

Evaluation of the Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies (TALA): Interim Report #2

Executive Summary and Evaluation Report

December 2010

Submitted to:
Texas Education Agency



Submitted by:
ICF International
9300 Lee Highway
Fairfax, VA 22031

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Executive Summary

This report provides an update on evaluation findings related to Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies (TALA) program activity through summer 2009. An initial interim report focused on training activities during summer 2008 related to grade 6 teachers was published in May of 2009 and is referenced throughout the report.¹ This second interim report focuses on findings of training activities during summer 2009 related to grade 7 and grade 8 teachers and to grade 6 teachers' implementation of TALA during the 2008-09 school year.

About TALA

Texas House Bill 2237 was passed in 2007 in order to improve high school success and increase college readiness in Texas public schools, and it provided specific direction and funding for TALA. TALA was created to improve literacy rates among middle school students. In order to achieve this goal, TALA focuses on improving teaching by providing Grades 6-8 English language arts (ELA)/reading and content area teachers with research-based strategies for improving their students' academic literacy.

The TALA Model

The goal of TALA is to provide professional development for ELA/reading and content area teachers in the use of scientifically-based literacy practices to improve academic literacy. TALA is intended to help prepare middle school teachers to design appropriate instruction for all students, including those who are struggling with reading due to limited English proficiency (LEP), learning disabilities, dyslexia, and other risk factors for reading difficulties.

TALA instructional routines emphasize implementation of a three-tier reading model consistent with a response to intervention (RTI) model. RTI emphasizes ongoing data collection and immediate intervention for students who demonstrate a need in one or more reading skills. TALA is tailored for the unique structure of middle schools and is framed within a schoolwide approach to addressing the needs of struggling adolescent readers.

The Format of TALA

As designed to date, TALA consists of two separate academies: ELA academy and content area academy. The ELA academy is designed for reading and English language arts teachers. The content area academy targets math, science, and social studies teachers. Both academies provide professional development in scientifically-based, general literacy instructional strategies. ELA academies consisted of three days of face-to-face training, followed by a one-day online practicum follow-up. The content area academies consisted of a day and a half of face-to-face training, followed by a half-day online practicum. During TALA, trainers provided examples of the strategies and their applications, both in hard copy and video formats, with appropriate subject area materials in the middle school classroom.

¹ Throughout the present report, all references to the evaluation report refer to the following citation: Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies (TALA): Interim Report #1, http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/opge/progeval/ProfessionalDevelopment/TALA_Interim_0509.pdf.

TALA content was organized into seven units with individual modules that last between 30 and 75 minutes. Units 1-3 (Tier I strategies for all students) were covered in both ELA and content area academies, while units 4-7 (Tiers II and III strategies for students with reading difficulties) were only covered in the ELA academies. TALA training was first provided to grade 6 teachers during summer 2008, while training for grade 7 and grade 8 teachers first occurred in summer 2009. While the content for the grade 6 academies and the grade 7 and grade 8 academies was identical, grade-specific videos used in the training were different.

Implementation of TALA

Regional education service center (ESC) leaders were in charge of operations for the implementation of TALA statewide. The ESC leaders scheduled TALA ELA and content area academies in their respective regions, established locations, set dates and times, and worked with their information technology staffs to set up the registration information in their catalogs and develop a registration database to track participants.

In 2008 and 2009, TALA utilized a training of trainers (TOT) model in order to prepare trainers for the implementation of TALA statewide. Prior to the summer 2008 grade 6 academies, the State TOT was held in March 2008, where master trainers trained state trainers. Three Regional TOTs were then conducted in May 2008 in which state trainers trained regional trainers. Finally, regional trainers conducted TALA grade 6 teacher academies throughout the 20 ESCs with a maximum of 50 participants in each. The TOT model was repeated in spring 2009 followed by TALA grade 7 and grade 8 teacher academies in summer 2009. Teachers who teach at campuses that were rated Academically Unacceptable (AU) in reading were required to attend TALA. Grade 6 teachers attended these trainings in summer 2008, while grade 7 and grade 8 teachers attended trainings in summer 2009.

Approach to the TALA Evaluation

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) contracted with ICF International (ICF) to conduct a statewide evaluation of TALA. The comprehensive evaluation approach was designed to:

- Evaluate the quality of the TALA training, including the materials developed for use in training, the training of trainers, and the training of classroom teachers;
- Evaluate the quality and level of ongoing implementation of the TALA training in the classroom;
- Evaluate the effects of the TALA teacher training on student outcomes; and
- Conduct an analysis of financial data to assess the cost-effectiveness of TALA.

Specific research questions were developed to address each of the four overall evaluation objectives. These research questions guided the selection of data sources, the development of instruments to collect new data, and the analysis of the data.

Evaluating Quality of TALA Training

Several data sources were used to evaluate the quality of the TALA training, including TALA training materials, TALA training observations, state trainer interviews, the 2008 regional trainer survey, and the 2009 TALA trainer survey. An expert review technical advisory board (TAB,

consisting of five nationally recognized experts in literacy, professional development, and special education) reviewed the TALA content and materials in 2008 and 2009. Members of the ICF evaluation team conducted observations of TALA trainings at all three levels (State TOT, Regional TOT, and classroom teacher academies) in 2008 (and to a lesser extent in 2009), conducted state trainer telephone interviews in 2008, and administered the regional trainer and TALA trainer web-based surveys in 2008. Instruments developed in order to collect data from these sources included an expert review protocol, the TALA training observation protocol and semi-structured field note template, the state trainer telephone interview protocol, and the regional trainer survey. The regional trainer survey was modified to become the 2009 TALA trainer survey and included items for both state and regional trainers.

Evaluating TALA Implementation, Impact on Student Outcomes and Cost Effectiveness

Existing data were obtained from TALA archival planning materials (e.g., steering committee meeting minutes, program rules), TEA Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), TEA Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), ESC-provided teacher stipend data, and the TALA online follow-up data. New data were collected through spring 2009 classroom observations of participating grade 6 teachers, online surveys of participating teachers and campus administrators, and interviews with the TALA developer and TEA program staff. Instruments developed in order to collect data from these sources included a TALA-specific observation protocol, the TALA developer and program staff telephone interview protocol, and the participating teacher and campus administrator surveys. An ESC TALA expenditure reporting form was developed to collect expenditures broken out by categories (e.g., number of academies conducted, budgets per academy). Trained graduate students conducted observations of TALA participating classrooms. Members of the ICF evaluation team conducted telephone interviews, and administered the participating teacher and campus administrator web-based survey. Additional data collection occurred during the 2009-10 school year and will be included in a final TALA evaluation report to be submitted in December 2010.

Evaluation Findings

The Quality of TALA Training

Grade 6 and Grades 7-8 TALA Training

Expert Review of Teacher Training Materials

The TAB reviewed both the Grade 6 training materials (see Interim Report #1) and the Grades 7-8 training materials (written and video). They also reviewed overall descriptions of the training (e.g., time allotted for presenting modules). Not surprisingly given the amount of overlap in materials provided to Grade 6 versus Grade 7 and 8 teachers, the TAB findings and recommendations over the two sets of materials were very similar (see Table 1). The TAB concluded that, overall, instructional routines included in both sets of materials were linked to state standards and that the practices used in the professional development component are strong. The TAB was concerned about the short duration of the TALA training and follow-up and recommended that systematic support mechanisms (including ongoing follow-up, administrator support, and a dedicated website) could assist in addressing the concerns associated with the implementation of TALA in schools.

Table 1: TAB Findings and Recommendations based on Review of Grade 6 and Grades 7-8 TALA Materials

| | Grade 6 TALA Materials | Grades 7-8 TALA Materials |
|--|--|---|
| TAB findings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overall quality of TALA content is high. ▪ Many of the instructional routines represent the best practices in literacy and are scientifically based. ▪ The instructional routines are linked to national and state standards. ▪ The practices used in the professional development component are strong (e.g., TALA trainers modeling strategies during training). ▪ The short duration of the TALA training was a concern. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The content is based on research-based best practices. ▪ The instructional routines are linked to state standards. ▪ The emphasis on importance/ necessity of routines for content area teachers is a benefit. ▪ TALA does not try to introduce too many strategies, and this makes it manageable for teachers. ▪ The practices used in the professional development component are strong (e.g., active learning). ▪ The reading intervention units may pose problems for middle school ELA teachers lacking background knowledge. ▪ Minimal amount of follow-up to initial training is provided. |
| TAB recommendations to improve TALA training and the implementation of TALA in schools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide teachers with systematic support from reading coaches and school administrators. ▪ Provide teachers with on-going training to assist them with classroom implementation. ▪ Provide teachers with opportunities to see TALA strategies actually modeled in the classroom after the training. ▪ Integrate actual teacher texts into the training as this may allow the teacher to see how TALA instructional routines will work in their classrooms.* | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide teachers with additional vocabulary and comprehension instructional routines. ▪ Provide teachers with ongoing follow-up activities. ▪ Include suggestions for setting up TALA teacher study groups or grade level team activities at the district or campus level. ▪ Suggest a school administrator trained in the TALA routines evaluate the teacher during the year. ▪ Develop a dedicated TALA website to serve as a hub to post, share, and critique lessons. |

* Teachers were asked to bring their Teacher's Editions of textbooks to the TALA training, and activities were structured so that teacher participants could practice TALA strategies using their own materials.

Observations of TALA Training

TALA Grade 6 Regional TOTs and TALA classroom teacher academies and TALA Grades 7-8 classroom teacher academies were highly rated overall by observers (see Table 2). While some Grades 7-8 TALA trainers were observed providing personal examples and asking interactive questions, observers expressed the concern that some were reading directly from notes, perhaps indicating the trainer was not yet personally comfortable with the materials.

Table 2: Findings from Observations of TALA Academies by Grade 6 and Grades 7-8

| Observations of TALA Grade 6 Regional TOTs and TALA Grade 6 Classroom Teacher Academies | Observations of TALA Grades 7-8 Classroom Teacher Academies |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trainings were reflective of best practices for professional development. ▪ Trainers effectively implemented the components of the TALA training. ▪ The culture of the training sessions facilitated the engagement of participants. ▪ Trainers followed the activities and content of the TALA training materials. ▪ A large amount of information was covered during the TALA trainings in a short amount of time. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The training was well implemented. ▪ Trainers were effective in their use of TALA videos and handouts, managing the training pace, and using modeling. ▪ Trainers were given low ratings on the use of questioning strategies, connecting TALA to TEKS, and connecting TALA to English Language Learners. ▪ Training participants were actively involved in the TALA training and worked collaboratively together. ▪ The TALA trainers attempted to reach their audiences through personal examples and interactive questions. ▪ The majority of the delivery method involved trainers reading directly from their notes. |

Trainer and Participant Perceptions of TALA Training

Both state and regional trainers of the Grade 6 TALA training and Grades 7-8 TALA training had positive perceptions of the training (see Table 3). Trainers reported that the training they attended adequately prepared them for the training they conducted. This favorable perception of TALA training was echoed by Grade 6 ELA and content area classroom teachers. The majority of Grade 6 classroom teachers (86%) who participated in TALA indicated that the TALA trainings were appropriate for teachers of their subjects. Over 75% of teacher responded that the TALA training would help to improve teaching in their respective subjects.

Table 3: Trainer and Teacher Participant Perceptions of TALA Training

| | Grade 6 TALA Training | Grades 7-8 TALA Training |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| State and Regional Trainers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trainer roles and expectations were clearly stated and the goals of the trainings were clearly articulated. ▪ Content area state trainers noted gaps in the math, science, and social studies aspects of content. ▪ ELA and content area state trainers noted that the overall quality of the trainings was very good. ▪ State and regional trainers reported that more time was needed to discuss potential problems that would arise during the trainings. ▪ Regional and state trainers reported that they felt adequately prepared for the training they conducted. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The culture and quality of the training were rated positively by most trainers. ▪ The training content and materials were reported as what the trainers liked best. ▪ The most frequently reported area for improvement pertained to the scripted nature of the TALA training (e.g., reading the slides verbatim). ▪ The majority of trainers (94%) felt prepared for their roles as a TALA trainer. ▪ Most of the trainers (89%) reported that they would attend a similar training in the future, and over 50% of the trainers were returning trainers from 2008. |

| | Grade 6 TALA Training | Grades 7-8 TALA Training |
|---|--|---|
| ELA Classroom Teacher Participants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ELA teachers reported that the quality of the TALA trainings (73%), the effectiveness of the presenters (73%), and the quality of the workshop content (75%) were above average or excellent. ▪ Over 80% of ELA teachers reported that they were fairly well or very well prepared to use the TALA instructional routines, strategies, and assessment (Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment - TMSFA). ▪ Approximately 63% of ELA felt prepared to deal with special student populations (e.g., LEP, special education, economically disadvantaged). ▪ Approximately 90% of ELA teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the TALA ELA trainings were appropriate for teachers of ELA and reading. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not yet available – to be reported in final evaluation report |
| Content Area Classroom Teacher Participants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Content area teachers reported that the quality of the TALA trainings (63%), the effectiveness of the presenters (61%), and the quality of the workshop content (63%) were above average or excellent. ▪ Approximately 53% of content area teachers felt prepared to deal with special student populations (e.g., LEP, special education, economically disadvantaged). ▪ Most content area teachers (80%) agreed or strongly agreed that the TALA content area trainings were appropriate for content area teachers and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Would recommend the training to social studies or science teachers (83%). ▪ Would recommend the training for math teachers (77%). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not yet available – to be reported in final evaluation report |

Administrator Overview Training

Expert Review of Administrator Overview Training

Overall, the TAB viewed the administrator overview training as a step in the right direction. Getting administrator “buy-in” was viewed as critical to TALA’s success. The TAB liked the handouts that illustrated how to organize instruction (e.g., sample schedules). They recommended that the training be delivered in person with an ongoing follow-up that could be web-based.

The TAB had the following recommendations that they believe would secure campus administrator support:

- Administrators should be required to attend the administrator training.
- Administrators should go through the same training that the teachers attended.
- Handouts need to be explicitly mentioned in the training.

- Administrators should be provided with detailed training on using the *Walkthrough Guide*.²
- The handouts to assist in the implementation of a schoolwide intervention (e.g., *Walkthrough Guides*, classroom observation forms, *Teacher Self-Assessment*) should be simplified and clarified for use in Texas.
- In the future, administrator training should be conducted by administrators who have successfully implemented the program at their schools/campuses.

Administrator Perceptions of TALA Training

Administrators were asked to rate the overall quality of the training they received. Over half of the administrators (62%) rated the quality of the training as “excellent” or “above average,” while a small percentage (6%) rated the training they received as “below average” or “poor.” The majority of the administrators perceived the training structure (87%), content (92%), and materials (92%) as effective or very effective, and 72% believed that the TALA training was effective or highly effective in preparing them to support teachers.

Classroom Implementation of TALA

Based on responses to the TALA teacher participant survey, Grade 6 classroom observations, and TALA online follow-up data, the majority of Grade 6 ELA and content area teachers who participated in TALA reported that they are implementing TALA routines into their instruction to at least some degree.

Implementation of TALA in Grade 6 ELA Classrooms

Teachers who attended TALA Grade 6 ELA academies are implementing the TALA content and strategies in their classrooms in many ways, including:

- About 9 out of 10 ELA teachers surveyed (n= 997) are incorporating TALA into their instruction at least to some degree.
- ELA teachers reported more frequent classroom implementation of identifying main ideas in text, defining words, and building background knowledge than other TALA Tier I instructional routines.
- ELA teachers indicated that they are implementing Tiers II and III instructional routines:
 - ◆ To help struggling readers,
 - ◆ To reinvigorate their teaching using new methods, and
 - ◆ To help students develop skills that will help them become better readers across all subjects.
- The TMSFA is not implemented as widely as the TALA instructional routines by the ELA teachers, with 35% of ELA teachers reporting they occasionally or frequently administer and/or interpret the TMSFA, and 33% reporting that they have never administered or interpreted results from the TMSFA.

² The *Walkthrough Guide* allows administrators to evaluate the level of TALA implementation in the teachers’ classrooms. The *Walkthrough Guide* consists of observable elements of TALA instructional routines. A total score is calculated and interpreted as high, partial, or low implementation of TALA instructional routines.

- Of the teachers who implemented the TMSFA, 32% indicated that the areas of need that were identified for the majority of their students were decoding, fluency, and comprehension; 50% said the areas of need were fluency and comprehension only; and 18% said the area of need was comprehension only.
- A majority of observed ELA teachers (71%) implemented general TALA strategies (e.g., fostering student engagement, providing explicit instruction, providing feedback to students).
- A majority of ELA teachers who were observed implemented vocabulary instructional routines (81%) and comprehension instructional routines (66%).
- One-quarter of the ELA teachers who were observed implemented word study routines (25%), while only a few implemented monitoring comprehension routines (12%), and fluency routines (5%).

Implementation of TALA in Content Area Classrooms

Content area teachers (science, social studies, mathematics) who attended TALA Grade 6 content area academies also are implementing the TALA content and strategies in their classrooms in many ways, including:

- About 9 out of 10 content area teachers surveyed (n=832) are incorporating TALA into their instruction at least to some degree.
- A majority of observed content area teachers implemented general TALA strategies (e.g., fostering student engagement, providing explicit instruction, providing feedback to students).
- A majority of content area teachers who were observed implemented vocabulary instructional routines (76%).
- Less than half of the content area teachers who were observed implemented comprehension instructional routines (35%), and word study routines (20%).
- Content area teachers reported more frequent classroom implementation of defining words, building background knowledge, and generating examples and nonexamples.
- Content area teachers also reported that they frequently adapt instruction to structure learning opportunities for all students, foster student engagement, and group or pair students.

Campus Support of TALA Implementation

- The majority of ELA and content area teachers (80%) reported that policies and practices to support TALA schoolwide were at least in development at their campuses. These supports included:
 - ◆ Support from administrators
 - ◆ Assessment of students in reading
 - ◆ Creation of literacy intervention plans
 - ◆ Improvement of school climate
 - ◆ Strengthening of core instructional programs
 - ◆ Provision of teacher professional development

At least 85% of administrators responded that these same supports were at least in development at their campuses.

Impact of TALA on Grade 6 Student Achievement

The evaluation team investigated the effects of TALA on student achievement, in particular, reading achievement, math achievement, and achievement by students identified as being at-risk. In addition the relationship between student achievement and a range of teacher characteristics was explored.

In order to best understand the impact of TALA on student achievement, campuses were first classified on level of implementing TALA (high, medium or low) based on the proportion of Grade 6 teachers who participated in TALA, the percentage of Grade 6 teachers who completed the online follow-up, teacher self-reported implementation of the TALA instructional routines/strategies in the TALA teacher participant survey, and on level of campus support as reported in the administrator survey and TALA teacher participant survey. The high implementing campuses were then matched to campuses where teachers had not participated in TALA in order to make comparisons related to student achievement. A description of the matching process and outcomes of the match are described in Appendix L. This analysis assumes that all students on the campus had opportunity to have experienced teaching that had been impacted by TALA implementation.

In addition to comparisons made between high implementing TALA campuses and matched non-TALA campuses, the evaluation team examined differences among participating TALA campuses (high, medium, and low implementers). TALA campuses were further divided based on prior student reading performance (2007-08 school year) according to the average percentage of students who met the TAKS standard in reading for the campuses (above the mean vs. at or below the mean). The TALA campuses were compared using the categories described in Figure 1.

Figure 1. TALA Campus Comparison Groups

| | | Prior Reading Performance | |
|---------------------|--------|---|--|
| | | Low: At or Below the Mean | High: Above the Mean |
| TALA Implementation | High | High Implementing/Low Reading Performance | High Implementing/High Reading Performance |
| | Medium | Medium Implementing/Low Reading Performance | Medium Implementing/High Reading Performance |
| | Low | Low Implementing/Low Reading Performance | Low Implementing/High Reading Performance |

Reading and Math Achievement

High Implementing TALA Participating Campuses vs. Non-TALA Participating Campuses

Results from the trend analyses of TAKS achievement of Grade 6 students (from 2005-06 to 2008-09) at high implementing TALA participating campuses to students at non-TALA participating campuses were as follows:

- There were no significant differences in Grade 6 reading achievement or math achievement between TALA and non-TALA campuses.
- Both TALA campuses and non-TALA campuses experienced a significant increase in the percentage of students meeting the standard in reading achievement and math achievement from 2006-07 to 2007-08 (the two years prior to TALA training). This increase was followed by a decline in both groups in the percentage of students meeting standards in 2008-09.

Comparisons of High, Medium, and Low Implementing TALA Participating Campuses

Changes in Grade 6 TAKS reading scores and Grade 6 TAKS math scores were compared across time for high, medium, and low implementing campuses. TALA campuses were then divided according to the average percentage of students who met the standard in reading for the implementing campuses in 2007-08 (*above the mean* and *at or below the mean*).³ Results from these trend analyses included:

- For the between year comparisons by level of campus implementation, when comparing similarly classified campuses to themselves over time, there were significant differences in reading and math achievement:
 - ♦ For all campuses (low, medium, and high) classified as above the mean, the percentage of students meeting the standard in TAKS reading significantly increased from 2005-06 to 2007-08 and from 2006-07 to 2007-08. All campuses experienced a significant decrease in the percentage of students meeting the standard in TAKS reading from 2007-08 to 2008-09.
 - ♦ For low implementing campuses that had low prior reading performance (classified as at or below the mean), the percentage of students meeting the standard in TAKS reading significantly increased from 2005-06 to 2007-08 and from 2006-07 to 2007-08. This was followed by a significant decrease in the percentage of students meeting the standard from 2007-08 to 2008-09. There were no significant differences across time for medium or high implementing campuses classified as at or below the mean.
 - ♦ For all campuses (low, medium, and high) classified as above the mean, the percentage of students meeting the standard in TAKS math significantly increased from 2005-06 to 2007-08 and from 2006-07 to 2007-08. All campuses experienced a significant decrease in the percentage of students meeting the standard from 2007-08 to 2008-09.

³ The mean percentage of students who met the standard on the reading TAKS in 2007-08 was 93.5.

- ◆ For low implementing campuses classified as at or below the mean, the percentage of students meeting the standard in TAKS math significantly increased from 2005-06 to 2007-08 and from 2006-07 to 2007-08. Medium and high implementing campuses also experienced a significant increase from 2006-07 to 2007-08. Although all three groups experienced a decrease in the percentage of students who met the math TAKS standard from 2007-08 to 2008-09, only the low implementing campuses experienced a significant decrease.
- For the within year comparisons among campuses, when comparing low, medium, and high implementing campuses to each other at any one time point, there were no significant differences in reading and math achievement. During the 2005-06 school year, low, medium, and high implementing campuses performed similarly with respect to reading and math achievement. This was also true in the 2006-07, 2007-08, and 2008-09 school years.

At-Risk Student Achievement

Using student-level data comparing the same students from one year to the next, the change in percentage of Grade 6 students from TALA campuses (high, medium, and low implementing) who met the TAKS standards in reading and math (first administration) was examined for at-risk student groups. The at-risk groups included special education students, LEP students, and economically disadvantaged students. The team analyzed student level TAKS data to compare the percentage of students who met the TAKS standards in 2007-08 (while in grade 5) and the percentage of the same group of students who met the TAKS standards in 2008-09 (while in grade 6). The results included:

- The percentage of special education students who met the standard in reading significantly increased from 2007-08 (grade 5) to 2008-09 (grade 6). The percentage of special education students who met the standard in reading increased by 15 percentage points, whereas the increase for non-special education students at TALA campuses was 7 percentage points.
- The percentage of special education students who met the standard in math significantly increased from 2007-08 (grade 5) to 2008-09 (grade 6). The percentage of special education students who met the standard in math increased by 2 percentage points, whereas the percentage of non-special education students at TALA campuses who met the standard decreased by 5 percentage points.
- The percentage of LEP students who met the standard in reading significantly increased from 2007-08 (grade 5) to 2008-09 (grade 6). The percentage of LEP students who met the standard in reading increased by 13 percentage points, whereas the increase for non-LEP students at TALA campuses was 8 percentage points.
- The percentage of economically disadvantaged students who met the standard in reading significantly increased from 2007-08 (grade 5) to 2008-09 (grade 6). The percentage of economically disadvantaged students who met the standard in reading increased by 9 percentage points, whereas the increase for non-economically disadvantaged students at TALA campuses was 6 percentage points.

Analysis of TALA Funding Allocations and Expenditures

The evaluation team examined how funds were used to both develop TALA content and disseminate TALA for Grade 6. Additional limited analyses examined planned expenditures for TALA Grades 7-8. The analyses revealed the following:

ELA TALA Academies for Grade 6

- For the ELA component of TALA, ESCs drew down an average of 59% of the funding allocated for the dissemination of TALA Grade 6 ELA area academies.
- Generally, when ESCs drew down smaller percentages of their total allotted expenditures, it was due to fewer teachers attending the TALA trainings.
- Only one ESC spent more than the funds originally allocated for the ELA component of TALA, while the rest of the ESCs spent 45% to 82% of their allocated budgets.
- Overall, ESCs spent an average of \$799 per teacher and \$18,093 per academy to conduct the TALA Grade 6 ELA academies.

Content TALA Academies for Grade 6

- For the content component of TALA, ESCs spent an average of 48% of their allocated funding for the content area academies.
- The content area academies spent 27% to 84% of their allocated budgets.
- Similar to ELA academies, ESCs reported that the content academies tended to spend more of their budgets when they trained more teachers.
- Overall, it cost an average of \$761 per teacher and \$11,192 per academy to conduct the TALA Grade 6 content area academies.

Conclusions and Next Steps for TALA

The overall findings of the TALA evaluation provide evidence that the TALA content is representative of best practices for literacy instruction, explicitly aligned to English language arts (ELA)/reading national and state standards, and illustrative of best practices for professional development. The TALA training prepared trainers for their roles as trainers and Grade 6 classroom teachers for implementation of the TALA routines and strategies in their classrooms. Grade 6 ELA and content area teachers who participated in TALA are implementing TALA routines into their instruction. Classroom teachers and campus administrators report campus support for the TALA program, consistent with the school-wide approach of TALA. Preliminary findings indicate that TALA participation is positively affecting TAKS scores in reading, particularly for special education students, LEP students, and economically disadvantaged students. Special education students are also experiencing positive increases in TAKS scores in math.

For the final report, the evaluation team plans to use many of the same data gathering techniques, including surveys of the different TALA stakeholders and classroom observations of TALA implementation. However, the data collection will include intensive case studies of TALA participating campuses, allowing the evaluation team to examine TALA implementation in AU campuses and campuses with positive shifts in TAKS scores and to assess the level of campus

support. Data analyses will include comparisons of TAKS scores of students of TALA participating teachers and students of non-participating teachers. Data analyses will also include the creation of a level of campus participation and campus level changes over time on reading, math, science, and social studies TAKS scores. Changes in at-risk student population TAKS scores will also be compared across time. Further, in terms of cost effectiveness, the evaluation team plans to measure the cost of the program per extra student that meets the standard on the TAKS as a result of their teacher's participation in the program. In addition, the costs and benefits of program continuation will be estimated, providing information about the sustainability of the program. The evaluation team will also use sensitivity analyses to examine the impact that changes in assumptions and estimates would have on the evaluation of cost effectiveness of TALA.

1. Introduction and Overview of the Development and Implementation of TALA

This report provides an update on evaluation findings related to Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies (TALA) activity through summer 2009. An initial interim report focused on activity through summer 2008 was published in May of 2009⁴. The first interim evaluation report focused on TALA training related to Grade 6 teachers. This second interim report focuses on TALA training related to Grade 7 and Grade 8 teachers and to Grade 6 teachers' implementation of TALA during the 2008-09 school year. A final evaluation report examining the impact of TALA through the 2009-10 school year will be provided in December 2010.

TALA was created to improve literacy rates among middle school students. In order to achieve this goal, TALA focuses on improving teaching, rather than directly on students, by providing Grades 6-8 English language arts (ELA)/reading and content area teachers with successful, research-based strategies for improving their students' academic literacy. TALA is tailored for "the unique structure of middle schools" and is framed within a schoolwide approach to addressing the needs of adolescent readers, including those who are struggling.⁵ The TALA approach is a three-tier model of reading intervention, which is consistent with a response to intervention, or RTI, approach. Tier I applies to all students and includes general education instructional strategies. Tier II, named "Strategic Intervention" in TALA content, is designed for students with reading difficulties that cannot be addressed in Tier I. Tier III, referred to as "Intensive Intervention," is designed for students with severe reading difficulties. TALA instructional routines represent scientifically-based instructional strategies based on reading research.

The stated goal of TALA is to provide professional development for ELA/reading and content area teachers in the use of scientifically-based literacy practices to improve academic literacy. TALA is intended to help prepare middle school teachers to design appropriate instruction for all students, including those who are struggling with reading due to LEP, learning disabilities, dyslexia, and other risk factors for reading difficulties. While TALA training is provided to individual teachers, in order to have maximum impact, the design of TALA was based on the theory that teachers could have a better impact on student achievement with a school-wide approach to implementing TALA. Both the TALA teacher training and administrator training emphasized the importance of a school-wide report.

Brief Overview of Reading Research Related to TALA

According to several reading researchers and government agencies, there is a literacy crisis in middle schools across the United States (e.g., Kamil, Borman, Dole, Kral, Salinger, & Torgesen, 2008; Slavin, Chamberlain, & Daniels, 2007). Over 70% of adolescents struggle to read and enter high school reading below grade level (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2003; NASBE, 2006). Approximately two-thirds of eighth grade students read below the proficient level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and one-quarter read below the basic level (NASBE, 2006). In Texas, TAKS passing rates decrease in middle school. Since poor

⁴ Throughout the present report, all references to the evaluation report refer to the following citation: Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies (TALA): Interim Report #1, http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/opge/progeval/ProfessionalDevelopment/TALA_Interim_0509.pdf.

⁵ Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies, Information Flyer.

readers are at a greater risk for dropping out of high school (Snow & Biancarosa, 2003), adolescent literacy has become a “hot topic” for research and intervention (Cassidy & Cassidy, 2007). Additionally, research indicates that students with average reading ability are unprepared for reading in post-secondary education and the workforce (Kamil et al., 2008). The middle school years offer the last chance to build the foundation of literacy skills for high school success (Slavin et al., 2007).

Explicit instruction in four key areas has been found to lead to reading improvement (Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw, & Rycik, 1999; National Reading Panel, 2000; RAND Group, 2002): (1) phonics, (2) fluency, (3) vocabulary, and (4) comprehension. In addition, instruction that focuses on only one component of reading is not sufficient to promote literacy in struggling readers. Phonics, fluency, and vocabulary are factors necessary for reading comprehension to occur. As a result, an emphasis on comprehension strategies alone will not increase reading ability, especially in students who are struggling readers. The inclusion of multiple reading components within the same intervention has been found to be the most effective to improve reading achievement (Scammacca, Vaughn, Edmonds, Reutebuch, & Torgesen, 2007).

Response to intervention (RTI) is a multi-tiered instructional model for educational assessment and intervention delivery. It is based on student progress data, which inform whether increasing levels of intervention delivery should be provided to students who are not responding to their current program of instruction (Colorado State Department of Education, 2006; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1998; Fuchs & Vaughn, 2006; NASDSE, 2006). Many RTI models apply a three-tiered approach that entails primary (or universal), secondary, and tertiary instruction. Each level is synonymous with a tier and student movement among them is typically informed by progress monitoring data. Tier 1 should be characterized as high-quality (i.e., research-based) instruction provided to all students. Tier 2 instruction is not universal, but is utilized for those students who do not make adequate progress in reading after working with core curricula. Students who do not respond sufficiently to Tier 2 intervention enter Tier 3, which typically involves more comprehensive evaluation and intense services and might apply to about 5% of students

Teacher Professional Development and Student Achievement

Across the state of Texas, several initiatives (e.g., TALA, Student Success Initiative, Mathematics Instructional Coaches Pilot Program) are being implemented to improve student learning. In order for these initiatives to improve student learning and subsequent achievement, students need well-prepared teachers to implement the curriculum or instructional strategies. To effectively implement research-based instructional methods, teachers need professional development (Benton & Benton, 2008).

Teacher professional development is a common approach used to improve student achievement, school performance, and teacher quality (Benton & Benton, 2008; Colbert, Brown, Choi, & Thomas, 2008). Professional development that focuses on research-based instructional routines, involves active learning by the teachers, and allows teachers to adapt the instructional routines to their classrooms has been found to be effective in improving student achievement (Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007). In addition, professional development has a moderate positive effect on teacher instructional practices (Wallace, 2009).

Slavin and his colleagues (2008) reviewed the research on best practices for middle and high school reading programs. This review focused on four types of programs: (a) reading curricula, (b) computer-assisted instruction, (c) programs that combined large and small group instruction

with computer activities, and (d) programs that focused on providing teachers with professional development to implement specific instructional routines. Programs that were designed to change teaching practices in the classroom were the most effective and had positive achievement effects.

As compared with longer-term professional development, short-term professional development has been found to be not as effective (Firestone, Hayes, Robinson, & Shalaby, 2008). In order for teacher professional development to be effective, considerable time must be allotted, and that time must be well-organized, carefully structured, purposefully directed, and focused on content or pedagogy or both” (Guskey & Yoon, 2009, p.499).

The research on teacher professional development supports the professional development initiatives in the state. However, it is difficult to measure the effects of professional development on student outcomes without accounting for the influence of teacher beliefs and school leadership (Putman, Smith, & Cassady, 2009). School leadership is one of the most critical components to the effective implementation of initiatives in the school (Leithwood, Jantzi, & McElheron-Hopkins, 2006; Murphy, 2004). TALA attempts to foster a schoolwide approach in reading instruction and the content areas. This includes securing support from campus administrators.

Overview of the Development and Implementation of TALA

This section presents an updated overview of the development, planning, and implementation of TALA from 2005 through spring 2009. It includes a discussion of the development of the content, plans for and actual implementation of TALA Grade 6, and plans for implementation of TALA Grades 7-8. The chapter is based on a review of public documents and archival data provided by TEA, which included minutes and agendas from TALA steering committee meetings, minutes and agendas from videoconferences with ESC TALA contacts, and general information about TALA. In addition, transcripts from interviews with the TALA developer and TEA program staff responsible for TALA implementation were drawn upon to fill in the gaps of information presented in Interim Report #1.

TALA Organization and Planning

Under HB 1 passed by the 79th Texas Legislature in 2005, TEA awarded a \$4 million development contract to the Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts (VGC) at The University of Texas at Austin (UT), to create what would eventually become the content for TALA professional development training academies through the Texas Adolescent Literacy Project (TALP).⁶ This project included three deliverables: (a) the professional development package with cross content Tier I instructional routines for content area teachers in Grades 6-8, (b) a source book of intervention materials focusing on Tier II and Tier III for reading teachers in Grades 6-8, and (c) the Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment (TMSFA), which was done in partnership with researchers at the Texas Institute for Measurement, Evaluation, and Statistics

⁶ Press Release, University of Texas at Austin, *University of Texas at Austin Vaughn Gross Center gets multimillion dollar award to study struggling adolescent readers*, May 17, 2006.

(TIMES) at the University of Houston. The award also included the field test of the materials across seven campuses in three school districts.⁷

TALP deliverables were based on a review of the literature examining reading interventions with secondary school students and input from expert consultants. VGC developed a three-tiered intervention approach for struggling middle school readers. The professional development materials were developed for Tier I to focus on a schoolwide approach to help content teachers help struggling readers, which included a small number of research-based strategies focusing on vocabulary and comprehension instruction that could be implemented across all content areas. The teacher source book of interventional materials was developed for Tiers II and III. Tier II materials address explicit reading intervention in large groups of 8-16 students. Tier III materials included more intensive and targeted instruction in a smaller group of 3-6 students. Tier II/III materials focused on word recognition and fluency, in addition to comprehension and vocabulary instruction. The materials were refined and condensed based on feedback from teachers and reviewers. Upon completion, the materials for Tiers I and II/III were vetted through content experts, ESC representatives, and middle school teachers.

Between August 2006 and May 2007, VGC worked with teachers at seven campuses to field test the academic literacy strategies in content area classrooms, field test the intervention strategies with struggling readers, and validate the assessment measures. VGC served as the lead organization in the development of TALA content and materials (including slides, training notes, sample lessons, and student work), working closely with the TEA director of special projects from the literacy area of the Division of Standards and Programs. VGC staff included the lead author, a team of field trainers, intervention teachers, a graduate research assistant, a team for assessment administration and data organization, and graphic designers. VGC was supported by Texas and national content experts, who helped by providing suggestions and reviewing materials at key points. Additionally, several focus groups were conducted with various groups of teachers (mathematics, science, social studies, ELA/reading, ELL, special education) and administrators at the seven campuses. Interviews were also conducted each semester with the teachers. VGC developers further enhanced presentation slides, training notes, sample lessons, and student work that eventually became the TALA training content. TIMES developed the TMSFA measure and validated it at seven middle school campuses during the 2006-07 school year.

In June 2007, a TALA steering committee was formed and consisted of representatives from 6 of the 20 regional ESCs, the TEA director of *Reading First*, the TEA director of English language arts (ELA)/reading, and the developer of TALA. The steering committee began meeting monthly to address topics such as budget allocation, documents, resource books, quality control, and content issues.⁸ The steering committee helped guide the development of TALA Grade 6 materials, as well as to plan for and oversee the logistics of the implementation of TALA Grade 6 statewide during the summer and fall of 2008. The steering committee was described by the developer as being “helpful in narrowing down the instructional routines that were included, and some of the activities for teachers to engage in or the reflection pieces. We relied on the steering committee to help make sure we had a balance of activities and reflection time.”

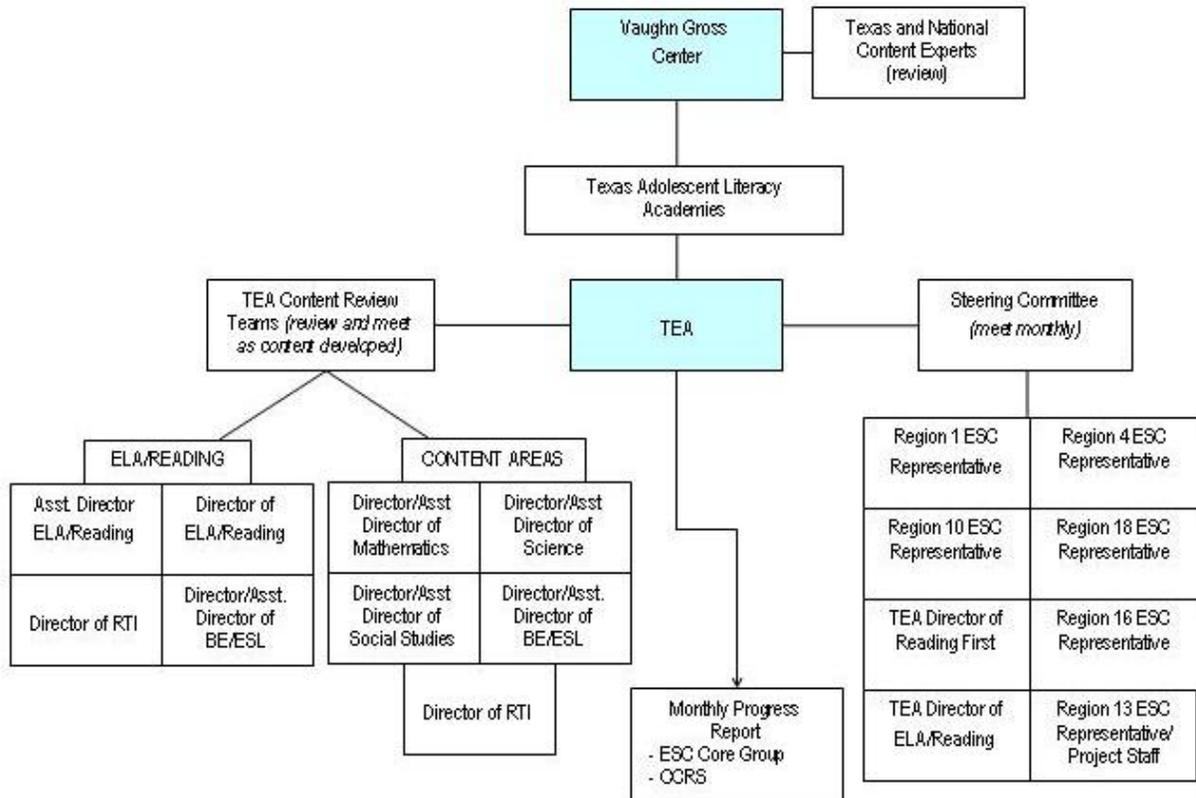
The ELA/Reading Content Review Team and the Content Area Content Review Team also were established in June 2007 to review and meet as the content was developed. The

⁷ Denton, C., Vaughn, S., Fletcher, J., & Francis, D. (2007). *Texas Adolescent Literacy Project Final Report*. Austin, TX: University of Texas at Austin, Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts.

⁸ Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies, Minutes of Steering Committee Meeting, July 12, 2007.

ELA/Reading Content Review Team consisted of the TEA director of ELA/reading, the TEA assistant director of ELA/Reading, the TEA director of RTI, and the TEA director/assistant director of Bilingual Education (BE)/English as a Second Language (ESL). The Content Area Content Review Team consisted of the TEA director/assistant director of mathematics, the TEA director/assistant director of science, the TEA director/assistant director of social studies, the TEA director of RTI, and the TEA director/assistant director of BE/ESL. Figure 1.1 illustrates the structure of TALA organization.

Figure 1.1: TALA Organization Chart



Source: Texas Education Agency

Development of TALA Content and Delivery Strategy

The initial materials from TALP were provided to TEA on August 31, 2007. At TALA steering committee meetings, the VGC developer laid out all of the strategies that were used in TALP for other steering committee members, along with corresponding feedback on each strategy collected during TALP. The steering committee collaborated to come to a consensus about which strategies and training would provide “the most bang for the buck” with the content area and ELA teachers during the specified amount of time, recognizing that TALA could not include all strategies from TALP. After that, the lead developer revised the training materials and the PowerPoint slides. The lead developer submitted drafts to other steering committee members, TEA ELA and content area directors and assistant directors to read and provide feedback. The steering committee members reviewed draft materials developed by the VGC developer and discussed issues like time limits, the activities covered in each unit and module, which units and modules could be combined or shortened, and the order in which units and modules were to be

presented. The steering committee served as a sounding board for the VGC developer and approved materials along the way.

Beginning in fall 2007, the classroom videos were filmed. In addition, the VGC developers submitted draft materials to content advisory teams and external experts for review during development. Changes were made to the TALA Grade 6 materials based on this feedback, and additional changes were made after the first State training of trainers (TOT). Specifically, developers realized that there was not enough time to present everything that was included after the first round of cuts, so the text structure units were taken out of the TALA Grade 6 materials.

Providing TALA Training

TALA (both for Grade 6 and Grades 7-8) consists of two separate academies: the ELA academy and the content area academy. The ELA academy is designed for reading and ELA teachers. The content area academy targets math, science, and social studies teachers. Both academies are intended to provide professional development in scientifically-based, general literacy instructional strategies. The ELA academy also provides training in the use of a progress monitoring assessment (the TMSFA) and reading intervention instructional strategies.

The training program for the ELA academy includes the following content presented in modules:

- General education instructional routines, which includes schoolwide intervention strategies, vocabulary and comprehension strategies, integrated scaffolding for English language learners (ELL) and students with disabilities, content-specific examples, connections to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and the TAKS test, and practical application/lesson planning;
- An intervention component, which includes training on instructional strategies appropriate for a reading intervention class geared at improving students' word recognition, fluency and comprehension, as well as reinforcement of the general education instructional routines to promote transfer of skills and sample lessons; and
- Training on a diagnostic and progress monitoring instrument (the TMSFA) that assesses student abilities in word identification, fluency, and comprehension; training in the use of decision-making tools for tracking progress and planning instruction; and practice administering assessments and interpreting results.

The training program for the content area academy includes only the general education instructional routines (the first bullet listed above). TALA's emphasis is on implementation of a three-tier reading model consistent with an RTI model. This model emphasizes ongoing data collection and immediate intervention for students who demonstrate a need in one or more reading skills.

TALA content is organized into seven units with individual modules that last between 30 and 75 minutes. The following outline describes TALA content. Units 1-3 were covered in both ELA and content area academies (general instructional routines), while units 4-7 were only covered in the ELA academies (reading intervention instructional routines). Table 1.1 presents the units and modules comprising both instructional routines.

Table 1.1: TALA General Intervention and Instructional Routines

| General Instructional Routines | Intervention Instructional Routines |
|---|--|
| Unit 1: Overview of Schoolwide Intervention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Module 1 - A Schoolwide Approach to Reading Intervention ◆ Module 2 - Effective Instruction Techniques Unit 2: Vocabulary Instructional Routines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Module 1 - Selecting Words ◆ Module 2 - Pronouncing and Defining Words ◆ Module 3 - Generating Examples and Non-Examples Unit 3: Comprehension Instructional Routines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Module 1 - Building Background Knowledge With Anticipation-Reaction Guides ◆ Module 2 - Identifying Main Ideas in Text ◆ Module 3 - Writing Summaries | Unit 4: Using Diagnostic and Progress Monitoring Data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Module 1 - Administering the Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment ◆ Module 2 - Interpreting and Implementing Assessment Results Unit 5: Word Study Routines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Module 1 - Identifying Syllable Structures ◆ Module 2 - Morphemic Analysis Unit 6: Fluency Routine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Module 1 - Building Fluency With Partner Reading Unit 7: Inferential Comprehension Instructional Routines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Module 1 - Generating Questions to Monitor Comprehension, Level 1 ◆ Module 2 - Generating Questions to Monitor Comprehension, Level 2 ◆ Module 3 - Generating Questions to Monitor Comprehension, Level 3 |

The TALA training program (see Box 1) includes an optional, but strongly encouraged, online follow-up module. ELA teachers participating in the online follow-up module select one of the training modules from the general educational instructional routines (units 1-3) and implement it in their classrooms. They also select one of the training modules from the intervention instructional routines (units 4-7) and implement it in their classrooms. Upon classroom implementation of these two modules, the ELA teachers complete the online corresponding five-question quiz and a documentation form for the two modules they implemented.

Similarly, after attending a TALA academy, content area teachers select one of the training modules from the general educational instructional routines (units 1-3) and implement it in their classrooms. The content area teachers then complete the online five-question quiz and documentation form for the module they implemented. The online follow-up module for TALA Grade 6 was available from September 1, 2008, to December 1, 2008; TALA Grades 7-8 was available from September 1, 2009, to December 1, 2009 and will be included in the final evaluation report.

Box 1. Overview of the TALA Model

ELA Academy model:

- Grade 6 teachers trained in summer 2008
- Grades 7-8 teachers trained in summer 2009
- Ratio of 2 trainers to 50 participants
- \$500 stipend:
 - \$250 after attending all 3 days of the face-to-face session
 - \$250 after completing the online follow-up
- 24 Continuing Professional Education credits for completion

Content Area Academy model:

- Grade 6 teachers trained in summer 2008
- Grades 7-8 teachers trained in summer 2009
- Ratio of 2 trainers to 50 participants
- \$250 stipend:
 - \$125 after attending all 1.5 days of the face-to-face session
 - \$125 after completing the online follow-up
- 12 Continuing Professional Education credits for completion

For both TALA Grade 6 and TALA Grades 7-8, the ELA academies consisted of three days of face-to-face training (6 hours per day), followed by a one-day (approximately 6 hours) online practicum follow-up. The content area academies consisted of 1.5 days of face-to-face training (6 hours on day one and 4 hours on day two), followed by a half-day online practicum (approximately 3 hours).

An overview of the TALA model is presented in Box 1. The teachers only receive the full stipend if they participate in both the face-to-face training and the online follow-up.

Development Processes

In addition to working with VGC on the development of TALA content, the TALA steering committee created a timeline, developed a trainer nomination and selection process, established teacher stipend requirements, developed a website (www.tea.state.tx.us/tala), and planned the TALA TOT. The steering committee also reviewed draft documents and discussed implementation logistics, technology needs and requirements, quality control, budget allocations, marketing, registration, and copyright agreements.

Changes Made to TALA Grade 6 Content for TALA Grades 7-8

Several minor changes were made to the TALA content as delivered to Grade 6 to prepare the materials for TALA Grades 7-8, which included adding or reducing the amount of allotted time to conduct some modules (based in part on feedback provided in the interim #1 evaluation report), dropping videos, replacing videos to include ones that involved seventh and eighth grade teachers and lessons, changing some wording, adjusting or reorienting some activities, and adding notes to facilitators and participants about specific elements of the modules.

Some of the universal changes included:

- Printing two slides per page on participant guide
- Paginating participant guide and presenter guide
- Adding handouts for all “Scaffolding” slides
- Creating poster PDFs (with citations)
- Updating TEKS for all ELA samples⁹
- Updating references
- Changing the entire technology basis for playing the videos within the presentations.

TALA developers kept the same instructional routines for TALA Grades 7-8 as TALA Grade 6 because TALA is a schoolwide approach. The main idea was to change the lesson samples so that new lesson samples that were focused around high priority TEKS and TAKS items for Grades 7 and 8 were included. When presented with the choice between focusing on Grade 7 or Grade 8, the directive was to go more to Grade 8 with the idea from TALP that Grade 8 is a high accountability year with it being the “gateway year” for high school. Working with the TEA curriculum directors and input from various people at the ESCs, the developer created new lesson samples for Grades 7 and 8 and re-shot the videos to feature Grades 7 and 8 classrooms.

⁹ The state adopted new TEKS and the TALA materials were adapted to reflect the new standards.

Implementation of TALA Grade 6

The work of the VGC developers, TEA Division of Standards and Programs, TALA steering committee, and TALA content review teams led to the implementation of TALA Grade 6 throughout Texas for sixth grade teachers in the summer and fall of 2008. In addition, ESCs are able to implement TALA Grade 6 again in summer and fall 2009. The following section presents the role of the Regional ESCs in TALA implementation, how state and regional trainers were nominated and selected for TALA Grade 6, the training schedules, the TALA Grade 6 registration process for classroom teachers, the number of sessions planned in 2008 and 2009, and the number of sessions held in 2008, and the number of teachers who attended TALA Grade 6.

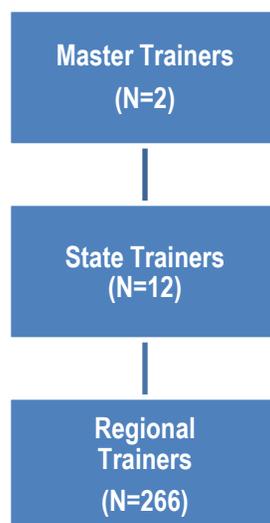
Regional ESCs

Regional ESC leaders received TALA funds to assist TEA with training and other activities relating to the development and operation of reading academies. Regional ESC leaders scheduled TALA Grade 6 ELA and content area academies in their respective regions, established locations, set dates and times, and worked with their IT (Information Technology) staffs to set up the registration information in their respective course catalogs and develop a registration database. In addition, the TALA steering committee met regularly throughout 2007 to assist with the implementation of TALA Grade 6 across the 20 regions across Texas. ESC 13 received a separate grant to assist with the administration and management of TALA Grade 6 across all 20 regions. Specific information about all allocations and expenditures related to TALA Grade 6 is included in chapter 7 of this report.

Nomination and Selection of State and Regional Trainers

TALA was designed to utilize a TOT model in order to prepare trainers for the implementation of TALA statewide. Figure 1.2 illustrates the plan for the flow of TALA trainers at all levels.

Figure 1.2: Organization of TALA Trainers for TALA Grade 6



Two master trainers from the VGC were selected to conduct the state TOT for TALA Grade 6. One master trainer was an external consultant with expertise in instruction for ELL students. The TALA steering committee outlined guidelines for nomination and selection of TALA state trainers and TALA regional trainers. These guidelines included:

- Nominations should be restricted to teachers with teaching experience in Grades 5-8.
- Nominations should be solicited from both ESC staff and district superintendents.
- Nominations should be solicited by sending a letter to district superintendents asking for one ELA nomination and one content area nomination.
- Superintendents will submit nomination forms to their respective ESCs.
- Selected nominees will receive a letter and application to complete and return to their respective ESCs.
- TEA/VGC will approve state trainers, while ESCs will approve regional trainers.
- Commitment letters will be sent out to selected nominees with acceptance instructions.

State trainer applications were reviewed and approved by TEA. The VGC was provided with the list of approved state trainers. ESCs approved the regional trainers. One master trainer was paid a consulting fee to conduct the state training. State and regional trainers received a stipend to provide TALA training.

For TALA Grade 6, the State TOT was held on March 3-6, 2008 in Austin, Texas, where master trainers trained state trainers. This was followed by three Regional TOTs conducted in May 2008 in which state trainers trained regional trainers. The three Texas Regional TOTs were held in Austin from May 5–8, 2008, in Houston from May 12–15, 2008, and in Dallas from May 19–22, 2008. Following the Regional TOTs, regional trainers conducted TALA Classroom Teacher trainings throughout the 20 ESCs.

Registration of Eligible Teachers, Including Those from Targeted Campuses

It was each ESC’s responsibility to track participation and pay stipends to the participating teachers. Teachers assigned to instruct students in Grade 6 in the 2008-09 school year at a campus rated “academically unacceptable” (AU) in reading (based on the 2006-07 school year) were required to attend and complete the appropriate literacy academy by December 2008. Attendance in person was required for each day of training at the appropriate literacy academy, and each ESC was responsible for determining the process for the makeup of any days missed due to emergencies on an individual basis.¹⁰

Between June 2, 2008, and December 15, 2008, ESCs reported that they conducted more TALA Grade 6 ELA and slightly fewer content area classroom teacher academies than they had planned. ESCs planned for 168 TALA Grade 6 ELA academies, but actually implemented 193. ESCs planned 180 TALA Grade 6 content area academies, but actually implemented just 176. Overall, during summer and fall 2008, 6,541 teachers participated in TALA Grade 6 academies.

Additional TALA Grade 6 academies are planned for summer and fall 2009 to train sixth grade teachers who were not able to attend the previous summer or recently became eligible to

¹⁰ Text of New 19 TAC, Chapter 102. Educational Programs, Subchapter HH. Commissioner's Rules Concerning the Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies.

attend. As of June 1, 2009, the 20 Regional ESCs had planned to offer 17 TALA Grade 6 ELA academies, 17 TALA Grade 6 content area academies, and 12 combined TALA Grade 6 ELA/content area academies. Data on actual number of sessions held and actual attendance will be collected throughout the remainder of 2009.

Implementation of TALA Grades 7-8

Planning for the implementation of TALA Grades 7-8 throughout Texas for seventh and eighth grade teachers in the summer and fall of 2009 followed the same processes as TALA Grade 6. The following sections present the role of the Regional ESCs in TALA implementation, how state and regional trainers were nominated and selected for TALA, the training schedules, the TALA registration process for classroom teachers, and the number of sessions planned for summer 2009.

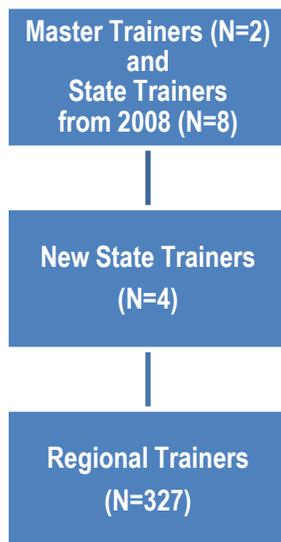
Regional ESCs

Like TALA Grade 6, Regional ESC leaders received TALA funds to assist TEA with training and other activities relating to the implementation of TALA. Regional ESC leaders scheduled TALA Grades 7-8 ELA and content area academies in their respective regions, established locations, set dates and times, and worked with their IT (Information Technology) staffs to set up the registration information in their respective course catalogs and develop a registration database. In addition, the TALA steering committee met regularly throughout 2008-09 to assist with the implementation of TALA Grades 7-8 in the 20 regions across Texas. ESC 13 received a separate grant to assist with the administration and management of TALA Grade 6 across all 20 regions. Specific information about all allocations and expenditures related to TALA Grade 6 is included in chapter 7 of this report.

Nomination and Selection of State and Regional Trainers

TALA was designed to utilize a TOT model in order to prepare trainers for the implementation of TALA statewide. Figure 1.3 illustrates the plan for the flow of TALA trainers at all levels, which was similar to the trainers for TALA Grade 6.

Figure 1.3: Organization of TALA Trainers for TALA Grades 7-8



Two master trainers (one from the VGC and one new external consultant who did not facilitate TALA Grade 6 State TOT) facilitated the state TOT for TALA Grades 7-8. Some of the TALA state trainers returned from the previous summer, and delivered the TALA modules. The master trainers served as facilitators and provided feedback after each module delivered by a returning state trainer. State trainers and regional trainers were selected based on similar guidelines, which included:

- Nominations should be restricted to teachers with teaching experience in Grades 5-8.
- Nominations should be solicited from both ESC staff and district superintendents.
- Nominations should be solicited by sending a letter to district superintendents asking for one ELA nomination and one content area nomination.
- Superintendents will submit nomination forms to their respective ESCs.
- Selected nominees will receive a letter and application to complete and return to their respective ESCs.
- TEA will approve state trainers, while ESCs will approve regional trainers.
- Commitment letters will be sent out to selected nominees with acceptance instructions.

State trainer applications were reviewed and approved by TEA. The VGC was provided with the list of approved state trainers. ESCs approved the regional trainers. One master trainer was paid a consulting fee to facilitate the state training. State and regional trainers received a stipend to provide TALA training.

According to the TALA developer, in preparation for TALA Grades 7-8 at the State TOT, the returning state trainers delivered the modules to the set of new state trainers that were there, to avoid adding a layer of interpretation through the levels of the TOT model. She stated that, “In some cases, the trainers did not realize that when they added their level of interpretation, they made some information incorrect or changed the emphasis because there was no opportunity to provide feedback to the state trainers.” A similar schedule was followed for TALA Grades 7-8,

where the State TOT was held in March 2009 in Austin, Texas, and three Regional TOTs were conducted in May and June 2009. Regional trainers began conducting TALA Grades 7-8 Classroom Teacher trainings throughout the 20 ESCs beginning in summer 2009.

Registration of Eligible Teachers, Including Those from Targeted Campuses

It was each ESC's responsibility to track participation and pay stipends to the participating teachers. Eligible teachers assigned to instruct students in Grades 7 or 8 in the 2009-10 school year at a campus rated AU in reading (based on 2006-07 school year) were required to attend and complete the appropriate literacy academy by December 2009. Attendance in person was required for each day of training at the appropriate literacy academy, and each ESC was responsible for determining the process for the makeup of any days missed due to emergencies on an individual basis.¹¹

According to the formulas used to allocate funds across regions, there should be a total of 683 TALA Grades 7-8 academies planned for summer/fall 2009. This number includes 291 TALA Grades 7-8 ELA academies and 392 TALA Grades 7-8 content area academies across the 20 ESCs. Overall, the allocation formulas estimate 15,000 eligible ELA teachers and 21,000 eligible content area teachers who teach Grades 7-8, for a total of 36,000 teachers. This is strictly the number of eligible teachers, and it is likely that fewer teachers will actually attend TALA. As of June 1, 2009, the 20 Regional ESCs had planned to offer 172 TALA Grades 7-8 ELA academies and 150 TALA Grades 7-8 content area academies, Combined TALA Grades 7-8 academies, where ELA and content area academies were conducted together instead of in separate sessions, was offered (93 sessions). Data on actual number of sessions held and actual attendance will be collected throughout the remainder of 2009.

Development and Implementation of TALA Administrator Overview Training

In addition to training materials for ELA and content area teachers, the VGC developed an online TALA administrator overview training. The stated purpose of the administrator overview is to assist administrators in supporting classroom implementation of TALA. The TALA administrator overview training consists of 27 PowerPoint slides describing the components of TALA and the three tiers of intervention. It also provides information on implementing a schoolwide reading intervention. The administrator overview training includes videos and handouts (e.g., *Walkthrough Guide*, *Teacher Self Assessment*) to assist in creating a schoolwide intervention.¹²

The Administrator Overview was originally designed to be delivered online as a self-study module. When the ESCs requested the ability to deliver the module in a face-to-face format, the VGC provided the presentation materials and a participant guide version. However, the module lacks presenter's notes with activities or additional information as is included in the TALA modules.

During summer and fall of 2008, the 20 Regional ESCs offered 33 face-to-face TALA administrator overview training sessions in addition to the online training. Overall, based on data reported by the ESCs and UT, 413 administrators participated in TALA administrator overview

¹¹ Text of New 19 TAC, Chapter 102. Educational Programs, Subchapter HH. Commissioner's Rules Concerning the Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies.

¹² The Administrator Overview Training was revised between 2008 and 2009. According to the lead developer, new video was added and the content was updated.

training—247 administrators participated in face-to-face administrator overview training, 85 administrators participated in the online training during 2008, and 81 administrators participated in both trainings.

Structure of the Report

This chapter introduced the background of the current evaluation. This included an overview of the research on adolescent literacy and major findings about effective practices. A review of the educational research literature related to the role of teacher professional development on student achievement was presented. It also presented the development and implementation of TALA. It included a discussion of the development of the content and instructional routines as well as the plan to train classroom teachers across the state.

Chapter 2 presents the evaluation approach used to assess the quality of TALA training, including the quality of TALA materials and the delivery of training. It presents the approach used to evaluate the implementation of TALA in participating teachers' classrooms and the impact of TALA on student achievement. It also presents the evaluation approach used to assess the cost effectiveness and sustainability of TALA.

Chapters 3–9 present the results of the evaluation. Chapter 3 describes the quality of Grade 6 TALA training. This includes the findings from the content review of TALA materials conducted by the Technical Advisory Board (TAB), the observations of TALA trainings, and the perceptions of TALA training from the perspectives of the various stakeholders, presenters, and participants who were surveyed or interviewed. Chapters 4 and 5 include the findings from the observations of participating classroom teacher classrooms and TALA online follow-up data. Chapter 6 includes results about campus support of the implementation of TALA. Chapter 7 describes the impact of TALA on student achievement in reading and math. It also presents the effect of TALA on at-risk student achievement. Chapter 8 presents the cost-effectiveness and sustainability of TALA. Chapter 9 describes the quality of Grades 7-8 TALA training, including findings from the content review of TALA materials conducted by the TAB, the observations of TALA trainings, and the perceptions of TALA training from the perspectives of the presenters. It also includes the evaluation of the administrator overview training. Chapter 10 presents the discussion of TALA findings and next steps in the evaluation.

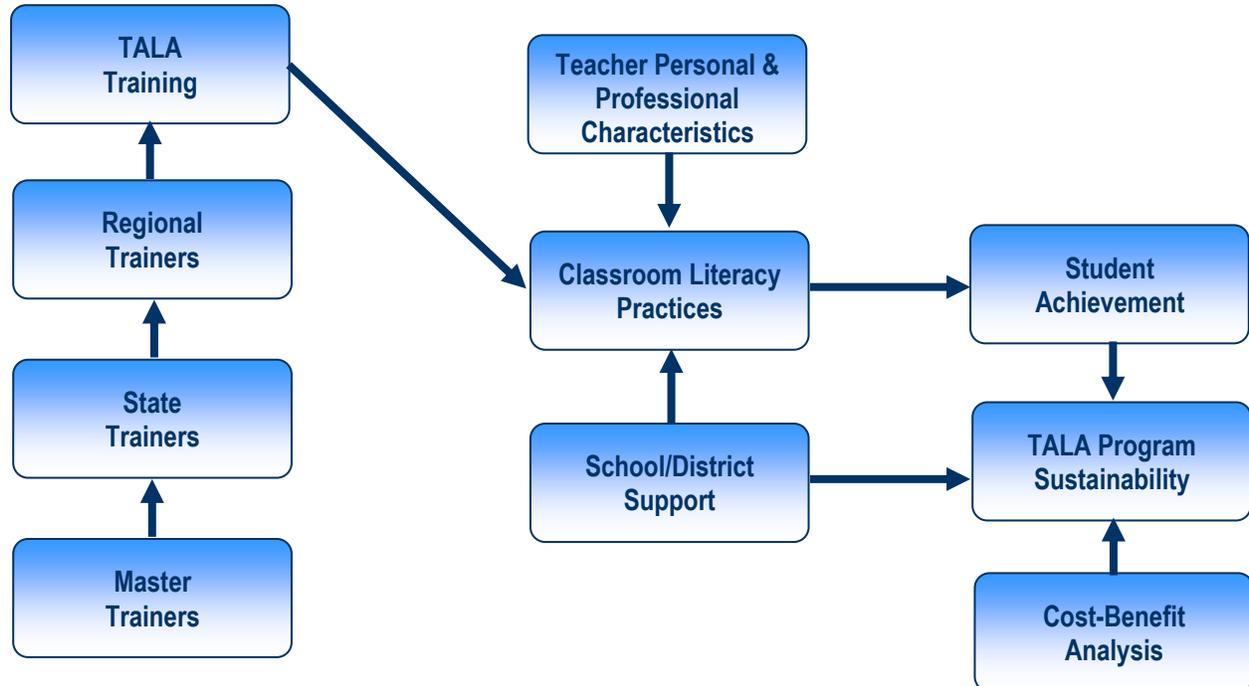
2. Evaluation Approach

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) contracted with ICF International to conduct a statewide evaluation of the Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies (TALA). The comprehensive evaluation approach was designed to accomplish the following objectives:

- Evaluate the quality of TALA training, including the materials developed for use in training, the training of trainers, and the training of classroom teachers;
- Evaluate the quality and level of ongoing implementation of TALA training in the classroom;
- Evaluate the effects of TALA teacher training on student outcomes; and
- Conduct an analysis of financial data to assess the cost-effectiveness of TALA.

At the center of this evaluation approach is the logic model depicted in Figure 2.1.¹³ To understand the impact of TALA on student achievement, it is important to identify whether TALA training affects classroom instruction. TALA content and professional development activities during the levels of TALA training may impact the implementation of TALA strategies in the classroom. Other factors that may affect classroom practices include the teachers' personal and professional characteristics, as well as school/district support for TALA. Student achievement, school/district support of TALA, and the cost-benefit analysis of TALA will impact the sustainability of the program.

Figure 2.1: Logic Model for TALA Evaluation



¹³ A logic model is a systematic and visual way to create and present an understanding of the relationships among inputs and other key factors, program operations and the results sought by the program.

Based on this logic model, Evaluation Objective 1 is an evaluation of TALA training. It includes an evaluation of the quality of the content, the delivery of the training at the state, regional, and classroom teacher levels, trainer perceptions of the training that they attended and conducted, and teacher perceptions of training. Evaluation Objective 2 addresses whether TALA participation leads to a change in teaching practices and Evaluation Objective 3 addresses whether this influences student achievement as measured by the TAKS. Information on the cost-effectiveness and sustainability of TALA, including how funds were allocated to develop and implement TALA is addressed by Evaluation Objective 4.

Methodology

In this section, we provide an overview of the evaluation design.¹⁴ Technical detail is provided in appendices and referenced as appropriate.

Research Questions

Specific research questions were developed to address each of the four evaluation objectives:

Evaluation Objective 1: To evaluate the quality of TALA training, including training of trainers

- To what extent does TALA content reflect best practices for literacy instruction according to experts in the field?
- To what extent is TALA content aligned with national and state standards in reading and ELA?
- What types of content were included as part of each level of training (training of state and regional trainers, as well as training of teachers and administrators)?
- What types of activities were included as part of each level of training (training of state and regional trainers, as well as training of teachers and administrators)?
- To what extent were participants engaged in TALA trainings?
- What types of instructional strategies (e.g., lecture, modeling) do TALA instructors use to facilitate participant learning?

Evaluation Objective 2: To evaluate the quality and level of ongoing implementation of TALA training in the classroom

- What are the professional and demographic characteristics of participating teachers?
- In what ways are trained teachers implementing TALA content and/or strategies?
- At what tier(s) are ELA participating teachers implementing the content learned at the ELA academy?
- To what extent are content area teachers (e.g., science, social studies) incorporating TALA content into their instruction?

¹⁴ More detailed information about the methodology can be found at http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/opge/progeval/ProfessionalDevelopment/TALA_Interim_0509.pdf. Throughout the present report, all references to the evaluation report refer to this citation.

- In what ways are trained ELA teachers using the Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment (TMSFA)?
- What do teachers perceive as the barriers and facilitators to implementing TALA content/strategies in the classroom?
- What do administrators perceive as the barriers and facilitators to implementing TALA content/strategies in the classroom?
- How has participation in the TALA training affected classroom literacy practices?

Evaluation Objective 3: To evaluate the effects of TALA teacher training on student outcomes

- How has TALA training affected TAKS scores in reading and language arts?
- How has TALA training affected TAKS scores in math?
- How are TALA trained teacher characteristics/behaviors related to student achievement?
- How is teacher self-efficacy related to student achievement?
- How is teacher job satisfaction related to student achievement?
- How is teacher implementation of TALA strategies related to student achievement?
- How has TALA training affected reading progress and overall achievement of at-risk students?
- Students with special education needs, including reading disabilities (e.g., dyslexia)
- Students with limited English proficiency
- Students from low SES environments

Evaluation Objective 4: To conduct an analysis of financial data to assess the cost-effectiveness of TALA

- How were funds used to develop TALA content?
- How were funds used by the regional ESCs to disseminate TALA?
- To what extent is there cost-savings related to TALA?
- What factors are contributing to the sustainability of the TALA initiative?
- What factors are prohibiting the sustainability of the TALA initiative?

These research questions guided the selection of data sources, the development of instruments to collect new data, and the analysis of the data.

Data Sources and Instrumentation

Several data sources were used to address the research questions of the evaluation, relying heavily on extant TEA data (i.e., existing data provided by TEA) while also collecting new data. Following is an overview of the types of data that were used in the TALA evaluation.

Extant Data

- **TALA Grades 7-8 Training Materials.** TALA Content Area Instructional Routines to Support Academic Literacy (Units 1-3), TALA Assessment and Instructional Routines for Reading Interventions (Units 4-7), and the Administrator Overview Training were collected from TEA or the VGC. The Content Area Instructional Routine materials included a Presenter Guide consisting of PowerPoint presentation slides with notes, handouts for each module, and one DVD containing the entire presentation, including the video and audio files used in the training. The Assessment and Instructional Routines for Reading Interventions included a Presenter Guide consisting of PowerPoint presentation slides with notes, handouts for each module, two CDs (containing the Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment and the Reading Teacher’s Sourcebook), and one DVD containing the presentation and video/audio files. The Administrator Overview Training materials consisted of PowerPoint presentation slides with notes, handouts, and three video files.¹⁵
- **Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS).** PEIMS contains information collected by TEA on public education. It provides longitudinal data on student demographics, academic performance, school personnel, school financial information, and district organizational information. PEIMS provides current information that was used to match schools for comparison purposes.
- **Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS).** TAKS is used to measure student achievement in Grades 3-11 in the areas of reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies. Grade 6 TAKS data were used as an outcome when comparing TALA participating campuses to non-participating campuses. Grade 6 TAKS data were also used when comparing high/medium/low implementing TALA campuses to each other.
- **TALA Online Follow-up Data.** The University of Texas at Austin provided TALA online follow-up data. The online follow-up provides information as to how the participating ELA and content area teachers implemented the TALA instructional routines in their classrooms. The data included (1) the subject area and grade level of the course where the routine was implemented, (2) the number of students in the class, (3) the instructional routine that was implemented, (4) the phase of the 3-step explicit instruction process that was implemented, (5) the length of time spent planning the lesson, and (6) the lesson that was implemented.
- **Teacher Stipend Data.** Each ESC was asked to verify the attendance of each individual teacher who they reported as attending TALA Grade 6 in the summer/fall of 2008, as well as provide the specific amount of stipends paid to each participating teacher (broken out by the first half of the stipend for attending the face-to-face training and the second half of the stipend for completing the online follow-up training).¹⁶ This data for TALA Grades 7-8 will be reported in the final evaluation report.
- **TALA Archival Planning Materials.** TEA provided TALA archival planning materials. Materials included general information about TALA (e.g., description of TALA models, TALA FAQs, TALA organization chart, and timeline of events), TEA laws and rules regarding TALA (e.g., attendance requirements), and Steering Committee and ESC TALA contact meeting agendas and minutes. Training of trainer (TOT) materials (e.g., reflective questions from readings and trainer tips) and trainer forms (e.g., application form, trainer agreement letters,

¹⁵ These were the Administrator Overview Training materials that were meant to be provided to administrators in an online format.

¹⁶ In some cases, ESCs were not able to report the specific amounts paid to individual teachers, and in many cases, these databases were not as accurate as they could be due to circumstances beyond the control of the evaluators.

and the selection process for trainers) also were provided to the evaluation team, and TEA provided budget information pertaining to TALA (e.g., ESC allocations for the academies).

New Data Sources

- **Expert Review Protocol.** In order to evaluate the quality of TALA training materials, an expert review panel was created. This panel, the Technical Advisory Board (TAB), consisted of five nationally recognized experts in literacy, professional development, and special education. Using the Expert Review Protocol (Appendix B), the TAB reviewed TALA content and materials. Guiding questions were provided in the expert review protocol to assist in the content analysis of TALA content. TAB members were instructed to evaluate the content and materials in terms of best practices for literacy instruction for students in Grades 7 and 8. They evaluated the content in terms of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) ELA and Reading standards. In addition, the TAB evaluated the TALA training from the perspective of best practices in professional development. Each member of the TAB produced a written report of findings and participated in a conference call to discuss the synthesis of findings.
- **TALA Grades 7-8 Training Observations.** To obtain data on TALA training efforts, the evaluation team collected data at the classroom teacher academies (attended ELA trainings in three of the 20 Texas regions and content trainings in two regions). Observers¹⁷ used the TALA Training Observation Protocol and the TALA Training Observation Semi-Structured Field Note Template to record observation activities at the classroom teacher academies.

 - ♦ *TALA Training Observation Protocol* (Appendix C) assessed the learning environment by documenting the set-up and seating arrangement of training rooms and the equipment and materials utilized by trainers (e.g., handouts, poster boards, overhead projectors). The protocol was also used to document which modules were covered during each day of training and the frequency by which various activities took place during each module (e.g., group discussions, videos, modeling content). Finally, observers rated the major components of the trainings:
 - **Implementation** – the degree to which presenters implemented the training materials, including the degree to which trainers used questioning strategies, managed the training pace, and used modeling.
 - **Culture** – the degree to which training participants were actively involved during the training and worked collaboratively.
 - ♦ *TALA Training Observation Semi-Structured Field Note Template* (Appendix C) helped observers document changes made to the environment to accommodate the goals of each module, questions participants asked during each module, and participant behaviors and reactions to the module content.
- **TALA Classroom Observations.** To obtain data on the implementation of TALA instructional routines and strategies in participating teachers' classrooms, the evaluation team observed 78 classroom teachers. Trained observers used the Classroom Observation Instrument (COI) and the TALA-Specific Classroom Observation Instrument (TALA-COI) to record instructional activities in the participating teachers' classrooms.

 - ♦ *Classroom Observation Instrument (COI)* assessed classroom literacy instruction practices (Appendix C). The COI is a modified version of the Expository Reading

¹⁷ More information about the observers is presented in Chapter 4.

Comprehension Classroom Observation Instrument (ERC), a psychometrically established observation instrument.¹⁸ The ERC was developed to systematically categorize and code the content and quality of instruction in both treatment and comparison classrooms.

The COI measures teaching behaviors categorized within two broad constructs: (1) explicitness of instruction and (2) student practice. Following is an overview of the two constructs and the related teaching behaviors.

1. Explicitness of Instruction. Explicitness refers to behaviors the teacher utilizes to teach a skill or strategy in a clear, accurate, and logical fashion. During explicit instruction, the focus skill/strategy is made clear to students and then taught in a logical, step-by-step fashion with the teacher making the thinking process public for students.

Effective explicit instruction incorporates the three components of metacognitive knowledge (declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge) to ensure that students will be able to move toward independence in implementing the skill/strategy.

2. Student Practice. This construct relates to a teacher's ability to provide supported practice that will gradually allow students to use the strategy or skill independently. This category is characterized by opportunities for all students to apply the focus skill/strategy with teacher support. One aspect of the student practice portion of the lesson is the teacher's skill in building on students' responses and ideas to reinforce the skill/strategy being taught.

The COI consists of four sections: (1) Comprehension, (2) Vocabulary, (3) Fluency, and (4) Grouping Arrangements. The observation is conducted in 10-minute intervals. The teaching behaviors are rated either on a frequency or present-absent basis. During each 10-minute interval, the observer places a tally mark next to each observed teaching behavior of comprehension and vocabulary instruction. In addition, fluency items and grouping formats are rated as either present or absent.

- ♦ *TALA-Specific Classroom Observation Instrument (TALA-COI)* assessed specific instructional routines that are part of TALA (Appendix C). The TALA-COI records the presence or absence of TALA routines. The TALA instructional routines include: (1) General Instruction, (2) Vocabulary Instruction, (3) Comprehension Instruction, (4) Word Study, (5) Fluency, and (6) Inferential Comprehension. These items are rated at the conclusion of the observation.
- **TALA Developer and Program Staff Interview Protocol.** Data were collected via telephone interviews using a semi-structured interview protocol with the developer of TALA and the current and former TEA program manager of TALA. The interview protocol consisted of 28 open-ended questions (Appendix D). The items were designed to collect information about the development of the TALA materials. The items assessed information about the training of trainers and statewide implementation of the Grade 6 classroom teacher academies. Information about the allocation and use of funds was also collected.

¹⁸ The median inter-observer reliability is 92.4 percent. More information about the validation of the ERC is available at <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20094032/pdf/20094032.pdf>

- **Classroom Teacher Interview Protocol.** Members of the evaluation team conducted telephone interviews using a semi-structured interview protocol with participating ELA and content area teachers. The ELA interview protocol consisted of 21 open-ended questions and the content area interview protocol consisted of 16 open-ended questions (Appendix D). The items were designed to collect professional background and experience information, as well as perceptions of the training they attended. The items served to gather information about their opinions of the training in terms of strengths and weaknesses. The items assessed the teachers' preparedness to implement TALA routines in their classrooms. The items also gathered information about the classroom implementation of TALA routines and strategies. The interview data were used to create the TALA Teacher Participant Survey.
- **Administrator Interview Protocol.** Data were collected via telephone interviews using a semi-structured interview protocol with campus administrators. The interview protocol consisted of 21 open-ended questions (Appendix D). The items were designed to collect professional background and experience information, as well as campus characteristics. The items assessed perceptions of the training they attended and supports for implementing TALA in their campuses. The data were used to create the TALA Administrator Survey.
- **TALA Teacher Participant Survey.** Data were collected through a web-based survey of the ELA and content area teachers who attended the TALA classroom teacher academies (Appendix E). A 52-item survey was developed to capture classroom teacher perceptions of TALA trainings they attended.¹⁹ The survey included questions about the classroom teachers' professional backgrounds and experiences. It also collected information about their job satisfaction, beliefs about teaching reading, and literacy instruction behaviors in the classroom. The survey assessed the classroom teachers' perceptions of the classroom teacher academies in which they participated in summer and fall 2008. It also assessed their perceived preparedness to use the TALA instructional techniques and the frequency that they used the routines in their classrooms. Finally, the survey measured the teachers' perceived campus support for TALA.

The ICF evaluation team used existing scales to collect participant information. The job satisfaction scale was adapted from Ho and Au's (2006) *Teacher Satisfaction Survey*. The literacy instruction behaviors scale included modified items from Tschannen-Moran and Johnson's (2004) *Teacher Self-Efficacy Literacy Scale (TSELS)*. The items measuring beliefs about teaching reading were developed for the current evaluation. Statistical analyses were conducted on the beliefs about teaching reading and literacy instruction behaviors in the classroom scales to ensure that the items measured what they were supposed to measure.²⁰ The validation process and findings are discussed in Appendix F.

- **TALA Administrator Survey.** A web-based survey collected data from campus administrators (Appendix E). The survey consisted of four parts. Part I included questions about the campus administrators' professional backgrounds and experiences. Part II collected information about their campuses. Part III included questions about the implementation of TALA at their campuses. Part IV assessed the campus administrators' perceptions of the TALA Administrator Overview Training.

¹⁹ The survey items were customized for ELA and content area teachers. Survey skip logic patterns directed the teachers to the appropriate series of questions.

²⁰ Validation of the modified *Teacher Satisfaction Scale* is available at www.tea.state.tx.us/opge/progeval/ProfessionalDevelopment/BTIM_Evaluation_Jan_2009.pdf.

- **2009 TALA Trainer Survey.** Data were collected through a web-based survey of the state trainers who attended the State TOT and facilitated the Regional TOTs, and regional trainers who attended the Regional TOTs and facilitated TALA classroom teacher academies (Appendix E). A 20-item survey was developed to capture trainer perceptions of TALA trainings they attended (either the State TOT or the Regional TOTs). The survey consisted of three parts. Part I included questions about the trainers' professional backgrounds and experiences. Part II assessed the trainers' perceptions of the State or Regional TOT in which they participated to become a TALA trainer. Part III collected information about preparing for their roles and responsibilities as a TALA trainer.
- **TALA Grade 6 Expenditure Reporting Form.** In an effort to assess how regional ESCs spent their TALA funding, each ESC TALA contact was asked to complete an ESC TALA Expenditure Reporting Form developed by the evaluators. This form solicited detailed information regarding the number of TALA Grade 6 academies conducted, the number of teachers trained, the number of trainers used, the number of follow-up trainings held, and the number of administrator trainings held. It also requested estimates on TALA Grade 6 expenditures broken down by base budgets, budgets per academy, and teacher stipend budgets. Since regions were not required to keep detailed records of their expenditures broken out by category, the data provided were based on regions' best estimates.²¹ This data for TALA Grades 7-8 will be reported in the final evaluation report.

Data Collection Activities

- **TALA Grades 7-8 Training Observations.** To obtain data on TALA training efforts, the evaluation team observed three ELA classroom teacher academies (one in each of the following: Austin, Houston, and Dallas). Two content area classroom teacher academies were also observed (in Austin and Houston). Selection of the regions for the training observations was determined after consultation with TEA. Regions where a Regional TOT was conducted were selected for observation.

The training observations were conducted between June 8, 2009, and July 9, 2009. Trained observers utilized the Classroom Teacher TALA Training Observation Protocol and the Classroom Teacher TALA Training Observation Semi-Structured Field Note Template to record their observations and field notes during the one and one-half day content area classroom teacher academies and three-day ELA classroom teacher academies. Observers completed one observation protocol for each day they observed a training (e.g., two observation protocols were completed by observers of one and a half-day long content trainings and three observation protocols were completed by observers of three-day long ELA trainings). Observers completed one field note template for each training module they observed.

- **Classroom Observations.** The ICF evaluation team, in consultation with TEA, selected TALA participating campuses for classroom observations. First, the evaluation team aggregated the teacher participant database by campus to identify a list of campuses where TALA participating teachers work. Next, the evaluation team searched for the prior year TAKS reading scores for each of these campuses, and if the campus did not have this data, they were eliminated and the campus list was reduced to 1,700 campuses. Next, in order to

²¹ The total estimated spending provided for each ESC was checked against the actual amount of funding drawn down from the TEA ISAS system, and in cases where these numbers differed by more than \$10,000, ESCs were contacted and additional information was obtained. Therefore, some estimates are still off by amounts of \$10,000 or less.

make campus visits worthwhile, the evaluation team eliminated campuses that did not have at least nine teachers who attended TALA. However, campuses that were Academically Unacceptable in reading in 2007-08 and had TAKS reading outcome data were kept in the list. The list of eligible campuses was reduced to 122 campuses). Next the evaluation team calculated the percentage of teacher participation (total number of teachers attending TALA/total number of sixth grade teachers on the campus * 100). Achievement was based on the percentage of students who passed TAKS reading at the campus in 2007-08.

To generate a high and low category for teacher participation and achievement, the evaluation team calculated the median achievement rate and median participation rate for the campuses. The median was 88.40% for achievement. Any rate above the mean was coded as a high achievement campus and any rate at or below the mean was coded as a low achievement campus. The median for teacher participation was 25.36%. Any rate above the mean was coded as a high teacher participation campus and any rate at or below the mean was coded as a low teacher participation campus.

The ICF evaluation team selected five campuses for each of the following categories:

- ◆ High Teacher Participation/Low Achievement
- ◆ High Teacher Participation/High Achievement
- ◆ Low Teacher Participation/Low Achievement
- ◆ Low Teacher Participation/High Achievement

In both high and low achievement categories, the evaluation team planned to observe 6 teachers at each selected high teacher participation campus (3 ELA and 3 content area Teachers) and 3 teachers at each low teacher participation campus. Table 2.1 illustrates the planned observations.

Table 2.1: Planned Number of ELA and Content Area Observations

| | Low Teacher Participation | High Teacher Participation |
|------------------|---|--|
| Low Achievement | 5 Campuses 1 day (3 observations per day) = 3 observations per Campus Total: 15 Observations | 5 Campuses 2 days (3 observations per day) = 6 observations per Campus Total: 30 Observations |
| High Achievement | 5 Campuses 1 day (3 observations per day) = 3 observations per Campus Total: 15 Observations | 5 Campuses 2 days (3 observations per day) = 6 observations per Campus Total: 30 Observations |

This would allow the evaluation team to conduct a maximum of 90 classroom observations, which was ten more than was in the original scope of the evaluation knowing that some observations would get cancelled due to teacher absences or other factors. Information about the selected TALA participating campuses is presented in Appendix G.

TALA classroom observations occurred at 19 schools in 18 districts, representing 90% of the 20 ESCs throughout Texas. The classroom observations took place over the course of the spring semester 2009, beginning in January 2009 and ending in early May 2009. Superintendents of the district and principals of the schools were asked permission to

observe teachers who participated in the summer TALA ELA or the TALA content area academies. One school observation was cancelled because permission was never granted.

Teachers at each school, who attended the TALA Training, were randomly selected to be observed for a minimum of 25 minutes and a maximum of 60 minutes during any given class lesson. Overall, 81 of the 90 proposed teachers (but one more than the original scope of the evaluation) who attended the ELA and content area academies were observed: 42 teachers who taught ELA and 39 teachers who taught content areas.

Table 2.2 presents how many classroom observations were conducted for ELA and content area teachers based on the schools' level of participation and achievement. There were five schools that were observed that had high participation and high achievement; five schools that had low participation and high achievement; and five schools with low participation and low achievement. Lastly, there were six schools (one more than the proposed five) that were observed with high participation and low achievement. Teachers from two charter schools instead of one charter school were observed since there were not enough teachers at these campuses to fulfill the sample. More teachers were observed at the high participation/achievement schools.

Table 2.2: Actual Number of ELA and Content Area Observations

| TALA Participation/ Achievement Levels | Number of Observations | |
|---|------------------------|-----------------------|
| | ELA Teachers | Content Area Teachers |
| High Participation/High Achievement | 13 | 15 |
| High Participation /Low Achievement | 7 | 9 |
| Low Participation /High Achievement | 14 | 6 |
| Low Participation /Low Achievement | 8 | 9 |
| TOTAL | 42 | 39 |

Source: ICF Tracking table for all ELA and Content Observations

- **Telephone Interviews.** Telephone interviews were conducted with 12 ELA teachers, eight content area teachers, and eight campus administrators. The interviews were conducted during early November 2008 through early January 2009. The duration of most interviews was between 30 and 60 minutes. Classroom teachers and campus administrators signed a consent form to participate, as well as a form to either agree or decline having the interview recorded for note-taking purposes. Participants were informed that their responses would remain confidential in that specific responses would not be linked to names or other identifying information.

Telephone interviews were conducted with the developer of TALA, the Assistant Director of English Language Arts and Reading in the TEA Division of Curriculum, and the former TEA director of special projects for the Division of Programs and Standards. The interviews were conducted during late June 2009. The duration of the interviews ranged from one hour to two and a half hours. All participants were asked prior to the interview, both by email and verbally, to either accept or decline having the interview recorded for note-taking purposes.

- **Web-based Surveys.** The evaluation team used SurveyMonkey to administer the various stakeholder surveys.
 - ♦ *TALA Teacher Participant Survey.* The TALA Teacher Participant Survey was launched on March 6, 2009, and closed on April 17, 2009. The ESCs provided the evaluation team with the contact information for the ELA and content area teachers who participated in the Classroom Teacher Academies.

- ◆ *TALA Administrator Survey.* The TALA Administrator Survey was launched on March 10, 2009, and closed on April 17, 2009. The ESCs provided the evaluation team with the contact information for the campus administrators who completed the TALA Administrator Overview Training.
- ◆ *TALA Trainer Survey.* The TALA Trainer Survey was launched on June 11, 2009, and closed on July 6, 2009. TEA provided the evaluation team with the contact information for the state and regional trainers who participated in TALA.
- ◆ For each survey, an email was sent two weeks prior to the survey launch date to identify incorrect email addresses. The two-week notification email: (1) introduced the survey and importance of the project, (2) provided contact information for obtaining a paper version of the survey,²² and (3) had an evaluation notification letter from TEA attached. Email invitations for the survey were sent to potential respondents that included: (1) a description of the evaluation, (2) the purpose of the study, and (3) contact information for key evaluation staff. Respondents were given three weeks to complete the survey. Weekly reminder emails were sent to those who did not respond to the survey.

Data Analysis

In this section, a description of the analyses performed to address the specific evaluation objectives is provided. The nature of the available data and the specific evaluation questions determined the analysis techniques employed.

Quality of TALA Content and Training

The evaluation team conducted a series of descriptive analyses to understand the distributional properties of survey and observation data. Using survey data (classroom teacher, TALA trainer, and campus administrator) and TALA observation data, basic descriptive analyses were conducted, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations depending on the scale of measurement. The findings from quantitative analyses were integrated with qualitative findings and content analyses to generate overall statements about the quality of TALA materials, trainings, and stakeholder perceptions.

Content analyses were conducted on the TALA training materials, interview data, and open-ended survey responses. The TALA training materials were evaluated by the TAB. Each TAB member produced a written report of their assessments of the material and the findings were synthesized during a conference call. The common themes in the participating teacher and administrator interview data were used to generate response options for the TALA participating teacher or administrator survey. Open-ended survey items were analyzed for common themes to summarize classroom teacher, TALA trainer, and campus administrator perceptions of TALA.

Implementation of TALA Training in the Classroom

Examining the use of TALA routines provides information on the classroom implementation of TALA instructional routines. Using classroom observation data, online follow-up data, and participating teacher survey data, basic descriptive analyses were conducted for each variable, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations depending on the scale of measurement. Classroom observations and online follow-up data provided information on the

²² Paper-based surveys were available in instances where online completion was problematic (e.g., computer difficulties when trying to submit the survey).

types of instructional routines that were being utilized. Participating teacher surveys captured information on the frequency of use of the TALA instructional routines. Participating teacher and campus administrator survey data provided information on the perceived level of campus support for TALA.

Effect of TALA on Student Outcomes

Student achievement among TALA participating campuses from three years prior to the implementation of TALA to the year following implementation was compared. Campuses were classified as high, medium, or low TALA implementers using several variables:

- Percentage of Grade 6 teachers who attended TALA at the campus/school
- Percentage of TALA participants who completed the online follow-up documentation
- Teacher self-reported implementation of TALA instructional routines in the TALA Teacher Participant Survey
- Administrator/campus support as reported in the TALA Campus Administrator Survey and TALA Teacher Participant Survey

More information about the level of TALA implementation variable is found in Appendix K. Changes in reading and math test scores were compared across time and between groups.

Propensity score matching (PSM) was used to create a comparison group for high implementing TALA campuses. The comparison group (campuses that did not have TALA participating teachers) was matched on a set of observable characteristics. The characteristics included (1) the size of Grade 6 at the campus (number of students), (2) percentage of Grade 6 economically disadvantaged students, (3) percentage of students passing the Grade 6 TAKS in reading, (4) percentage of students passing the Grade 6 TAKS in math, and (5) percentage of Grade 6 limited English proficient (LEP) students. Appendix L includes information about the PSM technique used in the evaluation. Changes in reading and math test scores were compared across time and between groups (TALA campuses versus non-TALA campuses).

The impact of TALA on at-risk student groups was also explored. The change in reading and math TAKS scores across TALA campuses was compared for at-risk students. This included students with special educational needs (including reading disabilities), LEP students, and economically disadvantaged students. Changes in reading and math test scores were compared across time.

Additionally, the evaluation team explored the characteristics of TALA participating teachers and their relationship to student achievement. Teacher characteristics included job satisfaction, beliefs about teaching reading, and use of reading/writing behaviors in the classroom.

Cost-Effectiveness and Sustainability of TALA

Using existing data and data collected from the ESC Grade 6 Expenditure Reporting Form, the evaluation team was able to describe cost breakouts across ESCs. The allocation and spending of funds were analyzed, including the amount of teacher stipends.

The following chapters include the findings from the TALA evaluation. Chapter 3 includes the findings from the content review of Grade 6 TALA materials conducted by the TAB, the

observations of Grade 6 TALA trainings, and the perceptions of Grade 6 TALA training from the perspectives of TALA trainers and participants. Chapter 4 includes the findings from the classroom observations, online follow-up data, and teacher-reported implementation of TALA routines in the classroom. It also includes perceptions of campus support by teachers and campus administrators. Findings on the impact of TALA on student achievement are presented in Chapter 5. Findings related to the cost and sustainability of TALA are presented in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 includes the findings from the content review of Grade 7-8 TALA materials conducted by the TAB, the observations of Grade 7-8 TALA trainings, and the perceptions of Grade 7-8 TALA training from the perspectives of TALA trainers and participants. It also includes the review of the administrator overview training, as well as administrator perceptions of TALA.

Limitations

At this point in the evaluation, several limitations exist in the data, methodology, and findings:

- One of the key data sources the evaluation team used to assess classroom implementation of TALA was classroom observations. TALA classroom observations occurred at 19 schools in 18 districts, representing 90% of the 20 ESCs throughout Texas. There is variability in the implementation of TALA in classrooms across the state. Observing more classrooms would provide greater information regarding the implementation of TALA in classrooms. The implementation findings are limited to the 81 teachers who were observed.
- TALA participating teacher surveys were another data source used in the evaluation. A problem was identified with the skip logic pattern in the ELA teacher section. Rather than directing the ELA teachers to the items about implementing TALA routines in the classroom, it directed them to the end of the survey. The evaluation team created an ELA supplement survey that included the missing items and re-invited the ELA teachers to complete the survey. Of the 1,457 ELA teachers who completed the original survey, 1,002 completed the supplement. This is a 31% loss of survey respondents and a loss of information regarding the level of TALA implementation in the ELA classroom.
- Stakeholder survey data was collected at only one point in time. The TALA surveys were administered in Spring 2009, providing a snapshot of stakeholder perceptions of the program. Changes over time (e.g., ELA and content area teachers' use of literacy activities in the classroom) were not examined. As a result, findings are descriptive in nature.
- The campus administrator survey was sent to all campuses that had a teacher attend TALA (n=1,831). Campus administrators were not required to respond to the evaluation survey and no incentives were provided to survey respondents. As a result, respondents self-selected whether to participate in the survey, resulting in a low response rate (13%). Administrator perceptions of TALA and campus support for TALA are limited to the campus administrators who completed the survey.
- To gather a closer approximation to implementation in the classroom, the evaluation team created a school-level implementation of TALA measure based on four variables (1) percentage of sixth grade teachers who attended TALA at the campus/school, (2) percentage of TALA participants from each school/campus who completed the Online Follow-up Documentation, (3) teacher self-reported implementation of the TALA instructional routines and strategies in the TALA Teacher Participant Survey, and (4) campus support as reported in the Administrator Survey and TALA Teacher Participant Survey. After the four

sources of data were merged, there were 1,651 campuses. Of those campuses, only 477 campuses had complete data across all four variables. Over 70% of campuses who had a teacher that attended TALA were excluded from the analyses due to missing data. This impacts the achievement outcome analyses.

- Reading and math TAKS scores are used to measure student achievement. Campus level TAKS scores are used to compare TALA and non-TALA campuses, as well as the different TALA implementing campuses (high, medium, and low). At the time of this writing, student TAKS data was not linked to a teacher. The ability to link the students to their teachers would provide a more accurate depiction of the impact of TALA on student achievement. As a result, findings are descriptive in nature.
- It was not feasible to conduct a randomized control trial on TALA, and given that this is the only methodology where it can be asserted that TALA caused impacts on student achievement, the ability to attribute findings to the presence of TALA will be limited. Attribution can be strengthened, however, through the conduct of a multi-method study, which will allow for the triangulation of results from a number of quantitative and qualitative analyses.

The reader is encouraged to interpret all results with caution, keeping these limitations in mind.

3. The Quality of Grade 6 TALA Training

This chapter includes the evaluation of the quality of the Grade 6 TALA materials and implementation of training (Evaluation Objective #1). The results of the Technical Advisory Board's (TAB) review of TALA Grade 6 materials are presented. The chapter also presents results from data collected by observers of TALA Regional TOTs and the Grade 6 classroom teacher academies in 2008. The chapter includes state and regional trainers' perceptions of the TALA training that they attended as well as their perceived preparedness for conducting training. It also includes TALA participating teachers' perceptions of the Grade 6 TALA training.

This chapter addresses the following questions:

- To what extent does TALA content reflect best practices for literacy instruction according to experts in the field?
- To what extent is TALA content aligned with national and state standards in reading and ELA?
- What types of content were included as part of each level of training (training of state and regional trainers, as well as training of teachers)?
- What types of activities were included as part of each level of training (training of state and regional trainers, as well as training of teachers and administrators)?
- To what extent were participants engaged in TALA trainings?
- What types of instructional strategies (e.g., lecture, modeling) do TALA instructors use to facilitate participant learning?

Expert Review of Grade 6 Materials²³

Nationally recognized experts in adolescent literacy, content area literacy, professional development, and special education served on the TAB. Members include: Dr. William Brozo from George Mason University; Dr. Danielle Dennis from University of South Florida; Dr. Janice Dole from University of Utah; Dr. Russell Gersten from Instructional Research Group; and Dr. Tamara Jetton from Central Michigan University. Appendix H contains background information about each TAB member.

Each TAB member was provided with the following materials to conduct the expert review:

- TALA Content Area Instructional Routines to Support Academic Literacy: Presenter Guide with two CDs (video files) (Units 1-3)
- TALA Assessment and Instructional Routines for Reading Interventions: Presenter Guide with four CDs (TMSFA, Reading Teacher's Sourcebook, and presentation with the video/audio files) (Units 4-7)
- TEKS for ELA and Reading (sixth grade only; pages 1-40).

The TAB evaluated Grade 6 TALA content (instructional routines) in terms of best practices for literacy instruction. The TAB also evaluated the content relative to national reading and ELA

²³ Detailed findings are presented in TALA Interim Evaluation Report #1.

standards,²⁴ as well as TEKS ELA and Reading standards. Finally, the TAB evaluated TALA training from the perspective of best practices in professional development. Each member of the TAB produced a written report of findings and participated in a conference call to discuss the synthesis of findings.

The TAB perceived Grade 6 TALA instructional strategies to be important and necessary for adolescent readers. The routines require active teaching, high levels of student participation, and “cognitive engagement” by the students. Many of the instructional routines are representative of best practices in literacy and scientifically-based research practices. The routines that concerned the TAB possessed research evidence with elementary school students but lacked support for the use with middle school students.

The TAB recommended the inclusion of other instructional routines to improve student literacy, including text structure, visualization/mental imagery, application to narrative text, more opportunities for discussion of text, incorporation of writing strategies, and the inclusion of strategies to increase student motivation. The TAB also recommended using other assessments (e.g., a comprehension measure) in addition to the TMSFA to make diagnostic decisions.

Table 3.1 summarizes the TAB’s perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of Grade 6 TALA instructional routines.

Table 3.1: TAB Perceptions of TALA Instructional Routines

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ General instructional practices: ▪ Cooperative learning ▪ Emphasis on curriculum-embedded instruction ▪ Emphasis on student engagement ▪ Explicit instruction ▪ Vocabulary instruction: ▪ Creating student friendly definitions ▪ Generating examples and nonexamples ▪ Selection of vocabulary words ▪ Use of graphic organizers ▪ Use of word parts to pronounce vocabulary ▪ Comprehension instruction: ▪ Activation of background knowledge ▪ Identifying main ideas ▪ Summarization strategy ▪ Inferential comprehension | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Word study and fluency instruction routines lack research evidence with middle school population²⁵ ▪ Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment (TMSFA) should not be used alone to make diagnostic decisions ▪ Missing instructional routines: ▪ Role of student motivation ▪ Text structures and text features ▪ Visualization/mental imagery ▪ Narrative text ▪ Discussion of text ▪ Writing strategies |

Source: TAB content analysis of Grade 6 TALA training materials

TALA instructional routines were identified by the TAB as being clearly and explicitly linked to national (International Reading Association and National Council of Teachers of English Standards for the English Language Arts) and state ([TEKS] Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills) standards. According to the TAB, the strategies in TALA are process oriented with a focus on how students read, not what they read. As a result, standards dealing with what students should be reading in the sixth grade were not addressed by TALA.

²⁴ International Reading Association and National Council of Teachers of English. (1996). *Standards for the English Language Arts*.

²⁵ This weakness was noted in the speaker’s notes of the TALA material. The fluency module also contained a slide indicating the caveats with respect to adolescents.

The TAB perceived the practices used in the professional development component of Grade 6 TALA as strong (e.g., modeling strategies). The largest concern that the TAB had with TALA training associated with professional development was its short duration. A large amount of content was presented in a short amount of time. This was perceived as a more pressing concern for the content area teachers (1 ½ days of training) than ELA teachers.

The TAB provided several recommendations that they believed would improve the implementation of TALA in the schools:

- Teachers need systemic support from reading coaches and school administrators
- Teachers need on-going training to assist them with classroom implementation
- Teachers need classroom follow-up including an opportunity to practice the routines with feedback
- Teachers should see models in the classroom – moving beyond TALA videos
- Actual teacher texts should be used in training as this may allow the teachers to see how TALA instructional routines will work in their classrooms²⁶
- Teachers are exposed to a large number of instructional routines that are taught in isolation of their texts; they need to learn how to fuse the content with the strategies.

Observations of Grade 6 TALA Training²⁷

TALA Regional TOTs and TALA classroom teacher academies were highly rated by observers. Trainers at the Regional TOT and classroom teacher academies were able to effectively implement the components of the TALA training. In both trainings, the presenters/trainers explained and reviewed TALA content, provided examples and elaborations, and distributed and used the handouts. Both trainings (Regional TOT and Classroom Teacher Academies) had fewer observations of modeling the routines and having the participants practice the routines independently or with each other. The trainers were less likely to use the videos in the Classroom Teacher Academies. As noted in observer field notes, this could be due to technology problems that were experienced at several training sites.

Regional and classroom teacher academies were rated as being reflective of best practices for professional development, and the culture of the training sessions facilitated the engagement of participants in the TALA training. However, observers were hesitant to report that the Regional TOT prepared participants to present the TALA training. For example, observers rated perceived preparation as low for “working with adult learners” and “differentiation of instruction for various learning styles.” It is important to note that the observers were unaware of the participants’ backgrounds. Based on the nomination and selection process to become a regional trainer, it was assumed by TEA and the VGC that the trainers had the requisite skills as a professional development trainer (i.e., working with adult learners). Therefore, these elements were not explicitly included in the TALA training.

Observers rated the TALA Regional TOT as exhibiting high implementation (explicitly following the activities and content as presented in the training materials). This rating is reflected in

²⁶ In the TALA materials, it states that the teachers were asked to bring “one volume of the teacher’s edition or other curricular materials from their content area to use for a variety of activities.”

²⁷ Detailed findings are presented in TALA Interim Evaluation Report #1.

perceived preparedness of regional trainers to present the activities as outlined in the training. Also, the culture of the Regional TOT was perceived as positive as well as the perception of regional trainers to maintain a positive learning environment. However, there was less implementation of the TEKS and TAKS in the Regional TOT, and observers reported lower beliefs that the training built participants' skills in linking their instruction to the TEKS and developed participants' understanding of the TAKS student assessment system.²⁸

In addition, some observers believed that there was too much information covered during the trainings. Consequently, they anticipated that participants would have a difficult time switching roles from participant to trainer. Observers felt that participants' questions during the session reflected their lack of understanding of the material. Based on the observations of training, TALA routines were effectively implemented, yet observers expressed a concern about implementation in the classrooms.

Perceptions of Grade 6 TALA Training²⁹

Twelve state trainers (6 ELA and 6 content area trainers) were interviewed by telephone to assess perceptions of the TALA training that they attended (State TOT) as well as their perceived preparedness for conducting the Regional TOT. Results from the interviews were used to create an online survey for the regional trainers. The online survey invitation was sent to 272 regional trainers. Of the invited participants, 205 trainers completed the survey (75% response rate).

In addition, telephone interviews were conducted with 12 ELA teachers and eight content area teachers. The results of the interviews were used to create the TALA teacher participant survey. The online survey invitation was sent to 5,934 teachers. Of the invited participants, 2,196 teachers completed the survey (37% response rate).

State Trainers

State ELA trainers noted that their roles and expectations were clearly stated and the goals of the training were clearly articulated. State content area trainers shared the same perceptions of their roles and expectations. However, two content area trainers did not view the goals as clearly articulated until the second day of the State TOT. Both ELA and content area state trainers viewed the content favorably, stating that the content was organized and easy to follow. Content area trainers perceived gaps in the math, science, and social studies aspects of the content.

ELA trainers viewed overall quality of the training they received as excellent. They cited the master trainers' skills in sharing information and knowledge as effective. The one criticism of the training was that they did not have adequate time to discuss the materials and reflect on the content. Content area trainers shared the same perceptions as the ELA trainers. They rated the overall quality of the training as very good and stated that the lead facilitator was knowledgeable and articulate. They also wanted more time to discuss potential problems that would arise during the trainings they conducted. Other issues that emerged from both groups were the

²⁸ According to the TALA developer, the connection pieces to TEKS and TAKS were up front and on slides. Those pieces were moved to handouts due to the TEKS revision process during TALA.

²⁹ Detailed findings on the state and regional trainers' perceptions of the TALA training are presented in TALA Interim Evaluation Report #1.

perception of “tension” in the State TOT and unhappiness with the removal of the text structure unit from the TALA training.

Both ELA and content area trainers stated that the training was effective, and they felt adequately prepared for the training that they conducted based on the training that they attended. Both groups stated that they had the requisite knowledge and skills to fulfill their roles and responsibilities as a TALA trainer.

Regional Trainers

Regional trainers had positive perceptions of the TALA training. The majority of trainers had the prerequisite skills needed to conduct the training (e.g., previous experience as a teacher, previous professional development experience). The overall impressions of the training that they attended to become a TALA trainer were favorable, reporting that the training was effective in helping them prepare for their roles as a trainer. The trainers felt adequately prepared for the training that they conducted based on the training that they attended. The one issue that emerged was the need for more time/additional days to learn and present TALA content due to the large amount of material covered in the training.

ELA Classroom Teachers

The majority of teachers attending the TALA ELA academy attended the summer session before the school year started (89%) and completed the TALA practicum follow-up with online documentation (89%).

Overall Impressions of the TALA ELA Training

Participants in the TALA ELA academy were asked to rate the overall quality of the training, presenters, and workshop content. Table 3.2 shows that about 75% of respondents found the overall training quality to be above average or excellent in each area.

Table 3.2: Overall ELA Training Quality

| Item | Very Poor | Below Average | Average | Above Average | Excellent |
|---|-----------|---------------|---------|---------------|-----------|
| How would you rate the overall quality of the training you received? (n=996) | <1% | 3% | 24% | 41% | 32% |
| How would you rate the overall effectiveness of the presenters? (n=993) | 1% | 3% | 23% | 39% | 34% |
| How would you rate the overall quality of the workshop content? (n=989) | <1% | 3% | 21% | 42% | 33% |

Source: TALA Teacher Participant Survey

ELA academy participants were also asked to rate the effectiveness of eight aspects of the training:

1. Training structure
2. Opportunities for active learning
3. Training content
4. Training materials
5. Knowledge of presenters
6. Skills of presenters in providing professional development for teachers
7. Environment
8. Videos and other visual stimuli

As presented in Table 3.3, at least 80% of respondents found the effectiveness to be above average or excellent for each aspect. Nearly half of all respondents reported that the training materials and knowledge of presenters were excellent, while only about 20% of respondents reported that the training structure, including timing, was excellent.

Table 3.3: Effectiveness of ELA Training

| Item | Very Poor | Below Average | Average | Above Average | Excellent |
|--|-----------|---------------|---------|---------------|-----------|
| Training structure (i.e., time to learn everything; time for reflection) (n=996) | 1% | 5% | 11% | 62% | 21% |
| Opportunities for active learning (i.e., participant-centered learning) (n=995) | 1% | 4% | 11% | 57% | 28% |
| Training content (i.e., vocabulary instruction) (n=995) | <1% | 2% | 7% | 57% | 34% |
| Training materials (e.g., binder) (n=992) | <1% | 2% | 5% | 46% | 47% |
| Knowledge of presenters (n=994) | <1% | 2% | 7% | 44% | 47% |
| Skills of presenters in providing professional development for teachers (n=992) | <1% | 3% | 8% | 47% | 41% |
| Environment (n=994) | <1% | 2% | 13% | 52% | 33% |
| Videos and other visual stimuli (n=986) | <1% | 3% | 10% | 55% | 31% |

Source: TALA Teacher Participant Survey

Self-Perceptions of ELA Teacher Preparedness

ELA teachers were asked to rate the extent to which they felt prepared to implement several instructional routines in the classroom:

Tier I Routines

1. Selecting words
2. Pronouncing words
3. Defining words
4. Generating examples and nonexamples
5. Building background knowledge
6. Identifying main ideas in text
7. Writing summaries
8. Identifying text structures

Tier II/III Routines

1. Using graphic organizers
2. Identifying syllable structures
3. Conducting morphemic analysis
4. Generating Level I, II, and III questions

Table 3.4 presents teachers' self-perceptions of their preparedness to implement the Tier I routines, and Tier II/ III routines. The majority of teachers felt fairly well prepared or very well prepared to use each routine. Teachers felt most prepared to use graphic organizers (71% felt that they were "very well prepared"), identify main ideas in text (69%), and define words (75%), and least prepared to conduct morphemic analysis (40%).

Table 3.4: ELA Teachers' Sense of Preparedness: Instructional Routines

| Routine | Not At All Prepared | Somewhat Prepared | Fairly Well Prepared | Very Well Prepared | I Don't Know |
|---|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Tier I Routines | | | | | |
| Selecting words (n=948) | 2% | 10% | 36% | 51% | 1% |
| Pronouncing words (n=949) | <1% | 7% | 29% | 63% | <1% |
| Defining words (n=950) | 1% | 5% | 26% | 67% | <1% |
| Generating examples and nonexamples (n=948) | 1% | 7% | 34% | 58% | <1% |
| Building background knowledge (n=948) | 2% | 5% | 29% | 64% | <1% |
| Identifying main ideas in text (n=949) | 1% | 4% | 25% | 69% | <1% |
| Writing summaries (n=948) | 1% | 7% | 30% | 62% | <1% |
| Identifying text structures (n=949) | 1% | 9% | 35% | 54% | <1% |
| Tiers II & III Routines | | | | | |
| Using graphic organizers (n=946) | 1% | 5% | 22% | 71% | 2% |
| Identifying syllable structures (n=947) | 1% | 11% | 34% | 53% | <1% |
| Conducting morphemic analysis (n=944) | 4% | 16% | 40% | 40% | 1% |
| Generating Level I, II, and III questions (n=944) | 2% | 9% | 38% | 50% | 1% |

Source: TALA Teacher Participant Survey

ELA teachers were asked to rate the extent to which they felt prepared to implement seven general teaching strategies in the classroom:

1. Adapt instruction to structure learning opportunities for all students
2. Foster student engagement
3. Group or pair students
4. Facilitate partner reading
5. Actively involve students (i.e., Think-Pair-Share, Tell-Help-Check, Generate-Share)
6. Provide explicit instruction using scaffolding (i.e., I Do, We Do, You Do)
7. Select appropriate text for fluency instruction

Table 3.5 presents ELA teachers' perceptions of their abilities to implement the general teaching strategies in the classroom. Teachers reported feeling most prepared to group or pair students; about 94% felt fairly well or very well prepared. Teachers felt least prepared to select appropriate text for fluency instruction (84%) and to provide explicit instruction using scaffolding (89%).

Table 3.5: ELA Teachers' Sense of Preparedness: Strategies

| Strategy | Not At All Prepared | Somewhat Prepared | Fairly Well Prepared | Very Well Prepared | I Don't Know |
|---|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Adapt instruction to structure learning opportunities for all students (n=940) | 1% | 9% | 40% | 50% | <1% |
| Foster student engagement (n=939) | 1% | 6% | 33% | 60% | <1% |
| Group or pair students (n=938) | <1% | 5% | 26% | 68% | <1% |
| Facilitate partner reading (n=939) | <1% | 7% | 31% | 61% | <1% |
| Actively involve students (i.e., Think-Pair-Share, Tell-Help-Check, Generate-Share) (n=935) | 1% | 7% | 30% | 61% | <1% |
| Provide explicit instruction using scaffolding (i.e., I Do, We Do, You Do) (n=938) | 2% | 9% | 29% | 60% | <1% |
| Select appropriate text for fluency instruction (n=933) | 2% | 13% | 39% | 45% | <1% |

Source: TALA Teacher Participant Survey

Table 3.6 presents ELA teachers' perceptions of their abilities to administer and interpret the TMSFA. Over 70% of teachers felt fairly well or very well prepared to administer and interpret the TMSFA. As compared with the strategies above, teachers felt less prepared to implement strategies related to the TMSFA. Overall, 7% of ELA teachers felt "not at all" prepared to implement the TMSFA strategies compared to 1% or less for Tier I routines, 4% or less for Tier II/III routines, and 2% or less for general instructional strategies.

Table 3.6: ELA Teachers’ Sense of Preparedness: TMSFA

| Strategy | Not At All Prepared | Somewhat Prepared | Fairly Well Prepared | Very Well Prepared | I Don’t Know |
|---|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Administer the Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment (TMSFA) (n=936) | 7% | 18% | 33% | 39% | 3% |
| Interpret the results of the Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment (TMSFA) (n=935) | 7% | 19% | 36% | 35% | 3% |

Source: TALA Teacher Participant Survey

Table 3.7 depicts teachers’ sense of preparedness for teaching students who struggle with reading due to various circumstances. About 90% of teachers felt fairly or very well prepared to teach students who struggle with reading due to a low socioeconomic environment, while only 63% of teachers felt equally prepared to teach students who struggle with reading due to dyslexia.

Table 3.7: ELA Teachers’ Sense of Preparedness: Special Populations

| Strategy | Not At All Prepared | Somewhat Prepared | Fairly Well Prepared | Very Well Prepared | I Don’t Know |
|---|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Limited English proficiency (n=937) | 7% | 22% | 36% | 34% | 1% |
| Learning disabilities (n=939) | 4% | 18% | 37% | 41% | <1% |
| Dyslexia (n=938) | 10% | 26% | 33% | 30% | 1% |
| Being from a low socioeconomic environment (n=936) | <1% | 9% | 30% | 60% | <1% |
| Other risk factors for reading difficulties (n=892) | 2% | 14% | 39% | 41% | 4% |

Source: TALA Teacher Participant Survey

About 90% of ELA teachers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the TALA ELA training was appropriate for teachers of English language arts and reading, as depicted in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8: Appropriateness of ELA Training

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| The TALA training I attended was appropriate for teachers who teach the subjects that I teach. (n=969) | 1% | 2% | 6% | 45% | 46% |

Source: TALA Teacher Participant Survey

As presented in Table 3.9, over 75% of ELA teachers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the TALA ELA training helped them improve their teaching in English language arts and reading.

Table 3.9: Helpfulness of ELA Training

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| The TALA training I attended helped me improve my teaching in the subjects that I teach. (n=962) | 2% | 4% | 17% | 46% | 31% |

Source: TALA Teacher Participant Survey

As presented in Table 3.10, about 90% of ELA teachers would probably or definitely recommend the TALA training to other ELA teachers. About 85% of ELA teachers would recommend the training to social studies or science teachers, and fewer than 75% would recommend it for math teachers.

Table 3.10: ELA Recommendations by Subject Area

| Would you recommend the TALA training to Grade 6 teachers of... | Definitely Not | Probably Not | Not Sure | Probably | Definitely |
|---|----------------|--------------|----------|----------|------------|
| ...ELA/reading? (n=971) | 1% | 4% | 5% | 28% | 63% |
| ...Social studies? (n=964) | 2% | 4% | 13% | 34% | 48% |
| ...Science? (n=963) | 1% | 5% | 14% | 33% | 47% |
| ...Mathematics? (n=963) | 2% | 7% | 19% | 29% | 42% |

Source: TALA Teacher Participant Survey

Content Area Classroom Teachers

The majority of teachers attending the TALA content area academy attended the summer session before the school year started (90%) and completed the TALA practicum follow-up with online documentation (85%).

Overall Impressions of the TALA Content Area Training

Participants in the TALA content area academy were asked to rate the overall quality of the training, presenters, and workshop content. Table 3.11 shows that just over 60% of respondents found the overall training quality to be above average or excellent in each area.

Table 3.11: Overall Content Area Training Quality

| Item | Very Poor | Below Average | Average | Above Average | Excellent |
|--|-----------|---------------|---------|---------------|-----------|
| How would you rate the overall quality of the training you received? (n=828) | <1% | 3% | 34% | 44% | 19% |
| How would you rate the overall effectiveness of the presenters? (n=825) | <1% | 3% | 35% | 39% | 22% |
| How would you rate the overall quality of the workshop content? (n=825) | <1% | 5% | 32% | 41% | 22% |

Source: TALA Teacher Participant Survey

Content area academy participants were also asked to rate the effectiveness of eight aspects of the training.

1. Training structure
2. Opportunities for active learning
3. Training content
4. Training materials
5. Knowledge of presenters
6. Skills of presenters in providing professional development for teachers
7. Environment
8. Videos and other visual stimuli

As depicted in Table 3.12, respondents rated the effectiveness of the content area training favorably. Nearly 90% of respondents reported above average or excellent training materials and knowledge of presenters.

Table 3.12: Effectiveness of Content Area Training

| Item | Very Poor | Below Average | Average | Above Average | Excellent |
|--|-----------|---------------|---------|---------------|-----------|
| Training structure (i.e., time to learn everything; time for reflection) (n=828) | 1% | 5% | 13% | 69% | 12% |
| Opportunities for active learning (i.e., participant-centered learning) (n=826) | 1% | 6% | 11% | 63% | 19% |
| Training content (i.e., vocabulary instruction) (n=825) | 1% | 2% | 10% | 64% | 23% |
| Training materials (e.g., binder) (n=820) | 1% | 2% | 8% | 61% | 29% |
| Knowledge of presenters (n=826) | <1% | 2% | 10% | 51% | 36% |
| Skills of presenters in providing professional development for teachers (n=825) | <1% | 4% | 11% | 56% | 29% |
| Environment (n=826) | <1% | 3% | 13% | 61% | 23% |
| Videos and other visual stimuli (n=815) | 2% | 4% | 15% | 58% | 22% |

Source: TALA Teacher Participant Survey

Self-Perceptions of Content Area Teacher Preparedness

Content area teachers were asked to rate the extent to which they felt prepared to implement seven instructional routines in the classroom:

1. Selecting words
2. Pronouncing words
3. Defining words
4. Generating examples and nonexamples
5. Building background knowledge
6. Identifying main ideas in text
7. Writing summaries

Table 3.13 presents teachers' self-perceptions of their preparedness to implement the instructional routines. The majority of teachers felt fairly well prepared or very well prepared to use each routine. Teachers felt most prepared to implement defining words routines (92%) and least prepared to implement writing summaries (85%).

Table 3.13: Content Area Teachers' Sense of Preparedness: Instructional Routines

| Routine | Not At All Prepared | Somewhat Prepared | Fairly Well Prepared | Very Well Prepared | I Don't Know |
|---|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Selecting words (n=821) | 1% | 10% | 37% | 51% | 1% |
| Pronouncing words (n=819) | 1% | 9% | 31% | 59% | 1% |
| Defining words (n=820) | <1% | 6% | 28% | 64% | <1% |
| Generating examples and nonexamples (n=817) | 1% | 9% | 32% | 57% | 2% |
| Building background knowledge (n=818) | 1% | 7% | 32% | 58% | 1% |
| Identifying main ideas in text (n=818) | 1% | 7% | 32% | 57% | 2% |
| Writing summaries (n=818) | 3% | 11% | 39% | 46% | 2% |

Source: TALA Teacher Participant Survey

Table 3.14 presents content area teachers' perceptions of their abilities to implement six teaching strategies in the classroom:

1. Adapt instruction to structure learning opportunities for all students
2. Foster student engagement
3. Group or pair students
4. Facilitate partner reading
5. Actively involve students (i.e., Think-Pair-Share, Tell-Help-Check, Generate-Share)
6. Provide explicit instruction using scaffolding (i.e., I Do, We Do, You Do)

The majority of teachers felt fairly well or very well prepared to implement each strategy. Teachers felt most prepared to group or pair students (93%) and least prepared to provide explicit instruction using scaffolding (87%) and to facilitate partner reading (84%).

Table 3.14: Content Area Teachers' Sense of Preparedness: Strategies

| Strategy | Not At All Prepared | Somewhat Prepared | Fairly Well Prepared | Very Well Prepared | I Don't Know |
|---|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Adapt instruction to structure learning opportunities for all students (n=809) | 1% | 11% | 41% | 47% | <1% |
| Foster student engagement (n=804) | 1% | 9% | 34% | 57% | <1% |
| Group or pair students (n=807) | <1% | 6% | 27% | 66% | <1% |
| Facilitate partner reading (n=804) | 3% | 11% | 33% | 51% | 2% |
| Actively involve students (i.e., Think-Pair-Share, Tell-Help-Check, Generate-Share) (n=808) | 2% | 9% | 33% | 56% | <1% |
| Provide explicit instruction using scaffolding (i.e., I Do, We Do, You Do) (n=806) | 2% | 11% | 37% | 50% | <1% |

Source: TALA Teacher Participant Survey

Table 3.15 depicts teachers' sense of preparedness for teaching students who struggle with reading due to various circumstances. About 82% of teachers felt fairly or very well prepared to teach students who struggle with reading due to a low socioeconomic environment, while only about 53% of teachers felt equally prepared to teach students who struggle with reading due to dyslexia and about 59% felt prepared to teach LEP students.

Table 3.15: Content Area Teachers' Sense of Preparedness: Special Populations

| Strategy | Not At All Prepared | Somewhat Prepared | Fairly Well Prepared | Very Well Prepared |
|---|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Limited English proficiency (n=804) | 8% | 33% | 40% | 20% |
| Learning disabilities (n=804) | 4% | 27% | 43% | 26% |
| Dyslexia (n=804) | 14% | 34% | 37% | 15% |
| Being from a low socioeconomic environment (n=805) | 3% | 15% | 45% | 37% |
| Other risk factors for reading difficulties (n=750) | 6% | 29% | 45% | 19% |

Source: TALA Teacher Participant Survey

About 80% of content area teachers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the TALA content area training was appropriate for teachers of their subjects, as depicted in Table 3.16.

Table 3.16: Appropriateness of Content Area Training

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| The TALA training I attended was appropriate for teachers who teach the subjects that I teach. (n=756) | 2% | 5% | 13% | 59% | 21% |

Source: TALA Teacher Participant Survey

As presented in Table 3.17, over 70% of content area teachers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the TALA content area training helped them improve their teaching in their respective subjects.

Table 3.17: Helpfulness of Content Area Training

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| The TALA training I attended helped me improve my teaching in the subjects that I teach. (n=753) | 3% | 5% | 20% | 54% | 18% |

Source: TALA Teacher Participant Survey

As presented in Table 3.18, content area teachers were most likely to probably or definitely recommend the TALA training to ELA teachers (about 88%). About 83% of content area teachers would recommend the training to social studies or science teachers, and about 77% would recommend it for math teachers.

Table 3.18: Content Area Recommendations by Subject Area

| Would you recommend the TALA training to Grade 6 teachers of... | Definitely Not | Probably Not | Not Sure | Probably | Definitely |
|---|----------------|--------------|----------|----------|------------|
| ...ELA/reading? (n=757) | 2% | 3% | 7% | 34% | 55% |
| ...Social studies? (n=757) | 2% | 5% | 9% | 35% | 50% |
| ...Science? (n=753) | 2% | 5% | 9% | 35% | 49% |
| ...Mathematics? (n=754) | 3% | 7% | 12% | 35% | 43% |

Source: TALA Teacher Participant Survey

All TALA Participating Teachers

As illustrated by Table 3.19, 89% of all teachers surveyed incorporate TALA strategies into their instruction at least to some degree. Of this amount, 7% incorporate it a great deal.

Table 3.19: Incorporating TALA into Instruction

| | Not At All | Very Little | To Some Degree | Quite a Bit | A Great Deal |
|--|------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|
| To what extent are you incorporating what you learned at the TALA training into your instruction or helping teachers incorporate strategies and practices into their instruction? (n=1730) | 2% | 9% | 48% | 34% | 7% |

Source: TALA Teacher Participant Survey

About 86% of all teachers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the TALA academy training was appropriate for teachers of their subjects, as depicted in Table 3.20.

Table 3.20: Appropriateness of Training

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| The TALA training I attended was appropriate for teachers who teach the subjects that I teach. (n=1725) | 2% | 3% | 9% | 51% | 35% |

Source: TALA Teacher Participant Survey

As presented in Table 3.21, about 75% of all teachers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the TALA academy training helped them improve their teaching in their respective subjects.

Table 3.21: Helpfulness of Training

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| The TALA training I attended helped me improve my teaching in the subjects that I teach. (n=1715) | 3% | 5% | 19% | 50% | 25% |

Source: TALA Teacher Participant Survey

As presented in Table 3.22, among all teachers surveyed, the TALA academy was recommended the most to ELA teachers (about 90%). About 83% of all teachers would recommend the training to social studies or science teachers, and about 75% would recommend it for math teachers.

Table 3.22: Recommendations by Subject Area

| Would you recommend the TALA training to Grade 6 teachers of... | Definitely Not | Probably Not | Not Sure | Probably | Definitely |
|---|----------------|--------------|----------|----------|------------|
| ELA/reading (n=1728) | 1% | 3% | 6% | 31% | 59% |
| Social studies (n=1721) | 2% | 4% | 11% | 39% | 49% |
| Science (n=1716) | 2% | 5% | 12% | 34% | 48% |
| Mathematics (n=1717) | 2% | 7% | 16% | 32% | 43% |

Source: TALA Teacher Participant Survey

Summary of the Quality of Grade 6 TALA Training

This chapter examined the quality of Grade 6 TALA training using results from the TAB's review of TALA material, data from the observation data of the TALA trainings, and survey data from the classroom teacher academies in 2008.

The main findings are discussed below:

Expert Review of Grade 6 Training Materials

The Technical Advisory Board's (TAB) review of the Grade 6 training materials revealed:

- The overall quality of the content is high.
- Many of the instructional routines represent the best practices in literacy and are scientifically based. The instructional routines that concerned the TAB lacked research support with middle school students (e.g., no existing research on word study routines with adolescents).
- The instructional routines are linked to national and state standards.
- The practices used in the professional development component are strong and reflective of best practices in professional development (e.g., TALA trainers modeling strategies during training).
- The short duration of the TALA training was a concern.

The TAB provided several recommendations to improve the implementation of TALA in schools:

- Teachers need systematic support from reading coaches and school administrators.
- Teachers need on-going training to assist them with classroom implementation.
- Teachers should see the TALA strategies modeled in the classroom by actual teachers, during and after the training.
- Actual teacher texts should be used in training as this may allow the teacher to see how TALA instructional routines will work in their classrooms.

Observations of Grade 6 TALA Training

TALA Grade 6 Regional TOTs and TALA classroom teacher academies were highly rated by observers. Observations of the Regional TOT and classroom teacher academies revealed that:

- Trainings were reflective of best practices for professional development.
- Trainers effectively implemented the components of the TALA training.
- The culture of the training sessions facilitated the engagement of participants.
- Trainers followed the activities and content of the TALA training materials.
- Too much information was covered during the TALA trainings.

Trainer and Teacher Perceptions of Grade 6 TALA Training

State and regional trainers were asked to rate the TALA trainings they attended (either the State TOT or the Regional TOTs). Trainer perceptions of TALA included:

- Trainer roles and expectations were clearly stated, and the goals of the trainings were clearly articulated.
- Content area state trainers noted gaps in the math, science, and social studies aspects of content (e.g., concrete content area examples).
- ELA and content area state trainers noted that the overall quality of the trainings was very good.
- State and regional trainers reported that more time was needed to discuss potential problems that would arise during the trainings.
- Regional and state trainers reported that they felt adequately prepared for the training they conducted.

ELA and content area classroom teacher participants rated their perceptions of the TALA training and their implementation of TALA routines in the classroom. Analyses revealed:

- More than 75% of ELA teachers and 70% of content area teachers reported that the quality of the TALA trainings, the effectiveness of the presenters, and the quality of the workshop content were above average or excellent.
- Over 80% of ELA teachers reported that they were fairly well or very well prepared to use the TALA instructional routines, strategies, and assessment (i.e., the TMSFA).
- Approximately 63% of ELA teachers and 53% of content area teachers felt prepared to deal with special student populations (e.g., LEP, special education, economically disadvantaged).
- Approximately 90% of ELA teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the TALA ELA trainings were appropriate for teachers of ELA and reading.
- Most content area teachers (80%) agreed or strongly agreed that the TALA content area trainings were appropriate for content area teachers. Of those who agreed or strongly agreed:
 - ◆ 83% would recommend the training to social studies or science teachers.
 - ◆ 77% would recommend the training for math teachers.
- The majority of ELA and content area teachers (89%) reported that they are implementing TALA routines into their instruction to at least some degree.
- The majority of classroom teachers (86%) responded that the TALA trainings were appropriate for teachers of their subjects.
- Over 75% of teachers responded that the TALA training would help to improve teaching in their respective subjects.

4. Classroom Implementation of TALA: Grade 6 ELA Classrooms

This chapter includes evaluation findings related to the quality and level of implementation of the TALA training by participating ELA teachers (Objective #2 of the evaluation plan). Data collected through three activities are presented: (a) observations of a sample of TALA ELA teacher participants' classrooms, (b) online follow-up training in which TALA ELA teacher participants documented their implementation of TALA instructional strategies in their classrooms, and (c) the survey of TALA ELA teacher participants.

This chapter addresses the following questions:

- What are the professional and demographic characteristics of participating teachers?
- In what ways are trained teachers implementing the TALA content and/or strategies?
 - ♦ At what tier(s) are ELA participating teachers implementing the content learned at the ELA academies?
- In what ways are trained ELA teachers using the progress monitoring instrument (i.e., the Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment, or TMSFA)?
- What do teachers perceive as the barriers and facilitators to implementing TALA content/strategies in the classroom?
- How has participation in the TALA training affected classroom literacy practices?

Observations of TALA Grade 6 ELA Classrooms

As described in Chapter 2 (Evaluation Approach), classroom observers completed two standard protocols during and after the observation of one lesson. The Classroom Observation Instrument (COI) was used by observers to collect data on the implementation of general reading strategies (comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency), as well as grouping arrangements and usage of text. The TALA-Specific Classroom Observation Instrument (TALA-COI) was used by observers to gather data about the implementation of TALA-specific routines (general, vocabulary, comprehension, word study, fluency, and inferential comprehension).

Implementation of General Reading Strategies

The COI was developed to systematically categorize and code the content and quality of general reading instructional strategies in TALA participating teachers' classrooms. Specifically, the COI was used to gather data on specific conditions and practices under which comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency instruction is delivered. The COI yields data on: (a) the presence and frequency of behaviors indicative of high-quality comprehension and vocabulary instruction, (b) reading fluency instruction, (c) student grouping arrangements, and (d) presence or absence of the use of connected text.

The COI is an interval contingent event-sampling observation of the teachers' instructional practices during comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency instruction. This means that the observer records data within a certain period of time, in this case, 10 minutes, to study ongoing

activities (teaching behaviors) that vary across and within this period of time in a naturally-occurring environment.

The evaluation team established the minimum length of each classroom observation at 25 minutes in order for it to count as a completed observation, and the maximum length of each observation at 60 minutes. Therefore, the length of the observations varied across schools due to the many ways in which class schedules are established at each school. As a result, all observation cases have at least three intervals worth of data, and the longer observations have up to three more intervals of data (for a maximum of six intervals).

In 10-minute contiguous intervals, the observer records (a) teaching behaviors, (b) grouping arrangements, and (c) whether or not connected text is used. The teaching behaviors are rated either on a frequency or present-absent basis, meaning that during each interval, the observer places a tally mark next to each observed teaching behavior. If there is at least one tally mark, then the corresponding behavior was present, and if there are no tally marks, then the behavior is absent. When the teacher is providing instruction during each interval, the observer attends to the appropriate section of the protocol (comprehension, vocabulary, or fluency) depending on the primary purpose of instruction. Grouping arrangements and usage of text are observed on a present-absent basis during each interval.

Comprehension

Eight comprehension teaching behaviors were observed using the COI during each interval of each lesson when the ELA teacher's primary purpose of the lesson was to teach comprehension:

1. The teacher/student activates prior knowledge and/or previews text before reading.
2. The teacher provides explicit comprehension instruction that teaches students about text structure.
3. The teacher provides explicit comprehension instruction that teaches students how to use strategies such as, main idea, summarizing, drawing conclusions, visualizing events, making predictions during and after reading, evaluating predictions, identifying fact vs. opinion, monitoring for comprehension.
4. The teacher provides explicit comprehension instruction that teaches students how to generate questions.
5. The teacher provides explicit comprehension instruction that teaches text features to interpret text.
6. The teacher asks students to justify their responses.
7. The teacher asks questions based on material in the text that are beyond the literal level.
8. The teacher elaborates, clarifies, or links concepts during and after text reading.

The first teaching behavior was observed before reading actually occurred; behaviors 2-4 were observed before, during or after reading; and behaviors 5-8 were observed during or after reading. To add another dimension to the observations of comprehension components, observers recorded frequencies of each behavior across three different instructional strategies to see where each behavior intersected with each strategy: the teacher modeling (equal to "I Do" in TALA strategies); the teacher explaining, reviewing, or providing examples or elaborations (equal to "We Do" in TALA strategies); and the student practicing (equal to "You Do" in TALA strategies).

Comprehension is not something that the observed teachers taught by modeling during these lessons. Rather, more of the observed teachers tended to have students practice the lesson material themselves, or the teacher would explain, review, or provide examples or elaborations to students. Many of the comprehension teaching behaviors were observed more frequently during student practice (“You Do”), and three of the teaching behaviors were observed in this dimension of instructional strategies. In addition, the teachers who used these two instructional strategies (explaining/reviewing and having students practice), when exhibiting the comprehension teaching behaviors, more frequently exhibited these teaching behaviors. This is based on the average number of times (or the mean) each behavior was observed during all observations of ELA teacher participants.

For example, 59% of the observed ELA teachers had students practice how to elaborate, clarify, or link concepts during and after text reading (behavior 8), and on average, this was observed 10 times across all intervals across all observations. Likewise, about half (49%) of the ELA teachers had students practice generating questions based on material in the text that were beyond the literal level, and this was observed about 8 times across all intervals across all observations. These were the two most frequently observed comprehension teaching behavior across all ELA teachers’ classrooms.

Table J-1 in Appendix J includes the frequency and percentage of ELA classrooms in which the comprehension teaching behaviors were observed, as well as the average number of times each comprehension teaching behavior was observed across all ELA classrooms.

Vocabulary

Six vocabulary teaching behaviors were observed using the COI during each interval of each lesson when the ELA teacher’s primary purpose of the lesson was to teach vocabulary:

1. The teacher provides an explanation and/or a definition or asks a student to read a definition.
2. The teacher provides: a) examples; b) contrasting examples; c) multiple meanings; d) immediate elaborations to students’ responses.
3. The teacher uses visuals/pictures, gestures related to word meaning, facial expressions, or demonstrations to discuss/demonstrate word meanings.
4. The teacher teaches word learning strategies - using context clues, word parts, root meaning.
5. Students do or are asked to do something that requires knowledge of words.
6. Students are given an opportunity to apply word learning strategies - using context clues, word parts, root meaning.

The most frequently observed of all of the teaching behaviors in ELA classrooms was when students did or were asked to do something that required knowledge of words (behavior 5), which was observed during 33 of the 41 observations (80%). Additionally, this teaching behavior was observed more times than any other behavior, about 12 times on average, across all intervals in these classrooms where this behavior was observed. The second most frequently observed teaching behavior, observed in 78% of the classrooms, was when teachers provided examples, contrasting examples, multiple meanings, or immediate elaborations to students’ responses (behavior 2), and this was observed about 11 times across all intervals in each of the classrooms where it was observed.

Table J-2 in Appendix J includes the frequencies and percentages of Grade 6 ELA classrooms in which each of the six vocabulary teaching behaviors were observed, and the average number of times each teaching behavior was observed in those classrooms. This evidence suggests that TALA Grade 6 ELA teacher participants were more frequently instructing students about vocabulary using basic strategies like defining words and less frequently using more advanced strategies like word learning strategies (using context clues, word parts, and root meaning).

Fluency

Fluency teaching behaviors were only observed twice across all 41 ELA classrooms, and in these cases, the fluency instruction was observed later during the lesson (intervals 3 and 4). In one case, the teacher listened as students practiced repeated oral readings that were not timed, with text that was not modeled, and with corrective feedback. In the other case, the teacher arranged for students to practice repeated oral readings with a partner that were not timed, with text that was modeled, with corrective feedback. This is not surprising, but is concerning, given that fluency often is not taught to adolescent readers.

Grouping Arrangements

Grouping arrangements could change during the course of each interval, and the observers were asked to mark all of the grouping arrangements that they observed during each interval. Therefore, each column may add to more than 100%. The majority of ELA teachers who were observed (69%) tended to present the lesson to the whole class across all six 10-minute intervals, while some teachers worked with individual students (20%), small groups (18%), or pairs (13%). This indicates that only a handful of teachers who were observed were using the TALA general strategies that involved grouping students. Table 4.1 shows the frequency and percentage of ELA classrooms in which each grouping arrangement was observed per interval. The "total" column includes the total number of tallies across all intervals observed in ELA classrooms.

Table 4.1: Grouping Arrangements Observed in Sixth Grade Classrooms of TALA Grade 6 ELA Teacher Participants

| Grouping Arrangements | Interval Frequency (%) | | | | | | Total |
|--|------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| | I | II | III | IV | V | VI | |
| Whole class ($\geq 75\%$ of class) | 33 (81%) | 31 (76%) | 27 (66%) | 15 (60%) | 5 (50%) | 3 (43%) | 114 (69%) |
| Large groups (> 6 students, <75% of class) | 2 (5%) | 1 (2%) | 1 (2%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 4 (2%) |
| Small groups (3-6 students) | 5 (12%) | 4 (10%) | 8 (20%) | 6 (24%) | 4 (40%) | 2 (29%) | 29 (18%) |
| Pairs | 3 (7%) | 4 (10%) | 5 (12%) | 5 (20%) | 3 (30%) | 1 (14%) | 21 (13%) |
| An individual | 8 (20%) | 6 (15%) | 9 (22%) | 5 (20%) | 3 (30%) | 2 (29%) | 33 (20%) |
| Total Classrooms | 41 | 41 | 41 | 25 | 10 | 7 | 165 |

Source: Classroom Observations TALA Grade 6 ELA Teachers (N=41)

Note: Each column may add to > 100% since grouping arrangements may have changed during each interval observed.

Usage of Text

Table 4.2 shows the frequency and percentage of ELA classrooms in which the reading of connected text was observed per interval. The “total” column includes the total number of tallies across all intervals observed in ELA classrooms. Looking at the first three intervals (which were observed in all lessons), ELA teachers used text more as the lesson progressed.

Table 4.2: Usage of Text Observed in Sixth Grade Classrooms of TALA Grade 6 ELA Teacher Participants

| Usage of Text | Interval Frequency (%) | | | | | | Total |
|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| | I | II | III | IV | V | VI | |
| Text Being Used | 18 (44%) | 23 (56%) | 30 (73%) | 20 (80%) | 7 (70%) | 5 (72%) | 103 (63%) |
| Text Not Being Used | 23 (56%) | 17 (42%) | 11 (27%) | 5 (20%) | 2 (20%) | 1 (14%) | 59 (36%) |
| Not sure | 0 (0%) | 1 (2%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 1 (10%) | 1 (14%) | 1 (1%) |
| Total Classrooms | 41 | 41 | 41 | 25 | 10 | 7 | 163 |

Source: Classroom Observations TALA Grade 6 ELA Teachers (N=41)

Implementation of TALA-Specific Instructional Routines

The TALA-COI was designed to collect information about the implementation of TALA-specific general instructional strategies and routines (vocabulary, comprehension, word study, fluency, and inferential comprehension). Observers were instructed to complete this protocol as soon as the observation was completed so that the observation was fresh in their minds. Observers relied heavily on their field notes taken during the observation to complete this instrument. The TALA-COI is a checklist with main questions and sub-items under each question. Observers were instructed to read each item and indicate whether the routines were addressed at any point throughout the entire lesson observed. If the TALA routine was observed, follow-up questions were often listed (but not always) to capture more detail about each routine or practice. Therefore, if the observer responded “yes” to the main question, then the sub-items under that main question were also answered. Observers were to “select all that apply” to all sub-items.

General Instructional Strategies

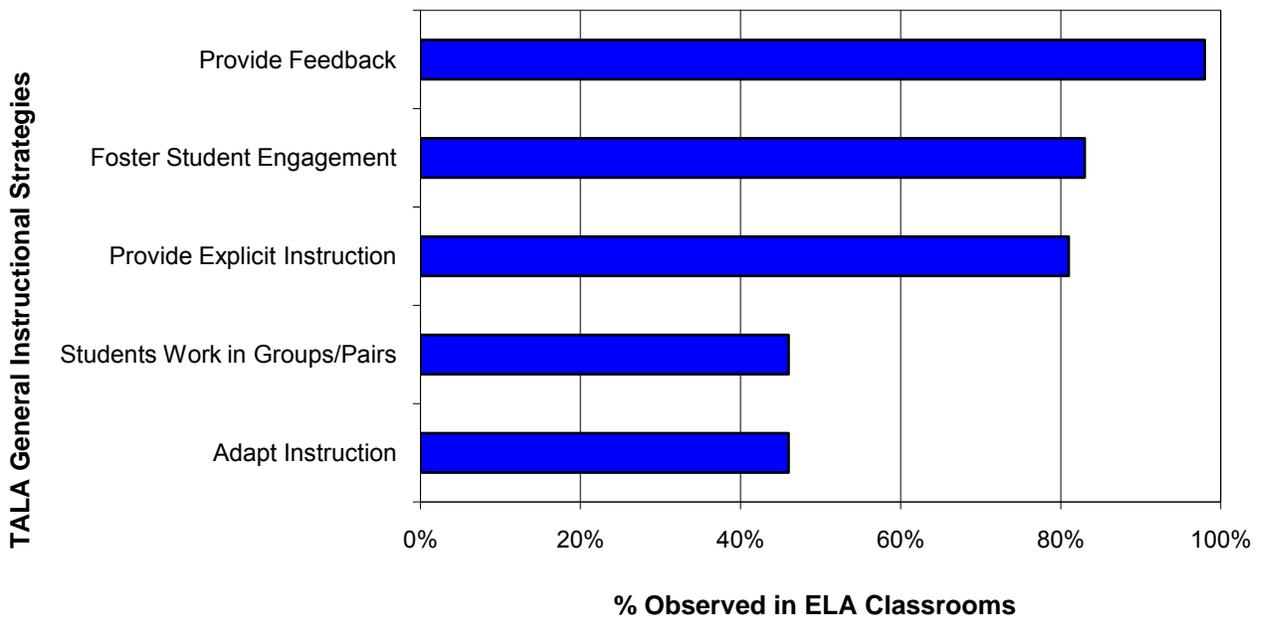
Five main questions relating to the general instructional strategies taught in TALA guided the observation:

1. Did the teacher adapt instruction during the lesson?
2. Did the teacher foster student engagement?
3. Did the teacher provide explicit instruction?
4. Did the teacher provide feedback to the students?
5. Did the students work in groups?

If the general instructional strategy was observed, then observers were prompted to respond to a series of sub-items (if applicable) to indicate whether or not specific aspects of each general instructional strategy were observed. These questions and sub-items aligned with the general instructional strategies taught in TALA.

Results from the 41 ELA classroom observations are presented in Figure 4.1. The figure illustrates that 98% of the observed ELA teachers provided feedback to the students during the observed lesson, while 83% of the teachers fostered student engagement and 81% of the teachers provided explicit instruction. Only 46% of the observed ELA teachers adapted instruction during the observed lesson. The students worked in groups during 46% of the observations.

Figure 4.1: Observations of ELA Teachers' Implementation of TALA General Instructional Strategies (N=41)



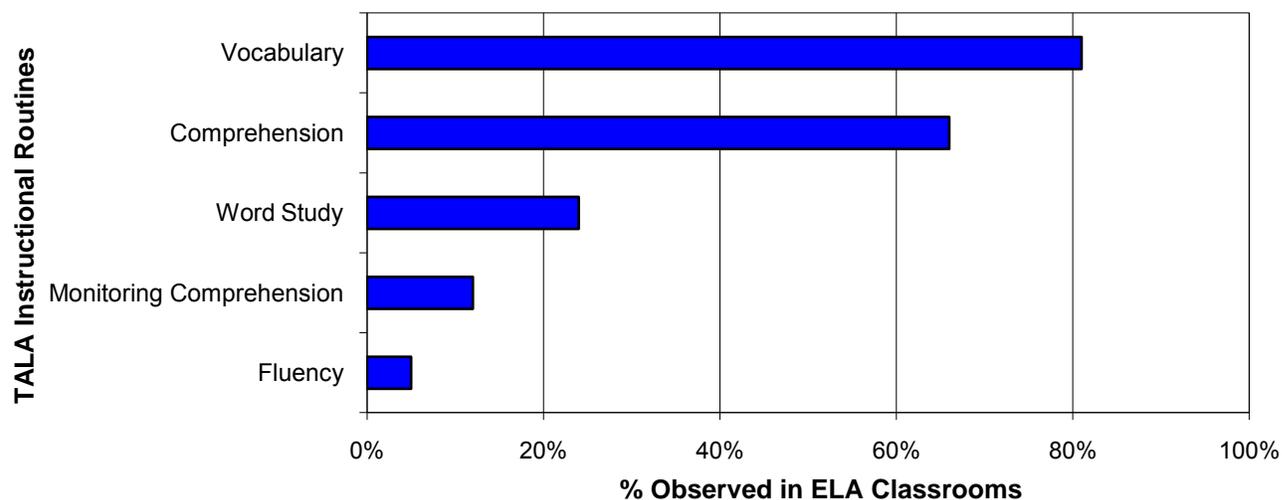
Source: TALA Classroom Observations

Table J-3 in Appendix J lists the five main questions about the TALA-specific general instructional strategies along with how many and what percentage each was observed during the 41 ELA classroom observations. In addition, the sub-items (if applicable) are listed under each of the main questions.

TALA Instructional Routines

As previously stated, observers were instructed to record the occurrence of the TALA instructional routines in the ELA teachers' classrooms. This included vocabulary, comprehension, word study, fluency, and inferential comprehension routines. Figure 4.2 illustrates the percentage of classrooms where each routine was observed. As predicted by the TAB, vocabulary and comprehension instructional routines (Tier I) were observed most frequently, with fewer observations of word study, fluency, and inferential comprehension routines (Tier II/III routines). The following sections provide greater details about the implementation of Tier I and II/III routines in the ELA teachers' classrooms.

Figure 4.2: Observations of ELA Teachers' Implementation of TALA Instructional Routines (N=41)



Source: TALA Classroom Observations

Vocabulary. Observers were instructed to indicate whether the lesson included vocabulary instruction, and if so, which TALA vocabulary instructional routines were observed during each lesson. Questions about these vocabulary instructional routines included:

1. Did the teacher pre-teach vocabulary words?
2. Did the teacher teach academic vocabulary words?
3. Did the teacher teach content-specific vocabulary words?
4. Did the teacher teach the vocabulary words by pronouncing words, defining words, identifying characteristics of the words, or generating examples and/or non-examples of the words?
5. Did the teacher use everyday language to explain the meaning of vocabulary words?
6. Did the teacher use the *Fruyer Model*³⁰ (i.e., a graphic organizer) to teach vocabulary?

Observers indicated that vocabulary instructional routines occurred in 33 of 41 observations (81%). During those 33 observations, the most common vocabulary instructional routine, used by ELA teachers in 97% of the observed lessons, was the use of everyday language to explain the meaning of vocabulary words. In addition, observers noted that the most common type of words taught were academic words (during 82% of the observed lessons). The ELA teachers taught the vocabulary words mostly by generating examples of the words (85%). The least observed method of teaching vocabulary words was generating non-examples of the words (42%). One-third of the ELA teachers used the *Fruyer Model* to teach vocabulary during the observed ELA lessons.

Table J-4 in Appendix J describes the TALA-specific vocabulary instructional routines with the frequencies and percentages of the observations of the 41 ELA classrooms.

³⁰ The Fruyer Model is a graphic organizer used for word analysis and vocabulary building. It prompts students to think about and describe the meaning of a word or concept by defining the term, describing its essential characteristics, providing examples of the idea, and offering non-examples of the idea (Fruyer, Frederick, & Klausmeier, 1969).

Comprehension. Observers were instructed to indicate whether the lesson included comprehension instruction, and if so, which TALA comprehension instructional routines were observed during each lesson. Questions about these comprehension instructional routines included:

1. Did the teacher build upon the students' background knowledge prior to reading the text?
2. Did the teacher use *Anticipation-Reaction Guides*?
3. Did the teacher instruct the students to identify the main ideas of the text?
4. Did the teacher state the primary focus of the text, connect the text to prior learning, identify the main ideas of each paragraph, record important details related to the main ideas, and/or compose a main idea of the section statement?
5. Did the teacher use the *Notes Log* when teaching about main ideas?
6. Did the teacher use the *Get the Gist* routine to find the main ideas of the paragraph?
7. Did the teacher instruct the students to summarize the text?
8. Did the teacher use the *Notes Log* when teaching about writing summaries?

Observers indicated that 27 of 41 (66%) of observed lessons included comprehension instructional routines. The most commonly observed comprehension instructional routine was teachers building upon the students' background knowledge prior to reading the text (observed in 70% of the lessons). Teachers used the *Notes Log* when teaching about main ideas and writing summaries in two observations (observed in 7% of the lessons) of comprehension instruction. The teachers used the *Anticipation Reaction Guides* in 19% of the observations. When the teachers instructed the students to identify the main ideas of the text (observed in 59% of the lessons), the most common way was by identifying the main ideas of each paragraph (observed in 48% of the lessons), and the least common way was composing a main idea of the section statement (observed in only one lesson, or in 4% of the observed lessons). The teachers instructed the students to summarize the text 26% of the time.

Table J-5 describes the comprehension instructional practices with the frequencies and percentages of the 41 observations in the ELA classrooms.

Word Study. Observers were instructed to indicate whether the lesson included word study instruction, and if so, which TALA word study instructional routines were observed during each lesson. Questions about these word study instructional routines included:

1. Did the teacher instruct students to recognize syllable patterns, and if so, what types of syllable patterns were taught?
2. Did the teacher instruct students to recognize morphemes by using various strategies?
3. Did the teacher instruct students to use the *morphemic analysis routine* to determine the meaning of words by using various strategies?

Ten of the 41 observed ELA lessons included word study instruction, or about 24% of the observed lessons. The teachers instructed the students to recognize syllable patterns during 2 of the observed lessons. In both of these observed lessons, the closed,³¹ vowel-consonant-e (silent e),³² and irregular types of syllable patterns³³ were taught. Open, vowel-r syllables, vowel

³¹ Closed syllables have one vowel that is closed by a consonant and the vowel sound is short (e.g., rabbit).

³² Vowel-consonant-e (silent e) syllables end in one vowel, one consonant, and a final e. The vowel is long and the final e is silent (e.g., profile).

³³ Irregular types of syllable patterns have letter combinations that do not make their expected sound.

pair syllables, and consonant-le syllables were never taught during the instruction of syllable patterns. Both of the observed teachers taught the syllables patterns by directly instructing the syllable pattern.³⁴ Practicing the types of syllables (identifying/sounding out) was observed only once. The teachers instructed students to recognize morphemes (the smallest meaningful linguistic unit in the grammar of a language) mostly by generalizing the morphemes to new words (in 6 out of these 10 observations). Additionally with this instruction, the teachers never used the technique of generating non-examples of the morphemes. Teachers instructed students to use the morphemic analysis routine to determine the meaning of words by finding the root of the word and by thinking about what the root means in 6 out of these 10 observations.

Table J-6 in Appendix J describes the word study instructional practices with the frequencies and percentages of the 41 observations in the ELA classrooms.

Fluency. Observers were instructed to indicate whether the lesson included fluency instruction, and if so, which TALA fluency instructional routines were observed during each lesson. Questions about these fluency instructional routines included:

1. Did the teacher read the passage aloud?
2. Did the students engage in partner reading?

The observed ELA lessons included fluency instruction only 5% of the time, or in only 2 of the 41 observations. Within these two lessons, TALA routines were observed. In one instance, the teacher read the passage out loud, and when the teacher did, the students followed along and underlined words to review the passage. Additionally, as the teacher read the passage aloud in this case, the teacher and students did not repeat any underlined words, nor did the students provide the main ideas of the passage. In another instance, the students engaged in partner reading, and during this lesson, the only event that was observed was the partner following along and underlining errors or skipped words. All of the other activities listed on the TALA-COI were not observed.

Table J-7 describes fluency instructional practices with the frequencies and percentages of the 41 observations in the ELA classrooms.

Inferential Comprehension. Observers were instructed to indicate whether the lesson included monitoring comprehension, and if so, which TALA inferential comprehension instructional routines were observed during each lesson. Questions about these inferential comprehension instructional routines included:

1. Did the teacher explain the purpose for generating questions while reading?
2. Did the teacher show students how to generate questions while reading?
3. Did the students use question cards?

Throughout all observations of ELA classrooms, monitoring comprehension was observed only 12% of the time, or during 5 of the 41 lessons. Within these two lessons when teachers were observed monitoring comprehension, TALA routines were observed. The teachers explained the purpose for generating questions while reading during one of the five lessons. The teachers showed students how to generate questions while reading during three of the five lessons. Only

³⁴ Directly instructing the syllable pattern means teaching students how to recognize and pronounce each syllable type, highlighting the distinguishing features of the syllable type.

one teacher was observed identifying a fact in the passage that was a *who, what, where, when, why or how*. The teachers did not use any of the other instructional techniques listed on the TALA-COI, like instructing students to generate questions by modeling how to turn a fact into a question. Students worked with a partner to generate questions, and students discussed questions and answers with the partner during one lesson. The students did not use the question cards throughout these observations.

Table J-8 in Appendix J describes inferential comprehension with the frequencies and percentages of the 41 observations in the ELA classrooms.

TALA Online Follow-Up Grade 6 ELA

In order to receive the second half of their stipends (\$250) and to obtain a Continuing Professional Education (CPE) certificate, TALA Grade 6 ELA academy participants were required to complete a one-day practicum follow-up. ELA teachers had to submit online documentation of the follow-up between September and December 2008 for two activities: one for Tier I and one for either Tiers II/III or the TMSFA.

Tier I includes general strategies and instructional routines (in vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency) that are implemented schoolwide and affect all students in the school. In Tier II, students with reading difficulties that cannot be addressed sufficiently through instructional supports in Tier I receive strategic intervention in reduced group sizes. Tier III of the model is an intensive intervention for middle school students who have severe reading difficulties and need intervention of much greater intensity if they are to become competent readers. The more intensive the Tier III intervention, the smaller the group size is.

Characteristics of the TALA Grade 6 ELA Teacher Online Follow-Up Participants

Overall, 3,554 TALA Grade 6 ELA teacher participants completed the online training. Appendix I shows the representation of the teacher participants across ESCs. Of the 3,554 TALA Grade 6 ELA teacher participants who completed the online training, 2,237 of them could be matched to PEIMS 2007-08 data to determine their demographic characteristics. The reason for this low match rate is because some educators, like new teachers for example, do not have a PEIMS record or could not be matched because of the lack of information provided by ESCs (e.g., participant full name, campus name). Tables are presented in Appendix I to show the ESC, sex, race/ethnicity, and highest degree earned for these teachers.

Characteristics of the Classrooms in Which TALA Grade 6 ELA Online Follow-Up Activities Were Implemented

As expected, most of the TALA Grade 6 ELA teacher participants implemented the literacy instructional routine in English language arts and reading courses across all tiers. Table 4.3 lists the other course subjects in which the instructional routines were implemented.

Table 4.3: Subject of the Classes in Which Grade 6 ELA Teacher Participants Implemented TALA by Tiers and the TMSFA

| Course Subject | Tier I (n=2277) | Tiers II/III (n=1694) | TMSFA (n=486) |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| English language arts | 46% | 46% | 34% |
| Reading | 34% | 38% | 53% |
| ESL | 6% | 7% | 6% |
| Special Education | 7% | 9% | 7% |
| Mathematics | 2% | - | - |
| Science | 2% | - | - |
| Social Studies | 3% | - | - |

Source: Online Follow-Up Training Database

As shown in Table 4.4, a large majority of the TALA Grade 6 ELA teacher participants implemented the literacy instructional routine in classes with sixth grade students across all tiers, while other instructional routines were implemented in classes with a mix of students in Grades 6-8.

Table 4.4: Grade Level of the Students Enrolled in the Classes in Which Grade 6 ELA Teacher Participants Implemented TALA by Tiers and the TMSFA

| Grade Level | Tier I (n=2277) | Tiers II/III (n=1694) | TMSFA (n=486) |
|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| Grade 6 | 80% | 82% | 59% |
| Combination of Grades 6-8 | 20% | 18% | 41% |

Source: Online Follow-Up Training Database

Table 4.5 displays the number of students who were in the class in which TALA Grade 6 ELA teacher participants implemented the literacy instructional routines. Tier I and Tiers II/III instructional routines were implemented most frequently in classes with 21 to 30 students, while TMSFA instructional routines were implemented most commonly in classes with one to ten students. This is partly what would be expected given that Tier I strategies would be used with all students. Likewise, the TMSFA is for diagnostic purposes for struggling readers, and these struggling readers tend to be taught in small groups, so it is likely that the TMSFA would be used in small groups. However, one might expect to see Tiers II/III strategies implemented in classes with fewer students, though it is possible that entire classes needed additional help, which is the focus of Tiers II/III.

Table 4.5: Number of Students Who Were in the Classes in Which Grade 6 ELA Teacher Participants Implemented TALA by Tiers and the TMSFA

| Number of Students | Tier I (n=2277) | Tiers II/III (n=1694) | TMSFA (n=486) |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| 1-10 students | 17% | 21% | 43% |
| 11-20 students | 34% | 35% | 30% |
| 21-30 students | 42% | 39% | 11% |
| 31-40 students | 3% | 2% | 5% |
| More than 40 students | 4% | 3% | 11% |

Source: Online Follow-Up Training Database

Characteristics of the Instructional Routines that were Implemented by TALA Grade 6 ELA Online Follow-Up Participants

Table 4.6 details the length of time TALA Grade 6 ELA teacher participants spent planning the lesson in which they implemented the instructional routine or administered the TMSFA. Teachers spent more time preparing to administer the TMSFA—over half of the teachers who administered the TMSFA (58%) planned for over one hour. Teachers spent less time planning for Tiers II/III lessons than for TMSFA, but slightly more time than teachers spent planning for Tier I lessons. Overall, 30% of the teachers spent 20 minutes or less to plan Tier I lessons, 31% spent 30 minutes, and the remaining 39% spent 45 minutes or more. In comparison, 26% of the ELA teachers spent 20 minutes or less to plan Tiers II/III lessons, 31% spent 30 minutes, and the remaining 43% spent 45 minutes or more.

Table 4.6: Length of Time TALA Grade 6 ELA Teacher Participants Spent Planning the Lesson in Which the Instructional Routine was Implemented by Tiers and the TMSFA

| Time | Tier I (n=2277) | Tiers II/III (n=1694) | TMSFA (n=486) |
|-------------|--------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| 10 minutes | 2% | 2% | 3% |
| 15 minutes | 9% | 7% | 4% |
| 20 minutes | 19% | 17% | 7% |
| 30 minutes | 31% | 31% | 11% |
| 45 minutes | 20% | 23% | 6% |
| 1 hour | 9% | 11% | 11% |
| Over 1 hour | 10% | 9% | 58% |

Source: Online Follow-Up Training Database

Table 4.7 shows the phases of explicit instruction process (I Do, We Do, You Do) and areas of need for the TMSFA. The TMSFA assesses student abilities in word identification, fluency, and comprehension; training in the use of decision-making tools for tracking progress and planning instruction; and practice administering assessments and interpreting results. TMSFA training indicates that the assessment be administered at the beginning of the year (BOY), middle of the year (MOY), and end of year (EOY). Results from each administration are intended to guide student placement (e.g., reading groups, interventions).

For both Tier I and Tiers II/III, teachers most frequently reported that they implemented We Do: Teacher-assisted explicit instruction (44% and 36%, respectively), followed by I Do: Modeling (30% and 32%, respectively), and We Do: Peer-assisted explicit instruction (16% and 21%). You Do: Independent Practice was the phase that was least commonly implemented by about 10% of teachers in Tier I and Tiers II/III. In terms of the areas of need addressed by teacher implementing the TMSFA, half of the teachers addressed fluency and comprehension; about 32% addressed decoding, fluency and comprehension; and the remaining 18% only addressed comprehension.

Table 4.7: Phase of the Three-Step Explicit Instruction Process in Which TALA Grade 6 ELA Teacher Participants Implemented the Online Follow-Up Activity by Tiers and Portions of the TMSFA

| Phase of Explicit Instruction Process/Area of Need | Tier I (n=2277) | Tiers II/III (n=1694) | TMSFA (n=486) |
|--|--------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| I Do: Modeling | 30% | 32% | N/A |
| We Do: Teacher-assisted | 44% | 36% | N/A |
| We Do: Peer-assisted | 17% | 21% | N/A |
| You Do: Independent Practice | 9% | 11% | N/A |
| Fluency & Comprehension | N/A | N/A | 50% |
| Decoding, Fluency, & Comprehension | N/A | N/A | 32% |
| Comprehension | N/A | N/A | 18% |

Source: Online Follow-Up Training Database

Table 4.8 lists the TALA instructional routines and portion of the TMSFA that TALA Grade 6 teacher participants implemented. The most frequently implemented Tier I routine was the *Fruyer Model* to generate examples and nonexamples (28%), followed by pronouncing and defining words (22%). The two most commonly implemented Tiers II/III routines were generating Level 1 questions (35%) and building fluency with partner reading (31%). A majority of teachers (57%) gave both the passage reading and the word reading subtests of the TMSFA, while 39% of teachers gave just the passage reading fluency subtest of the TMSFA.

Table 4.8: Instructional Routines by Tiers and Portions of the TMSFA Implemented for Online Follow-Up Activity by TALA Grade 6 ELA Teacher Participants

| Phase of Explicit Instruction Process/Area of Need | Tier I (n=2277) | Tiers II/III (n=1694) | TMSFA (n=486) |
|---|--------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| Generating Examples and Nonexamples (<i>Fruyer Model</i>) | 28% | N/A | N/A |
| Pronouncing and Defining Words | 22% | N/A | N/A |
| Partner Reading & Active Involvement | 19% | N/A | N/A |
| Using Anticipation Reaction Guides | 14% | N/A | N/A |
| Composing Main Idea Statements (<i>Notes Log</i>) | 12% | N/A | N/A |
| Composing Summaries (<i>Notes Log</i>) | 5% | N/A | N/A |
| Generating Level 1 Questions | N/A | 35% | N/A |
| Building Fluency with Partner Reading | N/A | 31% | N/A |
| Identifying Syllable Types | N/A | 15% | N/A |
| Morphemic Analysis | N/A | 13% | N/A |
| Generating Level 3 Questions | N/A | 3% | N/A |
| Generating Level 2 Questions | N/A | 3% | N/A |
| Both Passage Reading and Word Reading Subtests | N/A | N/A | 57% |
| Passage Reading Fluency Subtest | N/A | N/A | 39% |
| Word Reading Fluency Subtest | N/A | N/A | 4% |

Source: Online Follow-Up Training Database

TALA Grade 6 ELA teacher participants were asked to explain why they chose to implement the routines on which they reported. For Tier I instructional routines, ELA teachers indicated that they implemented these routines for reasons such as: (a) to help students build skills in areas in which they constantly struggle (e.g., comprehension, vocabulary, fluency), (b) to differentiate instruction, (c) to address the needs of specific groups of students, (d) to implement a routine or strategy that they learned during TALA, and (e) to address areas of low student achievement (i.e., specific standards) on benchmark assessments or high stakes tests (i.e., TAKS). Table 4.9

illustrates these reasons by listing a sample open-ended responses from teachers who selected each Tier I routine.

Table 4.9: Sample Open-Ended Responses from Participating ELA Teachers Who Selected to Implement Each Instructional Tier I Routine for Online Follow-Up Activity

| TALA Tier I Instructional Routine | Sample Open-Ended Response |
|---|--|
| Generating Examples and Nonexamples (<i>Frayer Model</i>) | —As a sixth grade reading team, we decided to use [the <i>Frayer Model</i>] for our vocabulary [lessons]. All of my students either are dyslexic or have repeatedly failed the Reading TAKS test. I needed a way to help my students make a connection between vocabulary and the real world. Most of my students have a very low vocabulary level and recognition. It doesn't benefit them in any way to simply copy a definition from a dictionary. They have to see how the word relates to their life, and using examples as well as nonexamples has helped them out tremendously.” |
| Pronouncing and Defining Words | —Many of my students struggled with the vocabulary on benchmark tests in prior years. Using the Pronouncing and Defining Words strategy has helped students read and understand the concepts more effectively.” |
| Partner Reading & Active Involvement | —This routine allows for cooperative learning groups. In these groups, I get to observe and participate in many different reading practices. The students grow more comfortable with it as the year goes on and their reading levels increase. Practice makes perfect. The more they read the more they learn. They are taking responsibility for what they learn.” |
| Using Anticipation-Reaction Guides | —Most of my students need a variety of sources of background information in order to be successful in class assignments and discussions. I chose an anticipation-reaction guide to focus their attention on particular aspects of the reading assignment. I planned my statements so they would also activate any prior background knowledge and opinions they had about the main idea of the story.” |
| Composing Main Idea Statements (<i>Notes Log</i>) | —This is an area where most students have difficulty. It is hard for them to understand a main idea if they don't know what has been read. Once they have built that background knowledge by using a <i>Notes Log</i> , then they get a better understanding of the story and can determine the main idea.” |
| Composing Summaries (<i>Notes Log</i>) | —I feel that being able to create summaries empowers my students to have a better understanding of all content areas. In the past students haven't had well-developed note taking strategies and therefore aren't very successful in studying for tests, which require note taking.” |

Source: Online Follow-Up Training Database (N=2277)

For Tiers II/III instructional routines, teachers indicated that they implemented these routines to help struggling readers, reinvigorate their teaching using new methods, and help students develop skills that will help them become better readers across all subjects. Table 4.10 illustrates these reasons by listing sample open-ended responses from teachers who selected each Tiers II/III routine.

Table 4.10: Sample Open-Ended Responses from Participating ELA Teachers Who Selected to Implement Each Instructional Tiers II/III Routine for Online Follow-Up Activity

| TALA Tiers II/III Instructional Routine | Sample Open-Ended Response |
|---|---|
| Generating Level 1 Questions | —I've always taught the three levels of questions, but I've never taught them one at a time before. I usually teach them at the same time, but I know it took several practices before the students grasped each type." |
| Building Fluency with Partner Reading | —I love the way I can partner a lower reader with a higher reader. Hearing the passage twice before reading independently helps insure my lower readers' success in reading the passage." |
| Identifying Syllable Types | —I wanted to help students be able to recognize words so that they can increase their ability to read and comprehend the meanings of new words." |
| Morphemic Analysis | —Students need help when they come across a word and don't know the meaning. This is an important reading strategy that I like to teach. They need to be able to break apart words to figure out the meaning of words." |
| Generating Level 3 Questions | —I wanted the students to be able to answer higher level questions, and one way to do that is to have them write higher level questions." |
| Generating Level 2 Questions | —I wanted the students to move beyond just finding the answer in one place. Much of their content area reading for other classes requires them to look in more than one place and I felt this would help them to be more successful." |

Source: Online Follow-Up Training Database (N=2277)

ELA teachers were asked to describe any differences between the TMSFA and the other diagnostic and progress monitoring assessments they have used. Responses were mixed in terms of their differences, but most ELA teachers said they liked using the TMSFA. One ELA teacher stated, "TMSFA is similar to other assessments I've used in that both subtests of passage and word reading fluency give a reliable and valid measure of the students' current functioning level that allows (a teacher) to determine the materials and instructional support activities you'll need for individual students." Another ELA teacher stated, "The TMSFA is different from other assessments because, I can use several assessments to come up with the overall score. In the past, I have used various assessments in which I only had one assessment tool per student."

Nearly all of the TALA Grade 6 ELA teacher participants reported that the lesson they implemented was successful. Table 4.11 lists the exact percentages across the tiers and the TMSFA.

Table 4.11: TALA Grade 6 ELA Teacher Participants' Indication of the Success of the Lesson Implemented for the Online Follow-Up Activity by Tiers and Portions of the TMSFA

| Lesson Successful/Information Useful | Tier I (n=2277) | Tiers II/III (n=1694) | TMSFA (n=486) |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| No | 1% | 2% | 3% |
| Yes | 99% | 98% | 97% |

Source: Online Follow-Up Training Database

For teachers who believed that the lesson was successful, reasons for its success included students understood what they were reading, students were engaged, and the routine was successful in accomplishing the goals of the lesson. As one teacher stated, "Anything that helps struggling readers develop their reading skills is definitely a success." For teachers who did not believe that the lesson was successful, reasons for its failure included:

- The lack of time leading to incomplete implementation of the routine.
- Struggling readers becoming frustrated when it was their turn to do the assignment on their own.
- The routine helping to introduce the definitions for the vocabulary, but not giving students enough practice using the skill.
- Having to go back to the “+Do” because routine was too difficult of an idea for students to begin with.
- The students not taking the subject matter seriously enough to get the gist of how the *Frayer Model* would be helpful.
- Students misbehaving.
- Students needing more guided practice.
- The students understanding the concept, but not putting enough effort into it.

One ELA teacher indicated that the lesson “was and was not” successful, stating that, “It was somewhat difficult to keep up with the anticipation-reaction guide while reading this first time. I think it will work out better next time I try it. I will be more dedicated to sticking with the guide.”

Survey of Grade 6 ELA Teachers

This section includes findings from the survey of TALA Grade 6 ELA teacher participants regarding the implementation of TALA Tier I general instructional routines and strategies, TALA Tiers II and II instructional routines, and the TMSFA.

Implementation of Tier I – General Instructional Routines

ELA teachers were asked how often they actually used seven Tier I instructional routines from the TALA ELA training in their classrooms:

1. Selecting words
2. Pronouncing words
3. Defining words
4. Generating examples and nonexamples
5. Building background knowledge
6. Identifying main ideas in text
7. Writing summaries

Table 4.12 depicts the self-reported frequency with which teachers implemented these seven Tier I instructional routines. Approximately 85% of teachers reported they implemented identifying main ideas in text occasionally or frequently, followed by defining words (84%) and building background knowledge (83%). The least common instructional routines implemented occasionally or frequently were generating examples and nonexamples (71%) and selecting words (63%).

Table 4.12: ELA Teachers' Reported Implementation of Tier I Instructional Routines

| Routine | Frequency of Classroom Implementation | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|--------|-----------|--------------|------------|
| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Occasionally | Frequently |
| Selecting words (n=949) | 3% | 8% | 26% | 28% | 35% |
| Pronouncing words (n=946) | 2% | 6% | 17% | 26% | 49% |
| Defining words (n=946) | 1% | 2% | 13% | 24% | 60% |
| Generating examples and nonexamples (n=946) | 2% | 7% | 20% | 31% | 40% |
| Building background knowledge (n=946) | 1% | 3% | 13% | 22% | 61% |
| Identifying main ideas in text (n=948) | 1% | 3% | 11% | 19% | 66% |
| Writing summaries (n=948) | 2% | 5% | 16% | 31% | 46% |

Source: TALA Teacher Participant Survey

In addition, ELA teachers were asked how often they actually used eight Tier I general teaching strategies from the TALA ELA training in their classrooms:

1. Adapt instruction to structure learning opportunities for all students
2. Foster student engagement
3. Group or pair students
4. Facilitate partner reading
5. Actively involve students (i.e., Think-Pair-Share, Tell-Help-Check, Generate-Share)
6. Provide explicit instruction using scaffolding (i.e., I Do, We Do, You Do)
7. Select appropriate text for fluency instruction
8. Identifying text structures

Table 4.13 represents the self-reported frequency with which teachers implemented these eight general instructional strategies in the classroom. Almost 90% of teachers reported fostering student engagement in their classrooms occasionally or frequently, but only about 65% reported selecting text for fluency instruction as often. Over half reported that they occasionally or frequently identify text structures (70%).

Table 4.13: ELA Teachers' Reported Implementation of TALA Tier I General Strategies

| Strategy | Frequency of Implementation | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|--------|-----------|--------------|------------|
| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Occasionally | Frequently |
| Adapt instruction to structure learning opportunities for all students (n=935) | 1% | 2% | 14% | 24% | 59% |
| Foster student engagement (n=939) | 1% | 2% | 9% | 19% | 69% |
| Group or pair students (n=937) | 1% | 3% | 13% | 27% | 57% |
| Facilitate partner reading (n=939) | 2% | 8% | 18% | 35% | 37% |
| Actively involve students (i.e., Think-Pair-Share, Tell-Help-Check, Generate-Share) (n=940) | 2% | 4% | 18% | 31% | 45% |
| Provide explicit instruction using scaffolding (i.e., I Do, We Do, You Do) (n=941) | 2% | 8% | 18% | 26% | 46% |
| Select appropriate text for fluency instruction (n=926) | 4% | 9% | 21% | 31% | 35% |
| Identifying text structures (n=948) | 3% | 6% | 21% | 33% | 37% |

Source: TALA Teacher Participant Survey

Implementation of Tiers II and III – Intervention Instructional Routines

ELA teachers were asked how often they actually used four Tier II or III instructional routines from the TALA ELA training in their classrooms:

1. Using graphic organizers
2. Identifying syllable structures
3. Conducting morphemic analysis
4. Generating Level I, II, and III questions

Table 4.14 depicts the self-reported frequency with which teachers implemented these four Tier II or III routines. Most ELA teachers (81%) reported using graphic organizers occasionally or frequently, while over two-thirds reported that they occasionally or frequently generate Level I/II/III questions (68%). Tiers II/III instructional routines implemented occasionally or frequently the least by ELA teachers include identifying syllabic structures (56%) and conducting morphemic analysis (47%). In general, teachers implemented Tier I routines more regularly than Tier II and Tier III routines. Using graphic organizers was the only Tier II or III routine that was used almost as frequently (54%) as the Tier I routines.

Table 4.14: Frequency of ELA Teachers’ Reported Implementation of Tiers II/III Instructional Routines

| Routine | Frequency of Implementation | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|--------|-----------|--------------|------------|
| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Occasionally | Frequently |
| Using graphic organizers (n=948) | 1% | 3% | 15% | 27% | 54% |
| Identifying syllable structures (n=941) | 4% | 14% | 26% | 30% | 26% |
| Conducting morphemic analysis (n=940) | 7% | 19% | 27% | 29% | 18% |
| Generating Level I, II, and III questions (n=935) | 2% | 7% | 23% | 34% | 34% |

Source: TALA Teacher Participant Survey

Use of the Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment (TMSFA)

Table 4.15 presents the frequency with which TALA ELA teachers actually administered and interpreted the TMSFA. About 35% of teachers reported administering the test occasionally or frequently, with a similar percentage reporting that they have occasionally or frequently interpreted the results of the TMSFA.

Table 4.15: ELA Teachers’ Reported Implementation of the Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment (TMSFA)

| Strategy | Frequency of Implementation | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|--------|-----------|--------------|------------|
| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Occasionally | Frequently |
| Administer the Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment (TMSFA) (n=939) | 33% | 15% | 17% | 22% | 13% |
| Interpret the results of the Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment (TMSFA) (n=932) | 33% | 15% | 17% | 23% | 12% |

Source: TALA Teacher Participant Survey

The fact that a large majority of ELA teacher participants (89%) said they were incorporating TALA strategies into their instruction at least “to some degree” indicates that TALA Grade 6 ELA

teacher participants were integrating what they learned at TALA into their classroom instruction, or that they were already using similar strategies in their instruction. Participating ELA teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which they were incorporating what they learned at the TALA training into their instruction or the extent to which they were helping other teachers incorporate strategies and practices into their own instruction. Of the 971 ELA teachers who responded to this question, almost half of them (47%) said they were incorporating TALA into their instruction “to some degree”, while about one-third of them said they were incorporating TALA “quite a bit” (35%), and another 7% said they were incorporating TALA “a great deal” into their instruction. Only about 10% of ELA teachers indicated that they were incorporating TALA “very little” (9%) or “not at all” (2%).

Participating teachers were asked to identify barriers to their implementation of TALA. The few ELA teachers who were not incorporating TALA at all said it was because: (a) they were using other strategies, (b) they were already using these strategies, or (c) they were overwhelmed or did not have the time. The ELA teachers who were incorporating TALA very little had: (a) chosen one or two specific strategies, (b) used the strategies with specific groups of students, or (c) had not incorporated TALA much because they did not have time.

Even the ELA teachers who are incorporating TALA “to some degree” still seem to be incorporating only one or two specific strategies. In addition, a few of these teachers said they would have implemented more if they could remember what they had learned. One ELA teacher who responded “to some degree” stated, “It has been so long since I attended the training that I must confess I may have forgotten some of the wonderful things that were presented.” These teachers are the ones who may benefit from job-embedded professional development because it would give them an opportunity to try additional TALA strategies or learn ways to incorporate TALA strategies into existing lessons.

Summary of the Classroom Implementation of TALA in ELA Classrooms

This chapter presented findings from the evaluation of the quality and level of ongoing implementation of the TALA training in the classroom by participating ELA teachers based on data from samples of these teachers who were observed, completed the online follow-up training, and who were surveyed. To the extent possible, evaluators developed strategies to gather information from a representative sample of ELA teachers. All participating ELA teachers were able to complete the online follow-up training and were invited to complete the survey, while only a small percentage of participating teachers were observed in the classroom. While the data were not necessarily statistically representative of the population of TALA participating ELA teachers, the findings are based on data from participants from TALA Grade 6 ELA academies spanning the 20 ESCs of Texas.

Teachers who attended TALA Grade 6 ELA academies are implementing the TALA content and strategies in their classrooms in many ways, including:

- About 9 out of 10 ELA teachers surveyed are incorporating TALA into their instruction at least to some degree.
- A majority of observed ELA teachers (71%) implemented general TALA strategies (e.g., fostering student engagement, providing explicit instruction, providing feedback to students).

- ELA teachers who were observed implemented vocabulary instructional routines (81%), comprehension instructional routines (66%), word study routines (25%), monitoring comprehension routines (12%), and fluency routines (5%).
- ELA teachers reported more frequent classroom implementation of identifying main ideas in text, defining words, and building background knowledge than other TALA Tier I instructional routines.
- ELA teachers indicated that they are implementing Tiers II and III instructional routines:
 - ◆ To help struggling readers,
 - ◆ To reinvigorate their teaching using new methods, and
 - ◆ To help students develop skills that will help them become better readers across all subjects.
- The TMSFA is not used as widely as the TALA instructional routines by the ELA teachers, with 35% of ELA teachers reporting they occasionally or frequently administer and/or interpret the TMSFA, and 33% reporting that they have never administered or interpreted results from the TMSFA.

Of the ELA teachers who use the TMSFA, 32% indicated that the areas of need that were identified for the majority of their students were decoding, fluency, and comprehension; 50% indicated that areas of need that were identified were fluency and comprehension; and 18% indicated the area of need was comprehension only. Since the law specifies the use of the TMSFA for grade 7 only, the use of the assessment by grade 6 teachers is encouraging.

5. Classroom Implementation of TALA: Grade 6 Content Area Classrooms

This chapter includes evaluation findings related to the quality and level of implementation of the TALA training by participating content area teachers (Objective #2 of the evaluation plan). Data collected through three activities are presented: (a) observations of a sample of TALA content area teacher participants' classrooms, (b) online follow-up training in which TALA content area teacher participants documented their implementation of TALA instructional strategies in their classrooms, and (c) the survey of TALA content area teacher participants.

This chapter addresses the following questions:

- What are the professional and demographic characteristics of participating teachers?
- In what ways are trained teachers implementing the TALA content and/or strategies?
 - ♦ To what extent are content area teachers (science, social studies, mathematics) incorporating TALA instructional routines and strategies into their instruction?
- What do teachers perceive as the barriers and facilitators to implementing TALA content/strategies in the classroom?
- How has participation in the TALA training affected classroom literacy practices?

Observations of TALA Grade 6 Content Area Classrooms

As described in Chapter 2 (Evaluation Approach) and in the previous chapter on ELA classroom observations, classroom observers completed two standard protocols. These two instruments were used by observers during and after the classroom observations: (a) the Classroom Observation Instrument (COI) was used by observers to collect data on the implementation of general reading strategies (comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency), as well as grouping arrangements and usage of text; and (b) the TALA-Specific Classroom Observation Instrument (TALA-COI) was used by observers to gather data about the implementation of TALA-specific routines (general, vocabulary, comprehension, word study, fluency, and inferential comprehension).

Implementation of General Reading Strategies

The previous chapter on ELA classroom observations provides a specific description of the COI used by observers to collect data on the implementation of general reading strategies. This chapter covers the implementation of general reading strategies in observed content area classrooms.

Comprehension

Eight comprehension teaching behaviors were observed using the COI during each interval of each lesson when the content area teacher's primary purpose of the lesson was to teach comprehension:

1. The teacher/student activates prior knowledge and/or previews text before reading.
2. The teacher provides explicit comprehension instruction that teaches students about text structure.
3. The teacher provides explicit comprehension instruction that teaches students how to use strategies such as, main idea, summarizing, drawing conclusions, visualizing events, making predictions during and after reading, evaluating predictions, identifying fact vs. opinion, monitoring for comprehension.
4. The teacher provides explicit comprehension instruction that teaches students how to generate questions.
5. The teacher provides explicit comprehension instruction that teaches text features to interpret text.
6. The teacher asks students to justify their responses.
7. The teacher asks questions based on material in the text that are beyond the literal level.
8. The teacher elaborates, clarifies, or links concepts during and after text reading.

The first teaching behavior was observed before reading actually occurred; behaviors 2-4 were observed before, during or after reading; and behaviors 5-8 were observed during or after reading. To add another dimension to the observations of comprehension components, observers recorded frequencies of each behavior across three different instructional strategies to see where each behavior intersected with each strategy: the teacher modeling (equal to “I Do” in TALA strategies); the teacher explaining, reviewing, or providing examples or elaborations (equal to “We Do” in TALA strategies); and the student practicing (equal to “You Do” in TALA strategies).

Of the content area teachers observed, 49% had students practice how to elaborate, clarify, or link concepts during and after text reading (behavior 8), and on average, this was observed 13 times across all intervals across all observations. Likewise, about one-third (35%) of the content area teachers had students practice generating questions based on material in the text that were beyond the literal level, and this was observed about 10 times across all intervals across all observations. These were the two most frequently observed comprehension teaching behavior across all content area teachers’ classrooms.

Table J-9 in Appendix J includes the frequency and percentage of content area classrooms in which the comprehension teaching behaviors were observed, as well as the average number of times each comprehension teaching behavior was observed across all content area classrooms.

Vocabulary

Six vocabulary teaching behaviors were observed using the COI during each interval of each lesson when the content teacher’s primary purpose of the lesson was to teach vocabulary:

1. The teacher provides an explanation and/or a definition or asks a student to read a definition.
2. The teacher provides: a) examples; b) contrasting examples; c) multiple meanings; d) immediate elaborations to students’ responses.
3. The teacher uses visuals/pictures, gestures related to word meaning, facial expressions, or demonstrations to discuss/demonstrate word meanings.
4. The teacher teaches word learning strategies - using context clues, word parts, root meaning.
5. Students do or are asked to do something that requires knowledge of words.

6. Students are given an opportunity to apply word learning strategies - using context clues, word parts, root meaning.

The two most frequently observed teaching behaviors in content area classrooms were students did or were asked to do something that required knowledge of words (behavior 5) and teachers provided examples, contrasting examples, multiple meanings, or immediate elaborations to students' responses (behavior 2), which were each observed during 32 of the 37 observations (86%). Additionally, both of these teaching behaviors were observed more times than any other behavior, about 15 times on average, across all intervals in these classrooms where these behaviors were observed. This evidence suggests that TALA Grade 6 content area teacher participants were more frequently instructing students about vocabulary using strategies that are more conducive to content area lessons, like building on students' previous knowledge of words and less frequently using more advanced strategies like word learning strategies (using context clues, word parts, and root meaning).

Table J-10 in Appendix J includes the frequencies and percentages of Grade 6 content area classrooms in which each of the six vocabulary teaching behaviors were observed, and the average number of times each teaching behavior was observed in those classrooms.

Fluency

Fluency instructional routines were not observed in any content area classrooms (out of a possible 37), though one observer did note general fluency work in the TALA-specific portion of the instrument (see the section on the TALA-specific components presented later in this chapter).³⁵ This is not surprising, but is concerning, given that fluency often is not taught to adolescent readers.

Grouping Arrangements

Grouping arrangements could change during the course of each interval, and the observers were asked to mark all of the grouping arrangements that they observed during each interval. Therefore, each column may add to more than 100%. The majority of ELA teachers who were observed (74%) tended to present the lesson to the whole class across all six 10-minute intervals, while some teachers worked with individual students (25%), small groups (16%), or pairs (14%). This indicates that only a handful of content area teachers, similar to ELA teachers, who were observed were using the TALA general strategies that involved grouping students. Table 5.1 shows the frequency and percentage of content area classrooms in which each grouping arrangement was observed per interval. The "total" column includes the total number of tallies across all intervals observed in content area classrooms.

³⁵ Fluency instruction was not part of TALA professional development for content area teachers.

Table 5.1: Grouping Arrangements Observed in Sixth Grade Classrooms of TALA Grade 6 Content Area Teacher Participants

| Grouping Arrangements | Interval | | | | | | Total |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|------------|
| | I | II | III | IV | V | VI | |
| Whole class (\geq 75% of class) | 30 (81%) | 28 (76%) | 28 (76%) | 11 (58%) | 5 (71%) | 1 (33%) | 103 (74%) |
| Large groups (> 6 students, <75% of class) | 2 (5%) | 2 (5%) | 1 (3%) | 1 (5%) | 1 (14%) | 1 (33%) | 8 (6%) |
| Small groups (3-6 students) | 2 (5%) | 5 (14%) | 7 (19%) | 4 (21%) | 3 (43%) | 2 (67%) | 23 (16%) |
| Pairs | 3 (8%) | 4 (11%) | 6 (16%) | 3 (15%) | 2 (29%) | 1 (33%) | 19 (14%) |
| An individual | 10 (27%) | 11 (30%) | 9 (24%) | 4 (21%) | 1 (14%) | 0 (0%) | 35 (25%) |
| Total Classrooms | 37 | 37 | 37 | 19 | 7 | 3 | 140 |

Source: Classroom Observations TALA Grade 6 Content Area Teachers (N=37)

Note: Each column may add to > 100% since grouping arrangements may have changed during each interval observed.

Usage of Text

Table 5.2 shows the frequency and percentage of content area classrooms in which the reading of connected text was observed per interval. The “total” column includes the total number of intervals across all Content classrooms. Looking at the first three intervals (which were observed in all lessons), about half of the content area teachers used text.

Table 5.2: Usage of Text Observed in Sixth Grade Classrooms of TALA Grade 6 Content Area Teacher Participants

| Usage of Text | Interval | | | | | | Total |
|-------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|------------|
| | I | II | III | IV | V | VI | |
| Text Being Used | 19 (51%) | 21 (57%) | 20 (54%) | 9 (47%) | 4 (57%) | 2 (67%) | 75 (54%) |
| Text Not Being Used | 18 (49%) | 16 (43%) | 16 (43%) | 9 (47%) | 3 (43%) | 1 (33%) | 63 (45%) |
| Not sure | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 1 (3%) | 1 (5%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 2 (1%) |
| Total Classrooms | 37 | 37 | 37 | 19 | 7 | 3 | 140 |

Source: Classroom Observations TALA Grade 6 Content Area Teachers (N=37)

Note: Each column may add to > 100% since the usage of text may have changed during each interval observed.

Implementation of TALA Specific Instructional Routines

The TALA-COI was designed to collect information about the implementation of TALA-specific general instructional strategies and routines (vocabulary, comprehension, word study, fluency, and inferential comprehension). Observers were instructed to complete this protocol as soon as the observation was completed so that the observation was fresh in their minds. Observers relied heavily on their field notes taken during the observation to complete this instrument. The TALA-COI is a checklist with main questions and sub-items under each question. Observers were instructed to read each item and indicate whether or not the routines were addressed at any point throughout the entire lesson observed. If the TALA routine was observed, follow-up questions were often listed (but not always) to capture more detail about each routine or practice. Therefore, if the observer responded “yes” to the main question, then the sub-items

under that main question were also answered. Observers were to “select all that apply” to all sub-items.

General Instructional Strategies

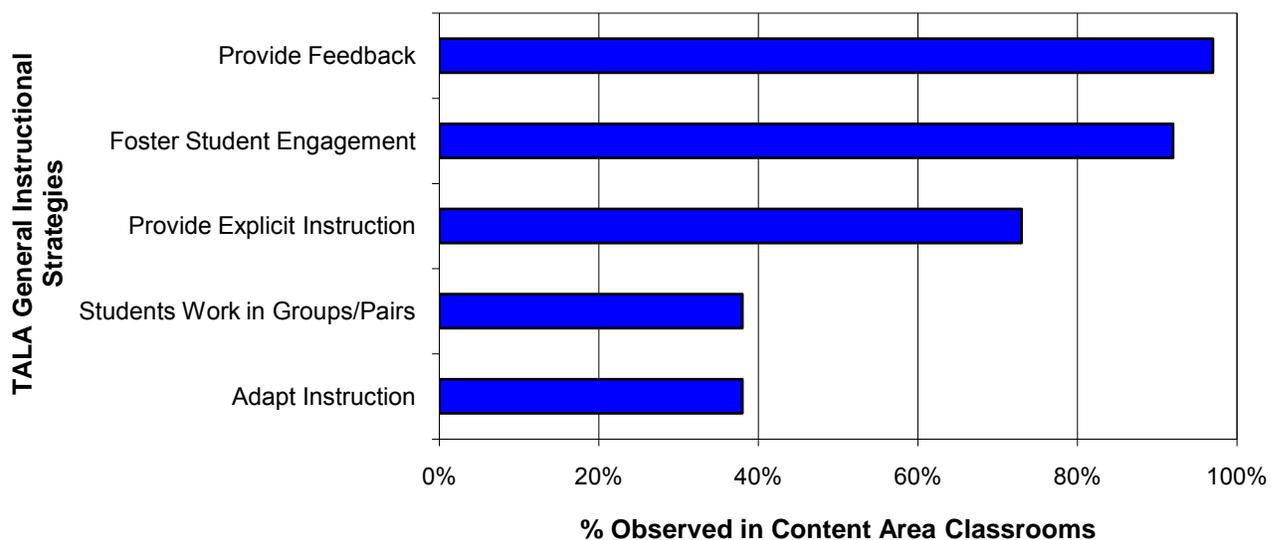
Five main questions relating to the general instructional strategies taught in TALA as observed during each lesson were:

1. Did the teacher adapt instruction during the lesson?
2. Did the teacher foster student engagement?
3. Did the teacher provide explicit instruction?
4. Did the teacher provide feedback to the students?
5. Did the students work in groups?

If the general instructional strategy was observed, then observers were prompted to respond to a series of sub-items (if applicable) to indicate whether or not specific aspects of each general instructional strategy were observed. These questions and sub-items aligned with the general instructional strategies taught in TALA.

Results from the 37 content area classroom observations are presented in Figure 5.1. The figure illustrates that 97% of the observed content area teachers provided feedback to the students, while 92% of the teachers fostered student engagement and 73% of the teachers provided explicit instruction. Only 38% of the observed content area teachers adapted instruction during the observed lessons. The students worked in groups during 38% of the observations.

Figure 5.1: Observations of Content Area Teachers’ Implementation of TALA General Instructional Strategies (N=37)



Source: TALA Classroom Observations

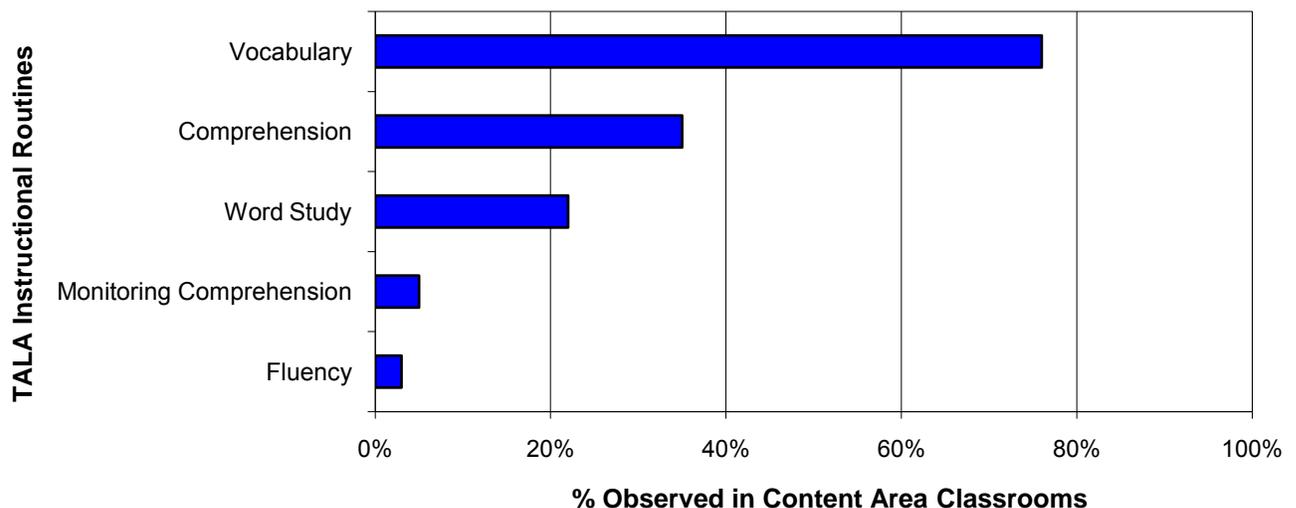
Table J-3 in Appendix J lists the five main questions about the TALA-specific general instructional strategies along with how many and what percentage each was observed during

the 37 content area classroom observations. In addition, the sub-items (if applicable) are listed under each of the main questions.

TALA Instructional Routines

Observers were instructed to record the occurrence of the TALA instructional routines in the content area teachers' classrooms. This included vocabulary, comprehension, word study, fluency, and inferential comprehension routines. Figure 5.2 illustrates the percentage of classrooms where each routine was observed. Vocabulary and comprehension instructional routines (Tier I) were observed most frequently, with fewer observations of word study, fluency, and inferential comprehension routines (Tier II/III routines). The following sections provide greater details about the implementation of Tier I and II/III routines in the content area teachers' classrooms.

Figure 5.2: Observations of Content Area Teachers' Implementation of TALA Instructional Routines (N=37)



Source: TALA Classroom Observations

Vocabulary. Observers were instructed to indicate whether the lesson included vocabulary instruction, and if so, which TALA vocabulary instructional routines were observed during each lesson. Questions about these vocabulary instructional routines included:

1. Did the teacher pre-teach vocabulary words?
2. Did the teacher teach academic vocabulary words?
3. Did the teacher teach content-specific vocabulary words?
4. Did the teacher teach the vocabulary words by pronouncing words, defining words, identifying characteristics of the words, or generating examples and/or non-examples of the words?
5. Did the teacher use everyday language to explain the meaning of vocabulary words?
6. Did the teacher use the *Fruyer Model* (i.e., a graphic organizer) to teach vocabulary?

Observers noted that 76% of the content area lessons observed included vocabulary instruction, and the most common type of words taught were content-specific words (86% of the time). The

most common vocabulary instructional routine, used by content area teachers in 93% of the observed lessons (26 of the 28 observed lessons where vocabulary instruction was observed), was teachers used everyday language to explain the meaning of vocabulary words. As would be expected, this was the opposite of the ELA classrooms where the ELA teachers were observed teaching academic words more frequently than content-specific words. The content area teachers taught the vocabulary words mostly by generating examples of defining the words (82% of the time). The least observed method of teaching vocabulary words was generating non-examples of the words (32% of the time). One-fifth of the content area teachers used the *Frustration Model* to teach vocabulary during the observed content area lessons.

Table J-12 in Appendix J describes the TALA-specific vocabulary instructional routines with the frequencies and percentages of the observations of the 37 content area classrooms.

Comprehension. Observers were instructed to indicate whether the lesson included comprehension instruction, and if so, which TALA comprehension instructional routines were observed during each lesson. Questions about these comprehension instructional routines included:

1. Did the teacher build upon the students' background knowledge prior to reading the text?
2. Did the teacher use *Anticipation-Reaction Guides*?
3. Did the teacher instruct the students to identify the main ideas of the text?
4. Did the teacher state the primary focus of the text, connect the text to prior learning, identify the main ideas of each paragraph, record important details related to the main ideas, and/or compose a main idea of the section statement?
5. Did the teacher use the *Notes Log* when teaching about main ideas?
6. Did the teacher use the *Get the Gist* routine to find the main ideas of the paragraph?
7. Did the teacher instruct the students to summarize the text?
8. Did the teacher use the *Notes Log* when teaching about writing summaries?

Observers indicated that 13 out of 37 observed lessons included comprehension instruction (35%). The most commonly observed comprehension instructional routine was teachers building upon the students' background knowledge prior to reading the text (observed in 85% of the lessons). None of the content area teachers were observed using the *Notes Log* or using the *Get the Gist* routine when teaching about main ideas, and none of the teachers used the *Anticipation Reaction Guides*. The most common ways that teachers instructed the students to identify the main ideas of the text were by identifying the main ideas of each paragraph and recording important details related to the main ideas (each observed in 31% of the 13 lessons), and the least common way was connecting the text to prior learning (observed in only two lessons). The teachers instructed the students to summarize the text 23% of the time.

Table J-13 describes the comprehension instructional practices with the frequencies and percentages of the 37 observations in the content classrooms.

Word Study. Observers were instructed to indicate whether the lesson included word study instruction, and if so, which TALA word study instructional routines were observed during each lesson. Questions about these word study instructional routines included:

1. Did the teacher instruct students to recognize syllable patterns, and if so, what types of syllable patterns were taught?

2. Did the teacher instruct students to recognize morphemes by using various strategies?
3. Did the teacher instruct students to use the *morphemic analysis routine* to determine the meaning of words by using various strategies?

The observed content area lessons included word study 22% of the time (during 8 of the 37 observed lessons) although word study was not part of TALA professional development for content area teachers. The teachers instructed the students to recognize syllable patterns during one of the lessons. The most commonly seen word study instructional practice was students using the morphemic analysis routine to determine the meaning of words, which was observed in 88% of the 8 lessons during which word study instruction was observed.

Table J-14 in Appendix J describes the word study instructional practices with the frequencies and percentages of the 37 observations in the content area classrooms.

Fluency. Observers were instructed to indicate whether the lesson included fluency instruction, and if so, which TALA fluency instructional routines were observed during each lesson. Questions about these fluency instructional routines included:

1. Did the teacher read the passage aloud?
2. Did the students engage in partner reading?

Only one of the observed content area lessons included fluency instruction. Fluency instruction was not part of TALA professional development for content area teachers; therefore, the evaluation team did not expect to observe it in the content area teachers' classrooms. Table J-15 in Appendix J describes fluency instructional practices with the frequencies and percentages of the 37 observations in the content area classrooms.

Inferential Comprehension. Observers were instructed to indicate whether the lesson included monitoring comprehension, and if so, which TALA inferential comprehension instructional routines were observed during each lesson. Questions about these inferential comprehension instructional routines included:

1. Did the teacher explain the purpose for generating questions while reading?
2. Did the teacher show students how to generate questions while reading?
3. Did the students use question cards?

Throughout all observations of content area classrooms, monitoring comprehension was observed only twice. Inferential comprehension strategies were not part of TALA professional development for content area teachers. Table J-15 in Appendix J describes inferential comprehension with the frequencies and percentages of the 37 observations in the content area classrooms.

TALA Online Follow-Up Grade 6 Content Area

TALA Grade 6 content area academy participants were required to complete a half-day practicum follow-up with online documentation to be submitted between September and December 2008 in order to receive the second half of their stipends (\$125) and to obtain a Continuing Professional Education (CPE) certificate. Content area teachers had to submit online documentation for one Tier I activity. Tier I includes general strategies and instructional routines

(in vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency) that are implemented schoolwide and affect all students in the school.

Characteristics of the TALA Grade 6 Content Area Teacher Online Follow-Up Participants

As expected, most of the TALA Grade 6 content area teacher participants implemented the literacy instructional routine in mathematics, science, and social studies courses. Table 5.3 lists all the course subjects in which the instructional routines were implemented in Tier I.

Table 5.3: Subject of the Classes in Which Grade 6 Content Area Teacher Participants Implemented TALA - Tier I

| Course Subject | Tier I (n=1037) |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| English language arts | 1% |
| Reading | 1% |
| ESL | 1% |
| Special Education | 4% |
| Mathematics | 40% |
| Science | 30% |
| Social Studies | 23% |

Source: Online Follow-Up Training Database

As shown in Table 5.4, a large majority of the TALA Grade 6 content area teacher participants implemented the literacy instructional routine in classes with sixth grade students, while other instructional routines were implemented in classes with a mix of students in Grades 6-8.

Table 5.4: Grade Level of Students Enrolled in the Classes in Which TALA Grade 6 Content Area Teacher Participants Implemented TALA - Tier I

| Grade Level | Tier I (n=1037) |
|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Grade 6 | 91% |
| Combination of Grades 6-8 | 9% |

Source: Online Follow-Up Training

Table 5.5 shows the number of students who were in the class in which TALA Grade 6 content area teacher participants implemented the literacy instructional routines. Tier I instructional routines were implemented most frequently in classes with 21 to 30 students. This is what would be expected given that Tier I strategies would be used with all students.

Table 5.5: Number of Students Who Were in the Classes in Which Grade 6 Content Area Teacher Participants Implemented TALA - Tier I

| Number of Students | Tier I (n=1037) |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 1-10 students | 8% |
| 11-20 students | 30% |
| 21-30 students | 54% |
| 31-40 students | 4% |
| More than 40 students | 4% |

Source: Online Follow-Up Training Database

Characteristics of the Instructional Routines that were Implemented by TALA Grade 6 Content Area Online Follow-Up Participants

Table 5.6 details the length of time TALA Grade 6 content area teacher participants spent planning the lesson in which they implemented the instructional routine in Tier I. About 34% of the teachers spent 20 minutes or less to plan Tier I lessons, 30% spent 30 minutes, and the remaining 36% spent 45 minutes or more.

Table 5.6: Length of Time TALA Grade 6 Content Area Teacher Participants Spent Planning the Lesson in Which the Instructional Routine was Implemented in Tier I

| Time | Tier I (n=1037) |
|-------------|-----------------|
| 10 minutes | 3% |
| 15 minutes | 12% |
| 20 minutes | 19% |
| 30 minutes | 30% |
| 45 minutes | 20% |
| 1 hour | 8% |
| Over 1 hour | 8% |

Source: Online Follow-Up Training Database

Table 5.7 shows the phases of explicit instruction process (I Do, We Do, You Do). Content area teachers most frequently reported that they implemented We Do: Teacher-assisted explicit instruction (53%), followed by I Do: Modeling (24%), and We Do: Peer-assisted explicit instruction (16%). You Do: Independent Practice was the phase that was least commonly implemented by about 7% of teachers in Tier I.

Table 5.7: Phase of the Three-Step Explicit Instruction Process in Which TALA Grade 6 Content Area Teacher Participants Implemented the Online Follow-Up Activity in Tier I

| Phase of Explicit Instruction Process | Tier I (n=2277) |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| I Do: Modeling | 24% |
| We Do: Teacher-assisted | 53% |
| We Do: Peer-assisted | 16% |
| You Do: Independent Practice | 7% |

Source: Online Follow-Up Training

Table 5.8 lists the TALA instructional routines that TALA Grade 6 content area teacher participants implemented. The most frequently implemented Tier I routine was the *Fray Model*

to generate examples and nonexamples (52%), followed by pronouncing and defining words (21%). The *Fraye Model* was implemented more frequently by content area teachers than by ELA teachers as part of the online follow-up.

Table 5.8: Instructional Routines Implemented for Online Follow-Up Activity by TALA Grade 6 Content Area Teacher Participants

| Phase of Explicit Instruction Process | Tier I (n=1037) |
|--|-----------------|
| Generating Examples and Nonexamples (<i>Fraye Model</i>) | 52% |
| Pronouncing and Defining Words | 21% |
| Partner Reading & Active Involvement | 12% |
| Using Anticipation-Reaction Guides | 6% |
| Composing Main Idea Statements (<i>Notes Log</i>) | 5% |
| Composing Summaries (<i>Notes Log</i>) | 4% |

Source: Online Follow-Up Training Database

TALA Grade 6 content area teacher participants were asked to explain why they chose to implement a particular routine. Responses centered around several different reasons. For Tier I instructional routines, content area teachers indicated that they implemented these routines for similar reasons as reported by ELA teachers (e.g., to differentiate instruction, to address the needs of specific groups of students), but also added subject-specific reasons. Many respondents indicated that these strategies were valuable in helping students develop their reading skills while learning in content area classes. Table 5.9 illustrates some of these reasons by listing a sample open-ended responses from content area teachers who selected each Tier I routine.

Table 5.9: Sample Open-Ended Responses from Participating Content Area Teachers Who Selected to Implement Each Instructional Tier I Routine for Online Follow-Up Activity

| TALA Tier I Instructional Routine | Sample Open-Ended Response |
|--|--|
| Generating Examples and Nonexamples (<i>Fraye Model</i>) | —We were working on a unit on the properties of matter. We were looking at both the physical and chemical properties when I chose to use the <i>Fraye Model</i> . Students often get these 'mixed up' when trying to decide if something is a physical or chemical property. The <i>Fraye Model</i> gave the students the opportunity to see clearly via the definition and characteristics the difference between the examples and non-examples. The examples and non-examples generated helped them be able to identify properties with more success as the unit went on." |
| Pronouncing and Defining Words | —I chose this module because I have several students who struggle with learning vocabulary and pronouncing the correct syllables. My ESL students particularly struggle with this concept. After observing this struggle from my ESL students, I implemented this strategy in my classroom. I noticed that instead of sitting idly and looking lost, these students began to actively participate in the lesson." |
| Partner Reading & Active Involvement | —In my class, there is such a wide range of reading levels. I really felt that pairing students according to their achievement level would benefit the lower students and help them understand the text better." |
| Using Anticipation-Reaction Guides | —I have chosen this lesson because I teach social studies, and I have a multicultural class. By having a multicultural class and teaching geography is very important to relate the students' background to what they are learning. Once students have shared their background, this creates a more interactive environment and the anticipation-reaction to the lesson will have a greater benefit for all. Therefore as the lecture is being presented, students are able to understand more the concepts and create a mental image of the new vocabulary they are acquiring." |

| TALA Tier I Instructional Routine | Sample Open-Ended Response |
|---|---|
| Composing Main Idea Statements (<i>Notes Log</i>) | —Social studies is composed of informational texts that students skim over and do not comprehend as well as fictional or novel reading. Students are required to learn facts and characteristics about geography and culture. I chose [this routine] to help my students read the text and comprehend the information by using the ‘I Do, We Do, and You Do’ while filling in a graphic organizer of the text.” |
| Composing Summaries (<i>Notes Log</i>) | —We were composing summaries over the steps that must be taken when working with problems that involve the long division. I chose this because the students often have a difficult time remembering the precise steps needed to solve these types of problems. We included the summaries in our math journals.” |

Source: Online Follow-Up Training Database (N=1037)

Nearly all of the TALA Grade 6 content area teacher participants reported that the lessons they implemented were successful. Table 5.10 lists the exact percentages for Tier I.

Table 5.10: TALA Grade 6 Content Area Teacher Participants’ Indication of the Success of the Lesson Implemented for the Online Follow-Up Activity in Tier I

| Lesson Successful/Information Useful | Tier I (n=1037) |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| No | 1% |
| Yes | 99% |

Source: Online Follow-Up Training Database

For content area teachers who believed that the lesson was successful and that the information presented was useful, they said it was because of things like students being more engaged, students scoring higher on benchmark assessments, and students exhibiting higher skill levels in the areas addressed by the lesson (e.g., comprehension, vocabulary, fluency). For content area teachers who did not believe that the lesson was successful and that the information presented was not useful, they said it was because of things like:

- The low reading ability of the majority of students in the class and students with learning disabilities in the area of reading/language.
- They needed to reorganize the lesson.
- The length of time it took to complete the activity.
- More reinforcement is needed to improve the students' long term memory.
- Students not completing the lesson.

One content area teacher who did not feel that the lesson was successful stated, “I felt that many of the students were unable to see the main idea of word problems due to their inability to organize details and facts into a numerical sentence or expression. The students struggled with common math terms such as: evaluate, factor, solution, difference, and sum.”

Survey of Grade 6 Content Area Teachers

This section includes findings from the survey of TALA Grade 6 content area teacher participants regarding the implementation of TALA Tier I general instructional routines and strategies.

Implementation of Tier I General Instructional Routines

Content area teachers were asked how often they actually used seven TALA instructional routines (literacy-based) and instructional strategies (general teaching practices) from the TALA Grade 6 content area academy in their classrooms:

1. Selecting words
2. Pronouncing words
3. Defining words
4. Generating examples and nonexamples
5. Building background knowledge
6. Identifying main ideas in text
7. Writing summaries

Table 5.11 depicts the frequency with which content area teachers actually implemented each of these seven instructional routines from the TALA training. Nearly 60% of content area teachers reported using the defining words routine frequently. Nearly 60% reported generating examples and nonexamples, and 46% reported building background knowledge frequently. Of these routines, writing summaries is implemented the least among content area teachers; only 20% reported that they used the routine frequently.

Table 5.11: TALA Grade 6 Content Area Teacher Participants' Reported Implementation of Tier I Instructional Routines

| Routine | Frequency of Classroom Implementation | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|--------|-----------|--------------|------------|
| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Occasionally | Frequently |
| Selecting words (n=818) | 4% | 8% | 27% | 30% | 31% |
| Pronouncing words (n=820) | 3% | 7% | 22% | 29% | 39% |
| Defining words (n=819) | 2% | 3% | 13% | 23% | 59% |
| Generating examples and nonexamples (n=819) | 2% | 5% | 16% | 37% | 40% |
| Building background knowledge (n=818) | 2% | 4% | 17% | 31% | 46% |
| Identifying main ideas in text (n=817) | 5% | 8% | 20% | 32% | 35% |
| Writing summaries (n=812) | 8% | 14% | 26% | 32% | 20% |

Source: TALA Teacher Participant Survey

Content area teachers also were asked how often they actually used six TALA instructional strategies (general teaching practices) from the TALA Grade 6 content area academy in their classrooms:

1. Adapt instruction to structure learning opportunities for all students
2. Foster student engagement
3. Group or pair students
4. Facilitate partner reading
5. Actively involve students (i.e., Think-Pair-Share, Tell-Help-Check, Generate-Share)
6. Provide explicit instruction using scaffolding (i.e., I Do, We Do, You Do)

As illustrated by Table 5.12, content area teachers' use of six TALA strategies varied. More than 85% of teachers used the strategy, fostering student engagement, at least occasionally while less than 60% used the strategy, facilitating partner reading, at least occasionally. The use of the other four strategies varied between these two amounts.

Table 5.12: TALA Grade 6 Content Area Teacher Participants' Reported Implementation of TALA Tier I Strategies

| Strategy | Frequency of Implementation | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|--------|-----------|--------------|------------|
| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Occasionally | Frequently |
| Adapt instruction to structure learning opportunities for all students (n=808) | 1% | 2% | 17% | 27% | 53% |
| Foster student engagement (n=805) | 1% | 2% | 11% | 23% | 63% |
| Group or pair students (n=808) | 1% | 3% | 14% | 28% | 54% |
| Facilitate partner reading (n=807) | 7% | 13% | 22% | 34% | 24% |
| Actively involve students (i.e., Think-Pair-Share, Tell-Help-Check, Generate-Share) (n=806) | 3% | 6% | 18% | 33% | 40% |
| Provide explicit instruction using scaffolding (i.e., I Do, We Do, You Do) (n=803) | 4% | 10% | 21% | 28% | 37% |

Source: TALA Teacher Participant Survey

Content area teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which they were incorporating what they learned at the TALA training into their instruction. Table 5.13 shows that, of the 759 content area teachers who responded to this question, almost half of them said they were incorporating TALA into their instruction “to some degree” (49%), while about one-third of them said they were incorporating TALA “quite a bit” (33%), and another 6% said they were incorporating TALA “a great deal” into their instruction. Only about 12% of ELA teachers indicated that they were incorporating TALA “very little” (9%) or “not at all” (2%).

Table 5.13: Extent to Which Content Area Teachers are Incorporating What They Learned at the TALA Training into Their Instruction

| Extent Incorporating TALA Into Instruction | % Selecting Each (n=759) |
|--|--------------------------|
| A Great Deal | 6% |
| Quite a Bit | 33% |
| To Some Degree | 49% |
| Very Little | 9% |
| Not At All | 3% |

Source: TALA Teacher Participant Survey

The fact that a large majority of content area teacher participants (88%) said they were incorporating TALA strategies into their instruction at least “to some degree” indicates that TALA Grade 6 content area teacher participants were integrating what they learned at TALA into their classroom instruction, or they were already incorporating similar TALA instructional strategies in their classrooms already. However, when asked to identify the ways in which they were incorporating what they learned at the TALA training into their instruction, content area teachers still identified barriers to their implementation of TALA. The few content area teachers who were “not incorporating TALA at all” said it is because: (a) they felt that TALA was not worth the time, (b) personnel reasons (e.g., changed positions), or (c) they have not made the time to incorporate TALA yet. The content area teachers who were incorporating TALA very little typically reported that they: (a) are using one specific strategy, (b) do not make the time to

incorporate TALA, (c) do not want to take time away from their curriculum to incorporate TALA routines, or (d) do not remember what they learned from TALA.

Like the ELA teachers reporting similar answers, the content area teachers who are incorporating TALA “to some degree” still seem to be incorporating only one or two specific strategies. In addition, a few of these teachers said that, since they teach a content area and reading, they automatically incorporate these strategies into their instruction.

Summary of the Classroom Implementation of TALA in Content Area Classrooms

This chapter presented findings from the evaluation of the quality and level of ongoing implementation of the TALA training in the classroom by participating content area teachers based on data from samples of these teachers who were observed, completed the online follow-up training, and who were surveyed. To the extent possible, evaluators developed strategies to gather information from a representative sample of content area teachers. All participating content area teachers were able to complete the online follow-up training and were invited to complete the survey, while only a small percentage of participating content area teachers were observed in the classroom. While the data were not necessarily statistically representative of the population of TALA content area participating teachers, the findings are based on data from participants from TALA Grade 6 content area academies spanning the 20 ESCs of Texas.

Content area teachers (science, social studies, mathematics) who attended TALA Grade 6 content area academies also are implementing the TALA content and strategies in their classrooms in many ways, including:

- About 9 out of 10 content area teachers surveyed are incorporating TALA into their instruction at least to some degree.
- A majority of observed content area teachers implemented general TALA strategies (e.g., fostering student engagement, providing explicit instruction, providing feedback to students).
- Content area teachers who were observed implemented vocabulary instructional routines (76%) comprehension instructional routines (35%), and word study routines (20%).
- Content area teachers reported more frequent classroom implementation of defining words, building background knowledge, and generating examples and nonexamples than other strategies.
- Content area teachers also reported that they frequently adapt instruction to structure learning opportunities for all students, foster student engagement, and group or pair students.

6. Campus Factors Influencing TALA Implementation

Campus support is critical to the success of any school-wide initiative (Leithwood, Jantzi, & McElheron-Hopkins, 2006; Murphy, 2004). This chapter includes findings related to the implementation of TALA from the teacher participant survey and administrator survey. Since TALA is based on a schoolwide approach, teacher participants were asked to rate certain aspects of the campus factors influencing TALA implementation at their campuses. This includes perceptions of campus support for TALA, the degree to which ELA and content area teachers attended TALA training, and the frequency of meetings about TALA with other teachers and administrators. Campus administrators were asked their perceptions of campus support for TALA, the degree to which ELA and content area teachers attended TALA training, and potential outcomes of TALA.

This chapter addresses the following questions:

- How has participation in the TALA training affected classroom literacy practices?

Level of Teacher Participation

Because TALA is based on a schoolwide approach, participating teachers and campus administrators were asked to indicate the degree to which ELA and content area teachers attended TALA training. As shown in Table 6.1, the majority of ELA teachers (92%) reported that one or more sixth grade ELA/reading teachers from their campuses attended TALA, whereas 72% of content area teachers and 67% of administrators reported that one or more ELA/reading teachers from their campuses attended TALA. Content area teachers (21%) and administrators (13%) were more likely to report that they did not know how many ELA/reading teachers from their campuses attended TALA than ELA teachers (7%).

Table 6.1: Number of Sixth Grade ELA/Reading Teachers from Respondents' Campuses Who Attended TALA

| Participation of Grade 6 ELA/Reading Teachers from Respondents' Campuses | ELA (n=940) | CA (n=806) | Admin (n=264) |
|--|-------------|------------|---------------|
| Most or all of the ELA/reading teachers from my campus(es) | 44% | 43% | 37% |
| A few of the ELA/reading teachers from my campus(es) | 32% | 19% | 14% |
| One of the ELA/reading teachers from my campus(es)/ Just me | 16% | 10% | 16% |
| None of the ELA/reading teachers from my campus(es) | 1% | 7% | 20% |
| I do not know | 7% | 21% | 13% |

Source: TALA Teacher Participant Survey; TALA Administrator Survey

Table 6.2 shows that the majority of content area teachers (88%) reported that one or more sixth grade content area teachers from their campuses attended TALA, whereas 50% of ELA/reading teachers and administrators reported that one or more content area teachers from their campuses attended TALA. Administrators (41%) were more likely to report that they did not know how many content area teachers from their campuses attended TALA than content area teachers (10%) or ELA teachers (28%).

Table 6.2: Number of Sixth Grade Content Area Teachers from Respondents' Campuses Who Attended TALA

| Participation of Grade 6 Content Area Teachers from Respondents' Campuses | ELA (n=940) | CA (n=806) | Admin (n=264) |
|---|-------------|------------|---------------|
| Most or all of the content area teachers from my campus(es) | 22% | 39% | 23% |
| A few of the content area teachers from my campus(es) | 20% | 35% | 18% |
| One of the content area teachers from my campus(es)/ Just me | 8% | 14% | 9% |
| None of the content area teachers from my campus(es) | 22% | 2% | 34% |
| I do not know | 28% | 10% | 41% |

Source: TALA Teacher Participant Survey; TALA Administrator Survey

Overall, ELA teacher participants were more knowledgeable about other ELA/reading teachers from their campuses attending TALA (93%) than they were about content area teachers from their campuses attending TALA (72%). Content area teacher respondents were more knowledgeable about other content area teachers from their campuses (90%) than they were about ELA/reading teachers from their campuses attending TALA (79%). This indicates that perhaps the ELA teachers are not talking to the content area teachers at their campuses about TALA. Since TALA takes a schoolwide approach, communication between ELA/reading teachers and content area teachers is critical to the success of TALA implementation in schools.

Campus Support for TALA

Teachers were asked about the regularity of meetings with other teachers and administrators. Table 6.3 presents the frequency with which teachers reported meeting with each of five groups of teachers (ELA/reading teachers, mathematics teachers, science teachers, social studies teachers, and other teachers) at their home campuses after attending the TALA training. ELA teachers (78%) reported meeting with other ELA/reading teachers at least once or twice since the TALA training. Less than 40% of ELA teacher respondents met with other content area teachers at their schools at least once or twice. Content area teachers reported meeting with ELA/reading teachers much more than with any of the other subject teachers (52% met at least once or twice). Less than 43% of content area teachers reported meeting with other content area teachers at least once or twice.

Table 6.3: Frequency of Meetings with Groups of Teachers about TALA Implementation

| | Never | | Once or Twice | | About Once a Month | | More than Once a Month | |
|-------------------------|-------|-----|---------------|-----|--------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|
| | ELA | CA | ELA | CA | ELA | CA | ELA | CA |
| ELA/reading teachers | 22% | 48% | 45% | 34% | 17% | 9% | 16% | 9% |
| Mathematics teachers | 67% | 56% | 22% | 24% | 7% | 9% | 4% | 11% |
| Science teachers | 67% | 55% | 23% | 25% | 6% | 10% | 4% | 10% |
| Social studies teachers | 64% | 57% | 25% | 24% | 7% | 9% | 4% | 10% |
| Other teachers | 68% | 72% | 22% | 19% | 7% | 5% | 3% | 4% |

Source: TALA Teacher Participant Survey

Table 6.4 presents the frequency with which teachers report meeting with each of three groups of administrators at their home campuses after attending the TALA training. Overall, 56% of ELA teachers met with campus administrators like the principal and assistant principal at least once or twice, 45% met with curriculum specialists at least once or twice, and 25% met with other administrators. About one-third of content area teachers had met with curriculum

specialists about TALA implementation, and 43% had met with campus administrators such as the principal or assistant principal. Content area teachers were less likely to have met with administrators at least once or twice than were ELA teachers.

Table 6.4: Frequency of Meetings with TALA Administrators about TALA Implementation

| | Never | | Once or Twice | | About Once a Month | | More than Once a Month | |
|--|-------|-----|---------------|-----|--------------------|----|------------------------|----|
| | ELA | CA | ELA | CA | ELA | CA | ELA | CA |
| Campus administrators (e.g., principal, assistant principal) | 44% | 57% | 44% | 32% | 9% | 7% | 3% | 4% |
| Curriculum specialists | 55% | 68% | 30% | 21% | 10% | 7% | 5% | 4% |
| Other administrators | 75% | 79% | 18% | 14% | 5% | 5% | 2% | 2% |

Source: TALA Teacher Participant Survey

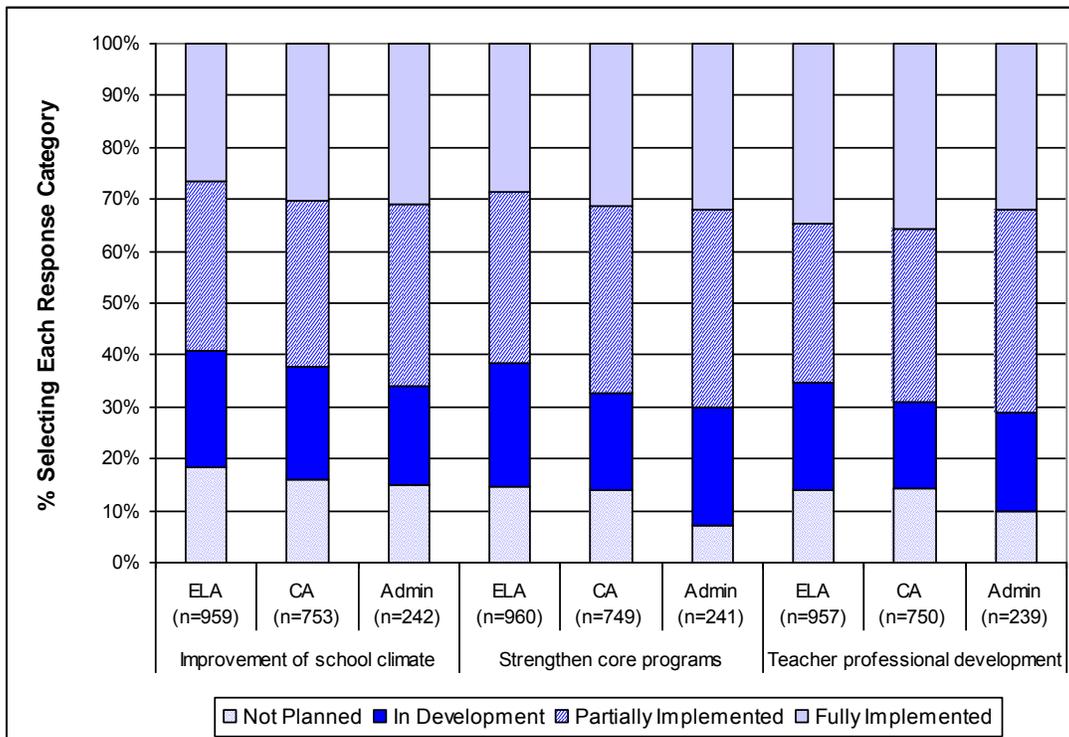
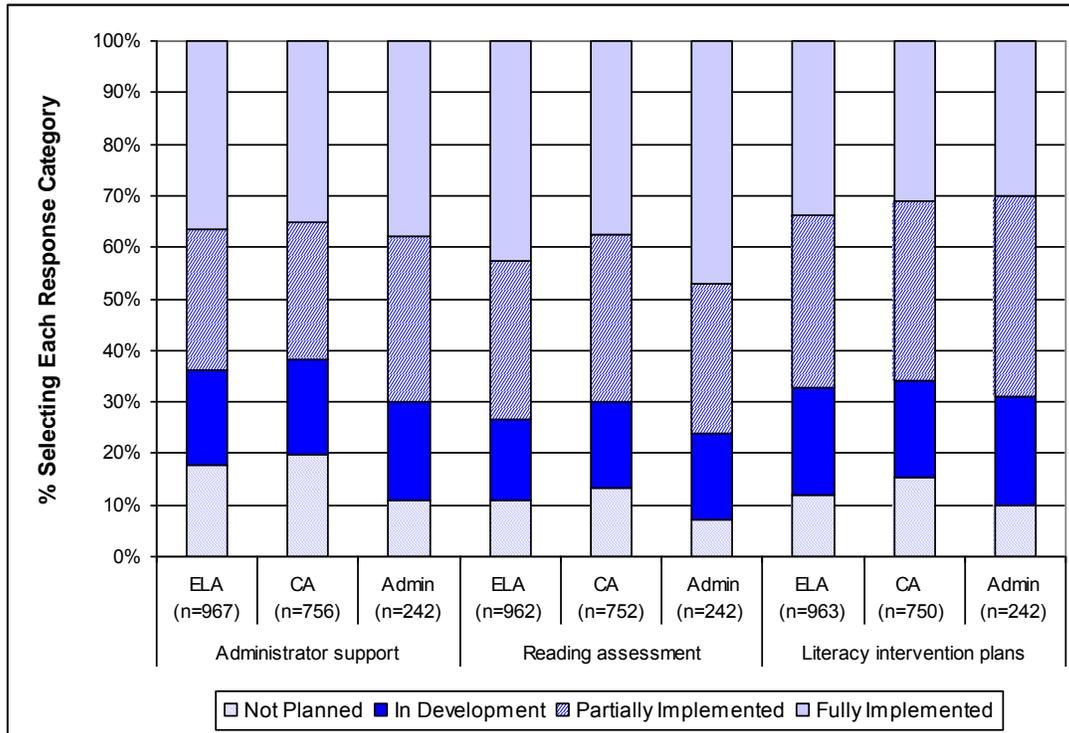
Teachers and administrators were asked to report on the level of development of policies in their schools. Figure 6.1 presents the perceptions of the level of development of six policies at their campuses that support the implementation of TALA:

1. Administrator support
2. Reading assessment
3. Literacy intervention plans
4. Improvement of school climate
5. Strengthening of core programs
6. Teacher professional development

Every policy was partially or fully implemented in 60% or more of ELA and content area teacher respondents' schools. Most ELA (75%) and content area teachers (70%) reported that assessment of students in reading was at least partially implemented at their campuses. The campus policies in support of TALA that were least developed at ELA and content area teachers' campuses were improvement of school climate and support from administrators.

Administrators indicated to what degree policies and practices are being implemented at their campuses to support TALA. Well over half of administrators reported that each of these policies was at least partially implemented at their campuses. Over three-fourths (77%) of administrators reported that assessment of students in reading was at least partially implemented at their campuses. Administrators were more likely to report that a policy was partially or fully implemented at their campus and less likely to report that a policy was not planned than ELA or content area teachers.

Figure 6.1: Perceptions of Campus Support for TALA



Source: TALA Teacher Participant Survey; TALA Administrator Survey

Potential Outcomes

Administrators indicated to what extent they felt certain outcomes would be achieved at their campuses, which are listed in Table 6.5. These include:

1. Help teachers design appropriate instruction and curriculum
2. Improve student achievement (TAKS scores) at your campus
3. Help adolescent students who struggle with reading
4. Improve student outcomes in reading/English language arts
5. Improve student outcomes in the content areas (social studies, science, and math)

Over half of the administrators responding to the survey (52%) indicated that they believe TALA Grade 6 will help adolescent students who struggle with reading “quite a bit” or “a great deal.” In addition, 49% of the administrators thought TALA Grade 6 will improve student outcomes in ELA/reading, while only 41% thought TALA Grade 6 would improve student outcomes in the content areas.

Table 6.5: Extent to Which Administrators believe TALA Grade 6 Will Achieve Various Outcomes at Their Campuses

| Outcomes | Not at All | Very Little | To Some Degree | Quite A Bit | A Great Deal |
|--|------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|
| Help teachers design appropriate instruction and curriculum. (n=243) | 2% | 7% | 45% | 35% | 11% |
| Improve student achievement (TAKS scores) at your campus. (n=243) | 2% | 7% | 46% | 33% | 12% |
| Help adolescent students who struggle with reading. (n=243) | 2% | 6% | 40% | 37% | 15% |
| Improve student outcomes in reading/English language arts. (n=243) | 2% | 7% | 42% | 36% | 13% |
| Improve student outcomes in the content areas (social studies, science, and math). (n=243) | 3% | 7% | 49% | 31% | 10% |

Source: TALA Administrator Survey

Summary of the Campus Factors Influencing TALA Implementation

This chapter examined the teacher participant survey and administrator survey to provide insight on the campus support for TALA implementation. More than half of ELA and content area teachers (60%) reported that policies and practices to support TALA schoolwide were partially or fully implemented at their campuses. These supports included:

- Support from administrators
- Assessment of students in reading
- Creation of literacy intervention plans
- Improvement of school climate
- Strengthening of core instructional programs
- Provision of teacher professional development

At least 66% of administrators responded that these same supports were partially or fully implemented at their campuses. The results from the administrator survey suggest that TALA was perceived as having the potential to improve student achievement outcomes to some degree, including those who are struggling readers.

7. Impact of TALA on Grade 6 Student Achievement

This evaluation investigates the effect of TALA on grade 6 student achievement in reading and mathematics as measured by TAKS. In addition, the impact of TALA on at-risk student achievement is assessed. The relationship between TALA participating teachers' characteristics (e.g., job satisfaction) and student achievement is also examined.

This chapter addresses the following questions:

- How has TALA training affected TAKS scores in reading and language arts?
- How has TALA training affected TAKS scores in math?
- How has TALA training affected reading progress and overall achievement of at-risk students?
- Students with special education needs
- Students with limited English proficiency
- Students from low SES environment
- How are TALA trained teacher characteristics/behaviors related to student achievement?
- How is teacher job satisfaction related to student achievement?
- How is teacher implementation of TALA strategies related to student achievement?

The TALA instructional routines were designed to provide evidence-based techniques for teaching reading. After attending TALA, teachers would have a variety of routines to add to their teaching techniques. Teachers from campuses with an academically unacceptable rating in reading were required to attend TALA (n=21) and all other campuses were invited to attend. Grade 6 TALA training occurred in summer 2008 and teachers implemented the routines during the 2008-09 school year. Therefore, the achievement data are based on one year of program implementation.

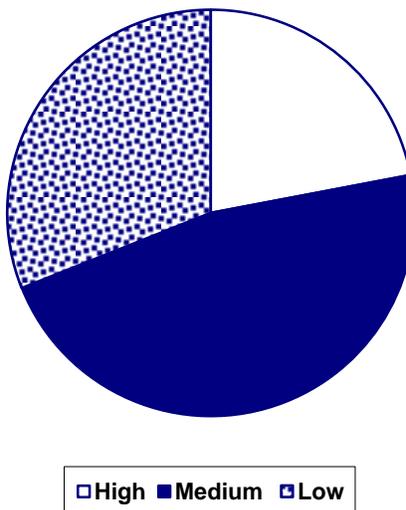
Effect of TALA on Grade 6 Student Achievement in Reading

The evaluation team examined the effect of TALA on grade 6 student achievement. The percentage of students who met the standard on the reading TAKS was used as an outcome in campus-level analyses. Prior to conducting the analyses, the evaluation team classified the TALA campuses by level of implementation. Merely attending an academy is not an adequate indicator of the implementation of the instructional routines in the classroom. TALA was intended as a school-wide approach to increase adolescent literacy; however, individual teachers receive the training. The evaluation team's assumption is that attending an academy in the summer, completing the online follow-up, and reporting that routines are being implemented in the classroom would indicate a greater likelihood that the students are experiencing the TALA instructional routines in the classroom. To gather a closer approximation to implementation in the classroom, the evaluation team created a school-level implementation of TALA measure that comprises several variables:

- Percentage of Grade 6 teachers who attended TALA at the campus/school.
- Percentage of TALA participants from each school/campus who completed the Online Follow-up Documentation.
- Teacher self-reported implementation of the TALA instructional routines and strategies in the TALA Teacher Participant Survey aggregated to the campus level.
- Campus support as reported in the Administrator Survey and TALA Teacher Participant Survey aggregated to the campus level.

The level of implementation score was used to divide campuses into low, medium, and high TALA implementers. The classification resulted in 105 high implementing campuses, 224 medium implementing campuses, and 148 low implementing campuses (Figure 7.1). More information on the development of the level of TALA implementation is provided in Appendix K.

Figure 7.1: Proportion of TALA High Implementing, Medium Implementing, and Low Implementing Campuses



Comparison of High Implementing TALA Campuses to Matched Non-TALA Campuses

To investigate the relationship between TALA and grade 6 student reading achievement, the performance of campuses in which teachers did not participate in TALA (referred to as non-TALA campuses) were compared to the high implementing TALA campuses.³⁶ TEA does not have data that connect students' TAKS scores to their individual teachers, so it was not possible to list the individual students who had TALA teachers and those who did not. Therefore, the evaluation team analyzed the relationship between campus-level TALA/non-TALA status and the percentage of students meeting the TAKS standard at the campus level. High implementing

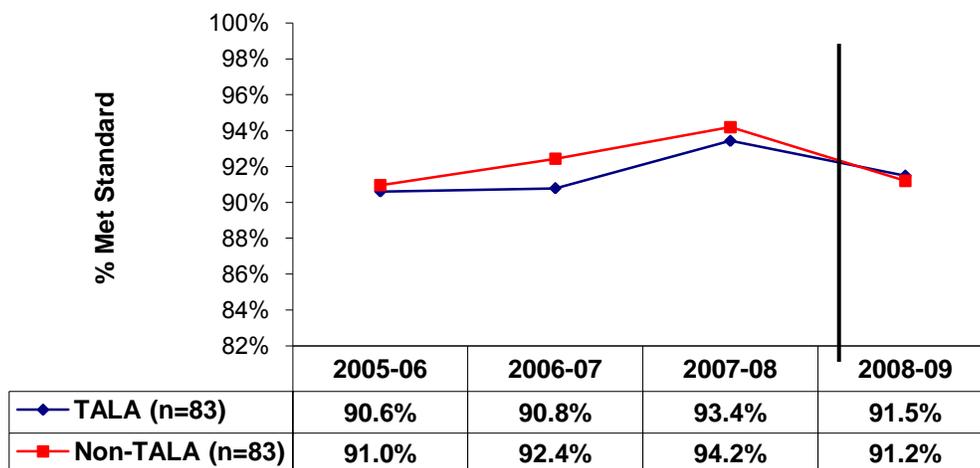
³⁶ High implementing TALA campuses are those with high teacher participation rates, high online follow-up completion rates, frequent self-reported implementation of TALA routines, and high levels of campus support for TALA.

TALA campuses were matched with non-TALA campuses using propensity score matching (PSM), which is a method that matches campuses on similar observable characteristics.³⁷ More detailed information about the PSM analyses can be found in Appendix L.

Changes in Grade 6 TAKS Reading Scores since 2005-06

The trends presented in Figure 7.2 represent changes in the percentage of grade 6 students meeting the TAKS reading standards. The overall trend across time shows gradual and significant improvements from 2005-06 to 2007-08. The effect size for this difference was moderate for both TALA (ES =.45) and non-TALA campuses (ES =.44).³⁸ Both TALA campuses and non-TALA campuses experienced a significant increase in the percentage of grade 6 students meeting the standard in grade 6 reading from 2006-07 to 2007-08. This effect was moderate for TALA campuses (ES =.42) and small for non-TALA campuses (ES =.28). This increase was followed by a decline in percentage of grade 6 students meeting the standard in 2008-09. Both high implementing TALA campuses and non-TALA campuses experienced a slight decrease in passing rates one year following the TALA training. The effect size for this difference was moderate for TALA and non-TALA campuses (ES = .33 and .36, respectively). Although there were significant differences across time, there were no significant differences in reading achievement between TALA and non-TALA campuses.

Figure 7.2: Grade 6 TAKS Reading Achievement Over Time: TALA High Implementing Campuses and Non-TALA campuses



Source: 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08 TAKS; preliminary 2008-09 TAKS

³⁷ PSM was used to match campuses on the following characteristics: (1) percent of Grade 6 students eligible for the free or reduced-price lunch program, (2) percent of Grade 6 Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students, (3) Grade 6 enrollment, (4) percent of Grade 6 students passing TAKS reading, (5) percent of Grade 6 students passing TAKS math, (6) school size, (7) locality of school, (8) campus type, and (9) instructional type.

³⁸ An effect size (ES) is a way of determining the practical or “real world” significance of a statistic by reducing the impact of sample size.

Comparison of TALA Campuses

In addition to comparisons made between TALA and non-TALA campuses, the evaluation team examined differences among participating TALA campuses (high, medium, and low implementers). TALA campuses were divided according to the average percent of grade 6 students who met the standard in reading for the implementing campuses in 2007-08 (*above the mean* and *at or below the mean*).³⁹ The TALA campuses were compared using the categories in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1: TALA Campus Classification Matrix

| | | Academic Performance | |
|---------------------|--------|---|-------------------------------------|
| | | At or Below the Mean | Above the Mean |
| TALA Implementation | High | High Implementing/ At or Below the Mean | High Implementing/ Above the Mean |
| | Medium | Medium Implementing/ At or Below the Mean | Medium Implementing/ Above the Mean |
| | Low | Low Implementing/ At or Below the Mean | Low Implementing/ Above the Mean |

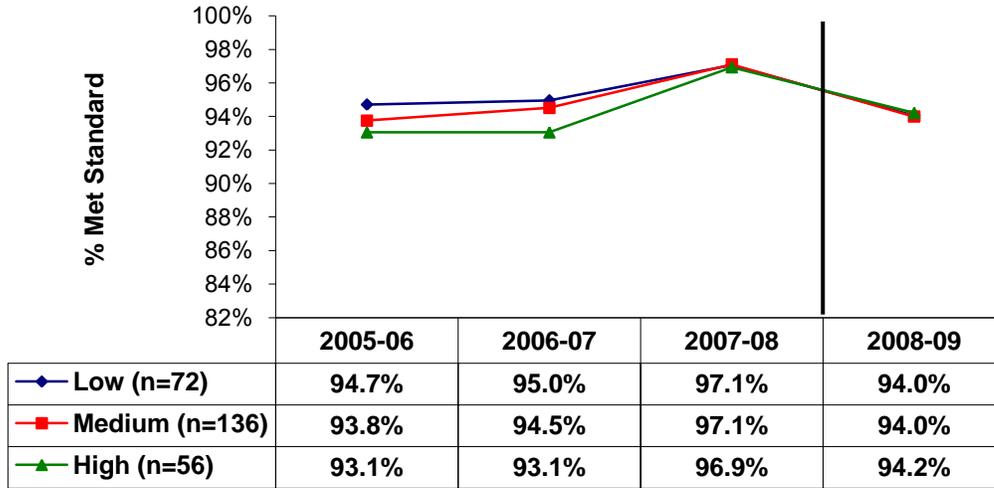
Changes in Grade 6 TAKS reading scores were compared across time within each group.

The trends presented in Figure 7.3 represent changes in the percentage of grade 6 students meeting the TAKS reading standards in the TALA campuses classified as *above the mean*. For all campuses (low, medium, and high), the percent of grade 6 students meeting the standard in TAKS reading significantly increased from 2005-06 to 2007-08 and from 2006-07 to 2007-08. All campuses experienced a significant decrease in the percentage of grade 6 students meeting the standard from 2007-08 to 2008-09. Although there were significant differences across time, there were no significant differences in grade 6 reading achievement between low, medium, and high implementing campuses.

Figure 7.4 illustrates the trends in grade 6 reading achievement for the TALA campuses classified as *at or below the mean*. Only low implementing campuses had significant changes in the percentage of grade 6 students who met the standard in reading across time. The percentage of grade 6 students meeting the standard in TAKS reading significantly increased from 2005-06 to 2007-08 and from 2006-07 to 2007-08. This was followed by a significant decrease in the percentage of grade 6 students meeting the standard from 2007-08 to 2008-09. There were no significant differences in grade 6 reading achievement between low, medium, and high implementing campuses.

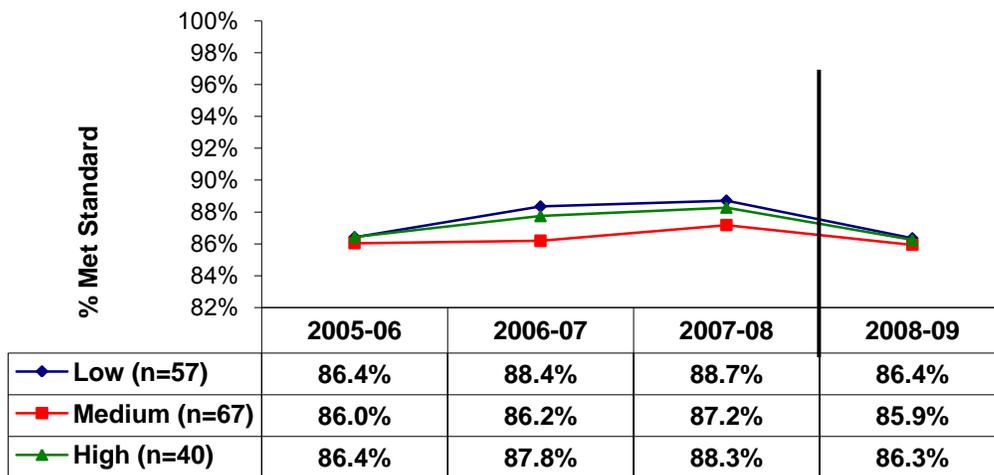
³⁹ The mean percent of students who met the standard on the Grade 6 reading TAKS in 2007-08 was 93.5. Since one of the intended outcomes of TALA is to improve student reading achievement, the evaluation team (in consultation with TEA) decided to categorize TALA campuses according to the average percentage of students who met the standard in Grade 6 reading (*above the mean* and *at or below the mean*). Very few campuses were below the state average so a decision was made to group campuses that were at or below the state average.

Figure 7.3: Grade 6 TAKS Reading Achievement Over Time: Implementation by “Above the Mean”



Source: 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08 TAKS; preliminary 2008-09 TAKS

Figure 7.4: Grade 6 TAKS Reading Achievement Over Time: Implementation by “At or Below the Mean”



Source: 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08 TAKS; preliminary 2008-09 TAKS

Effect of TALA on Grade 6 Student Achievement in Math

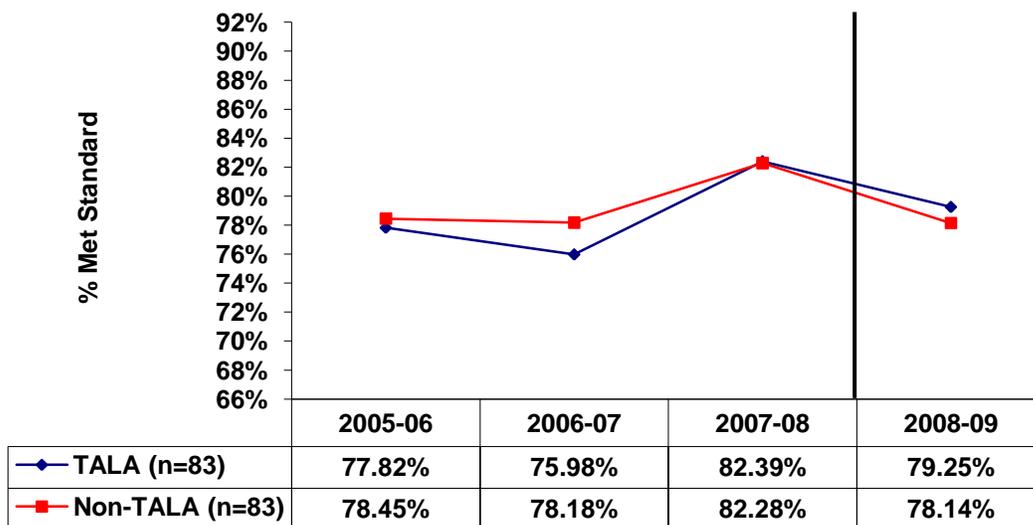
Comparison of High Implementing TALA Campuses to Matched Non-TALA Campuses

High implementing TALA campuses were compared to non-participating campuses in terms of grade 6 math achievement.

Changes in Grade 6 TAKS Math Scores since 2005-06

The trend analysis in Figure 7.5 showed that there were changes in the percent of grade 6 students passing the TAKS math standards. The trends of TALA campuses mirrored the non-TALA campus trends. High implementing TALA campuses experienced a significant decrease in the percentage of grade 6 students meeting the math standard from 2005-06 to 2006-07 (ES=.13; a small effect), followed by a significant increase in 2007-08 (ES=.47; a moderate effect). Non-TALA campuses also experienced a significant increase in the percentage of grade 6 students meeting the math standard from 2006-07 to 2007-08 (ES=.28). Both TALA campuses and non-TALA campuses experienced a significant decrease in the percentage of grade 6 students meeting the standard in math from 2007-08 to 2008-09. This effect was small for TALA campuses (ES =.26) and small for non-TALA campuses (ES =.31). Although there were significant differences across time, there were no significant differences in grade 6 math achievement between TALA and non-TALA campuses.

**Figure 7.5: Grade 6 TAKS Math Achievement Over Time:
TALA High Implementing Campuses and Non-TALA campuses**



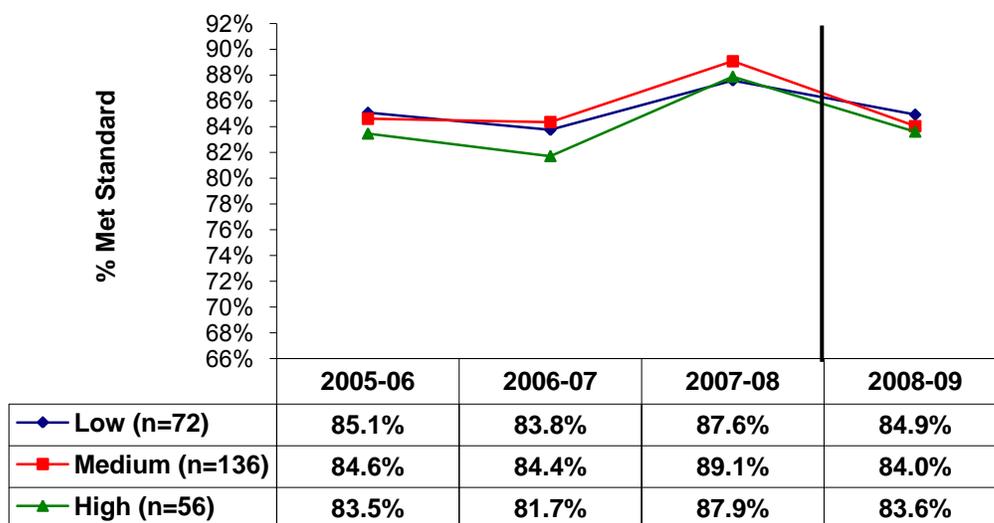
Source: 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08 TAKS; preliminary 2008-09 TAKS

Comparison of TALA Campuses

Changes in Grade 6 TAKS math scores were compared across time within each group.

Figure 7.6 illustrates the trends in grade 6 math achievement for the TALA campuses classified as *above the mean* on average percent of grade 6 students who met the TAKS math standard in 2007-08. For all campuses (low, medium, and high), the percent of grade 6 students meeting the standard in TAKS math significantly increased from 2005-06 to 2007-08 and from 2006-07 to 2007-08. All campuses experienced a significant decrease in the percentage of grade 6 students meeting the standard from 2007-08 to 2008-09. Although there were significant differences across time, there were no significant differences in grade 6 math achievement between low, medium, and high implementing campuses.

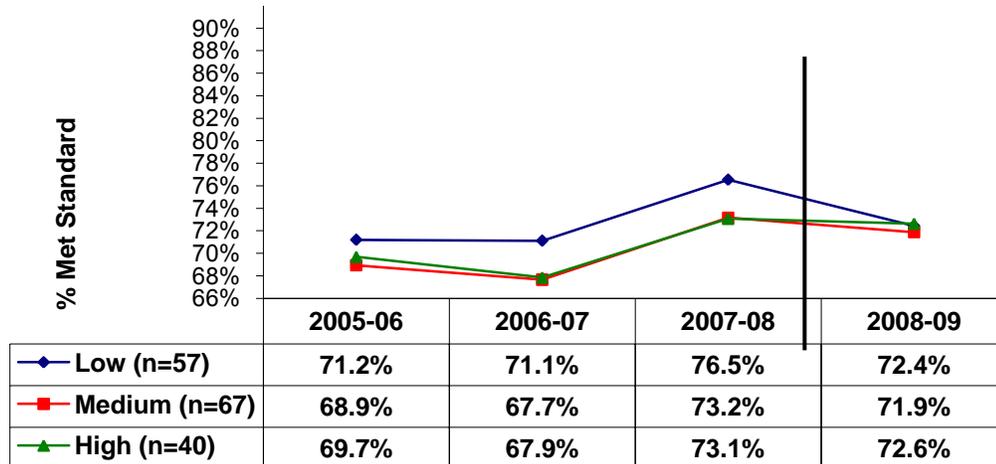
Figure 7.6: Grade 6 TAKS Math Achievement Over Time: Implementation by “Above the Mean”



Source: 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08 TAKS; preliminary 2008-09 TAKS

The trends presented in Figure 7.7 illustrate changes in the percentage of grade 6 students meeting the TAKS math standard for the TALA campuses classified as *at or below the mean*. For low implementing campuses, the percent of grade 6 students meeting the standard in TAKS math significantly increased from 2005-06 to 2007-08 and from 2006-07 to 2007-08. Medium and high implementing campuses also experienced a significant increase from 2006-07 to 2007-08. Although all three groups experienced a decrease in the number of grade 6 students who met the math TAKS standard from 2007-08 to 2008-09, only the low implementing campuses experienced a significant decrease. There were no significant differences in grade 6 math achievement between low, medium, and high implementing campuses.

Figure 7.7: Grade 6 TAKS Math Achievement Over Time: Implementation by “At or Below the Mean”



Source: 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08 TAKS; preliminary 2008-09 TAKS

Effect of TALA on At-Risk Student Achievement

The evaluation team examined the change in TAKS reading and math scores across TALA campuses (high, medium, and low implementing) for at-risk grade 6 student groups. The at-risk groups included special education students, students with limited English proficiency (LEP), and economically disadvantaged students. The team used student level TAKS scores and the 2008-09 campus as the identifier for the student to track change over time (since 2007-08).

Grade 6 Special Education Students

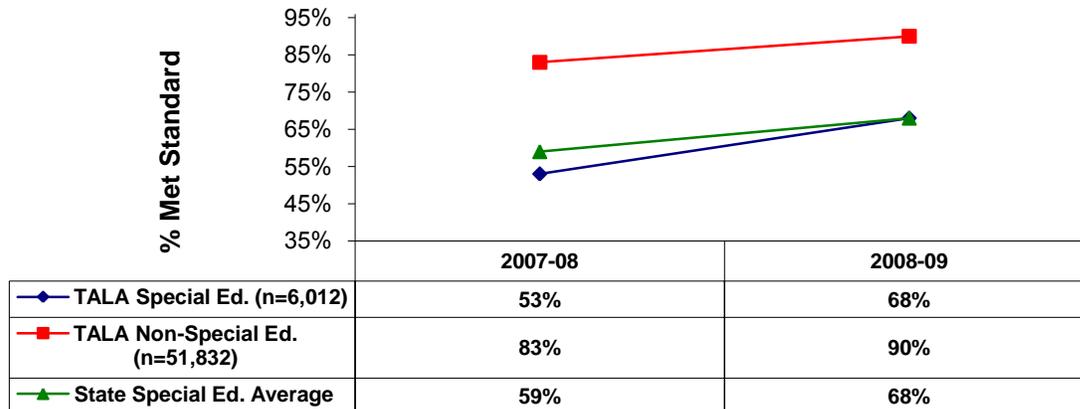
On TAKS reading, the rate of increase in the percentage of students who met the passing standard after one year of TALA implementation was greater for TALA special education students than for either TALA non-special education students or for the state special education population as a whole. This was not true for TAKS mathematics.

The percentage of TALA grade 6 special education students who met the standard in reading significantly increased since 2007-08. The percentage of grade 6 non-special education students who met the standard also significantly increased. The percentage of special education students who met the standard in reading increased by 15 percentage points, whereas the increase for non-special education students was 7 percentage points. The state average for special education students increased from 59% meeting the standard in reading in 2007-08 to 68% meeting the standard in reading in 2008-09.

Additionally, the percentage of special education who met the standard in math increased from 52% in 2007-08 to 54% in 2008-09. However, the percentage of non-special education students who met the standard in math significantly decreased since 2007-08 for math (from 84% to 79%). The state average for special education students increased from 39% meeting the

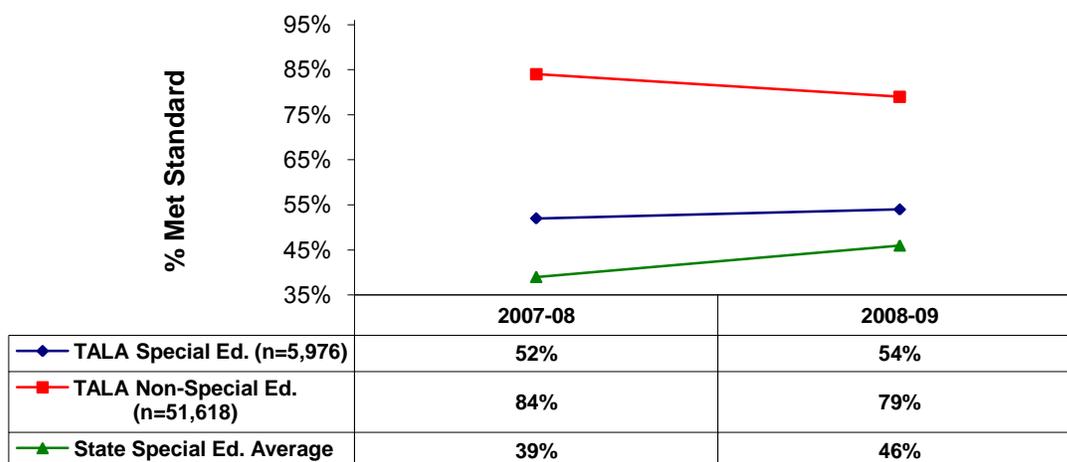
standard in math in 2007-08 to 46% meeting the standard in math in 2008-09. Figure 7.8 illustrates the change in the percentage of students who met the standard in reading, and Figure 7.9 illustrates the change in the percentage of students who met the standard in math for both special education and non-special education students.

**Figure 7.8: TAKS Reading Achievement:
Special Education Students and Non-Special Education Students**



Source: 2007-08 TAKS; preliminary 2008-09 TAKS

**Figure 7.9: TAKS Math Achievement:
Special Education Students and Non-Special Education Students**



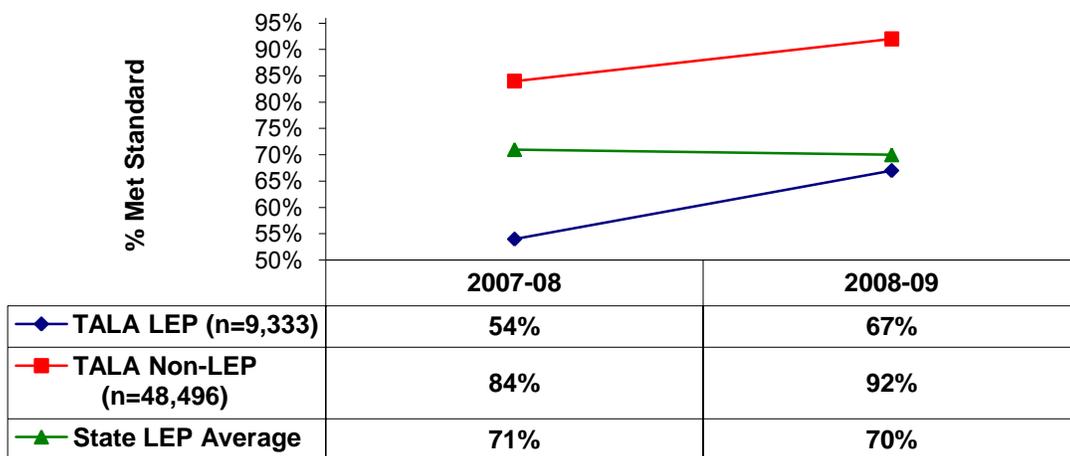
Source: 2007-08 TAKS; preliminary 2008-09 TAKS

Grade 6 Students with Limited English Proficiency

On TAKS reading, the rate of increase in the percentage of students who met the passing standard after one year of TALA implementation was greater for TALA LEP students than for TALA non-LEP students. On TAKS mathematics, the percentage of students who met the passing standard after one year of TALA implementation remained the same for TALA LEP students whereas the rate decreased for TALA non-LEP students.

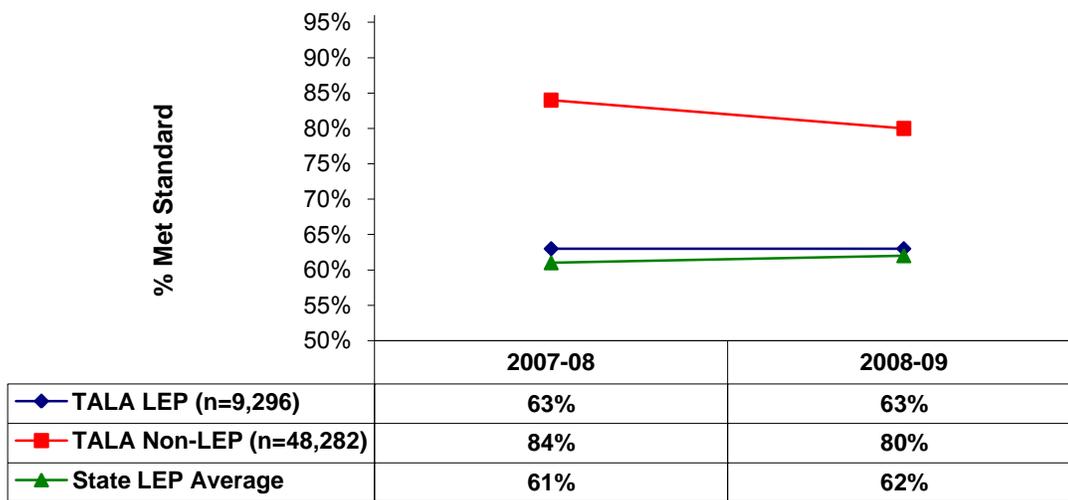
The percentage of grade 6 LEP students who met the standard in reading significantly increased since 2007-08. The percentage of grade 6 non-LEP students who met the standard also significantly increased. The percentage of LEP students who met the standard in reading increased by 13 percentage points, whereas the increase for non-LEP students was 8 percentage points. The state average for LEP students decreased from 71% meeting the standard in reading in 2007-08 to 70% meeting the standard in reading in 2008-09. Additionally, the percentage of LEP student who met the standard in math remained the same with 63% meeting the standard in 2007-08 and 2008-09. However, the percentage of non-LEP students who met the standard in math significantly decreased since 2007-08 for math. The state average for LEP students slightly increased from 61% meeting the standard in math in 2007-08 to 62% meeting the standard in math in 2008-09. Figure 7.10 illustrates the change in the percentage of students who met the standard in reading, and Figure 7.11 illustrates the change in the percentage of students who met the standard in math for both LEP and non-LEP students.

Figure 7.10: TAKS Reading Achievement: LEP Students and Non-LEP Students



Source: 2007-08 TAKS; preliminary 2008-09 TAKS

Figure 7.11: TAKS Math Achievement: LEP Students and Non-LEP Students



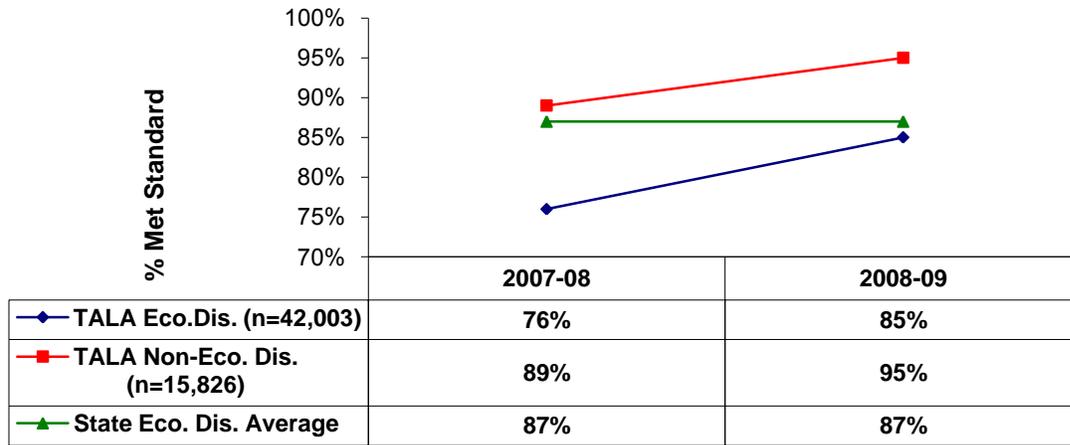
Source: 2007-08 TAKS; preliminary 2008-09 TAKS

Grade 6 Economically Disadvantaged Students

On TAKS reading, the rate of increase in the percentage of students who met the passing standard after one year of TALA implementation was greater for TALA economically disadvantaged students than for TALA non- economically disadvantaged students. This was not true for TAKS mathematics.

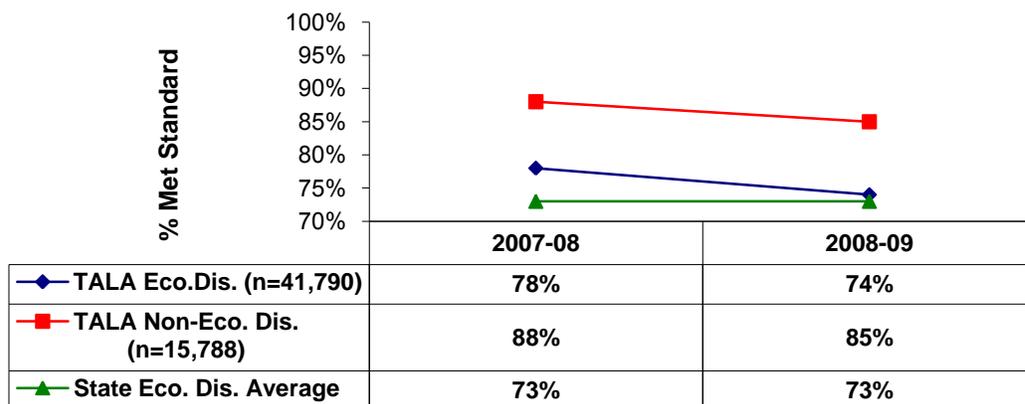
Economically disadvantaged students are those who receive free or reduced-price lunch or are economically disadvantaged in some other way. The percentage of grade 6 economically disadvantaged students who met the standard in reading significantly increased since 2007-08. The percentage of grade 6 non-economically disadvantaged students who met the standard in reading also significantly increased. The percentage of economically disadvantaged students who met the standard in reading increased by 9 percentage points, whereas the increase for non-economically disadvantaged students was 6 percentage points. The state average for economically disadvantaged students remained constant with 87% meeting the standard in reading in 2007-08 and 2008-09. Additionally, the percentage of economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students who met the standard in math decreased since 2007-08. The state average for economically disadvantaged students remained the same with 73% meeting the standard in math in 2007-08 and 2008-09. Figure 7.12 illustrates the change in percent of students who met the standard in reading and Figure 7.13 illustrates the change in percent of students who met the standard in math for both economically disadvantaged and non- economically disadvantaged students.

Figure 7.12: TAKS Reading Achievement: Economically Disadvantaged Students and Non-Economically Disadvantaged Students



Source: 2007-08 TAKS; preliminary 2008-09 TAKS

Figure 7.13: TAKS Math Achievement: Economically Disadvantaged Students and Non-Economically Disadvantaged Students



Source: 2007-08 TAKS; preliminary 2008-09 TAKS

TALA was designed to address the needs of all middle school students, including struggling adolescent readers. Special education, LEP, and economically disadvantaged students often are struggling readers. The results for all three groups illustrate positive changes in reading achievement.

Relationship between TALA Teacher Characteristics and Grade 6 Student Achievement

The relationship between ELA and content area teacher characteristics and grade 6 student achievement⁴⁰ in reading and math was investigated since teacher characteristics (e.g., beliefs) influence the effectiveness of professional development (Putman, Smith, & Cassady, 2009). Correlation coefficients were computed among the preliminary 2008-09 TAKS passing rate and teacher literacy reading behaviors (e.g., adjust reading materials to an individual student's level) and literacy writing behaviors (e.g., use students' writing to teach grammar and spelling strategies), teacher beliefs about teaching reading (positive beliefs about teaching reading and negative beliefs about teaching reading), and teacher job satisfaction.

Relationship between TALA Teacher Literacy Behaviors and Grade 6 Student Achievement

The relationship between reading achievement and ELA teacher literacy behaviors (reading behaviors or writing behaviors) was not significant. This indicates that the types of literacy instructional behaviors that are being used by ELA teachers were not related to TAKS reading achievement. No significant relationship was found between math achievement and ELA teacher literacy behaviors. As with ELA teachers, no significant relationship was found between math achievement and content area teachers' literacy behaviors. No significant relationship was found between reading achievement and content area teacher reading behaviors. However, the relationship between content area teacher writing behaviors was weak yet significantly negatively related to reading achievement ($r = -.083$, $p < .05$). This indicates that content area teachers who utilized writing instructional behaviors in their classrooms tended to work in campuses where fewer students passed the reading TAKS. This implies that the content area teachers may be utilizing writing strategies in the classroom to assist the low performing student. However, this does not mean that greater use of writing strategies caused lower passing rates.

Relationship between TALA Teacher Beliefs about Teaching Reading in the Content Areas and Grade 6 Student Achievement

The relationship between teacher beliefs about teaching reading in the content areas and grade 6 achievement was investigated with content area teachers only⁴¹. Negative beliefs about teaching reading were not significantly related to reading or math achievement. No significant relationship was found between positive beliefs about teaching reading and reading achievement. A weak yet significantly positive relationship was found between positive beliefs about teaching reading and math achievement ($r = .081$, $p < .05$). This indicates that teachers who hold positive beliefs about teaching reading in the content areas tended to work in campuses where more students passed the math TAKS. As with the previous finding, the relationship among these variables is not indicative of causation.

⁴⁰ The evaluation team analyzed the relationship between beginning teacher characteristics and campus level TAKS scores since TEA does not connect student TAKS scores to specific teachers.

⁴¹ The beliefs scale for ELA participants consisted of six items. The scale did not validate properly and was not used in subsequent analyses (see Appendix F for more information).

Relationship between TALA Teacher Job Satisfaction and Grade 6 Student Achievement

Content area teacher job satisfaction was weakly yet significantly positively related to reading achievement ($r=.141, p<.001$) and math achievement ($r=.192, p<.001$). This indicates that content area teachers with higher job satisfaction tended to work at campuses where more students passed the reading and math TAKS. No significant relationship was found between student achievement and ELA job satisfaction.

Relationship between Level of TALA Implementation and Grade 6 Student Achievement

High implementing TALA campuses are those with high teacher participation rates, high online follow-up completion rates, frequent self-reported implementation of TALA routines, and high levels of campus support for TALA. The relationship between TALA level of implementation (high, medium, and low) and grade 6 student achievement (reading and math) was investigated. Level of implementation was not found to be significantly related to reading or math achievement.

Summary of the Impact of TALA on Grade 6 Student Achievement

Reading and Math Achievement

Results from the comparison of TALA participating campuses to non-participating campuses were:

- Both TALA campuses and non-TALA campuses experienced a significant increase in the percentage of grade 6 students meeting the standard in reading and math from 2006-07 to 2007-08 (prior to TALA implementation). This increase was followed by a decline in percentage of grade 6 students meeting the standard in 2008-09 (after TALA implementation).
- There were no significant differences in grade 6 reading achievement or math achievement between TALA and non-TALA campuses.

Results from the comparison of low, medium, and high implementing campuses included:

- For the “between year” comparisons by level of campus implementation, when comparing similarly classified campuses to themselves over time, there were significant differences in grade 6 reading and math achievement. Looking at the trends by campus type, low implementing campuses experienced significant differences in grade 6 reading and math achievement between 2005-06 and 2008-09. Significant differences were also experienced by medium implementing campuses between 2005-06 and 2008-09, as well as by high implementing campuses over this time period. The percentages of students who met the standard in math and reading fluctuated over time, with all campus types experiencing a decrease in the percentage meeting the standard following the implementation of TALA.
- For the “within year” comparisons among campuses, when comparing low, medium, and high implementing campuses to each other at any one time point, there were no significant differences in grade 6 reading and math achievement. During the 2005-06 school year, low,

medium, and high implementing campuses performed similarly with respect to grade 6 reading and math achievement. This was also true in the 2006-07, 2007-08, and 2008-09 school years.

At-Risk Student Achievement

The evaluation team examined the change in grade 6 TAKS reading and math scores across TALA campuses for at-risk student groups. The at-risk groups included special education students, LEP students, and economically disadvantaged grade 6 students. The team used student level TAKS scores and the 2008-09 campus as the identifier for the student to track change over time since TALA implementation (i.e., since 2007-08). The results included:

- The percentage of special education students who met the standard in reading significantly increased since 2007-08. The percentage of special education students who met the standard in reading increased by 15 percentage points, whereas the increase for non-special education students was 7 percentage points.
- The percentage of special education students who met the standard in math significantly increased since 2007-08. The percentage of special education students who met the standard in reading increased by 2 percentage points, whereas the percentage of non-special education students decreased by 5 percentage points.
- The percentage of LEP students who met the standard in reading significantly increased since 2007-08. The percentage of LEP students who met the standard in reading increased by 13 percentage points, whereas the increase for non-LEP students was 8 percentage points.
- The percentage of economically disadvantaged students who met the standard in reading significantly increased since 2007-08. The percentage of economically disadvantaged students who met the standard in reading increased by 9 percentage points, whereas the increase for non-economically disadvantaged students was 6 percentage points.

Relationship between Teacher Characteristics and Grade 6 Student Achievement

The evaluation also investigated the relationship between ELA and content area teacher characteristics and student achievement in reading and math. Findings included:

- Content area teacher job satisfaction was weakly yet significantly positively related to grade 6 reading and math achievement, indicating that teachers with higher job satisfaction tended to work at campuses where more grade 6 students passed the reading and math TAKS.
- Content area teacher writing behaviors was weak yet significantly negatively related to grade 6 reading achievement. This indicates that content area teachers who utilized writing instructional behaviors in their classrooms tended to work in campuses where fewer grade 6 students passed the reading TAKS.
- A weakly yet significantly positive relationship was found between positive beliefs about teaching reading and grade 6 math achievement. This indicates that teachers who hold positive beliefs about teaching reading in the content areas tended to work in campuses where more grade 6 students passed the math TAKS.

8. Analysis of TALA Funding Allocations and Expenditures

Due to the timing of the grant award period for TALA Grade 6 (September 1, 2007 to December 31, 2008) and the evaluation reporting cycle, Interim Report #1 only included information on the allocation of funds to develop and disseminate TALA Grade 6 and did not include any cost information about TALA Grades 7-8. This chapter presents the allocation and expenditure of funds for TALA Grade 6 development and dissemination. Using planned budget data and expenditure data provided by TEA, expenditure patterns are described for TALA Grade 6. In addition, allocations for the development and dissemination of TALA Grades 7-8 are presented. The chapter addresses the following questions:

- How were funds used to develop TALA content?
- How were funds used by the regional education service centers (ESCs) to disseminate TALA?

The data provided in the ESC TALA Expenditure Reporting Forms from each ESC were analyzed along with archival budget data provided by TEA to examine how various funds were allocated and spent to develop and disseminate TALA. In addition, data collected through interviews with the developer and TEA program staff were used to provide more detail about how the funds were allocated and spent.

Allocation and Expenditure of Funds to Develop TALA Content

Allocations and Expenditures to Develop TALA Grade 6

In May 2006, TEA awarded a \$4 million development contract to the Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts (VGC) at The University of Texas at Austin, and along with the Texas Institute for Measurement, Evaluation, and Statistics (TIMES) at the University of Houston, to create the content for what would later become the TALA professional development training academies, including the assessment instrument (TMSFA).

The original materials developed under this contract were created for the Texas Adolescent Literacy Project (TALP), a literacy program targeting eighth grade students. After successfully field testing across seven sites, VGC was allocated \$850,000 in TALA funds to develop these materials into TALA Grade 6 training materials. As part of these efforts, VGC refined and edited the TALP materials to meet the needs and time constraints of the TALA program. Modifications to the TALP materials were based on field test results, feedback from focus groups, and advice from expert consultants. A significant portion of the budget went to the development of videos. Other expenses were devoted to developing the online follow-up. The developers of Project CRISS (Creating Independence through Student-owned Strategies)⁴² and Project SIM (Strategic Instruction Model),⁴³ two other models for schoolwide approaches to academic literacy being used in Texas, served as external reviewers in order to ensure that the materials developed for TALA complemented and integrated these program approaches. Additionally, a steering committee was convened to oversee the development of the TALA training content.

⁴² <http://www.projectcriss.com>

⁴³ <http://www.ku-crl.org/sim/>

The final TALA Grade 6 training materials combined direct content and instruction with interactive activities and videos that modeled implementation in the classroom. These materials were designed to train sixth grade teachers on how to implement a validated diagnostic screening and progress monitoring instrument and a tiered intervention instruction package for students determined at risk to not perform at proficient levels on the Grade 6 TAKS reading assessments. Of the original \$850,000, \$475,000 was allocated to develop the TALA Grade 6 ELA academy materials (three-day training and one-day online follow-up) and \$375,000 was used to develop the TALA Grade 6 content area academy materials (two-day training and half-day online follow-up). Specific information about the distribution of the actual development funds between the two sets of academy materials was not collected as part of this evaluation.⁴⁴

Allocations to Develop TALA Grades 7-8

Building off the materials developed for TALA Grade 6, \$850,000 was allocated through TALA to VGC to develop the TALA Grades 7-8 materials. In order to facilitate the development of TALA as a schoolwide approach with a common set of vocabulary and comprehension routines, the materials for TALA Grades 7-8 were based on the same instructional routines as TALA Grade 6. The primary changes to the materials centered on the development of new lesson samples focused on the high priority TEKS and TAKS items for seventh and eighth grades. Additionally, relevant feedback from ESCs regarding the TALA Grade 6 materials was incorporated to the TALA Grade 7-8 materials. Again, a significant portion of funds went to creating the new videos, and there were also expenses related to improving the technology for both the presentations/videos and the online follow-up. Specific information about the distribution of the actual development funds also was not collected as part of this evaluation.

Allocation and Expenditure of Funds to Disseminate TALA

Historical records provided by TEA about the allocation of TALA funds were the primary source of data on allocation of funds to disseminate TALA Grade 6 and TALA Grades 7-8. These records provided information about the formulas used to allocate funds by ESC, as well as the final amounts allocated to each ESC in categories described below. In addition, historical records provided data about how funds were allocated to ESC 13 to administer TALA across all the other ESCs. These funds were to be used to conduct training of trainers at all levels and provide administration/management support of the TALA program across all ESCs for TEA.

In an effort to assess how ESCs spent their TALA funding, each ESC TALA contact was asked to complete a TALA Expenditure Reporting Form developed by the evaluators. This form solicited detailed information regarding the number of TALA academies conducted, the number of teachers trained, the number of trainers used, the number of follow-up trainings held, and the number of administrator trainings held. It also requested estimates on expenditures broken down by base budgets, budgets per academy, and teacher stipend budgets. Since ESCs were not required to keep detailed records of their expenditures broken out by category, the data provided were based on ESCs' best estimates.⁴⁵ In addition, each ESC was asked to verify the attendance of each individual teacher whom they reported as attending TALA Grade 6 in the

⁴⁴ According to the developer, the expenditures for the development of TALA Grade 6 materials were not tracked separately for the ELA Academies and Content Area Academies.

⁴⁵ The total estimated spending provided for each ESC was checked against the actual amount of funding drawn down from the TEA Integrated Statewide Administrative System (ISAS), and in cases where these numbers differed by more than \$10,000, ESCs were contacted and additional information was obtained. Therefore, reported estimate totals are correct within a margin of \$10,000.

summer/fall of 2008, as well as provide the specific amount of stipends paid to each participating teacher (broken out by the first half of the stipend for attending the face-to-face training and the second half of the stipend for completing the online follow-up training).⁴⁶

Data were requested separately for ELA and content area academies. In six of the ESCs that did not maintain separate expenditure records, base budgets were split evenly between the ELA and content area expenditure estimates, and academy budgets were split proportionally based on the number of ELA and content area academies held in the ESC.

The data provided in the ESC Expenditure Reporting Forms were analyzed along with archival budget data provided by TEA to examine how various funds were allocated and spent to develop and disseminate TALA by ESC.

TALA Grade 6 Training of Trainers and Administration/Management Allocations and Expenditures (ESC 13)

In addition to the amount awarded for dissemination of TALA, ESC 13 was awarded a separate grant to implement the training of trainers and for administration/management of TALA Grade 6 across all 20 ESCs. Table 8.1 shows the amount of allocated funds to ESC 13 to administer and manage TALA Grade 6 academies statewide, including breakouts for the cost for state and regional training of trainers, as well as general administration/management.

Table 8.1: Allocation and Expenditure of Funds to ESC 13 for Administration/Management of TALA Grade 6 Academies, 2008

| Activity | | TALA Grade 6 ELA Academy 2008 Allocations | TALA Grade 6 Content Area Academy 2008 Allocations | Total TALA Grade 6 2008 Allocations |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| State Training of Trainers | 2 Master Trainers provide training | \$15,850 | \$11,400 | \$27,250 |
| | 6 State Trainers receive training | \$16,800 | \$12,900 | \$29,700 |
| Regional Training of Trainers | 6 State Trainers provide training | \$64,925 | \$46,950 | \$111,875 |
| | 150 Local Trainers receive training | \$309,000 | \$256,500 | \$565,500 |
| Administration/Management | | \$100,000 | \$100,000 | \$200,000 |
| TOTAL | | \$506,575 | \$427,750 | \$934,325 |

Source: TEA Historical Records

Based on an analysis of the amount of funds paid to ESC 13 as reported in TEA's Integrated Statewide Administrative System (ISAS)⁴⁷, it is estimated that ESC 13 spent \$657,269 of the allocated \$934,325 (70%) for the administration and management of TALA Grade 6 in 2008. Specific reports for how funds were spent were not available.

⁴⁶ In some cases, since TALA registration systems and stipend payment records were not linked, ESCs were not able to report the specific amounts paid to individual teachers. As a result, the amounts paid in TALA stipends did not always exactly match the number of teachers reported as attending TALA. Therefore, in many cases, these databases were not as accurate as they could be due to circumstances beyond the control of the evaluators.

⁴⁷ ISAS provides enterprise-wide financial and administrative information to agency employees and managers.

TALA Grade 6 Dissemination Allocations and Expenditures (All ESCs)

Each ESC was given a budget to disseminate TALA based on the estimated number of sixth grade ELA and content area teachers who were eligible to attend TALA Grade 6. Table 8.2 shows the amount allocated as well as the amount of funding spent based on the amount drawn down from ISAS by each ESC. In total, 55% of the funding allocated for the dissemination of TALA Grade 6 ELA and content area academies was drawn down, with individual ESCs ranging from 39-79% in the proportion of allocated funding they drew down.

Table 8.2: Comparison of TALA Grade 6 Total Allocations and Total Expenditures by ESC, 2008

| ESC | Total Amount Allocated | Total Amount Spent* | Percent Spent of Total Allocated |
|--------------|------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | \$769,250 | \$436,388 | 57% |
| 2 | \$273,500 | \$189,402 | 69% |
| 3 | \$196,750 | \$143,241 | 73% |
| 4 | \$1,915,250 | \$762,360 | 40% |
| 5 | \$215,750 | \$147,005 | 68% |
| 6 | \$381,000 | \$208,709 | 55% |
| 7 | \$400,750 | \$230,814 | 58% |
| 8 | \$197,250 | \$140,090 | 71% |
| 9 | \$189,750 | \$114,134 | 60% |
| 10 | \$1,449,250 | \$822,831 | 57% |
| 11 | \$1,012,750 | \$396,028 | 39% |
| 12 | \$357,750 | \$233,857 | 65% |
| 13 | \$1,553,075 | \$1,001,489 | 64% |
| 14 | \$189,000 | \$107,996 | 57% |
| 15 | \$178,250 | \$86,267 | 48% |
| 16 | \$251,750 | \$148,611 | 59% |
| 17 | \$225,750 | \$154,590 | 68% |
| 18 | \$185,000 | \$146,989 | 79% |
| 19 | \$434,000 | \$323,579 | 75% |
| 20 | \$665,750 | \$299,713 | 45% |
| TOTAL | \$11,041,575 | \$6,094,093 | 55% |

Source: Texas Education Agency, ISAS and ESC Report of Expenditures

* The total funding drawn down from TEA (according to ISAS)

The main reason why all allocated funds for TALA Grade 6 were not spent was because not as many teachers were served as were eligible to attend in each ESC. Overall, 6,963 of the 13,679 eligible sixth grade ELA and content area teachers (slightly over 50%) actually attended TALA Grade 6. According to information from the TEA program manager collected during the phone interview, the remaining funds were reallocated for use by the ESCs to provide related professional development to teachers.

TALA Grade 6 ELA Academy Allocations and Expenditures

A base budget was established for each ESC to cover staff salaries and other administrative or business office costs to run the ELA academies in its ESC. The number of sessions per ESC was established based on the estimated number of ELA teachers per ESC. Based on the estimates of participating teachers, a number of ELA trainers per ESC were allotted to cover

these sessions. ELA academy trainers were also eligible to be content area academy trainers, but not vice-versa.⁴⁸

In addition, a \$6,000 per session budget was established to cover room rental, audio-visual and other equipment, printing of session materials, and stipends for trainers (\$400 per day for lead trainer, \$350 per day for second trainer).

Each teacher participating in an ELA academy could potentially receive a \$500 stipend. Each teacher participant received \$250 after attending all three days of the face-to-face session. The additional \$250 was received only after completing and submitting assignments for the online follow-up session between September 1, 2008, and December 1, 2008, which is considered the equivalent of a one-day (6 hours) follow-up. The teacher stipend budget for each ESC was calculated by multiplying the estimated number of teachers by \$500 each and adding this to the product of the percentage of total teachers multiplied by \$900,000 of leftover funds, or funds not included in the initial estimates but that were divided across ESCs.

Table 8.3 provides a detailed breakdown of allocations and expenditures by ESC. For ELA, only 59% of the allocated funding was expended. While the percent of allocated funding expended varied from 48% to 91% by ESC, only ESC 18 spent more than it was originally allocated with the majority of ESCs spending between 60% and 80% of their allocated budgets.

Overall, ESCs spent more of their base and academy budgets than they did their stipend budgets. In total, 91% of allocated base budgets and 80% of allocated academy budgets were spent compared to 45% of allocated stipend budgets. While all but one ESC spent over 60% of their base budgets, the majority of ESCs spent under half of their stipend budgets.

⁴⁸ Thus the number of ELA academy trainers overlaps with the number of Content Area academy trainers.

Table 8.3: Comparison of TALA Grade 6 ELA Allocations and Expenditures by ESC, 2008

| ESC | Base Budget | | | Academy Budget | | | Teacher Stipend Budget | | | Total Budget | | |
|-------|-------------------|----------------|------|---------------------|--------------|------|------------------------|--------------|-----|------------------|--------------|-----|
| | Amount Allocated* | Amount Spent** | % | Amount Allocated*** | Amount Spent | % | Amount Allocated**** | Amount Spent | % | Amount Allocated | Amount Spent | % |
| 1 | \$59,000 | \$39,127 | 66% | \$72,000 | \$69,300 | 96% | \$323,500 | \$157,500 | 49% | \$454,500 | \$265,927 | 59% |
| 2 | \$41,000 | \$41,652 | 102% | \$24,000 | \$26,714 | 111% | \$79,500 | \$40,000 | 50% | \$144,500 | \$108,366 | 75% |
| 3 | \$38,000 | \$30,538 | 80% | \$18,000 | \$16,145 | 90% | \$55,500 | \$35,875 | 65% | \$111,500 | \$82,558 | 74% |
| 4 | \$98,000 | \$96,162 | 98% | \$192,000 | \$143,130 | 75% | \$837,000 | \$265,810 | 32% | \$1,127,000 | \$505,102 | 45% |
| 5 | \$41,000 | \$44,876 | 109% | \$18,000 | \$24,769 | 138% | \$70,500 | \$28,250 | 40% | \$130,500 | \$97,895 | 75% |
| 6 | \$44,000 | \$46,557 | 106% | \$36,000 | \$31,118 | 86% | \$132,500 | \$47,500 | 36% | \$212,500 | \$125,175 | 59% |
| 7 | \$47,000 | \$60,425 | 129% | \$36,000 | \$25,560 | 71% | \$148,500 | \$71,125 | 48% | \$231,500 | \$157,110 | 68% |
| 8 | \$38,000 | \$24,233 | 64% | \$18,000 | \$17,070 | 95% | \$48,500 | \$34,000 | 70% | \$104,500 | \$75,303 | 72% |
| 9 | \$38,000 | \$36,014 | 95% | \$18,000 | \$4,690 | 26% | \$52,500 | \$11,375 | 22% | \$108,500 | \$52,079 | 48% |
| 10 | \$86,000 | \$89,187 | 104% | \$156,000 | \$126,234 | 81% | \$680,500 | \$331,500 | 49% | \$922,500 | \$546,921 | 59% |
| 11 | \$68,000 | \$57,977 | 85% | \$102,000 | \$60,362 | 59% | \$454,500 | \$174,500 | 38% | \$624,500 | \$292,839 | 47% |
| 12 | \$44,000 | \$61,410 | 140% | \$30,000 | \$14,428 | 48% | \$134,500 | \$53,250 | 40% | \$208,500 | \$129,088 | 62% |
| 13 | \$53,000 | \$54,084 | 102% | \$54,000 | \$40,478 | 75% | \$228,500 | \$106,500 | 47% | \$335,500 | \$201,062 | 60% |
| 14 | \$38,000 | \$26,416 | 70% | \$18,000 | \$16,489 | 92% | \$47,000 | \$25,500 | 54% | \$103,000 | \$68,405 | 66% |
| 15 | \$38,000 | \$24,925 | 66% | \$18,000 | \$17,190 | 96% | \$44,000 | \$21,000 | 48% | \$100,000 | \$63,115 | 63% |
| 16 | \$41,000 | \$18,149 | 44% | \$24,000 | \$16,485 | 69% | \$76,000 | \$42,750 | 56% | \$141,000 | \$77,384 | 55% |
| 17 | \$41,000 | \$26,717 | 65% | \$18,000 | \$27,734 | 154% | \$67,500 | \$48,750 | 72% | \$126,500 | \$103,201 | 82% |
| 18 | \$38,000 | \$46,466 | 122% | \$18,000 | \$6,490 | 36% | \$44,500 | \$28,400 | 64% | \$100,500 | \$91,356 | 91% |
| 19 | \$50,000 | \$41,330 | 83% | \$48,000 | \$45,907 | 96% | \$210,500 | \$140,750 | 67% | \$308,500 | \$227,987 | 74% |
| 20 | \$53,000 | \$36,951 | 70% | \$60,000 | \$47,588 | 79% | \$252,500 | \$117,750 | 47% | \$365,500 | \$202,289 | 55% |
| TOTAL | \$994,000 | \$903,196 | 91% | \$978,000 | \$777,881 | 80% | \$3,988,000 | \$1,782,085 | 45% | \$5,961,000 | \$3,473,162 | 58% |

* ELA Base Budget = (\$35,000 base) + (% of total teachers x \$300,000 remaining funds [comment: remaining from what?])

** For ESCs that did not report base budget amounts separately for ELA and content area academies, total base budget amounts were divided in half and apportioned equally across academy types.

*** ELA Academy Budget = \$6,000 per academy for room rental, A/V and other equipment, printing of academy materials, stipends for trainers (\$400 per day for lead trainer, \$350 per day for second trainer)

**** ELA Teacher Stipend Budget = (# of teachers x \$500) + (% of total teachers x \$900,000 of leftover funds not part of the initial allocation to ESCs)

Source: Texas Education Agency, 2006-2007 PEIMS data and ESC Report of Expenditures

Table 8.4 shows the number of ELA activities carried out by ESC as well as their associated expenditures as estimated by the ESC. In total, \$3,491,984 was used to conduct 193 ELA academies and train 4,373 ELA teachers. ESCs spent between \$52,079 and \$546,921 conducting ELA academies, with ESCs that spent larger amounts of money reporting that they trained more teachers. The ESCs that reported spending the largest sums of money were ESC 10: Richardson (709 teachers trained), ESC 4: Houston (715 teachers trained), and ESC 11: Fort Worth (377 teachers trained).

The average number of teachers per academy varied from 14 to 38, and the expenditures per teacher served ranged from \$529 and \$1,296 across all ESCs. Overall, ESCs spent an average of \$799 per teacher and \$18,093 per academy to conduct the TALA Grade 6 ELA academies.

Table 8.4: Comparison of TALA Grade 6 ELA Services and Expenditures by ESC, 2008

| ESC | Total Expenditures* | Number of Academies | Number of Teachers in Attendance | Average Number of Teachers per Academy | Expenditures per Teacher Served | Expenditures per Academy |
|--------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | \$265,927 | 11 | 358 | 33 | \$743 | \$24,175 |
| 2 | \$108,366 | 6 | 122 | 20 | \$888 | \$18,061 |
| 3 | \$82,558 | 4 | 85 | 21 | \$971 | \$20,640 |
| 4 | \$505,102 | 42 | 715 | 17 | \$706 | \$12,026 |
| 5 | \$97,895 | 4 | 59 | 15 | \$1,659 | \$24,474 |
| 6 | \$125,175 | 7 | 114 | 16 | \$1,098 | \$17,882 |
| 7 | \$157,110 | 5 | 181 | 36 | \$868 | \$31,422 |
| 8 | \$75,303 | 4 | 89 | 22 | \$846 | \$18,826 |
| 9 | \$52,079 | 3 | 44 | 15 | \$1,184 | \$17,360 |
| 10 | \$546,921 | 28 | 709 | 25 | \$771 | \$19,533 |
| 11 | \$292,839 | 21 | 377 | 18 | \$777 | \$13,945 |
| 12 | \$129,088 | 6 | 117 | 20 | \$1,103 | \$21,515 |
| 13 | \$201,062 | 5 | 237 | 47 | \$848 | \$40,212 |
| 14 | \$68,405 | 4 | 59 | 15 | \$1,159 | \$17,101 |
| 15 | \$63,115 | 6 | 83 | 14 | \$760 | \$10,519 |
| 16 | \$77,384 | 5 | 86 | 17 | \$900 | \$15,477 |
| 17 | \$103,201 | 4 | 118 | 30 | \$875 | \$25,800 |
| 18 | \$110,178 | 5 | 85 | 17 | \$1,296 | \$22,036 |
| 19 | \$227,987 | 11 | 423 | 38 | \$539 | \$20,726 |
| 20 | \$202,289 | 12 | 312 | 26 | \$648 | \$16,857 |
| TOTAL | \$3,491,984 | 193 | 4,373 | 23 | \$799 | \$18,093 |

* The total funding spent per ESC as estimated on the ESC Report of Expenditures. Due to estimation errors this number may differ slightly from the total funding drawn down.

Source: Texas Education Agency, ESC Report of Expenditures

TALA Grade 6 Content Area Academy Allocations and Expenditures

A base budget was also established for each ESC to cover staff salaries and other administrative or business office costs to run the content area academies. The number of sessions per ESC was established based on the estimated number of content area teachers per ESC. Based on the estimates of participating teachers, a number of content area trainers per ESC were allotted to cover these sessions.

In addition, a \$6,000 per session budget was established to cover room rental, audio-visual and other equipment, printing of session materials, and stipends for trainers (\$400 per day for lead trainer, \$350 per day for second trainer).

Each teacher participating in a content area academy could potentially receive a \$250 stipend. Each teacher participant received \$125 after attending one and one-half days of the face-to-face session. The additional \$125 was received only after completing and submitting assignments for the online follow-up session between September 1, 2008, and December 1, 2008, which is the equivalent of one half-day (3 hours) follow-up. The teacher stipend budget for each ESC was calculated by multiplying the estimated number of teachers by \$250 each and adding this to the product of the percentage of total teachers multiplied by \$200,000 of leftover funds.

Table 8.5 provides a detailed breakdown of allocations and expenditures by ESC. Compared to 58% for ELA academies, only 48% of the allocated funding for content area academies was expended. Allocated funding expended for content area academies by ESC ranged from 27% to 85% with the majority spending between 50% and 80% of their allocated budgets.

Similarly to ELA, ESCs spent significantly more of their base and academy budgets than they did their stipend budgets. In total, 85% of allocated base budgets and 56% of allocated academy budgets were spent compared to 25% of allocated stipend budgets. While ESC 19 spent 81% of its stipend budget, the majority spent below 40%.

Table 8.5: Comparison of TALA Grade 6 Content Area Allocations and Expenditures by ESC, 2008

| ESC | Base Budget | | | Academy Budget | | | Teacher Stipend Budget | | | Total Budget | | |
|--------------|-------------------|------------------|------------|---------------------|------------------|------------|------------------------|------------------|------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------|
| | Amount Allocated* | Amount Spent** | % | Amount Allocated*** | Amount Spent | % | Amount Allocated**** | Amount Spent | % | Amount Allocated | Amount Spent | % |
| 1 | \$59,000 | \$39,126 | 66% | \$84,000 | \$73,405 | 87% | \$171,750 | \$52,625 | 31% | \$314,750 | \$165,156 | 52% |
| 2 | \$44,000 | \$45,122 | 103% | \$30,000 | \$21,667 | 72% | \$55,000 | \$14,250 | 26% | \$129,000 | \$81,039 | 63% |
| 3 | \$38,000 | \$30,538 | 80% | \$18,000 | \$16,145 | 90% | \$29,250 | \$14,000 | 48% | \$85,250 | \$60,683 | 71% |
| 4 | \$101,000 | \$96,161 | 95% | \$228,000 | \$100,785 | 44% | \$459,250 | \$57,100 | 12% | \$788,250 | \$254,046 | 32% |
| 5 | \$38,000 | \$29,918 | 79% | \$18,000 | \$16,514 | 92% | \$29,250 | \$3,000 | 10% | \$85,250 | \$49,432 | 58% |
| 6 | \$47,000 | \$46,011 | 98% | \$42,000 | \$22,524 | 54% | \$79,500 | \$15,000 | 19% | \$168,500 | \$83,535 | 50% |
| 7 | \$47,000 | \$28,676 | 61% | \$42,000 | \$20,278 | 48% | \$80,250 | \$24,750 | 31% | \$169,250 | \$73,704 | 44% |
| 8 | \$41,000 | \$24,233 | 59% | \$18,000 | \$25,605 | 142% | \$33,750 | \$14,950 | 44% | \$92,750 | \$64,788 | 70% |
| 9 | \$38,000 | \$36,014 | 95% | \$18,000 | \$20,841 | 116% | \$25,250 | \$6,500 | 26% | \$81,250 | \$63,355 | 78% |
| 10 | \$80,000 | \$89,187 | 111% | \$150,000 | \$84,475 | 56% | \$296,750 | \$102,250 | 34% | \$526,750 | \$275,912 | 52% |
| 11 | \$65,000 | \$29,698 | 46% | \$108,000 | \$26,741 | 25% | \$215,250 | \$46,750 | 22% | \$388,250 | \$103,189 | 27% |
| 12 | \$44,000 | \$67,562 | 154% | \$36,000 | \$16,832 | 47% | \$69,250 | \$20,250 | 29% | \$149,250 | \$104,644 | 70% |
| 13 | \$56,000 | \$54,084 | 97% | \$78,000 | \$48,574 | 62% | \$149,250 | \$40,500 | 27% | \$283,250 | \$143,158 | 51% |
| 14 | \$38,000 | \$26,416 | 70% | \$18,000 | \$4,926 | 27% | \$30,000 | \$8,250 | 28% | \$86,000 | \$39,592 | 46% |
| 15 | \$38,000 | \$12,277 | 32% | \$18,000 | \$7,000 | 39% | \$22,250 | \$3,875 | 17% | \$78,250 | \$23,152 | 30% |
| 16 | \$41,000 | \$49,519 | 121% | \$24,000 | \$10,583 | 44% | \$45,750 | \$11,125 | 24% | \$110,750 | \$71,227 | 64% |
| 17 | \$41,000 | \$17,810 | 43% | \$18,000 | \$19,125 | 106% | \$40,250 | \$14,500 | 36% | \$99,250 | \$51,435 | 52% |
| 18 | \$38,000 | \$46,466 | 122% | \$18,000 | \$5,193 | 29% | \$28,500 | \$7,100 | 25% | \$84,500 | \$58,759 | 70% |
| 19 | \$44,000 | \$41,330 | 94% | \$30,000 | \$22,278 | 74% | \$51,500 | \$41,875 | 81% | \$125,500 | \$105,483 | 84% |
| 20 | \$59,000 | \$36,951 | 63% | \$84,000 | \$42,221 | 50% | \$157,250 | \$18,250 | 12% | \$300,250 | \$97,422 | 32% |
| TOTAL | \$997,000 | \$847,099 | 85% | \$1,080,000 | \$605,712 | 56% | \$2,069,250 | \$516,900 | 25% | \$4,146,250 | \$1,969,711 | 48% |

* Content Area Base Budget = (\$35,000 base) + (% of total teachers x \$300,000 remaining funds)

** For ESCs that did not report base budget amounts separately for ELA and content area academies, total base budget amounts were divided in half.

*** Content Area Academy Budget = \$6,000 per academy for room rental, A/V and other equipment, printing of academy materials, stipends for trainers (\$400 per day for lead trainer, \$350 per day for second trainer)

**** Content Area Teacher Stipend Budget = (# of teachers x \$250) + (% of total teachers x \$200,000 of leftover funds that was not part of the initial allocation to ESCs)

Source: Texas Education Agency, 2006-2007 PEIMS data and ESC Report of Expenditures

Table 8.6 shows the number of content area activities carried out by ESCs as well as their associated costs. In total, \$1,969,711 was used to conduct 176 content area academies and train 2,590 content area teachers. ESCs spent between \$23,152 and \$275,912 conducting content area academies. Similarly to ELA academies, ESCs that spent larger amounts of money reported training more teachers. The ESCs that reported spending the largest sums of money were ESC 10: Richardson (438 teachers trained), ESC 4: Houston (326 teachers trained), and ESC 1: Edinburg (254 teachers trained).

The average number of teachers per academy varied from 5 to 36 and the cost per teacher served ranged from \$457 to \$3,531 depending on the ESC. Overall, it cost an average of \$761 per teacher and \$11,192 per academy to conduct the TALA Grade 6 content area academies.

Table 8.6: Comparison of TALA Grade 6 Content Area Services and Costs by ESC, 2008

| ESC | Total Budget Spent* | Number of Academies | Number of Teachers in Attendance | Average Number of Teachers per Academy | Cost per Teacher Served | Cost per Academy |
|--------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|--|-------------------------|------------------|
| 1 | \$165,156 | 12 | 254 | 21 | \$650 | \$13,763 |
| 2 | \$81,039 | 5 | 78 | 16 | \$1,039 | \$16,208 |
| 3 | \$60,683 | 4 | 69 | 17 | \$879 | \$15,171 |
| 4 | \$254,046 | 38 | 326 | 9 | \$779 | \$6,685 |
| 5 | \$49,432 | 3 | 14 | 5 | \$3,531 | \$16,477 |
| 6 | \$83,535 | 8 | 93 | 12 | \$898 | \$10,442 |
| 7 | \$73,704 | 5 | 135 | 27 | \$546 | \$14,741 |
| 8 | \$64,788 | 6 | 71 | 12 | \$913 | \$10,798 |
| 9 | \$63,355 | 5 | 31 | 6 | \$2,044 | \$12,671 |
| 10 | \$275,912 | 25 | 438 | 18 | \$630 | \$11,036 |
| 11 | \$103,189 | 22 | 209 | 10 | \$494 | \$4,690 |
| 12 | \$104,644 | 7 | 93 | 13 | \$1,125 | \$14,949 |
| 13 | \$143,158 | 6 | 213 | 36 | \$672 | \$23,860 |
| 14 | \$39,592 | 2 | 33 | 17 | \$1,200 | \$19,796 |
| 15 | \$23,152 | 3 | 24 | 8 | \$965 | \$7,717 |
| 16 | \$71,227 | 3 | 51 | 17 | \$1,397 | \$23,742 |
| 17 | \$51,435 | 3 | 65 | 22 | \$791 | \$17,145 |
| 18 | \$58,759 | 4 | 48 | 12 | \$1,224 | \$14,690 |
| 19 | \$105,483 | 9 | 231 | 26 | \$457 | \$11,720 |
| 20 | \$97,422 | 6 | 114 | 19 | \$855 | \$16,237 |
| TOTAL | \$1,969,711 | 176 | 2,590 | 15 | \$761 | \$11,192 |

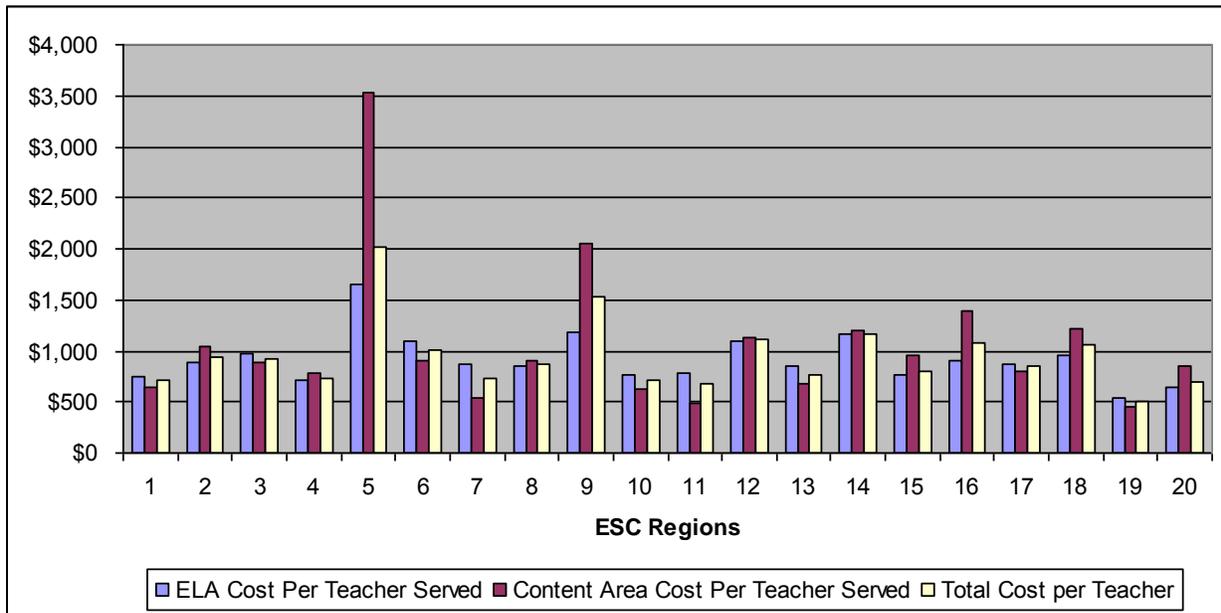
Source: Texas Education Agency, ESC Report of Expenditures

Comparison of TALA Grade 6 ELA and Content Area Academies

Figure 8.1 shows the cost per teacher for ELA and content area academies by ESC. With the exception of ESC 5 and ESC 9, the cost per teacher for most ESCs was fairly similar for ELA and content area academies. In fact, half of the ESCs had a higher cost per teacher for ELA while the other half had a higher cost for content area. Additionally, the difference in cost per teacher was less than \$100 for 10 of the 20 ESCs.

In ESC 5, only 14 content area teachers attended one of the three TALA content area academies offered. This number of content area teachers was less than the 109 that ESC 5 had hoped to serve. Likewise, in ESC 9, only 31 of 93 content area teachers attended one of the five TALA content area academies offered.

Figure 8.1: Comparison of TALA Grade 6 ELA and Content Area Cost Per Teacher by ESC, 2008



Source: Analysis of ESC TALA Expenditure Reporting Forms

NOTE: Total cost per teacher is the average cost for all teachers (ELA and content area teachers) who participated in TALA Grade 6.

ESCs were asked to estimate based on their experience offering TALA and similar training opportunities what they thought it would cost to conduct one ELA and one content area academy for 30 participants. Based on the information provided, the estimated cost per teacher was then calculated. As Table 8.7 demonstrates, ESCs tended to underestimate the cost for providing both ELA and content area academies. However, their estimation for content area academies, \$413 per teacher served, was far below the actual cost of \$761, compared to their estimated cost for ELA academies, \$705, which was only slightly below the actual cost of \$799. These results indicate that, although the content area teacher participants receive half the amount of the stipend for participating and the content area academy costs should be lower because the sessions are shorter, the actual costs per teacher for ELA and content area teachers have been closer than the ESCs would expect them to be. This difference may be attributable, at least in part, to potential error introduced by the decision to distribute base expenditures 50/50 between ELA and content area for ESCs that didn't report these figures.

Table 8.7: Comparison of TALA Grade 6 ELA and Content Area Actual and Estimated Cost per Teacher by ESC, 2008

| ESC | ELA Actual Cost per Teacher Served | ELA Estimated Cost per Teacher Served | Content Area Actual Cost per Teacher Served | Content Area Estimated Cost per Teacher Served |
|-------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| 1 | \$743 | \$687 | \$650 | \$343 |
| 2 | \$888 | \$710 | \$1,039 | \$370 |
| 3 | \$971 | \$740 | \$879 | \$490 |
| 4 | \$706 | \$717 | \$779 | \$367 |
| 5 | \$1,659 | \$650 | \$3,531 | \$325 |
| 6 | \$1,098 | \$633 | \$898 | \$320 |
| 7 | \$868 | \$759 | \$546 | \$408 |
| 8 | \$846 | \$667 | \$913 | \$383 |
| 9 | \$1,184 | \$683 | \$2,044 | \$383 |
| 10 | \$771 | \$713 | \$630 | \$366 |
| 11 | \$777 | \$710 | \$494 | \$384 |
| 12 | \$1,103 | \$723 | \$1,125 | \$443 |
| 13 | \$848 | \$692 | \$672 | \$350 |
| 14 | \$1,159 | \$1,159 | \$1,200 | \$1,200 |
| 15 | \$760 | \$667 | \$965 | \$400 |
| 16 | \$900 | \$605 | \$1,397 | \$335 |
| 17 | \$875 | \$622 | \$791 | \$317 |
| 18 | \$1,296 | \$700 | \$1,224 | \$450 |
| 19 | \$539 | \$698 | \$457 | \$332 |
| 20 | \$648 | \$561 | \$855 | \$299 |
| Mean | \$799 | \$705 | \$761 | \$413 |

Source: Texas Education Agency, ESC Expenditure Reporting Form

In examining the number of trainers used to provide ELA and content area academies Table 8.8 shows that the numbers ranged from 2 to 46 depending on ESC and whether they were hired to train ELA or content area academies. Overall, nine ESCs used more content area trainers than ELA trainers, six ESCs used more ELA trainers, and five ESCs used the same number for both. It should be noted, however, that ELA academy trainers were also eligible to be content area academy trainers, but not vice-versa, but these trainers are counted twice in the report of the number of academy trainers.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Thus the number of ELA academy trainers overlaps with the number of Content Area academy trainers.

Table 8.8: Comparison of TALA Grade 6 ELA and Content Area Trainers by ESC, 2008

| ESC | Number of ELA Trainers | Number of Content Area Trainers |
|--------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | 11 | 17 |
| 2 | 4 | 4 |
| 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 4 | 32 | 46 |
| 5 | 2 | 2 |
| 6 | 5 | 12 |
| 7 | 5 | 4 |
| 8 | 5 | 5 |
| 9 | 3 | 4 |
| 10 | 26 | 23 |
| 11 | 16 | 22 |
| 12 | 5 | 8 |
| 13 | 16 | 14 |
| 14 | 3 | 4 |
| 15 | 2 | 3 |
| 16 | 5 | 2 |
| 17 | 3 | 5 |
| 18 | 4 | 2 |
| 19 | 9 | 4 |
| 20 | 11 | 11 |
| TOTAL | 170 | 195 |

Source: Texas Education Agency, ESC Report of Expenditures

As part of TALA, ESCs were able to provide follow-up trainings for both ELA and content area academies as well as administrator trainings. As Table 8.9 shows, a total of six follow-up trainings were conducted for ELA and five for content area, with the majority of ESCs electing not to hold any follow-up trainings. In terms of administrator trainings, a total of 33 were held across 14 ESCs.

Table 8.9: Comparison of TALA Grade 6 ELA and Content Area Follow-up and Administrator Trainings by ESC, 2008

| ESC | Number of ELA Follow-up Trainings Conducted | Number of Content Follow-up Trainings Conducted | Number of Administrator Trainings Conducted |
|--------------|---|---|---|
| 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| 2 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 6 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 7 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 8 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 10 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| 11 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 12 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 13 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| 14 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 16 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 17 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 18 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| 19 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 20 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| TOTAL | 6 | 5 | 33 |

Source: Texas Education Agency, ESC Report of Expenditures

TALA Grades 7-8 Training of Trainers and Administration/Management Allocations

ESC 13 was awarded a grant to implement the training of trainers and for administration/management of TALA Grades 7-8 across all 20 ESCs. Table 8.10 shows the amount of allocated funds to ESC 13 to administer and manage TALA Grades 7-8 academies statewide, including breakouts for the cost for state and regional training of trainers, as well as general administration/management. An estimate of the total expenditures for administration of TALA Grades 7-8 Academies will be included in the final evaluation report.

Table 8.10: Budget for Administration of TALA Grades 7-8 Academies, 2009

| Activity | | TALA Grades 7-8 ELA Academy 2009 | TALA Grades 7-8 Content Area Academy 2009 | Total |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|--------------------|
| State Training of Trainers | 2 Master Trainers provide training | \$15,850 | \$11,400 | \$27,250 |
| | 6 State Trainers receive training | \$16,800 | \$12,900 | \$29,700 |
| Regional Training of Trainers | 6 State Trainers provide training | \$63,925 | \$46,950 | \$110,875 |
| | 200 Local Trainers receive training | \$468,600 | \$345,200 | \$813,800 |
| Administration/Management | | \$100,000 | \$100,000 | \$200,000 |
| TOTAL | | \$665,175 | \$516,450 | \$1,181,625 |

Source: TEA Historical Records

NOTE: An estimate of the total expenditures for administration of TALA Grades 7-8 Academies will be included in the final evaluation report.

TALA Grades 7-8 Overall Dissemination Allocations

Almost \$19 million was allocated to disseminate TALA Grades 7-8 across the 20 ESCs in Texas. The total allocation per ESC was based on estimates from PEIMS of the number of teachers who were eligible to attend. This estimate impacts the number of TALA trainings offered in the ESC as well as stipends. The allocation also includes base and session costs. Base costs include salaries and other administrative or business office costs. Session costs include \$6,000 per session for room rental, audio-visual and other equipment, printing of session materials, and stipends for trainers.

Table 8.11 lists the total allocation for all TALA Grade 7-8 ELA and content area academies by ESC. The ESCs that received the largest allocations were ESC 4: Houston (19%), ESC 10: Richardson (13%), and ESC 11: Fort Worth (9%). When total funds were allocated to each ESC, percentages used in the various formulas for session and stipend budgets were rounded, which resulted in \$363,000 in funds that were not allocated to any specific ESC. The allocation of these funds was not described in the TEA historical records.

Table 8.11: Total Allocation for Grades 7-8 ELA and Content Area Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies (TALA) by ESC, 2008-09

| ESC | ESC Location | Total Budget | % of Total Budget |
|--------------|----------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Edinburg | \$1,549,000 | 8% |
| 2 | Corpus Christi | \$439,000 | 2% |
| 3 | Victoria | \$269,500 | 1% |
| 4 | Houston | \$3,565,000 | 19% |
| 5 | Beaumont | \$439,000 | 2% |
| 6 | Huntsville | \$964,000 | 5% |
| 7 | Kilgore | \$778,000 | 4% |
| 8 | Mt. Pleasant | \$439,000 | 2% |
| 9 | Wichita Falls | \$269,500 | 1% |
| 10 | Richardson | \$2,473,000 | 13% |
| 11 | Fort Worth | \$1,795,000 | 9% |
| 12 | Waco | \$685,000 | 4% |
| 13 | Austin | \$1,084,000 | 6% |
| 14 | Abilene | \$269,500 | 1% |
| 15 | San Angelo | \$269,500 | 1% |
| 16 | Amarillo | \$439,000 | 2% |
| 17 | Lubbock | \$439,000 | 2% |
| 18 | Midland | \$439,000 | 2% |
| 19 | El Paso | \$701,500 | 4% |
| 20 | San Antonio | \$1,286,500 | 7% |
| Unallocated | | \$363,000 | 2% |
| TOTAL | | \$18,956,000 | 100% |

Source: Texas Education Agency

TALA Grades 7-8 ELA Academy Costs

Each ESC was given a base budget of \$100,000⁵⁰ to cover staff salaries and other administrative or business office costs to run the TALA Grades 7-8 ELA and content area academies. Using data from PEIMS, the number of sessions per ESC was established based

⁵⁰ For the purposes of this report, this base budget was split evenly between the ELA and Content Area academies.

on the estimated number of ELA teachers per ESC. Based on the estimates of participating teachers and number of sessions per ESC, a number of ELA trainers per ESC were allotted to cover the TALA Grades 7-8 ELA academies. ELA academy trainers were also eligible to be content area academy trainers, but not vice-versa.⁵¹

In addition, a \$6,000 per session budget was established to cover room rental, audio-visual and other equipment, printing of session materials, and stipends for trainers (\$400 per day for lead trainer, \$350 per day for second trainer).

Each teacher participating in an ELA academy could potentially receive a \$500 stipend. Each teacher participant received \$250 after attending all three days of the face-to-face session. The additional \$250 will be received only after completing and submitting assignments for the online follow-up session between September 1, 2009, and December 1, 2009, which is considered the equivalent of a one-day (6 hours) follow-up. The teacher stipend budget for each ESC was calculated by multiplying the number of teachers by \$500 each.

Overall, TEA allocated approximately \$687 per ELA teacher across all ESCs. Table 8.12 shows the total allocation for all TALA Grades 7-8 ELA academies by ESC.

⁵¹ Thus the number of ELA academy trainers overlaps with the number of Content Area academy trainers.

Table 8.12: Allocation for Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies (TALA) Grades 7-8 ELA Academies by ESC, 2008-09

| ESC | # of Sessions | # of ELA Teachers* | % of Total ELA Teachers | # of ELA Trainers Allotted** | ELA Base Budget*** | ELA Session Budget**** | ELA Teacher Stipend Budget***** | ELA Total Budget |
|--------------|---------------|--------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | 27 | 1350 | 9% | 16 | \$50,000 | \$162,000 | \$675,000 | \$887,000 |
| 2 | 6 | 300 | 2% | 3 | \$50,000 | \$36,000 | \$150,000 | \$236,000 |
| 3 | 3 | 150 | 1% | 2 | \$50,000 | \$18,000 | \$75,000 | \$143,000 |
| 4 | 60 | 3150 | 21% | 34 | \$50,000 | \$360,000 | \$1,575,000 | \$1,985,000 |
| 5 | 6 | 300 | 2% | 3 | \$50,000 | \$36,000 | \$150,000 | \$236,000 |
| 6 | 18 | 900 | 6% | 13 | \$50,000 | \$108,000 | \$450,000 | \$608,000 |
| 7 | 12 | 600 | 4% | 7 | \$50,000 | \$72,000 | \$300,000 | \$422,000 |
| 8 | 6 | 300 | 2% | 3 | \$50,000 | \$36,000 | \$150,000 | \$236,000 |
| 9 | 3 | 150 | 1% | 2 | \$50,000 | \$18,000 | \$75,000 | \$143,000 |
| 10 | 42 | 2100 | 14% | 24 | \$50,000 | \$252,000 | \$1,050,000 | \$1,352,000 |
| 11 | 30 | 1500 | 10% | 17 | \$50,000 | \$180,000 | \$750,000 | \$980,000 |
| 12 | 9 | 450 | 3% | 4 | \$50,000 | \$54,000 | \$225,000 | \$329,000 |
| 13 | 12 | 600 | 4% | 6 | \$50,000 | \$72,000 | \$300,000 | \$422,000 |
| 14 | 3 | 150 | 1% | 2 | \$50,000 | \$18,000 | \$75,000 | \$143,000 |
| 15 | 3 | 150 | 1% | 2 | \$50,000 | \$18,000 | \$75,000 | \$143,000 |
| 16 | 6 | 300 | 2% | 3 | \$50,000 | \$36,000 | \$150,000 | \$236,000 |
| 17 | 6 | 300 | 2% | 3 | \$50,000 | \$36,000 | \$150,000 | \$236,000 |
| 18 | 6 | 300 | 2% | 3 | \$50,000 | \$36,000 | \$150,000 | \$236,000 |
| 19 | 12 | 600 | 4% | 8 | \$50,000 | \$72,000 | \$300,000 | \$422,000 |
| 20 | 21 | 1050 | 7% | 12 | \$50,000 | \$126,000 | \$525,000 | \$701,000 |
| Unallocated | | 300 | 2% | | \$0 | \$54,000 | \$150,000 | \$204,000 |
| Total | 291 | 15,000 | 100.00% | 167 | \$1,000,000 | \$1,800,000 | \$7,500,000 | \$10,300,000 |

* Based on a total estimate of 15,000 ELA teachers

** Proportioned based on the number of ELA and Content Area sessions per ESC

*** ELA Base Budget = \$100,000/2

**** ELA Session Budget = \$6,000 per session for room rental, A/V and other equipment, printing of session materials, stipends for trainers (\$400 per day for lead trainer, \$350 per day for second trainer)

***** ELA Teacher Stipend Budget = estimated # of teachers x \$500

Source: Texas Education Agency

TALA Grades 7-8 Content Area Academy Costs

As previously stated, each ESC was given a base budget of \$100,000⁵² to cover staff salaries and other administrative or business office costs to run the TALA Grades 7-8 ELA and content area academies. The number of sessions per ESC was established based on the estimated number of content area teachers per ESC. Based on the estimates of participating teachers and number of sessions per ESC, a number of content area trainers per ESC were allotted to cover these sessions.

In addition, a \$6,000 per session budget was established to cover room rental, audio-visual and other equipment, printing of session materials, and stipends for trainers (\$400 per day for lead trainer, \$350 per day for second trainer).

Each teacher participating in a content area academy could potentially receive a \$250 stipend. Each teacher participant received \$125 after attending one and one-half days of the face-to-face session. The additional \$125 will be received only after completing and submitting assignments for the online follow-up session between September 1, 2009, and December 1, 2009, which is the equivalent of one half-day (3 hours) follow-up. The teacher stipend budget for each ESC was calculated by multiplying the number of teachers by \$250.

Overall, the TEA allocated just over \$410 per content area teacher across all ESCs. Table 8.13 shows the total allocation for all TALA Grades 7-8 content area academies by ESC.

⁵² For the purposes of this report, this base budget was split evenly between the ELA and Content Area academies.

Table 8.13: Allocation for Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies (TALA) Grades 7-8 Content Area by ESC, 2008-09

| ESC | # of Content Area Academies | # of Content Area Teachers* | % of Total Content Area Teachers | # of Content Area Trainers Allotted** | Content Area Base Budget*** | Content Area Session Budget**** | Content Area Teacher Stipend Budget***** | Content Area Total Budget |
|--------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| 1 | 32 | 1680 | 8% | 20 | \$50,000 | \$192,000 | \$420,000 | \$662,000 |
| 2 | 8 | 420 | 2% | 5 | \$50,000 | \$48,000 | \$105,000 | \$203,000 |
| 3 | 4 | 210 | 1% | 2 | \$50,000 | \$24,000 | \$52,500 | \$126,500 |
| 4 | 80 | 4,200 | 20% | 46 | \$50,000 | \$480,000 | \$1,050,000 | \$1,580,000 |
| 5 | 8 | 420 | 2% | 5 | \$50,000 | \$48,000 | \$105,000 | \$203,000 |
| 6 | 16 | 840 | 4% | 11 | \$50,000 | \$96,000 | \$210,000 | \$356,000 |
| 7 | 16 | 840 | 4% | 9 | \$50,000 | \$96,000 | \$210,000 | \$356,000 |
| 8 | 8 | 420 | 2% | 5 | \$50,000 | \$48,000 | \$105,000 | \$203,000 |
| 9 | 4 | 210 | 1% | 2 | \$50,000 | \$24,000 | \$52,500 | \$126,500 |
| 10 | 56 | 2,940 | 14% | 32 | \$50,000 | \$336,000 | \$735,000 | \$1,121,000 |
| 11 | 40 | 2100 | 10% | 23 | \$50,000 | \$240,000 | \$525,000 | \$815,000 |
| 12 | 16 | 840 | 4% | 8 | \$50,000 | \$96,000 | \$210,000 | \$356,000 |
| 13 | 32 | 1680 | 8% | 10 | \$50,000 | \$192,000 | \$420,000 | \$662,000 |
| 14 | 4 | 210 | 1% | 2 | \$50,000 | \$24,000 | \$52,500 | \$126,500 |
| 15 | 4 | 210 | 1% | 2 | \$50,000 | \$24,000 | \$52,500 | \$126,500 |
| 16 | 8 | 420 | 2% | 5 | \$50,000 | \$48,000 | \$105,000 | \$203,000 |
| 17 | 8 | 420 | 2% | 5 | \$50,000 | \$48,000 | \$105,000 | \$203,000 |
| 18 | 8 | 420 | 2% | 5 | \$50,000 | \$48,000 | \$105,000 | \$203,000 |
| 19 | 12 | 630 | 3% | 8 | \$50,000 | \$72,000 | \$157,500 | \$279,500 |
| 20 | 28 | 1470 | 7% | 16 | \$50,000 | \$168,000 | \$367,500 | \$585,500 |
| Unallocated | | 420 | 2% | | \$0 | \$54,000 | \$105,000 | \$159,000 |
| Total | 392 | 21,000 | 100% | 221 | \$1,000,000 | \$2,406,000 | \$5,250,000 | \$8,656,000 |

* Based on a total of 21,000 Content Area teachers

** Proportioned based on the number of ELA and Content Area sessions per ESC

*** Content Area Base Budget = \$100,000/2

**** Content Area Session Budget = \$6,000 per session for room rental, A/V and other equipment, printing of session materials, stipends for trainers (\$400 per day for lead trainer, \$350 per day for second trainer)

***** Content Area Teacher Stipend Budget = # of teachers x \$250

Source: Texas Education Agency

Summary of TALA Cost Analysis

Using expenditure data, this chapter examined how funds were used to both develop TALA content and disseminate TALA for Grade 6. Additional limited analyses examined planned expenditures for TALA Grades 7-8. Overall, this chapter uncovered several important pieces of information concerning budgetary and expenditure data for the TALA program, including the following:

ELA TALA Academies for Grade 6

- For the ELA component of TALA, ESC drew down an average of 58% of the funding allocated for the dissemination of TALA Grade 6 ELA area academies.
- Generally, when ESCs drew down smaller percentages of their total allotted expenditures, it was due to fewer teachers attending the TALA trainings.
- None of the ESCs spent more than the funds originally allocated for the ELA component of TALA. Overall, ESCs spent 45% to 91% of their allocated budgets.
- Overall, ESCs spent an average of \$799 per teacher and \$18,093 per academy to conduct the TALA Grade 6 ELA academies.

Content TALA Academies for Grade 6

- For the Content component of TALA, ESCs spent an average of 48% of their allocated funding for the content area academies.
- The content area academies spent 27% to 84% of their allocated budgets.
- Similar to ELA academies, ESCs reported that the content academies tended to spend more of their budgets when they trained more teachers.
- Overall, it cost an average of \$761 per teacher and \$11,192 per academy to conduct the TALA Grade 6 content area academies.

Comparison of TALA Grade 6 ELA and Content Academies

- ESCs tended to underestimate the costs of providing both the ELA and content area academies. The estimated cost per teacher of providing the content area academies was \$413 (actual cost was \$761) and the estimated cost per ELA academy participant was \$705 (actual cost was \$799). Again, this difference may be attributable, at least in part, to potential error introduced by the decision to distribute base expenditures 50/50 between ELA and content area for ESCs that didn't report these figures.
- Overall, a total of six follow-up trainings were conducted for ELA and five for content area, with the majority of ESCs electing not to hold any follow-up training.

Preliminary Cost Data for TALA Grades 7-8

- Across all ESCs, TEA allocated approximately \$687 per ELA area teachers and just over \$410 per content area teacher.

9. The Quality of Grades 7-8 TALA Training and Administrator Overview Training

This chapter includes the evaluation of the quality of the Grades 7-8 TALA materials and implementation of training (Objective #1 of the evaluation plan). The results of the Technical Advisory Board's (TAB) review of TALA materials are presented. This includes a review of Grades 7-8 materials, as well as a review of the Administrator Overview training materials. The chapter also presents results from data collected by observers of the Grades 7-8 classroom teacher academies in 2009. The chapter includes state and regional trainers' perceptions of the TALA training that they attended as well as their perceived preparedness for conducting training. In addition, administrator perceptions of training and TALA are presented.

This chapter addresses the following questions:

- To what extent does TALA content reflect best practices for literacy instruction according to experts in the field?
- To what extent is TALA content aligned with national and state standards in reading and ELA?
- What types of content were included as part of each level of training (training of state and regional trainers, as well as training of teachers)?
- What types of activities were included as part of each level of training (training of state and regional trainers, as well as training of teachers and administrators)?
- To what extent were participants engaged in TALA trainings?
- What types of instructional strategies (e.g., lecture, modeling) do TALA instructors use to facilitate participant learning?

Expert Review of Grades 7-8 Materials

The TAB reviewed the Grades 7-8 TALA materials. Since the instructional routines were the same as the Grade 6 materials, the TAB was instructed to focus on the appropriateness of the routines for students in Grades 7 and 8, the connection to TEKS, and if the TALA training was reflective of best practices for professional development. To complete the expert review, the TAB was provided with the following materials:

- TALA Content Area Instructional Routines to Support Academic Literacy: Presenter Guide with one CD (presentations and video files) (Units 1-3)
- TALA Assessment and Instructional Routines for Reading Interventions: Presenter Guide with three CDs (Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment, the Reading Teacher's Sourcebook, and presentations, video, and audio files) (Units 4-7)
- Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for English Language Arts and Reading (seventh and eighth grades only).
- As with the Grade 6 materials, each member of the TAB produced a written report of findings and participated in a conference call to discuss the synthesis of findings.

Best Practices for Literacy Instruction

According to the TAB, TALA instructional routines represent “best practices” for literacy instruction. The routines are short and not overly complicated. In addition, TALA does not try to introduce too many strategies. This, in their opinion, “makes it manageable.” The TAB also praised TALA for the emphasis on the importance and necessity of instructional routines for content area teachers.

The general instructional routines were perceived favorably by the TAB. The emphasis on explicit instruction, modeling of instructional routines, cooperative learning activities and the opportunities to practice instructional routines were representative of best practices for instruction. The TAB praised the scaffolding of learning (I do/We do/You do) and viewed it as a benefit during training and for subsequent classroom use.

Units 1-3 were perceived as appropriate for both ELA and content area teachers. The Frayer Model⁵³ was praised as an effective tool for vocabulary development. However, the TAB emphasized that the Frayer Model does not work for all vocabulary words (e.g., some science vocabulary). The TAB recommended adding additional vocabulary instructional routines to TALA, particularly for the content area teachers. Some alternative vocabulary instructional routines included vocabulary reinforcers and concept circles. The TAB highly recommended using Beck’s robust vocabulary instruction approach⁵⁴ since it is complementary to the Frayer Model.

Another potential problem that the TAB viewed for content area teachers was the lack of specific guidelines for determining the number of words to teach. Although clarifying common, academic and content-specific words was perceived as beneficial, the TAB referred to a “vague” slide about the number of words a student can learn. Their concern was that the slide could be a danger, with content area teachers assigning numerous vocabulary words and overwhelming their students. The TAB recommended limiting the number of words that a student learns at one time (3-5 words) and emphasizing depth of learning over quantity of words learned. The TAB stressed that vocabulary instruction needs to be covered in “multiple modalities,” providing multiple opportunities to learn the words (i.e., using various vocabulary instruction techniques instead of one method).

One issue that the TAB identified was that the vocabulary instructional routine did not account for the role of context. There was no instruction on how to use context clues to determine the meaning of a word. The TAB recommended the inclusion of this technique as it is used often in the content areas.

The comprehension instructional routines were perceived as appropriate for Grades 7 and 8. The use of anticipation-reaction guides, *Getting the Gist* routine, and the main Idea graphic organizer (*Notes Log*) are based in research and reflective of best practices according to the TAB. However, the TAB noted some limitations of the comprehension instructional routines.

⁵³ The Frayer Model is a graphic organizer used for word analysis and vocabulary building. It prompts students to think about and describe the meaning of a word or concept by defining the term, describing its essential characteristics, providing examples of the idea, and offering non-examples of the idea (Frayer, Frederick, & Klausmeier, 1969).

⁵⁴ Robust vocabulary instruction includes (1) rich information about words and their uses, (2) frequent and varied opportunities for students to think about and use words, and (3) enhanced student language comprehension (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002)

They perceived a limitation of anticipation-reaction guides for long passages/books. They recommended that the routine include a discussion of “chunking the chapter” into several *Anticipation Reaction Guides*.

One concern for the TAB was the comprehension routines and their applicability to mathematics teachers. The instructional routines were viewed as limited to reading a chapter in a book. In math, there are word problems. The *Get the Gist* activity would be difficult to do in a word problem. The TAB recommended a breakout session for math teachers and a packet of routines to help them since the nature of a math textbook is different from that of a social studies or science textbook.

The summarizing strategy is representative of best practices according to the TAB and is important for comprehension. The TAB, however, perceived it as a difficult routine. The routine was described as “complicated,” and the texts used in the examples were not perceived as helpful. The TAB recommended removing the writing summaries routine since content area teachers would not have the time to teach the routine. Instead, they stressed the importance of getting the gist as a comprehension strategy.

Units 4-7 were viewed by the TAB as appropriate for use with struggling readers. The routines dealing with syllabification, morphemic analysis, and fluency were viewed as beneficial techniques for struggling readers, as were repeated readings, partner reading, and the self-questioning (Question-Answer-Relationship -QAR) routines. The TAB noted that the intensive instruction routines will help meet the needs of some struggling readers but not all needs or all struggling readers. In addition, the TAB recommended that the questioning strategies (QAR) be available for content area teachers. With respect to the QAR strategies, the TAB did not believe that the title “inferential comprehension” was accurate since the questioning was “surface level” and did not require the students to infer from text.

The greatest concern that the TAB had regarding units 4-7 is that the routines may pose problems for middle school ELA teachers lacking background knowledge. In their opinion, many middle school ELA teachers are not schooled in fluency or word study. Therefore, the concepts are new to them. The word study routine is intricate and may pose difficulty to teachers lacking prior knowledge. In addition, the TAB emphasized that phonics is developmental, and the classroom is complex with students at all different levels. They recommended continuous follow-up with elementary school personnel who could model the use of the routines. With respect to the TMSFA, the TAB viewed it as a screening tool to identify where a student may need help in the classroom. However, the TAB emphasized the importance of using a reading specialist for diagnostic activities.

Connection to the State ELA/Reading Standards

TALA instructional routines were identified by the TAB as being clearly and explicitly linked to state (TEKS) ELA/reading standards. The TAB noted that TALA addressed several TEKS standards including:

- Vocabulary development
- Reading comprehension
- Word recognition (i.e., Word study, Syllabification, Fluency)

- Text structures
- Reading/Inquiry/Research

However, TALA does not address all TEKS standards. The TAB did not find a reading/writing connection although writing summaries is included as a comprehension routine. The routines also did not address using context to find meaning, the completion of analogies, and the evaluation and use of new media. Determining word meaning from linguistic roots and affixes/foreign words was also noted as missing from TALA.

Best Practices for Teacher Professional Development

According to the TAB, TALA had several professional benefits. The TAB praised TALA for having a clear purpose for each activity, an explicit connection to the TEKS for each module, the use of videos and graphic organizers, and a summary at the end of each module. The TAB also liked that resources and websites were provided for teachers for further information. The explicit instructional model and the gradual release (I Do/We Do/You Do) model were identified as effective techniques for instruction. The TAB believed that these techniques would instruct how to use the routines in the classroom. The emphasis on active learning (e.g., practicing the routines) and collaborative/cooperative learning were reflective of good teaching practices and would provide further opportunity to learn the routines.

The TAB had a concern with the short duration of the TALA training, as it did with the Grade 6 training. Learning comprehension, phonics, and fluency at the same time was viewed as “tough” and a daunting task. The TAB recommended more time for training, ranging from five to eight days. However, they did not recommend it being presented all at once. Their recommendation is for the instructional routines to be presented over the course of the summer, with ongoing follow-up throughout the school year.

The TAB viewed the online follow-up to be minimal and recommended more follow-up activities. The TAB stressed the need for ongoing follow-up opportunities. School support was identified as crucial for the success of TALA, therefore, the TAB recommended evaluations of teachers using the routines by school administrators trained in the TALA routines. They suggested that campuses or districts set up study groups or grade level team activities to provide more guided practice on the use of the instructional routines. The TAB recommended having a dedicated TALA website to serve as a hub to post, share, and critique lessons.

Summary of the TAB Review and Recommendations from the TAB

Overall, the TAB perceived the TALA instructional routines to be important to the success of adolescent readers. The routines are based in research and require active teaching and high levels of student participation. One TAB member commented that “in the scheme of things, TALA is one of the best state academies that I have seen.” The benefits of TALA included the following:

- Based on research-based best practices
- Routines are short – not overly complicated
- TALA does not try to introduce too many strategies – makes it manageable
- Emphasis on importance/necessity of routines for content area teachers

- The TAB also found some issues with TALA, including:
- Time is an issue due to the short duration of the training (one and a half days for content area teachers and three days for ELA/reading teachers)
- Only a few strategies are presented for vocabulary and comprehension instruction when there are actually many more available
- Units 4-7 may pose problems for middle school ELA teachers lacking background knowledge
- Units 4-7 will help meet the needs of some struggling readers but not all needs (or all struggling readers)
- Minimal amount of follow-up is provided

The TAB provided several recommendations that they believe would improve TALA training and the implementation of TALA in the schools:

- Teachers should be provided with additional vocabulary and comprehension instructional routines.
- Teachers need ongoing follow-up activities.
- TALA should include suggestions for setting up teacher study groups or grade level team activities at the district or campus level.
- A school administrator trained in the TALA routines should evaluate the teacher during the year.
- A dedicated TALA website should be developed to serve as a hub to post, share, and critique lessons.

Observations of Grades 7-8 TALA Training

Three trained observers attended five TALA classroom teacher academies (three ELA academies and two content area academies) between June 8, 2009, and July 9, 2009. Two observers were members of the ICF evaluation team, and one observer was a doctoral candidate at a Texas university. All observers had previous experience conducting observations in professional development activities. Two observers observed the Regional TOT and classroom teacher academies in 2008. The deputy director of the ICF evaluation team conducted the observer training over the telephone. Observers were provided with the TALA Training Observation Protocol and the TALA Training Observation Semi-Structured Field Note Template. The deputy director walked the observers through the observation measures and provided examples for each component. The deputy director responded to questions that the observers had about the observation measures.

On average, ELA academies were slightly larger than content area academies. ELA academies ranged from 11 to 30 participants while content area academies ranged from 1 to 20 participants.

Content and Activities Covered During TALA Classroom Teacher Academies

The goal of the training of trainer model was that the delivery of TALA to classroom teachers would possess the same content, activities, and quality as if all teachers in the state had been trained by the master trainers. Observers of TALA classroom teacher academies completed an observation protocol for each training day they observed. TALA ELA classroom teacher academies covered all seven units, which included a total of sixteen modules, while TALA content area classroom teacher academies covered just the first three units, which included eight modules.

Unit 1: Overview of Schoolwide Intervention. Unit 1 provided TALA Regional TOT participants with an overview of schoolwide intervention. Unit 1 covered two modules: A Schoolwide Approach to Reading Intervention and Effective Instruction Techniques. Both ELA and content area trainers were trained in general instructional practices. TALA instructional routines of module 2 focused on adapting instruction and fostering student engagement. Throughout the units, an explicit instruction routine was used (+Do/We Do/You Do”). TALA routines incorporated cooperative learning strategies and stressed the importance of teacher feedback.

Unit 2: Vocabulary Instructional Routines. Unit 2 focused on vocabulary instructional routines. Unit 2 included three modules: Selecting Words, Pronouncing and Defining Words, and Generating Examples and Non-Examples. The types of vocabulary words (academic and content-specific words) to teach as well as instruction in pronouncing and defining words were part of the unit. Using everyday language to define vocabulary words was a focus of the vocabulary instruction. Identifying characteristics of the words and generating examples and non-examples were also part of the unit. The routine used the Frayer Model to teach vocabulary.

Unit 3: Comprehension Instructional Routines. Unit 3 provided training related to comprehension instructional routines. This unit consisted of three modules: Building Background Knowledge with Anticipation-Reaction Guides, Identifying Main Ideas in Text, and Writing Summaries. The unit used the *Get the Gist* routine to teach students how to identify the main idea in a paragraph. It also used a *Notes Log* during instruction on identifying main ideas and writing summaries.

Unit 4: Diagnostic and Progress Monitoring Data. Unit 4 provided regional TALA trainers with information pertaining to diagnostic and progress monitoring data. Unit 4 consisted of two modules: Administering the TMSFA and Interpreting and Implementing Assessment Results.

Unit 5: Word Study Routines. Unit 5 covered word study routines and consisted of two modules: Identifying Syllable Structures and Morphemic Analysis. The unit provided instruction on the identification of syllable patterns (e.g., closed, open, vowel pair syllables). It also provided a morphemic analysis routine, including the root of a word, prefixes, and suffixes.

Unit 6: Fluency Routine. A fluency routine was the subject of Unit 6 and consisted of one module: Building Fluency with Partner Reading.

Unit 7: Inferential Comprehension Instructional Routines. Unit 7 provided training related to inferential comprehension instructional routines. Unit 7 consisted of three modules: Generating

Questions to Monitor Comprehension - Level 1, Generating Questions to Monitor Comprehension - Level 2, and Generating Questions to Monitor Comprehension - Level 3.

Observers indicated how often activities occurred in the observation protocol using tick marks to represent each occurrence during the individual modules. Following is a list of the activities included in the observation protocol:

- Presenter Facilitates (Whole or Small Group) Discussion
- Participants View Video
- Presenter Distributes and Uses Handouts
- Presenter Explains and/or Reviews TALA Content
- Presenter Provides Examples/ Elaborations of TALA Content
- Presenter Models TALA Content
- Participants Practice TALA Content with Presenter
- Participants Practice TALA Content with Each Other
- Participants Practice TALA Content Independently

Table 9.1 provides the average number of times each activity took place during Units 1 through 7. As can be seen, the frequency of activities differed based on the units and modules being presented. Activities that occurred most frequently across all modules during the TALA training included explaining/reviewing and providing examples/elaborations of TALA content and distributing/ using handouts. Additionally, presenters facilitating whole or small group discussions occurred frequently across all modules in the classroom teacher academies. Activities that occurred less frequently included presenters modeling TALA content and participants practicing TALA content (either with the presenter, independently or with other participants). Although viewing videos also was used less frequently throughout TALA compared to some of the other activities, there were certain modules in which viewing videos occurred with a high frequency (Unit 1: Module 2 – Effective Instruction, Unit 4: Module 1 - Administering the TMSFA ; and Unit 6 Module 1 - Building Fluency with Partner Reading). The number of videos per module varied depending on the content. However, most had at least one video to view.

Table 9.1: Average Number of Activities Conducted during Each Unit and Module of the Classroom Teacher Academies

| Unit: Module | Presenter Facilitates (Whole or Small Group) Discussion | Participants View Video | Presenter Distributes and Uses Handouts | Presenter Explains and/or Reviews TALA Content | Presenter Provides Examples/Elaborations of TALA Content | Presenter Models TALA Content | Participants Practice TALA Content with Presenter | Participants Practice TALA Content with Each Other | Participants Practice TALA Content Independently |
|-----------------|---|-------------------------|---|--|--|-------------------------------|---|--|--|
| U 1: M 1 | 2.25 | N/A | 1.80 | 5.00 | 2.60 | N/A | N/A | .50 | N/A |
| U 1: M 2 | 6.80 | 4.00 | 6.80 | 10.20 | 9.20 | 1.00 | .67 | 1.00 | 0.00 |
| U 2: M 1 | 3.60 | N/A | 2.60 | 6.60 | 4.60 | .50 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| U 2: M 2 | 5.25 | 1.00 | 3.20 | 10.40 | 6.20 | 2.60 | 1.60 | 1.60 | .50 |
| U 2: M 3 | 4.60 | 2.00 | 6.20 | 7.00 | 5.20 | .80 | .80 | 1.50 | .60 |
| U 3: M 1 | 4.00 | 3.40 | 8.00 | 12.00 | 8.80 | 1.20 | 1.20 | 1.60 | .60 |
| U 3: M 2 | 4.60 | 2.00 | 11.00 | 11.80 | 6.60 | 1.50 | 1.00 | 1.25 | 1.00 |
| U 3: M 3 | 6.60 | 2.00 | 7.40 | 10.00 | 6.20 | 1.60 | 1.00 | 1.80 | .60 |
| U 4: M 1 | 5.00 | 5.67 | 6.67 | 9.00 | 5.67 | .67 | 2.00 | .67 | 3.33 |
| U 4: M 2 | 7.33 | N/A | 11.33 | 6.00 | 4.33 | 2.33 | 1.33 | 2.33 | .67 |
| U 5: M 1 | 3.00 | 2.00 | 7.67 | 6.33 | 4.33 | 1.33 | 2.00 | 1.00 | 1.33 |
| U 5: M 2 | 5.33 | 2.00 | 5.67 | 9.00 | 6.00 | 2.33 | 2.33 | 2.67 | 2.00 |
| U 6: M 1 | 2.67 | 5.67 | 9.00 | 6.67 | 6.00 | 2.00 | 1.67 | 2.67 | 1.33 |
| U 7: M 1 | 2.33 | 2.00 | 3.33 | 5.67 | 2.67 | .67 | 2.00 | 2.00 | 1.33 |
| U 7: M 2 | 2.67 | 1.00 | 3.33 | 2.33 | 2.33 | 2.00 | 1.33 | 1.00 | 2.00 |
| U 7: M 3 | 2.00 | 2.00 | 2.67 | 1.67 | 1.67 | .67 | 1.33 | 1.00 | 1.67 |

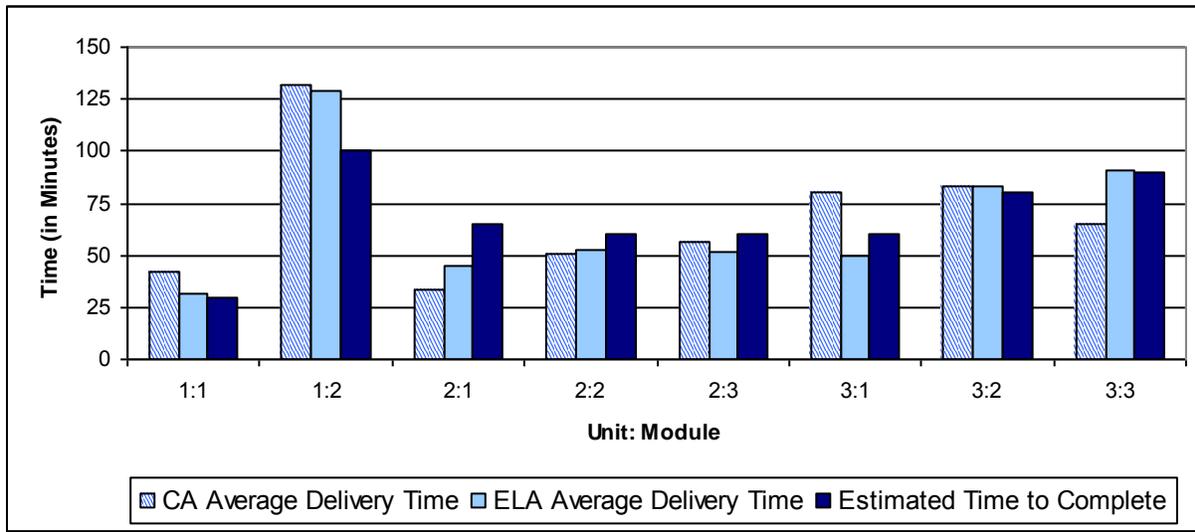
Note: U1M1 does not have TALA content to model or practice. It is background information. All modules with "N/A" did not have videos to view.

Source: Grades 7-8 Classroom Teacher Academy Observations

TALA Duration

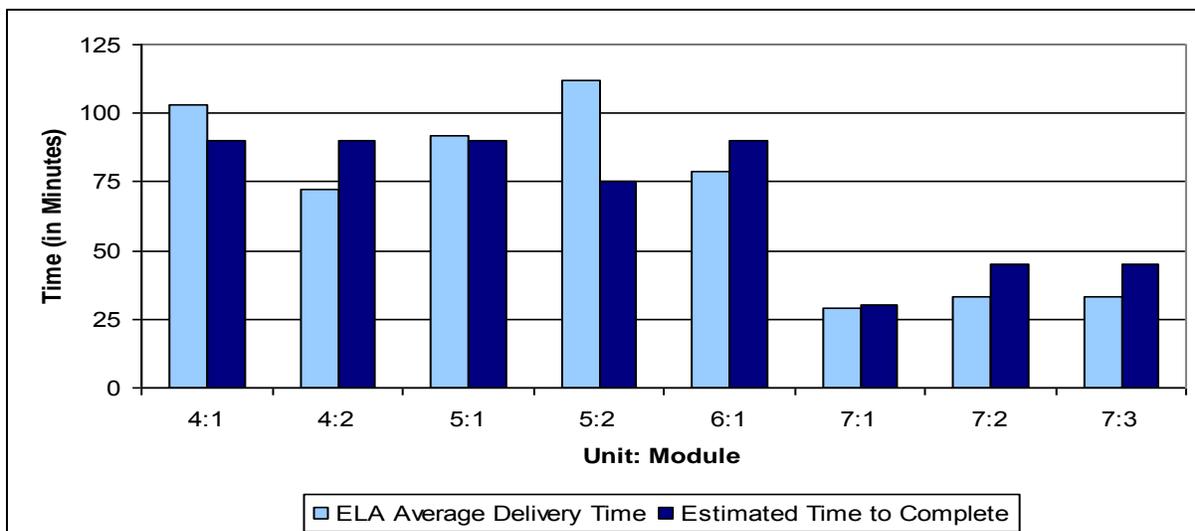
TALA developers provided an estimation of time needed to cover content in each of the modules. The following section describes the amount of time actually observed on presenting each module. Figures 9.1 and 9.2 show the average duration of the ELA and content area academy modules compared to the estimated time to complete each module.

Figure 9.1: Average TALA Module Duration: Tier I



Source: Grades 7-8 Classroom Teacher Academy Observations

Figure 9.2: Average TALA Module Duration: Tiers II and III



Source: Grades 7-8 Classroom Teacher Academy Observations

The duration of the ELA and content area academies exceeded the estimated time to completion in unit 1 (Schoolwide Approach to Reading and Effective Instruction) and unit 3: module 2 (Identifying Main Ideas of Text). The content area academy modules were completed in a shorter amount of time in unit 2: modules 1 (Selecting Words) and 2 (Pronouncing and Defining Words), and during unit 3: module 3 (Writing Summaries) compared to ELA academies. The time of delivery for unit 3: module 3 was almost 30 minutes shorter in the content academies than the ELA academies. This could be due to the trainers' awareness of the time limitations and the need to cover all instructional routines in the content area academy. The trainers took more time upfront to complete the modules as illustrated in the fact that the content area academies exceeded the ELA time to completion during the remaining modules. Perhaps by the time the trainers got to the last module, they delivered the information at a faster pace to deliver all modules.

For Tiers II and III, the average duration of the ELA academies exceeded the estimated time to completion during unit 4: module 1 (administering the TMSFA module) and in the word study unit (unit 5). The time to deliver the last modules in unit 7 (modules 2 and 3) was 10 minutes less than the estimated time to completion. As with the content area academies, the trainers' awareness of the time limitations and the need to cover all instructional routines in the last two modules may account for the accelerated duration.

Observer Ratings of Classroom Teacher Academy Components

Observers rated two components of TALA teacher trainings (implementation and culture) using a scale of 1 to 4, where 1=no evidence, 2=little evidence, 3=some evidence, and 4=strong evidence. Implementation was assessed by examining such indicators as the degree to which trainers used questioning strategies, managed the training pace, and used modeling. The training culture was examined by having observers rate such indicators as the degree to which training participants were actively involved during the training and worked collaboratively. The following sections present average observers' ratings for these two components. Observer comments are included to provide context to findings.

Implementation

Observers were asked to rate 10 key indicators of the implementation of the TALA training:

- Presenter(s) focused on TALA instructional routines.
- Presenter(s) used TALA videos in the modules effectively.
- Presenter(s) used TALA handouts in the modules effectively.
- Presenter(s) managed the pace of the training to meet the needs of participants.
- Presenter(s) carried out formal presentations of TALA routines effectively.
- Presenter(s) connected TALA to the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)
- Presenter(s) connected TALA routines to English Language Learners.
- Presenter(s) connected TALA to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)
- Presenter(s) reinforced effective instructional activities by modeling them.
- Presenter(s) effectively used questioning strategies.

Table 9.2 presents the average ratings for each of the key indicators within the implementation construct. The three indicators that were rated the highest for implementation included focusing on TALA instructional routines (3.9 out of 4.0) and using both TALA videos (3.9) and TALA handouts (3.7) in the modules effectively. The classroom teacher academies were rated lowest on the following implementation indicators: presenters effectively using questioning strategies (3.2), presenters reinforcing effective instructional activities by modeling them (3.2), presenters connecting TALA to TEKS (3.3), and presenters connecting TALA to English Language Learners (3.3).

Table 9.2: Ratings for Perceptions of TALA Implementation at the Classroom Teacher Academies

| Key Indicator | Mean* | S.D. |
|---|-------|------|
| Presenter(s) focused on TALA instructional routines. | 3.9 | .29 |
| Presenter(s) used TALA videos in the modules effectively. | 3.9 | .30 |
| Presenter(s) used TALA handouts in the modules effectively. | 3.7 | .49 |
| Presenter(s) managed the pace of the training to meet the needs of participants. | 3.6 | .69 |
| Presenter(s) carried out formal presentations of TALA routines effectively. | 3.5 | .67 |
| Presenter(s) connected TALA to the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills(TAKS) | 3.4 | .67 |
| Presenter(s) connected TALA routines to English Language Learners. | 3.3 | .89 |
| Presenter(s) connected TALA to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) | 3.3 | .79 |
| Presenter(s) reinforced effective instructional activities by modeling them. | 3.2 | .60 |
| Presenter(s) effectively used questioning strategies. | 3.2 | .58 |

* 1=no evidence; 2=little evidence; 3=some evidence; 4=strong evidence

Source: Grades 7-8 Classroom Teacher Academy Observations

In addition to rating key indicators of training implementation, observers also provided an overall rating for the implementation of TALA routines and content using a scale of 1 (The implementation of TALA content [i.e., routines] was not at all reflective of best practice for professional development) to 5 (The implementation of TALA content [i.e., routines] was extremely reflective of best practice for professional development). The average implementation rating was 3.8, indicating that the implementation of TALA routines at the classroom teacher academies was reflective of best practice for professional development. The implementation rating was slightly higher at the ELA academies (M=3.9) than the content area academies (M=3.5).

Observers who provided higher ratings often commented that presenters knew their TALA training materials and used ice breakers and personal examples, which increased their audience's engagement. Several observer comments that reflect higher implementation ratings include the following:

- –The trainers fully understood the TALA training materials and did a nice job delivering key concepts.”
- –The trainer used several ice breakers to get the day started.”
- –It appeared that the participants were engaged as there was a lot of discussion during the group activities and students were following along in their binders while taking notes.”
- –The training went on to be very smooth though. In fact, she did a great job...”

- –The main trainer hit all the key points, handouts and videos but did not read from the speaker notes. Instead she moved through the slides when she felt people in the room understood the concepts.”

Trainers who received lower scores on implementation suffered from some common problems. In particular, several observers mentioned that the trainers read directly from their notes or had poor delivery (e.g., monotone voices).

- –The trainers read directly from notes and did not deviate from materials.”
- –The trainers fully understood the TALA training materials and did a nice job delivering key concepts but they were fairly monotone.”
- –Participants seemed a bit frustrated at times with material being read to them rather than just explaining it.”
- Several observers noted that the length of the training sessions resulted in restive audiences:
- –It was a very long day of just sitting, for the most part.... Towards the late afternoon, they were really beginning to look bored and tired.”
- –However, as the day wore on, there were more and more side conversations and some day dreaming.”

Culture

Observers were asked to rate 12 key indicators of the culture of the TALA training:

- Presenter(s) respected the contribution of all participants.
- Participants interacted with each other around content issues.
- Presenter(s) were positive in their interactions with participants.
- Presenter(s) encouraged active participation of all participants.
- Participants were positive in their interactions with other participants.
- There was a climate of respect among participants for what other participants contributed.
- Participants actively participated in group discussions.
- Presenter(s) engaged participants equally.
- Interactions reflected collaborative working relationships between presenter(s) and participants.
- Presenter(s) encouraged participants to generate questions.
- Participants were on task.
- Participants enthusiastically engaged in hands-on activities.

Table 9.3 presents the mean ratings for each of the key indicators within the culture construct. The four key indicators in which presenters received the highest culture ratings were as follows: (1) presenters respected the contributions of all participants (3.5 out of 4.0); (2) participants interacted with each other around content issues (3.5); (3) presenters were positive in their interactions with participants (3.5); and (4) presenters encouraged active participation of all

participants (3.5). Only one construct was rated below 3.0, or having less than “some evidence” of the culture construct, participants enthusiastically engaged in hands-on activities.

Table 9.3: Ratings for Perceptions of TALA Training Culture at the Classroom Teacher Academies

| Key Indicator | Mean* | S.D. |
|---|-------|------|
| Presenter(s) respected the contribution of all participants. | 3.5 | .52 |
| Participants interacted with each other around content issues. | 3.5 | .52 |
| Presenter(s) were positive in their interactions with participants. | 3.5 | .52 |
| Presenter(s) encouraged active participation of all participants. | 3.5 | .66 |
| Participants were positive in their interactions with other participants. | 3.4 | .51 |
| There was a climate of respect among participants for what other participants contributed. | 3.4 | .65 |
| Participants actively participated in group discussions. | 3.3 | .63 |
| Presenter(s) engaged participants equally. | 3.2 | 1.07 |
| Interactions reflected collaborative working relationships between presenter(s) and participants. | 3.2 | .55 |
| Presenter(s) encouraged participants to generate questions. | 3.1 | .76 |
| Participants were on task. | 3.1 | .49 |
| Participants enthusiastically engaged in hands-on activities. | 2.9 | .64 |

* 1=no evidence; 2=little evidence; 3=some evidence; 4=strong evidence

Source: Grades 7-8 Classroom Teacher Academy Observations

In addition to rating key indicators of training culture, observers also provided an overall rating for the culture of TALA routines and content using a scale of 1 (The culture of the session interfered with engagement of participants in the TALA training) to 5 (The culture of the session facilitated the engagement of participants in the TALA training). The average culture rating was 3.8, indicating an environment conducive to participant engagement. The culture rating was slightly higher at the ELA academies (M=4.0) than the content area academies (M=3.3).

Observers who provided higher ratings often commented that presenters did a good job engaging participants, creating a positive learning environment, and keeping participants and the trainings on track. Some observer comments illustrating these points are listed below:

- “Instructors did a great job of including everyone equally, and encouraging discussion.”
- “While they (the presenters) covered all required TALA content, they used their tones and questioning strategies to keep participants engaged and on task.”
- “Some participants were off task and presenters were professional in the way they dealt with those issues.”

The participants’ enthusiasm about the TALA training was noted by one observer, who reported that the participants responded to TALA with personal stories and examples from their classrooms.

- “Participants offered opinions and personal stories showing they understood the concepts. Trainers did a great job of encouraging participation by calling on people for examples.”
- “Participants were very respectful of the comments that others made.”

Several of the observers noted that some of the presenters did not encourage enough interaction, were unresponsive to the audience, or else were not well versed enough in the TALA materials.

- –The presenters did not adequately engage participants in group discussions during the last two modules.”
- –Presenters often did not know answers to questions, which seemed to irritate the participants after awhile.”
- –Overall the training went well. The trainers covered every detail of the TALA materials and were able to end on time. However, they could have done a better job using questioning strategies and personal stories to keep participants engaged.”

Additionally, in two cases observers reported that participants reacted negatively to the TALA training. Observers noted the following about two TALA sessions.

- –Some participants were very negative, and did not take training very seriously at times.”
- –Much negativity in comments today-- some sarcastic comments by presenters indicated frustration with some of the participants; some participants were really rude today.”

Summary of the TALA Classroom Teacher Training Observations

Across the observed TALA teacher trainings, the activities that occurred most frequently included: (1) presenter explains and reviews TALA content; (2) presenter provides examples/ elaborations of TALA content; (3) presenter distributes and uses handouts; and (4) presenter facilitates group discussions. Conversely, presenters were less able to integrate the following recommended TALA practices into their classrooms: (1) presenters modeling TALA content and participants practiced TALA content with (2) the presenter, (3) each other, and (4) independently.

Observers rated two of the training components—training implementation and training culture. Analyses revealed that the training implementation was rated slightly higher than the training culture. These findings suggest that observers felt that the program was well implemented and that overall presenters were effective in their use of questioning strategies, managing the training pace, and using modeling. Although rated slightly lower, the training culture ratings suggested that the training participants were actively involved in the TALA training and worked collaboratively together.

Key indicators of training implementation revealed that presenters were effective when they focused on TALA instructional routines and when they used both TALA videos and TALA handouts in their modules. The presenters were given low ratings on using questioning strategies and connecting TALA to TEKS and to English Language Learners. From the observer comments it appears that the TALA trainers knew their materials and attempted to reach their audiences through personal examples and interactive questions. Several of the observers noted that although some TALA trainers were competent in delivering the material, the majority of the delivery method included reading the notes verbatim. Additionally, two observers noted that the training sessions were long, which resulted in the audience becoming more restless through the course of the day.

Key indicators of the training culture revealed that presenters generally received high marks for respecting the contributions of all participants and interacting with each other around content issues. Additionally, presenters were seen as being positive in their interactions with participants and in encouraging the participation of all participants. Potential areas for improvement within the culture construct include encouraging participants to ask questions and keeping the

participants on task. Only one item was rated below 3.0, or having less than “some evidence” of the construct, participants enthusiastically engaged in hands-on activities. Observers noted that the presenters were able to engage the participants and create a positive learning environment. There were two sessions in which the participants reacted negatively to the TALA trainings and the observers noted that the presenters could have engaged their audiences better or been more knowledgeable about the TALA content.

Perceptions of Grades 7-8 TALA Training

The online survey invitation was sent to 338 TALA trainers. Of the invited participants, 268 trainers completed the survey (79% response rate).

Background of the TALA Trainers

The trainers had diverse backgrounds and a variety of professional experiences (see Appendix I for more details). Seventy-one percent of trainers had professional experience as a classroom teacher, and 42% were currently employed as a teacher. Almost 40% of the trainers were curriculum specialists. Of those with a teaching background, 50% had more than 10 years of teaching experience. The majority of the trainers taught at the secondary level, with more than half of trainers possessing experience at the middle school level. The trainers represented a variety of content areas; however, over half of the trainers taught Language Arts.

Eighty-eight percent of trainers reported that they were a Regional Trainer in 2009. Seven percent indicated that they were a State Trainer and five percent indicated that they were both a Regional Trainer and a State Trainer.

Selection of Trainers

Participants were asked how they were selected to become a TALA trainer. The majority of trainers were nominated by a supervisor. Many trainers completed a formal application. Those who responded “other” were recommended by the district superintendent, invited/nominated by a state trainer, or were asked by ESC personnel. Of the trainers who responded to the survey, 45% were a returning trainer from 2008. Table 9.4 illustrates the various ways that TALA trainers were selected.

Table 9.4: How Trainers Were Selected for the TALA TOTs

| | Percentage Selecting Response (n=251)* |
|--|--|
| I was nominated by a supervisor | 53% |
| I was asked to participate based on my middle school teaching experience | 25% |
| I completed a formal application | 41% |
| I am a returning TALA trainer from 2008 | 45% |
| I do not know | <1% |
| Other | 7% |

* Where survey respondents were asked to “select all that apply,” percentages add to more than 100%.

Source: TALA Trainer Survey

Overall Impressions of the TALA TOTs

Trainers were asked to rate the quality, effectiveness, and satisfaction with the TALA training that they attended. Table 9.5 presents trainer perceptions of the effectiveness of the TALA training. The majority of trainers (76%) perceived the training as very effective or extremely effective in meeting their individual learning needs. Over 80% of trainers responding reported that the training was very effective or extremely effective in preparing them for their roles and responsibilities as a TALA trainer.

Table 9.5: Perceptions of the Effectiveness of the TALA Training

| Survey Item | Not at All Effective | Slightly Effective | Moderately Effective | Very Effective | Extremely Effective |
|---|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| To what extent was the workshop structure effective in meeting your learning needs? | 1% | 6% | 17% | 46% | 30% |
| How effective was the training of trainers you attended in preparing you for your roles/responsibilities as a TALA trainer? | <1% | 6% | 14% | 46% | 34% |

(n=250)

Source: TALA Trainer Survey

Table 9.6 presents trainer perceptions of their preparedness for their roles as a TALA trainer after the training. Over 90% of trainer respondents reported that they had the requisite knowledge and skills needed to fulfill their roles and responsibilities as a TALA trainer. The majority of regional trainers reported that the goals of TALA were clearly articulated and the responsibilities of a trainer were clearly defined.

Table 9.6: Perceptions of Preparedness for Role as a TALA Trainer

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Disagree nor Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|----------------------------|-------|----------------|
| The TALA training of trainers I attended provided me with the requisite knowledge and skills to fulfill my responsibilities as a TALA trainer. (n=250) | - | 2% | 4% | 35% | 59% |
| The goals of TALA were clearly articulated to me. (n=247) | 1% | <1% | - | 19% | 80% |
| My responsibilities as a trainer were clearly defined for me. (n=247) | 1% | <1% | 1% | 21% | 77% |

Source: TALA Trainer Survey

Trainers also reported that the culture of the TALA TOT was positive (see Table 9.7). Approximately 78% of trainers noted that the training environment was very conducive or extremely conducive to professional exploration and encouraged the sharing of ideas among participants.

Table 9.7: Perceptions of the Culture of the TALA TOT

| | Not at All Conducive | Slightly Conducive | Moderately Conducive | Very Conducive | Extremely Conducive |
|--|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| To what extent was the environment conducive to your individual professional exploration? | 2% | 5% | 15% | 39% | 39% |
| To what extent was the environment conducive to you being able to share ideas with other participants? | 1% | 6% | 14% | 38% | 41% |

(n=250)

Source: TALA Trainer Survey

TALA trainers were asked to respond to a series of open-ended questions pertaining to the training they attended. When asked if there was anything that they would not change about the training (what they liked best), the trainers reported that they “liked everything” and “everything was well prepared.” Other favorable elements of the training included:

- Discussions and activities
- Organized binders and helpful presentation materials
- Various presenters/presentation styles
- Background knowledge regarding research and development
- Actual content of training
- Logistics and learning environment
- Networking and collaboration with other professionals
- Pace and schedule of the training

When asked what could improve the training, the trainers reported a need for greater interaction among the participants with the material and more time to connect/discuss with others. Other suggestions included a separate or shortened session for returning TALA trainers (a review session). Other suggestions for improvement included:

- Enhance visual aids
- Diversify teaching methods
- Provide a better model of teaching methods while training
- “The script is important, but don’t just read it word for word.”
- “The *I do, we do, you do* isn’t always necessary for all activities.”

The responses reported in Table 9.8 suggest that the majority of trainers have overall positive perceptions of the TALA TOT that they attended. Eighty-nine percent of trainers reported that they would attend a similar training in the future (see Table 9.9).

Table 9.8: Overall Perceptions of TALA Training

| | Very Poor | Below Average | Average | Above Average | Excellent |
|--|-----------|---------------|---------|---------------|-----------|
| How would you rate the overall quality of the training you received? | - | 2% | 13% | 39% | 46% |
| How would you rate the overall effectiveness of the presenters? | - | 1% | 16% | 42% | 40% |
| How would you rate the overall quality of the workshop content? | - | - | 8% | 32% | 60% |

(n=250)

Source: TALA Trainer Survey

Table 9.9: Willingness to Attend the TALA TOT in the Future

| | Definitely Not | Probably Not | Not Sure | Probably | Definitely |
|--|----------------|--------------|----------|----------|------------|
| Would you attend a similar training of trainers in the future? (n=250) | 1% | 4% | 6% | 23% | 66% |

Source: TALA Trainer Survey

Over half of trainers (51%) reported that they were a TALA trainer in the past. Of the returning TALA trainers, 91% were regional trainers in 2008 and 5% were state trainers. Four percent reported that they were both a state and regional trainer in 2008.

When asked how the TALA training has improved since last attending in 2008, many trainers reported that the training was effective last year but has since improved upon the following:

- Online TALA follow-up component
- Improved technology with remote controls to advance presentation slides and better quality videos
- Better training manual
- Handouts – two slides per page
- Session times and schedule
- Streamlined the presentation process

Preparation for TALA Training

Trainers were asked to select all the activities in which they were engaged while preparing for their roles as a TALA trainer. These included:

1. Attended the statewide training of trainers for state trainers.
2. Attended the statewide training of trainers for regional trainers.
3. Reserved the training space.
4. Arranged the training space.
5. Contacted participants regarding session logistics.
6. Set an agenda for the session.
7. Met with co-presenters.

8. Assigned specific responsibilities to each of the presenters with whom I was preparing to present.
9. Studied the sections of the training materials that I was assigned to present.
10. Studied the sections of the training materials that my co-presenter(s) was/were assigned to present.
11. Worked with co-presenter(s) to ask questions of one another.
12. Practiced the demonstrations.
13. Previewed the training videos.
14. Prepared activity materials.
15. Reviewed the 2008 training materials (if applicable)

As illustrated in Table 9.10, preparation activities that occurred most frequently included studying the assigned sections of the training materials (93%), attending the TALA regional TOT (87%), and meeting with their co-presenters (89%).

Table 9.10: Trainers’ Preparation for Presenting TALA Training Sessions

| | Percentage Selecting Response* (n=251) |
|--|--|
| Attended the statewide training of trainers for state trainers. | 16% |
| Attended the statewide training of trainers for regional trainers. | 87% |
| Reserved the training space. | 12% |
| Arranged the training space. | 16% |
| Contacted participants regarding session logistics. | 11% |
| Set an agenda for the session. | 32% |
| Met with co-presenters. | 89% |
| Assigned specific responsibilities to each of the presenters with whom I was preparing to present. | 68% |
| Studied the sections of the training materials that I was assigned to present. | 93% |
| Studied the sections of the training materials that my co-presenter(s) was/were assigned to present. | 69% |
| Worked with co-presenter(s) to ask questions of one another. | 61% |
| Practiced the demonstrations. | 70% |
| Previewed the training videos. | 81% |
| Prepared activity materials. | 56% |
| Reviewed the 2008 training materials (if applicable) | 31% |

* Trainers were asked to select all that apply; therefore, percents will not sum to 100.

Source: TALA Trainer Survey

Summary of Perceptions of TALA Training

The trainers had favorable perceptions of the TOT that they attended. The culture and quality of the training were rated positively by most trainers. The training content and materials were reported as what the trainers liked best. The frequently reported area of improvement pertained to the scripted nature of the TALA training, particularly reading the slides verbatim. The majority of trainers felt prepared for their roles as a TALA trainer. Overall, the quality of the training was highly rated.

Eighty-nine percent of trainers reported that they would attend a similar training in the future. In fact, over half of the trainers were returning trainers from 2008. The returning trainers reported that several components of the TALA materials were improved (e.g., videos, manuals).

TALA Administrator Overview Training

Expert Review of Materials

The TAB reviewed the online Administrator Overview Training in terms of the description/overview of TALA, guidance for implementing the tiers of the schoolwide approach, and the *Walkthrough Guides* for content area classrooms and reading intervention classrooms.

The TAB praised the Administrator Overview Training. Getting administrator “buy-in” was viewed as critical to TALA’s success. The training provided a detailed overview of TALA. The TAB liked the handouts that illustrated how to organize instruction (e.g., sample schedules). The TAB believed that the training needed more detail and is currently a surface level overview. They recommended that administrators should go through the same training that the teachers have gone through to have a deeper understanding of the routines involved.

The TAB believed the *Walkthrough Guides* may be misused since the administrator overview training did not include specific training in the use of the instrument. The *Walkthrough Guides* allow administrators to evaluate the level of TALA implementation in the teachers’ classrooms. The *Walkthrough Guide* consists of observable elements of TALA instructional routines. For example, a comprehension instructional routine is rated on a scale from 0 to 2, where:

- 0 = The teacher assigns or begins reading assignments without assisting students in previewing the text or the important ideas.
- 1 = The teacher provides a list/overview of concepts that will be encountered in a reading assignment but does not engage students in a discussion about those ideas.
- 2 = The teacher and students spend time discussing their opinions and prior learning about important concepts before those ideas are encountered in the reading assignment.

If an administrator did not see an element, it could be rated as “not observed.” A total score is calculated and interpreted as high, partial, or low implementation of TALA instructional routines. The *Walkthrough Guides* consist of tallying points, and the TAB expressed concern that teachers would be unfairly rated poorly because the observation is a snapshot in time and one cannot expect to observe all elements on the *Walkthrough Guides* in a single observation. Additionally, the TAB stated that administrators need literacy training to use the evaluation tools presented in the training. They also commented that the evaluation tools are vague and questioned the usefulness of the *Teacher Self-Assessment*. The *Teacher Self-Assessment* measures the frequency of literacy instructional practices that are used to support student learning as well as teacher reported proficiency with the practices. The TAB recommended that the tools be simplified, based on concrete, observable characteristics, and clarified for use in Texas.

Overall, the TAB viewed the administrator overview training as a step in the right direction. They recommended that the training be delivered in person with an ongoing follow-up that could be Web-based. The TAB had the following recommendations that they believe would secure campus administrator support:

- Administrators should be required to attend the administrator training.
- Administrators should go through the same training that the teachers attended.

- Handouts need to be explicitly mentioned in the training.
- Administrators should be provided with detailed training on using the *Walkthrough Guide*.
- The *Walkthrough Guide* and *Teacher Self-Assessment* should be simplified and clarified for use in Texas.
- In the future, administrator training should be conducted by administrators who have successfully implemented the program at their schools/campuses.

Administrator Perceptions of TALA Training

Campus administrators were invited to complete an online survey to assess their support of TALA implementation at their campuses.⁵⁵ The survey assessed the type of training they received, including their perceptions of the effectiveness and overall quality of the TALA training for those who participated in training.

Of the administrators who completed the survey, less than half (46%) participated in the TALA Administrator Overview Training. For those administrators who participated in the TALA Administrator Overview Training, most administrators (94%) attended the training offered by one of the ESCs and five percent completed the online version. Two percent of administrators reported that they attended an “other” form of training. This included district training, mid-winter, and leading the training.

Administrators were asked to rate the overall quality of the training they received. Over half of the administrators rated the quality of the training as “excellent” or “above average.” Less than 10% rated the training they received as “below average” or “poor.” Table 9.11 presents a summary of the overall rating of administrator training.

Table 9.11: Administrator Ratings of Training Quality

| | Percentage Selecting Response (n=111) |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| Excellent | 25% |
| Above Average | 37% |
| Average | 32% |
| Below Average | 5% |
| Very Poor | 1% |

Source: TALA Administrator Survey

Administrators were asked to rate the effectiveness of the training they attended in terms of the training structure, content, and materials. Table 9.12 presents the administrator perceptions of the effectiveness of the administrator overview training. The majority of the administrators (over 85%) perceived the training structure, content, and materials as “effective” or “very effective.”

⁵⁵ The online survey invitation was sent to 1,831 campus administrators. Of the invited participants, 251 administrators completed the survey (13% response rate).

Table 9.12: Administrator Perceptions of the Effectiveness of the Administrator Overview Training

| | Very Ineffective | Ineffective | Effective | Very Effective |
|---|------------------|-------------|-----------|----------------|
| Training structure (e.g., time to learn everything; time for reflection). (n=111) | 4% | 9% | 71% | 16% |
| Training content (e.g., instructional routines). (n=108) | 4% | 5% | 68% | 24% |
| Training materials (e.g., PowerPoint slides). (n=107) | 3% | 5% | 69% | 23% |

Source: TALA Administrator Survey

Administrators also rated the effectiveness of the training in preparing them to support their teachers in implementing TALA. The majority of administrators (72%) indicated that it was “effective” or “highly effective” in preparing them to support their teachers. Table 9.13 presents the perceptions of preparedness.

Table 9.13: Perceptions of Preparedness to Support TALA Teachers

| | Percentage Selecting Response (n=111) |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Highly Effective | 22% |
| Effective | 50% |
| Neither Effective nor Ineffective | 20% |
| Ineffective | 6% |
| Very Ineffective | 2% |

Source: TALA Administrator Survey

Summary of the Quality of TALA Training

This chapter examined the quality of Grade 6 and 7-8 TALA trainings using results from the TAB’s review of TALA material, data from the observation data of the TALA trainings, survey data from the classroom teacher academies in 2008 and 2009, and the administrator survey.

The main findings are discussed below.

TALA Grades 7-8 Training

Expert Review of Grades 7-8 Training Materials

The TAB rated the overall quality of the Grades 7-8 training materials as high. The TAB review revealed:

- The content is based on research-based best practices.
- The instructional routines are linked to state standards.
- The emphasis on importance/necessity of routines for content area teachers is a benefit.
- TALA does not try to introduce too many strategies and this makes it manageable for teachers.
- The practices used in the professional development component are strong and reflective of good professional development practices (e.g., active learning).
- Time is an issue due to the short duration.

- The reading intervention units may pose problems for middle school ELA teachers lacking background knowledge.
- Minimal amount of follow-up is provided.

The TAB provided several recommendations that they believe would improve TALA training and the implementation of TALA in the schools:

- Teachers should be provided with additional vocabulary and comprehension instructional routines.
- Teachers need ongoing follow-up activities.
- TALA should include suggestions for setting up teacher study groups or grade level team activities at the district or campus level.
- A school administrator trained in the TALA routines should evaluate the teacher during the year.
- A dedicated TALA website should be developed to serve as a hub to post, share, and critique lessons.

Observations of Grades 7-8 TALA Training

Observations of the Grades 7-8 classroom teacher academies revealed that:

- The program was well implemented.
- Trainers were effective in their use of questioning strategies, managing the training pace, and using modeling.
- Trainers were given relatively low ratings on the use of questioning strategies, connecting TALA to TEKS, and applying TALA routines for use with English language learners.
- Training participants were actively involved in the TALA training and worked collaboratively together.
- The TALA trainers attempted to reach their audiences through personal examples and interactive questions.
- The primary delivery method involved trainers reading directly from their notes.

Trainer and Teacher Perceptions of Grades 7-8 TALA Training

The state and regional trainers had favorable perceptions of the TOT that they attended. Survey responses revealed:

- The culture and quality of the training were rated positively by most trainers.
- The trainers reported that they liked the training content and materials best.
- The frequently reported area for improvement pertained to the scripted nature of the TALA training (e.g., reading the slides verbatim).
- The majority of trainers (94%) felt prepared for their roles as a TALA trainer.
- Most of the trainers (89%) reported that they would attend a similar training in the future, and over 50% of the trainers were returning trainers from 2008.

Administrator Overview Training

Expert Review of Administrator Overview Training

Overall, the TAB viewed the administrator overview training as a step in the right direction. Getting administrator “buy-in” was viewed as critical to TALA’s success. The TAB liked the handouts that illustrated how to organize instruction (e.g., sample schedules). They recommended that the training be delivered in person with an ongoing follow-up that could be web-based.

The TAB had the following recommendations that they believe would secure campus administrator support:

- Administrators should be required to attend the administrator training.
- Administrators should go through the same training that the teachers attended.
- Handouts need to be explicitly mentioned in the training.
- Administrators should be provided with detailed training on using the *Walkthrough Guide*.
- The *Walkthrough Guide* and *Teacher Self-Assessment* should be simplified and clarified for use in Texas.
- In the future, administrator training should be conducted by administrators who have successfully implemented the program at their schools/campuses.

Administrator Perceptions of TALA Training

- Administrators were asked to rate the overall quality of the training they received. Perceptions included:
- Over half of the administrators rated the quality of the training as “excellent” or “above average.”
- Less than 10% rated the training they received as “below average” or “poor.”
- The majority of the administrators perceived the training structure, content, and materials as effective or very effective and believed that the TALA training was effective or highly effective in preparing them to support teachers.

10. Discussion and Next Steps for TALA

The findings from the TALA evaluation are reviewed in this chapter. The limitations of the present evaluation are discussed and next steps for TALA are presented for consideration.

Discussion of Evaluation Findings

The evaluation utilized numerous data sources to investigate the evaluation questions. Information was gleaned from training and classroom observations, interviews and surveys of key stakeholders, and expert review of materials to describe the quality of the TALA training, the classroom implementation of TALA, and the effect of TALA on student achievement. Archival data and ESC cost and stipend data were synthesized to describe how funds were allocated to develop and implement TALA.

For the current evaluation, quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive, inferential, and nonparametric statistical techniques. Qualitative data were analyzed for theme and content to summarize stakeholder perceptions of TALA. Quantitative and qualitative data were combined to generate a comprehensive look at TALA across the four evaluation objectives.

The following section presents the key findings from the TALA evaluation.

The Quality of TALA Training

TALA Content

The overall quality of the TALA content is high. One TAB member commented that “in the scheme of things, TALA is one of the best state academies that I have seen.” TALA instructional strategies were perceived by the TAB members as important and necessary for the success of adolescent readers. The routines require active teaching by the teacher, high levels of student participation, and require the students to become “more cognitively engaged in learning.” Many of the instructional routines are representative of best practices in literacy and scientifically-based research practices. TALA instructional routines were identified by the TAB as being clearly and explicitly linked to state (TEKS) ELA/reading standards.

The TAB found some issues with the TALA content, including a limited number of strategies presented for vocabulary and comprehension instruction. They also believed that the intensive instruction units (4-7) would pose problems for middle school ELA teachers lacking background knowledge. The TAB recommended adding additional vocabulary and comprehension instructional routines since these instructional routines would be used most frequently in the middle school classrooms. The TAB also believed that the TALA instructional routines would be difficult to use with math textbooks.

TALA state trainers and regional trainers were asked about their impressions of TALA content. Both state and regional trainers positively rated the TALA content. The training content and materials were reported as what the trainers liked best. State ELA trainers indicated that they “loved” the content, stating that the content was organized and easy to follow. State content area trainers also viewed the content favorably. However, they perceived gaps in the math, science, and social studies aspects of the content. Regional trainers also held positive impressions of TALA content. Nearly 83% of regional trainers rated the quality of TALA content

as above average or excellent. When asked what they would not change about the TALA training, several regional trainers reported that they would not change the content and materials.

Classroom teachers also rated the content favorably with 75% of ELA teachers and 70% of content area teachers rating the materials as above average or excellent.

TALA Training

The TALA Regional TOT and TALA classroom teacher academies were highly rated by observers. Regional and classroom teacher academies were rated as being reflective of best practices for professional development, and the culture of the training sessions facilitated the engagement of participants in the TALA training. This was consistent with the TAB perceptions of TALA. According to the TAB, TALA had several professional development benefits. In particular, the TAB praised TALA for having a clear purpose for each activity, an explicit connection to the TEKS for each module, the use of videos and graphic organizers, and a summary at the end of each module. In addition, the TAB liked that resources and websites were provided for teachers for further information. The emphasis on active learning and collaborative/cooperative learning were reflective of good teaching practices and would provide further opportunity to learn the routines.

Training observation data indicates that the TALA trainers knew their materials and attempted to reach their audiences through personal examples and interactive questions. Observers noted that the presenters were able to engage the participants and create a positive learning environment. Several of the observers noted that although some TALA trainers were competent in delivering the material, the primary delivery method involved reading directly from the notes. Potential areas for improvement include encouraging participants to ask questions and keeping the participants on task.

Both state and regional trainers had positive perceptions of the TALA training reporting that the training was effective in helping them prepare for their roles as a trainer. The trainers felt adequately prepared for the training that they conducted based on the training that they attended. The one issue that emerged in both state and regional trainer perceptions was the need for more time/additional days to learn and present the TALA content due to the large amount of material covered in the training. Another reported area of improvement pertained to the scripted nature of the TALA training, particularly reading the slides verbatim. The majority of trainers reported that they would attend a similar training in the future. In fact, over half of the trainers in 2009 were returning trainers from 2008.

A large percentage of ELA classroom teachers (over 75%) reported that the quality of the TALA trainings and the effectiveness of the presenters were above average or excellent. Among ELA teachers, the majority (80% or more) reported that they were fairly well or very well prepared to use each TALA instructional routine and the TMSFA. Approximately 63% of ELA teachers also felt prepared to deal with special student populations (e.g., LEP, special education, economically disadvantaged). Finally, approximately 90% of ELA teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the TALA ELA trainings were appropriate for teachers of ELA and reading.

Over 70% of content area classroom teachers reported that the quality of the TALA trainings and the effectiveness of the presenters were above average or excellent. More than half of TALA content area teachers (53%) felt prepared to deal with special student populations. Finally, approximately 80% of content area teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the TALA

content area trainings were appropriate for content area teachers. Of those who agreed that TALA was appropriate for content area teachers, 83% would recommend the trainings to social studies or science teachers, and 77% would recommend it to math teachers.

The TAB recommended that, in order to effectively implement TALA in the schools, teachers need systemic support from reading coaches and school administrators, on-going follow-up activities, and opportunities to practice the routines with feedback (e.g., a school administrator trained in the TALA routines should evaluate the teacher during the year). The TAB also believed that TALA should include suggestions for setting up teacher study groups or grade level team activities at the district or campus level. In addition, the TAB members suggested that teachers should see the instructional routines modeled in actual classrooms, during and after the training. Lastly, the TAB members felt that a dedicated TALA website should be developed to serve as a hub to post, share, and critique lessons, providing continuous follow-up and a community of teacher support.

Administrator Overview Training

Since TALA is a schoolwide approach to literacy instruction, campus support is important to the successful implementation of TALA. To foster campus support of TALA, an administrator overview training with handouts (e.g., classroom observation form - *Walkthrough Guide*) is provided. The TAB viewed the administrator overview training as a step in the right direction. Getting administrator “buy-in” was viewed as critical to TALA’s success. The TAB liked the handouts that illustrated how to organize instruction (e.g., sample schedules). They recommended that the training be delivered in person with an ongoing follow-up that could be Web-based. To secure campus administrator support, the TAB recommended that campus administrators should be required to attend the administrator training and should go through the same training that the teachers attended.

Administrators who participated in the administrator overview training were asked to rate the overall quality of the training they received. Over half of the administrators (62%) rated the quality of the training as “excellent” or “above average.” Additionally, the majority of the administrators perceived the training structure, content, and materials as effective or very effective and believed that the TALA training was effective or highly effective in preparing them to support teachers.

Classroom Implementation of TALA

Implementation of TALA in ELA Classrooms

Teachers who attended TALA Grade 6 ELA academies are implementing the TALA content and strategies in their classrooms in many ways. Overall, 89% of ELA teachers reported that they are implementing TALA strategies into their instruction at least to some degree. ELA teachers who were surveyed reported more frequent classroom implementation of identifying main ideas in text, defining words, and building background knowledge compared to other TALA Tier I instructional routines. At least half of the surveyed ELA teachers said they frequently foster student engagement, group or pair students, and adapt instruction to structure learning opportunities for all students. The use of graphic organizers was the most frequently implemented Tier II/III instructional routine according to surveyed ELA teachers.

Participating ELA teachers implemented Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III content learned at the ELA academies as part of the online follow-up training. They indicated that they implemented Tier I instructional routines to help students build skills in areas in which they constantly struggle, to differentiate instruction, to address the needs of specific groups of students, to implement a routine or strategy that they learned during TALA, and to address areas of low student achievement. ELA teachers indicated that they were implementing Tiers II and III instructional routines also to help struggling readers, to reinvigorate their teaching using new methods, and to help students develop skills that will help them become better readers across all subjects.

A majority of observed ELA teachers implemented general TALA strategies, like fostering student engagement, providing explicit instruction, and providing feedback to students. ELA teachers who were observed tended to implement more vocabulary instructional routines (81%) than they implemented comprehension instructional routines (66%). About one-quarter of the observed ELA lessons included word study, while only 12% of the lessons included monitoring comprehension. Only 5% of the teachers implemented fluency instructional strategies. The observation data are consistent with the ELA teacher self-report data, as well as the TAB comments.

The TMSFA was not used as widely as the TALA instructional routines by the ELA teachers. Only about 35% of the ELA teachers surveyed said they occasionally or frequently administer and/or interpret the TMSFA, while about the same percentage of ELA teachers surveyed (about 33%) said they have never administered or interpreted results from the TMSFA. Some trained ELA teachers implemented the TMSFA as part of their online follow-up training activity to diagnose and monitor the progress of their students. Half of the ELA online follow-up training participants who administered the TMSFA indicated that the areas of need that were identified for the majority of their students were fluency and comprehension; while about 32% indicated that the areas of need identified for the majority of their students were decoding, fluency, and comprehension; and about 18% indicated the area of need was comprehension only. The majority of ELA teachers who implemented the TMSFA as part of their online follow-up activity said they liked using the assessment. These teachers also spent a lot more time planning to implement the TMSFA than ELA teachers who planned lessons in which they implemented other TALA instructional routines. Since the law specifies the use of the TMSFA for grade 7 only, the use of the assessment by grade 6 ELA teachers is encouraging.

Participation in the TALA training has affected classroom literacy practices in many ways, primarily in the instruction of vocabulary and comprehension. Fluency has not really been addressed by ELA teachers who attended TALA Grade 6. This is consistent with the TAB perception that middle school ELA teachers have not been adequately prepared in their schooling to teach remedial reading. ELA teachers identified time and use of other strategies as the barriers to implementing TALA content and instructional strategies in their classrooms. Some ELA teachers reported that they did not incorporate the TALA routines since the training occurred the previous summer. This supports the TAB's recommendation for continuous follow-up activities to effectively implement TALA in the classroom.

Implementation of TALA in Content Area Classrooms

Like the ELA teachers, content area teachers (science, social studies, and mathematics) who attended TALA Grade 6 content area academies are implementing the TALA content and strategies frequently in their classrooms in many ways. Content area teachers (89%) reported that they are implementing TALA strategies into their instruction to at least some degree.

Content area teachers who were surveyed reported more frequent classroom implementation of these three Tier I instructional routines: defining words, building background knowledge, and generating examples and nonexamples. At least half of the surveyed content area teachers said they frequently adapt instruction to structure learning opportunities for all students, foster student engagement, and group or pair students.

A majority of observed content area teachers implemented general TALA strategies, like fostering student engagement, providing explicit instruction, and providing feedback to students. Content area teachers who were observed tended to implement more vocabulary instructional routines (76%) than they implemented comprehension instructional routines (35%). About 20% of the observed content area lessons included word study, while only 5% of the lessons included monitoring comprehension. Only one of the observed teachers implemented fluency instructional strategies. The observation data was consistent with the content area survey data.

Participating content area teachers implemented Tier I content learned at the content area academies as part of the online follow-up training. They indicated that they implemented Tier I instructional routines to differentiate instruction, to address the needs of specific groups of students, and for subject-specific reasons. Many respondents indicated that these strategies were valuable in helping students develop their reading skills while learning in content area classes. Content area teachers identified time and personal reasons as the barriers to implementing TALA content and instructional strategies in their classrooms.

Campus Support of TALA Implementation

Some of the facilitators for implementing TALA in their classrooms are school or district policies and practices to support TALA schoolwide, which according to ELA and content area teachers surveyed, were partially or fully implemented at about 60% of their campuses. These supports include support from administrators, assessment of students in reading, creation of literacy intervention plans, improvement of school climate, strengthening of core instructional programs, and provision of teacher professional development. At least 66% of administrators responded that these same supports were partially or fully implemented at their campuses.

Both ELA and content area teachers were twice as likely to meet with ELA teachers more than once a month than with any other type of core subject area teacher. Among all respondents, teachers were more likely to meet with campus administrators such as principals and vice principals than with curriculum specialists. However, teachers who did meet with administrators were more likely to meet more often with curriculum specialists than with campus administrators or other administrators.

At least 90% of administrators believe that TALA will achieve several goals at their campus related to classroom literacy practices and student outcomes. The goals related to classroom literacy practices include helping teachers design appropriate instruction and curriculum and helping adolescent students who struggle with reading. Student outcome goals include improving student achievement (i.e., TAKS scores), and specifically improving student outcomes in reading/English language arts and in the content areas.

Impact of TALA on Grade 6 Student Achievement

The evaluation team investigated the effects of TALA on grade 6 student achievement, in particular, reading achievement, math achievement, and at-risk student achievement. In

addition the relationship between grade 6 student achievement and teacher characteristics was explored.

Reading and Math Achievement

The evaluation investigated the relationship between TALA implementation and grade 6 student achievement in reading and math. TALA campuses were classified as high implementing, medium implementing, and low implementing. Results from comparisons of TALA high implementing campuses to comparable non-TALA campuses revealed no significant differences in grade 6 reading achievement or math achievement between TALA and non-TALA campuses. These findings do not suggest that TALA is not making an impact on student achievement. The state average for the percent of students meeting the standard is 91% for reading and 80% in math. Such a large percentage of grade 6 students meeting the standard in reading may make additional statistically significant increases difficult to achieve. Both TALA campuses and non-TALA campuses experienced a significant increase in the percentage of grade 6 students meeting the TAKS standard in reading and math from 2006-07 to 2007-08. This increase was followed by a decline in percentage of grade 6 students meeting the standard in 2008-09, the first year of TALA implementation. These findings mirror the fluctuations in the state averages for grade 6 reading and math, with increases in the percentage of grade 6 students meeting the TAKS standard in reading and math from 2006-07 to 2007-08, followed by decreases in 2008-09.

In addition to comparisons made between TALA and non-TALA campuses, the evaluation team examined differences among participating TALA campuses (high, medium, and low implementers). Changes in Grade 6 TAKS reading scores and Grade 6 TAKS math scores were compared across time within each group. For the “between year” comparisons by level of campus implementation, when comparing similarly classified campuses to themselves over time, there were significant differences in reading and math achievement. Looking at the trends by campus type, low implementing campuses experienced significant differences in reading and math achievement between 2005-06 and 2008-09. Significant differences were also experienced by medium implementing campuses between 2005-06 and 2008-09, as well as by high implementing campuses over this time period. The percentages of students who met the standard in math and reading fluctuated over time, with all campus types experiencing a decrease in the percentage meeting the standard following the implementation of TALA. Once again, these findings mirror the trends in the state averages.

For the “within year” comparisons among campuses, when comparing low, medium, and high implementing campuses to each other at any one time point, there were no significant differences in reading and math achievement. During the 2005-06 school year, low, medium, and high implementing campuses performed similarly with respect to reading and math achievement. This was also true in the 2006-07, 2007-08, and 2008-09 school years. Overall, students at campuses where teachers participated in TALA did not have significant academic gains or losses. This lack of evidence of TALA impact on student achievement is due to the preliminary nature of the findings as 2008-09 was the first year following TALA implementation.

At-Risk Student Achievement

The evaluation team examined the change in Grade 6 TAKS reading and math scores across TALA campuses for at-risk student groups since helping struggling readers is one element of TALA. The at-risk groups included special education students, LEP students, and economically

disadvantaged students. The percentage of special education students, LEP students, and economically disadvantaged students who met the standard in reading significantly increased since 2007-08, the first year of TALA implementation. The percentage of special education students who met the standard in math significantly increased since 2007-08, whereas the percentage of non-special education students who met the standard in math significantly decreased.

Relationship between Teacher Characteristics and Student Achievement

The evaluation also investigated the relationship between Grade 6 ELA and content area teacher characteristics and grade 6 student achievement in reading and math. For content area teachers, a weak yet significantly positive relationship between job satisfaction and grade 6 reading and math achievement was found, indicating that content area teachers with higher job satisfaction tended to work at campuses where more grade 6 students passed the reading and math TAKS. A weak but significantly negative relationship was found between content area teacher writing behaviors and reading achievement, indicating that content area teachers who utilized writing instructional behaviors in their classrooms tended to work in campuses where fewer grade 6 students passed the reading TAKS. Also, among content area teachers, a weak yet significantly positive relationship was found between positive beliefs about reading and grade 6 math achievement. This indicates that content area teachers who hold positive beliefs about teaching reading in the content areas tended to work in campuses where more grade 6 students passed the math TAKS. No significant relationships were found between ELA teacher characteristics and grade 6 student achievement in reading and math.

Analysis of TALA Funding Allocations and Expenditures

The data provided in the ESC TALA Expenditure Reporting Forms from each ESC were analyzed along with archival budget data provided by TEA to examine how various funds were allocated and spent to develop and disseminate TALA. In addition, data collected through interviews with the developer and TEA program staff was used to provide more detail about how the funds were allocated and spent.

Overall, ESCs spent an average of \$799 per teacher and \$18,093 per academy to conduct the TALA Grade 6 ELA academies. It cost an average of \$761 per teacher and \$11,192 per academy to conduct the TALA Grade 6 content area academies. Only one ESC spent more than the funds originally allocated for the ELA academies of TALA, while the majority of the ESCs spent between 60 to 80% of their allocated budgets. The majority of ESCs spent between 50 to 80% of their allocated budgets for the content area academies. Generally, when ESCs drew down smaller percentages of their total allotted expenditures, it was due to fewer teachers than expected attending the TALA trainings. In order for ESCs to use more of their allocated budgets, they need to serve more teachers.

ESCs tended to underestimate the costs of providing both the ELA and content area academies. The estimated cost per teacher of providing the content area was \$413 (actual cost was \$761) and the ELA area was \$705 (actual cost was \$799). These results indicate that, although the content area teacher participants receive half the amount of the stipend for participating and the content area academy costs should be lower because the sessions are shorter, the actual costs per teacher for ELA and content area teachers has been closer than the ESCs would expect them to be, based on assumptions about the equal distribution of base funding between ELA and content area academies.

Preliminary cost analyses for TALA Grades 7-8 revealed that across all ESCs, TEA allocated approximately \$687 per ELA area teachers and just over \$410 per content area teacher.

Limitations

Classroom Observations

One of the key data sources the evaluation team used to assess classroom implementation of TALA was classroom observations. TALA classroom observations occurred at 19 schools in 18 districts, representing 90% of the 20 ESCs throughout Texas. There is variability in the implementation of TALA in classrooms across the state. Observing more classrooms would provide greater information regarding the implementation of TALA in classrooms. In addition, only a small number of TALA instructional routines can be observed in a lesson. For example, a teacher might be teaching a particular comprehension strategy when observed and not a word study strategy. It does not mean that the word study strategy is not implemented in his/her classroom. Rather, the observation provides a snapshot of the TALA routines that are in use. The ability to observe a teacher at multiple time points would provide more information about the types of TALA routines that are being used.

Stakeholder Surveys

TALA participating teacher surveys, TALA trainer surveys, and campus administrator surveys were other data sources used in the evaluation. One limitation of the evaluation is that survey data was collected at only one point in time. The TALA teacher and administrator surveys were administered in Spring 2009 and the TALA trainer surveys were administered in Summer 2009, providing a snapshot of stakeholder perceptions of the program. Because of this limitation, changes over time (e.g., ELA and content area teachers' use of literacy activities in the classroom) were not examined. Comparing survey results at two time points would allow a better exploration of cause and effect relationships between teacher and administrator perceptions and program outcomes.

Another limitation of the evaluation is the survey sample used to assess TALA stakeholder perceptions of the program. The survey aimed to receive responses from all TALA trainers, participating classroom teachers, and campus administrators. However, it was not a requirement for TALA to respond to the evaluation survey and no incentives were provided to survey respondents. As a result, respondents self-selected whether to participate in the survey. In any self-report survey, there is a potential for inaccuracy due to issues such as recall (e.g., not remembering events or not having the information to respond to the question). There may also be issues with self-disclosure and an element of "satisficing" where respondents are overly positive in their ratings because they perceive that is what the evaluators want to hear (Braverman & Slater, 1996).

A problem was identified with the skip logic pattern in the ELA teacher section in the TALA participating teacher survey. Rather than directing the ELA teachers to the items about implementing TALA routines in the classroom, it directed them to the end of the survey. The evaluation team created an ELA supplement survey that included the missing items and re-invited the ELA teachers to complete the survey. Of the 1,457 ELA teachers who completed the original survey, 1,002 completed the supplement. This is a 31% loss of survey respondents and a loss of information regarding the level of TALA implementation in the ELA classroom.

Level of Implementation Variable

Merely attending a TALA academy is not an adequate indicator of the implementation of the instructional routines in the classroom. To gather a closer approximation to implementation in the classroom, the evaluation team created a school-level implementation of TALA measure. This measure was based on four variables:

- Percent of sixth grade teachers who attended TALA at the campus/school
- Percent of TALA participants from each school/campus who completed the Online Follow-up Documentation
- Teacher self-reported implementation of the TALA instructional routines and strategies in the TALA Teacher Participant Survey.
- Campus support as reported in the Administrator Survey and TALA Teacher Participant Survey.

After the four sources of data were merged, there were 1,651 campuses. Of those campuses, only 477 campuses had complete data across all four variables. The classification resulted in 105 high implementing campuses, 224 medium implementing campuses, and 148 low implementing campuses. Over 70% of campuses who had a teacher that attended TALA were excluded from the analyses due to missing data. As a result, the level of TALA implementation at those campuses is unknown. The more campuses that are included in the formulation of the implementation measure would provide greater validity to the classification of campuses as high implementing, medium implementing, and low implementing.

Achievement Outcome

One of the major intended outcomes of TALA is improved student achievement. For purposes of this evaluation, reading and math TAKS scores are used to measure student achievement. As previously mentioned, campus level TAKS scores are used to compare TALA and non-TALA campuses, as well as the different TALA implementing campuses (high, medium, and low). The ability to link the students to their teachers would provide a more accurate depiction of the impact of TALA on student achievement. In addition, the use of the reading TAKS subscales (objectives) would be a better indicator of TALA impact. Objective 1 of the reading TAKS pertains to “figuring out the meaning of an unknown word, finding important details and main ideas, and recognizing accurate summaries.” Each of these components is a part of the TALA instructional routines. Unfortunately, the subscales had not been vertically equated⁵⁶ at the time of this report so change over time could not be statistically compared.

Next Steps for TALA

Classroom observations and surveys of Grades 7-8 TALA participating teachers were conducted in 2009 and will be covered in the final evaluation report. The evaluation team, in consultation with TEA, selected campuses for observations. In selecting the campuses for the Grade 6 classroom observations, campuses were classified according to the percent of participating teachers at the campus and the percent of students who met the standard in

⁵⁶ Vertical equating refers to the process of equating tests administered to groups of students with different abilities, such as students in different grades (Baker, 1984).

reading. One issue was that many campuses met the standard in reading and a true low achieving campus was difficult to find.

TALA was designed to help all middle school students, including struggling readers. Campuses that were “academically unacceptable” (AU) in reading were required to attend TALA. However, only 25 schools in the state were AU in reading, and 14 of these were charter schools. Case studies were conducted with a sample of the academically unacceptable schools that sent teachers to TALA (not all participated in TALA). This allowed a greater exploration of how TALA is being implemented in AU campuses and to assess the level of campus support. These findings will be presented in the final report.

The majority of participating teachers represented campuses that were “academically acceptable” in reading. The evaluation team recommended the identification of TALA participating teachers who are effectively implementing the strategies in their classrooms. This involved looking at campuses that adopted TALA and exhibited a positive shift in TAKS scores. The information was collected via case studies and will be presented in the final report.

The final evaluation report will be published by January 1, 2011. It will be a comprehensive report of findings throughout the entire evaluation.

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Glossary

Anticipation-Reaction Guide – A graphic organizer that helps students activate and evaluate prior knowledge. Students form opinions based upon background knowledge and evaluate these opinions after exposure to new information.

Building Background Knowledge – Helping learners connect to concepts about to be taught by using activities that relate to or determine the level of their existing knowledge. This is also known as building prior knowledge.

Academic Words – Words that are associated with instructions and questioning in school (e.g., analyze) and words that include more sophisticated language (e.g., provoke).

Closed Syllables – Have one vowel that is closed by a consonant and the vowel sound is short (e.g., rabbit).

Comprehension – Understanding the meaning of text by reading actively and with purpose (for learning, understanding, or enjoyment).

Content-Specific Words – Words that are specific to a content area and not likely to be encountered outside of a subject area (e.g., photosynthesis).

Decoding – The ability to figure out how to read unknown words by using knowledge of letters, sounds, and word patterns.

Explicit Instruction – The intentional design and delivery of information by the teacher to the students. It begins with (1) the teacher's modeling or demonstration of the skill or strategy; (2) a structured and substantial opportunity for students to practice and apply newly taught skills and knowledge under the teacher's direction and guidance; and (3) an opportunity for feedback.

Expository Text – Text that explains, informs, describes, or persuades the reader. Textbooks are an example of expository text.

Frustration Model – A graphic organizer used for word analysis and vocabulary building. It prompts students to think about and describe the meaning of a word or concept by defining the term, describing its essential characteristics, providing examples of the idea, and offering non-examples of the idea.

Fluency – The ability to read text accurately, quickly and with proper expression.

Get the Gist – A strategy that helps students learn to identify the main idea of a paragraph.

Graphic Organizer – A text, diagram or other pictorial device that summarizes, organizes, and illustrates interrelationships among concepts in a text.

Irregular Syllable Patterns – Have letter combinations that do not make their expected sound.

Main Idea – The point the author of a text is making about a topic.

Morpheme – The smallest unit of meaning in oral and written language.

Morphemic Analysis – A strategy in which the meanings of words can be determined or inferred by examining their meaningful parts (i.e., prefixes, suffixes, roots, etc.).

Narrative Text – A text that tells a story.

Partner Reading – Pairs of students read together and the listener corrects the active reader.

Phonics – A method of teaching reading that focuses on letter-sound relationships.

Prefix – An affix that is added to the front of a word and changes its meaning (e.g., *im* being placed in front of the word *possible*).

Root of a Word – Words from other languages that are the origin of many English words. (e.g., *geo* from Greek means *earth*)

Scaffolding – Providing temporary support until help is no longer needed.

Suffix – A group of letters added to the end of a word to form a new word (e.g., when *ful* is added to the word *help*, a new word is formed: *helpful*).

Syllabification – Forming or dividing words into syllables.

Syllable – A unit of sound or group of letters made up of a vowel sound or a vowel consonant combination. Syllables contain only one vowel sound.

Text Structure – The organizational pattern an author uses to structure the ideas in a text. Common formats for text structure include compare/contrast, cause and effect, and sequencing.

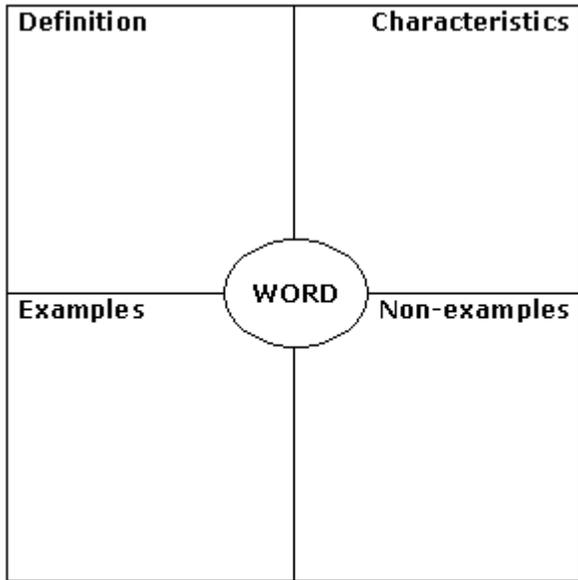
Visualization/Mental Imagery – Visual images that are formed in the mind while reading.

Vowel-consonant-e (silent e) Syllables – End in one vowel, one consonant, and a final e. The vowel is long and the final e is silent (e.g., *profile*).

Appendix A: Sample of TALA Instructional Routines

Appendix A: Sample of TALA Instructional Routines

Frayer Model



Anticipation-Reaction Guide

Before reading: Think about whether you agree or disagree with each statement written below. Make a checkmark in the appropriate column.

During reading: Look for evidence that either confirms your opinion of each statement or makes you want to change it. Write your evidence in the box next to the statement and record the page number where you found it.

| Agree | Disagree | Statement | Evidence | Page # |
|-------|----------|-----------|----------|--------|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

After reading: Look over your evidence and decide whether you want to change your opinion of any statement. Mark any changes in the Agree/Disagree columns.

Notes Log

| Topic/Title | | Pages |
|----------------------|-------|-------|
| Main Ideas | Notes | |
| Main Idea of Section | | |
| Summary | | |

Appendix B: Expert Review Protocol

Appendix B: Expert Review Protocol

TALA Training Materials Expert Review Protocol – 2009

As with your review of the sixth grade materials, please evaluate the presenter materials, including the PowerPoint slides, participant notes, handouts, and videos. Please keep in mind that the materials are geared to **seventh and eighth grade teachers**. As an expert reviewer, you should provide any feedback that you feel is relevant in your review of the materials. The following protocol has been designed to assist with the expert review of the TALA training content: Please keep in mind the context of TALA as you provide your review.

Best Practices for Literacy Instruction

- Are the instructional routines appropriate for seventh and eighth grade adolescent readers? Why or why not?
- Are the instructional routines in Units 1-3 appropriate for seventh and eighth grade content area teachers? Why or why not?
- Are the instructional routines (all Units) appropriate for seventh and eighth grade ELA teachers? Why or why not?
- To what extent do the TALA instructional routines address the needs of struggling readers (including students with learning disabilities or limited English proficiency)?
- In your expert opinion, what do you perceive as strengths of the TALA instructional routines?
- What do you perceive as lacking from the instructional routines?

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)

- Do the TALA instructional routines represent the state standards (TEKS) in reading/ELA for 7th and 8th grade students (what students should know and be able to do in a 7th or 8th grade classroom)? Why or why not?
- What appropriate state standards (TEKS) do the TALA instructional routines emphasize?
- What appropriate state standards (TEKS), if any, are not addressed by the TALA instructional routines?

Best Practices for Teacher Professional Development

- In your expert opinion, what do you perceive as strengths of the overall design and delivery of TALA relative to best practices of professional development?
- What do you perceive as lacking from TALA in terms of professional development?
- What are your perceptions of the length of time for each academy (1.5 days for the Content Academy and 3 days for the ELA academy)?
- What are your perceptions of the Online Teacher Follow-up?
- What are your perceptions of the Online Administrator Overview Training? In particular:
 - Description/overview of TALA
 - Guidance for implementing the tiers of the school wide approach
 - The “Walkthrough Guides” for content area classrooms and reading intervention classrooms.

Appendix C: TALA Observation Protocols

Appendix C: TALA Observation Protocols

TALA Training Observation Protocol

Date of Observation: _____ Region: _____

Observer: _____ Location: _____

Start Time: _____ Finish Time: _____

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Academy:</p> <p>English/Language Arts (ELA)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Day 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Day 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Day 3</p> | <p>Content Area</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Day 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 (½ day)</p> |
|---|--|

I. Training Contextual Information

1. What is the total number of participants attending the academy? _____

1 – 10 11 – 20 21 – 30 31 – 40 41 – 50

2. Please describe the room:

- Describe how seating is arranged, including the number of tables or desks
- If participants are seated at tables, indicate the number of participant chairs per table
- List/Describe any equipment or materials and where they are located in the room.

- Projector/Overhead Projector
- Computer
- Participant binders
- Participant notes pages
- Handouts
- Curriculum materials (e.g., textbooks)
- Highlighters
- Tape
- Chart paper
- Post-it Notes (i.e., sticky notes)
- Index cards
- Markers
- Plain paper
- Other (please list) _____

3. Site Map – Draw the physical layout of the room, including the following:

- Position of furnishings and other elements such as doors and windows
- Location of audio-visual equipment and projection space
- Seating arrangement in the room
- Tables used for materials/handouts and refreshments

II. Observation Matrix

1. Content⁵⁷ and Activities

First, please circle each module below that is covered during today’s training session. As you observe each training module, indicate how often the following activities are occurring by using tick marks (|) to represent each occurrence during the individual modules. You may mark multiple activities for each module as appropriate.

| Unit/Module | Activities | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------|---|--|--|--------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| | Presenter Facilitates (Whole or Small Group) Discussion | Participants View Video | Presenter Distributes and Uses Handouts | Presenter Explains and/or Reviews TALA Content | Presenter Provides Examples/Elaborations of TALA Content | Presenter Models TALA Content (I Do) | Participants Practice TALA Content with Presenter (We Do) | Participants Practice TALA Content with Each Other (We Do) | Participants Practice TALA Content Independently (You Do) |
| Unit 1: Overview of School-Wide Intervention | | | | | | | | | |
| Module 1 - A School Wide Approach to Reading Intervention | | | | | | | | | |
| Module 2 - Effective Instruction Techniques | | | | | | | | | |
| Unit 2: Vocabulary Instruction | | | | | | | | | |
| Module 1 - Selecting Words | | | | | | | | | |
| Module 2 - Pronouncing and Defining Words | | | | | | | | | |
| Module 3 - Generating Examples and Non-Examples | | | | | | | | | |
| Unit 3: Comprehension Instruction | | | | | | | | | |
| Module 1 - Using Anticipation Reaction-Guides to Build Background Knowledge | | | | | | | | | |
| Module 2 - Identifying Main Ideas | | | | | | | | | |
| Module 3 - Writing Summaries | | | | | | | | | |

⁵⁷ Content throughout refers to instructional routines planned to be covered in each module.

| Unit/Module | Activities | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------|---|--|--|--------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| | Presenter Facilitates (Whole or Small Group) Discussion | Participants View Video | Presenter Distributes and Uses Handouts | Presenter Explains and/or Reviews TALA Content | Presenter Provides Examples/Elaborations of TALA Content | Presenter Models TALA Content (I Do) | Participants Practice TALA Content with Presenter (We Do) | Participants Practice TALA Content with Each Other (We Do) | Participants Practice TALA Content Independently (You Do) |
| Unit 4: Using Diagnostic and Progress Monitoring Data | | | | | | | | | |
| Module 1 - Administering Assessments | | | | | | | | | |
| Module 2 - Interpreting and Implementing Assessment Results | | | | | | | | | |
| Unit 5: Interpreting and Implementing Assessment Results | | | | | | | | | |
| Module 1 - Identifying Syllable Structures | | | | | | | | | |
| Module 2 - Analyzing Morphemes | | | | | | | | | |
| Unit 6: Building Fluency | | | | | | | | | |
| Module 1 - Partner Reading | | | | | | | | | |
| Unit 7: Inferential Comprehension Instructional Routines | | | | | | | | | |
| Module 1 - Generating Level 1 Questions | | | | | | | | | |
| Module 2 - Generating Level 2 Questions | | | | | | | | | |
| Module 3 - Generating Level 3 Questions | | | | | | | | | |

2. Implementation of Training

| On average, to what extent was there evidence of the following? | No Evidence | Little Evidence | Some Evidence | Strong Evidence |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Presenter(s) focused on the TALA instructional routines. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Presenter(s) carried out formal presentations of TALA routines effectively. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Presenter(s) effectively used questioning strategies. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Presenter(s) connected the TALA routines to English Language Learners. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Presenter(s) used the TALA handouts in the modules effectively. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Presenter(s) connected TALA to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Presenter(s) connected TALA to the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Presenter(s) managed the pace of the training to meet the needs of participants. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Presenter(s) used the TALA videos in the modules effectively. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Presenter(s) reinforced effective instructional activities by modeling them. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Other general observations of the implementation of TALA routines and content during this training session:

How would you rate the overall implementation of the TALA routines and content in this training session?

Please circle the number that best describes your rating.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | |
|--|---|--------|---|---|---|--|
| The implementation of TALA content (i.e., routines) was not at all reflective of best practice for professional development. | | ←————→ | | | The implementation of TALA content (i.e., routines) was extremely reflective of best practice for professional development. | |

Supporting evidence for this overall rating:

Classroom Observation Instrument

Background Information

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Observer | Today's Date _____ / _____ / _____ mm dd yyyy |
| Teacher | Start time _____ a.m. p.m. |
| School/Campus | End time _____ a.m. p.m. |
| District | This observation took place during _____ Reading/ELA _____ Science _____ Social Studies _____ Math _____ Other (Specify) _____ |
| State | |
| | |

Check below to indicate your role:

_____ Assigned Observer _____ Reliability Observer _____ Quality Control Observer

| | | | |
|---|---------------|--|---------------|
| | Number | | Number |
| Maximum number of students observed in classroom | | Maximum number of adults observed providing instruction or educational support in the classroom (including teacher) | |

Describe any special circumstances that interrupted instruction.

Note to Observer:

Focus on primary teacher for rating purposes. If a student teacher is leading class, please do not observe and reschedule the observation.

COMPREHENSION: Place a tally mark in column A, B, or C each time you observe the behavior. Total the tallies in each cell, record the number and circle it. If there are NO tallies in a cell, write the number "0" and circle it.

| | A | B | C | |
|--|-----------------------|--|-------------------------|--------------|
| Before Reading | Teacher Models | Teacher Explains Reviews Provides Examples Elaborations | Student Practice | Notes |
| 1. The teacher/student activates prior knowledge and/or previews text before reading (e.g., shares background information about the title, author, content, reviews relevant content from previous lessons, makes predictions, makes connections, addresses text features). | | | | |
| Before, During, or After Reading | Teacher Models | Teacher Explains Reviews Provides Examples Elaborations | Student Practice | Notes |
| 2. Explicit comprehension instruction that teaches students about text structure (compare-contrast, cause-effect, problem-solution, time-order, story grammar, etc.) | | | | |
| 3. Explicit comprehension instruction that teaches students how to use strategies such as, main idea, summarizing, drawing conclusions, visualizing events, making predictions during and after reading , evaluating predictions, identifying fact vs. opinion, monitoring for comprehension, other _____ | | | | |
| 4. Explicit comprehension instruction that teaches students how to generate questions | | | | |
| During or After Reading | Teacher Models | Teacher Explains Reviews Provides Examples Elaborations | Student Practice | Notes |
| 5. Explicit comprehension instruction that teaches text features (sub-heads, captions, charts, maps, graphs, pictures, sidebars, bold & italicized words) to interpret text | | | | |
| 6. Teacher asks students to justify their responses (e.g., Teacher asks, "Why do you think/say that?" or, "How did you reach that conclusion?", etc.). | | | | |
| 7. Teacher asks questions based on material in the text that are beyond the literal level. | | | | |
| 8. Teacher elaborates, clarifies, or links concepts during and after text reading. May be an elaboration of a student response. | | | | |

VOCABULARY (Includes Concepts, Terminology, Ideas; May Be Technical or Complex Content-Area Vocabulary)

| | Tally | Notes |
|---|-------|-------|
| 1. The teacher provides an explanation and/or a definition or asks a student to read a definition. | | |
| 2. The teacher provides: a) examples; b) contrasting examples; c) multiple meanings; d) immediate elaborations to students' responses. | | |
| 3. The teacher uses visuals/pictures, gestures related to word meaning, facial expressions, or demonstrations to discuss/demonstrate word meanings. | | |
| 4. The teacher teaches word learning strategies - using context clues, word parts, root meaning. | | |
| 5. Students do or are asked to do something that requires knowledge of words (e.g., answer questions; define words; make sentences; find words based on clues; physically demonstrate meaning). | | |
| 6. Students are given an opportunity to apply word learning strategies - using context clues, word parts, root meaning. | | |

| Fluency (Code during each 10 minute interval) (Circle all that apply.) | |
|--|---|
| 1. The teacher listens as students practice repeated oral readings a. that are timed b. that are not timed c. with text that was modeled d. with text that was not modeled e. with corrective feedback f. without corrective feedback g. not observed | 2. The teacher arranges for students to practice repeated oral readings with a partner(s) a. that are timed b. that are not timed c. with text that was modeled d. with text that was not modeled e. with corrective feedback f. without corrective feedback g. not observed |

Grouping Arrangements and Text Reading (Code during each 10 minute interval)

| Grouping Arrangements (Circle all that apply.) | Text Reading (applies to reading connected text) (Circle only one.) |
|---|---|
| 1. Whole class ($\geq 75\%$ of class) 2. Large group (> 6 students, < 75% of class) 3. Small groups (3-6 students) 4. Pairs 5. An individual | 1. Text being used 2. Text not being used 3. Not sure |

| | |
|--|--|
| 6. If yes, what type of feedback was provided? (Select all that apply) | <input type="checkbox"/> Corrective <input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative |
| 7. Did the students work in groups? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 8. If yes, in what types of grouping activities did the students engage? | <input type="checkbox"/> Think-Pair-Share <input type="checkbox"/> Tell-Help-Check <input type="checkbox"/> Generate-Share <input type="checkbox"/> Partner Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

Vocabulary Instruction

| NOTES | |
|--|---|
| Did the lesson include vocabulary instruction? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <i>If yes, please complete the following items:</i> | |
| 1. Did the teacher pre-teach vocabulary words? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2. What types of vocabulary words were taught? (Select all that apply) | <input type="checkbox"/> Academic words <input type="checkbox"/> Content-specific words |
| 3. How did the teacher teach the vocabulary words? (Select all that apply) | <input type="checkbox"/> Pronouncing words <input type="checkbox"/> Defining words <input type="checkbox"/> Identifying characteristics of the words <input type="checkbox"/> Generating examples of the words <input type="checkbox"/> Generating nonexamples of the words |
| 4. Did the teacher use everyday language to explain the meaning of vocabulary words? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 5. Did the teacher use the <i>Fruyer Model</i> to teach vocabulary? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

Comprehension Instruction

| NOTES | |
|---|---|
| Did the lesson include comprehension instruction? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <i>If yes, please complete the following items:</i> | |
| 1. Did the teacher build upon the students' <i>background knowledge</i> prior to reading the text? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2. Did the teacher use <i>Anticipation-Reaction Guides</i> ? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 3. If yes, how did the teacher use the Anticipation-Reaction Guide? (Select all that apply) | <input type="checkbox"/> Identified important concepts/ themes in the text <input type="checkbox"/> Formed opinion statements about the concepts/themes in the text <input type="checkbox"/> Identified evidence from the text to support the opinion statements |
| 4. Did the teacher instruct the students to identify the <i>main ideas</i> of the text? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 5. If yes, how did the teacher instruct the students to identify the <i>main ideas</i> of the text? (Select all that apply) | <input type="checkbox"/> Stated the primary focus of the text <input type="checkbox"/> Connected the text to prior learning <input type="checkbox"/> Identified the main ideas of each paragraph <input type="checkbox"/> Recorded important details related to the main ideas <input type="checkbox"/> Composed a main idea of the section statement |
| 6. Did the teacher use the <i>Notes Log</i> when teaching about main ideas? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 7. Did the teacher use the <i>Get the Gist</i> routine to find the main ideas of the paragraph? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 8. Did the teacher instruct the students to <i>summarize</i> the text? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

| | |
|--|--|
| 9. If yes, how did the teacher instruct the students to <i>summarize</i> the text? (Select all that apply) | <input type="checkbox"/> List all the main ideas <input type="checkbox"/> Underline terms/phrases containing the most important information <input type="checkbox"/> Combine ideas that can go into one sentence <input type="checkbox"/> Number the ideas in logical order <input type="checkbox"/> Write the summary in one paragraph <input type="checkbox"/> Revise and proofread the summary |
| 10. Did the teacher use the <i>Notes Log</i> when teaching about writing summaries? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

Word Study

| NOTES | |
|--|---|
| Did the lesson include word study (syllable structures/morphemic analysis)? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <i>If yes, please complete the following items:</i> | |
| 1. Did the teacher instruct students to recognize <i>syllable patterns</i> ? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2. What types of syllable patterns were taught? (Select all that apply) | <input type="checkbox"/> Closed <input type="checkbox"/> Open <input type="checkbox"/> Vowel-consonant-e (silent e) <input type="checkbox"/> Vowel-r syllables <input type="checkbox"/> Vowel pair syllables <input type="checkbox"/> Consonant-le syllables <input type="checkbox"/> Irregular words |
| 3. How did the teacher teach the syllable patterns? (Select all that apply) | <input type="checkbox"/> Direct instruction of the syllable pattern <input type="checkbox"/> Discussed the distinguishing feature of each syllable type <input type="checkbox"/> Discussed the effect of the syllabic pattern on the vowel sound <input type="checkbox"/> Practiced the types of syllables (identifying/sounding out) <input type="checkbox"/> Generalized the syllable patterns to new words |
| 4. Did the teacher instruct students to recognize <i>morphemes</i> ? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>5. How did the teacher instruct students to recognize morphemes? (Select all that apply)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Direct instruction of roots and affixes <input type="checkbox"/> Generating examples of the morphemes <input type="checkbox"/> Generating nonexamples of the morphemes <input type="checkbox"/> Generalizing the morphemes to new words |
| <p>6. Did the teacher instruct students to use the <i>morphemic analysis routine</i> to determine the meaning of words?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <p>7. What steps in the morphemic analysis routine were observed in the classroom? (Select all that apply)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Finding the root of the word <input type="checkbox"/> Thinking about what the root means <input type="checkbox"/> Finding the prefixes and suffixes <input type="checkbox"/> Thinking about what the prefixes and suffixes mean <input type="checkbox"/> Combining the meaning of the word parts <input type="checkbox"/> Trying the possible meaning in a sentence |

Fluency

| NOTES | |
|--|--|
| Did the lesson include fluency instruction? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <i>If yes, please complete the following items:</i> | |
| 1. Did the teacher read the passage aloud? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2. If yes, what events occurred while the teacher was reading? (Select all that apply) | <input type="checkbox"/> Students followed along and underlined words to review <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher and students repeated any underlined words <input type="checkbox"/> Students provided main idea of the passage |
| 3. Did the students engage in partner reading? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 4. If yes, what events occurred during the partner reading? (Select all that apply) | <input type="checkbox"/> Student read passage for one minute <input type="checkbox"/> Partner followed along and underlined errors or skipped words <input type="checkbox"/> Partner circled last word read <input type="checkbox"/> Partner conducts error correction procedure <input type="checkbox"/> Partner calculates words correct per minute <input type="checkbox"/> Students switch duties |

Inferential Comprehension

| NOTES | |
|--|---|
| Did the lesson include monitoring comprehension? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <i>If yes, please complete the following items:</i> | |
| 1. Did the teacher explain the purpose for generating questions while reading? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>2. Did the teacher show students how to generate questions while reading?</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> |
| <p>3. How did the teacher instruct students to generate questions? (Select all that apply)</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Teacher read the passage aloud <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher discussed what the passage was about <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher identified a fact in the passage that was a “who,” “what,” “where,” “when,” “why,” or “how” <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher modeled how to turn a fact (e.g., what) into a question <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher checked the answer in the passage <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher located related facts from at least two different places in the text <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher combined facts to make a question <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher showed how to put information together to answer the question <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher related something in the passage to something the class studied, read, or experienced <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher used stems to generate a question <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher modeled how to combine information in the passage with prior knowledge to answer the question</p> |
| <p>4. What activities did the students engage while generating questions? (Select all that apply)</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Students worked with a partner to generate questions <input type="checkbox"/> Students discussed questions and answers with the partner <input type="checkbox"/> Students worked independently to generate questions <input type="checkbox"/> Students discussed questions and answers with the whole class</p> |
| <p>5. Did the students use question cards?</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> |

Appendix D: TALA Interview Protocols

Appendix D: TALA Interview Protocols

Classroom Teacher Interview Protocol: ELA

BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE

First, I'd like to learn a little bit about your background and experience.

1. Please begin by briefly describing how long you have been teaching.
2. What grade(s)/subject(s) do you currently teach?

TALA ELA ACADEMY

Next, I would like to ask you about your experience with the TALA ELA Academy.

3. How did you first learn about the TALA ELA Academy?
4. How did you register for the TALA ELA Academy?
5. Did you attend the TALA ELA Academy with any other sixth grade ELA/reading teachers from your campus?

Follow-Up:

- If so, did they attend with you, or did they attend other sessions (i.e., on different dates)?
 - If they attended with you, did you sit with them and/or participate in activities with them during the training?
- If so, have you had any follow-up with them since you all completed the TALA training?

6. Did any sixth grade content area teachers from your campus that you know of attend any of the TALA Content Area Academies?

Follow-Up:

- If so, which content area(s) do they teach (e.g., mathematics, science, social studies)?
- If so, have you had any follow-up with them since you all completed the TALA training?

7. Do you know if any of the administrators from your campus attended the TALA administrator overview training?

Follow-Up:

- If so, have you had any follow-up with them since you completed the TALA training?

8. To what extent were the overall goals of TALA clearly articulated to you?

Follow-Up:

- Were clear statements made regarding your learning goals for the TALA ELA Academy?
- Who articulated the goals?

9. (Unit 1) To what extent do you feel the TALA ELA Academy provided you with a good understanding of the purposes of the three tiers of intervention in the TALA model?

10. (Unit 1) To what extent do you feel prepared to implement these three tiers of intervention in your classroom?

11. (Unit 2) To what extent do you feel prepared to implement the strategies that will help students, especially struggling readers, with vocabulary?

Probe:

- More specifically, how prepared did it make you to help students, especially struggling readers, with definitions and examples of difficult words?

12. (Unit 3) How prepared do you feel to assist students, especially struggling readers, with reading comprehension?

Probe:

- More specifically, how prepared did it make you to assist students, especially struggling readers, with:
 - building background knowledge
 - identifying main ideas
 - writing summaries

13. (Unit 4) To what extent do you feel prepared to administer the Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment (TMSFA)?

14. (Unit 4) To what extent do you feel prepared to interpret the results of the Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment (TMSFA)?

15. (Unit 5) To what extent do you feel prepared to teach students, especially struggling readers, how to break down words into common syllable patterns and meaningful word parts?

Probe:

- More specifically, how prepared did it make you to help students, especially struggling readers, develop their ability to read, recognize, and comprehend new meanings of words or to conduct morphemic analysis?

16. (Unit 6) To what extent do you feel prepared in fluency instruction?

Follow-Up:

- In what ways will you select appropriate text for fluency instruction?

17. (Unit 7) To what extent do you feel prepared to help students, especially struggling readers, generate questions to comprehend text?

Probe:

- Specifically, in generating level I, II, and III questions.

18. To what extent do you feel the training prepared you to design appropriate instruction for all students, including those who are struggling with reading due to a) limited English proficiency, b) learning disabilities, c) dyslexia, or d) other risk factors for reading difficulties?

19. Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = very ineffective and 5 = highly effective, how would you rate the effectiveness of the following aspects of the TALA ELA Academy that you attended:

- A. Training structure (e.g., time to learn everything; time for reflection)?
- B. Training content?
- C. Training materials?
- D. Knowledge of presenters?
- E. Skills of presenters in providing professional development for teachers?
- F. Environment?
- G. Videos and other visual stimuli?

Follow-Up:

- Would you like to elaborate on any of your ratings?

20. Overall, what did you gain the most from participating in the TALA ELA Academy?

21. Is there anything else that you think should have been covered that could have helped you as you prepared to implement TALA strategies?

Probes:

- What else, if anything, do you think would have benefited you (e.g., reading comprehension strategies, organization of text/text structure, strategic reading)?
- What would you definitely not want to change, if anything, about the training you attended?
- What aspects of the training you attended, if any, could have been improved? Any suggestions for ways to make these improvements?

Classroom Teacher Interview Protocol: Content Area

BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE

First, I'd like to learn a little bit about your background and experience.

1. Please begin by briefly describing how long you have been teaching.
2. What grade(s)/subject(s) do you currently teach?

TALA CONTENT AREA ACADEMY

Next, I would like to ask you about your experience with the TALA Content Area Academy.

3. How did you first learn about the TALA Content Academy?
4. How did you register for the TALA Content Academy?
5. Did you attend the TALA Content Area Academy with any other sixth grade content area teachers from your campus?

Follow-Up:

- If so, which content area(s) do they teach?
 - If so, did they attend with you, or did they attend other sessions (i.e., on different dates)?
 - If they attended with you, did you sit with them and/or participate in activities with them during the training?
 - If so, have you had any follow-up with them since you all completed the TALA training?
6. Did any sixth grade ELA/reading teachers from your campus that you know of attend any of the TALA ELA Academies?

Follow-Up:

- B. If so, have you had any follow-up with them since you all completed the TALA training?
7. Do you know if any of the administrators from your campus attended the TALA administrator overview training?

Follow-Up:

- If so, have you had any follow-up with them since you completed the TALA training?
8. To what extent were the overall goals of TALA clearly articulated to you?
Follow-Up:
 - Were clear statements made regarding your learning goals for the TALA Content Area Academy?
 - Who articulated the goals?
 9. (Unit 1) To what extent do you feel the TALA Content Area Academy provided you with a good understanding of the purposes of the three tiers of intervention in the TALA model?

10. (Unit 1) To what extent do you feel prepared to implement these three tiers of intervention in your classroom in the content area(s) that you teach?
11. (Unit 2) To what extent do you feel prepared to implement the strategies that will help all students, especially struggling readers, with vocabulary in the content area(s) that you teach?

Probe:

- More specifically, how prepared did it make you to help students, especially struggling readers, with definitions and examples of difficult words?

12. (Unit 3) How prepared do you feel to assist students, especially struggling readers, with reading comprehension in the content area(s) that you teach?

Probe:

- More specifically, how prepared did it make you to assist students, especially struggling readers, with:
 - building background knowledge
 - identifying main ideas
 - writing summaries

13. To what extent do you feel the training prepared you to design appropriate instruction for all students in the content area(s) that you teach, including those who are struggling with reading due to: a) limited English proficiency, b) learning disabilities, c) dyslexia, or d) other risk factors for reading difficulties?

14. Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = very ineffective and 5 = highly effective, how would you rate the effectiveness of the following aspects of the TALA Content Area Academy that you attended:
- A. Training structure (e.g., time to learn everything; time for reflection)?
 - B. Training content?
 - C. Training materials?
 - D. Knowledge of presenters?
 - E. Skills of presenters in providing professional development for teachers?
 - F. Environment?
 - G. Videos and other visual stimuli?

Follow-Up:

- Would you like to elaborate on any of your ratings?

15. Overall, what did you gain the most from participating in the TALA Content Area Academy?
16. Is there anything else that you think should have been covered that could have helped you as you prepared to implement TALA strategies?

Probes:

- What else, if anything, do you think would have benefited you (e.g., reading comprehension strategies, organization of text/text structure, strategic reading)?
- What would you definitely not want to change, if anything, about the training you attended?
- What aspects of the training you attended, if any, could have been improved? Any suggestions for ways to make these improvements?

Interview Protocol: Campus Administrators

BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE

First, I'd like to learn a little bit about your background.

1. What is your job title?
2. How long have you been in this position?
3. Which TALA administrator overview training did you complete?
 - Online TALA administrator overview training
 - TALA administrator overview training offered by one of the ESCs?

CAMPUS CHARACTERISTICS

4. In what other literacy professional development initiatives have teachers at your campus participated?
5. What reading/English language arts curriculum do you implement at your campus?
6. What are some of the other teacher professional development or literacy programs being implemented on your campus?
7. About how many of the sixth grade teachers at your campus attended TALA training this summer that you know of?

Follow-Up:

- How did they decide to attend, or were they required to attend?
- What feedback, if any, have you received from the teachers who participated?

TALA ADMINISTRATOR TRAINING

Next, I would like to ask you about the training you completed.

8. To what extent were the overall goals of the TALA model conveyed to you?

Probes:

- All students will be able to read and learn from the academic text.
- All students will be motivated to engage in reading for many different purposes.

9. Were clear statements made regarding your learning goals as an administrator for the training?
10. To what extent did the training prepare you to work with your teachers to form a strong literacy leadership team?

11. To what extent do you believe the TALA training program will help teachers design appropriate instruction and curriculum?
12. Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = very ineffective and 5 = highly effective, how effective was the training you completed in preparing you as an administrator to support your teachers in implementing TALA?
13. Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = very ineffective and 5 = highly effective, how would you rate the effectiveness of the following:
 - Training structure (e.g., time to learn everything; time for reflection)?
 - Training content?
 - Training materials?

Follow-Up:

- Would you like to elaborate on any of your ratings?

14. What did you take away from the TALA administrator training in terms of the three-tiered school-wide approach to middle school reading?

Probes:

- Content area comprehension and vocabulary instructional routines
- Strategic intervention (i.e., helping students with reading that cannot be addressed in Tier I)
- Intensive intervention (i.e., students with severe reading difficulty)

15. What about the training could be improved?

IMPLEMENTING TALA AT YOUR CAMPUS

Lastly, I would like to ask you about implementing TALA at your campus.

16. How would you describe your understanding of the three tiers of TALA?
17. How would you describe your understanding of how to implement the three tiers at your campus?
18. What do you think it will take for your teachers, individually, to implement TALA strategies at your campus?

Probes:

- In terms of administrator support?
- In terms of teacher professional development?
- In terms of school climate?
- In terms of assessing students in reading?
- In terms of strengthening core instructional program?
- In terms of creating literacy intervention plans?

19. What do you think it will take to implement TALA school-wide at your campus?

Probes:

- In terms of administrator support?
- In terms of teacher professional development?
- In terms of school climate?
- In terms of assessing students in reading?
- In terms of strengthening core instructional program?
- In terms of creating literacy intervention plans?

20. What changes, if any, have you made or do you plan to make at your campus this year (e.g., organizational, scheduling, staffing) to achieve the goals of TALA?

21. Do you have anything else to add?

TALA Developer and Program Staff Interview Protocol

Development

1. What were the key tasks and deliverables (interim and final) associated with the Texas Adolescent Literacy Project (TALP) contract awarded to UT VGC?
2. What types of **content/activities** were included as part of each level of training? How were they selected?
 - a. Training of state trainers?
 - b. Training of regional trainers?
 - c. Training of teachers?
 - d. Training of administrators?
3. What steps were taken to align the TALA content with state standards (TEKS) in reading and ELA?
4. What professional development principles/models were incorporated into TALA?
5. How were the TALA materials developed, tested, and revised?
 - a. How were the instructional routines selected? Why were some instructional routines chosen over others? How were these decisions made?
 - b. What information can you provide about the focus groups in spring and summer of 2007?
 - c. What information can you provide about the results of field testing in 2006-07?
 - d. What information can you provide about the state legislation that passed changed the structure?
 - e. What changes, if any, were made to the TALA content based on focus groups, field testing, and after state legislation passed and the structure changed?
 - f. What changes, if any, were made to the TALA content based on the TALA Interim Evaluation Report #1 findings?
6. How does the TALA Grade 6 content differ from the content for TALA Grades 7-8?
7. How would you describe the role of the UT VGC staff in the development of the TALA content?
 - a. What tasks were they responsible for carrying out?
 - b. What decisions were they involved in making?
8. How would you describe the role of the TALA steering committee in the development of the TALA content?
 - a. What tasks were they responsible for carrying out?
 - b. What decisions were they involved in making?
9. How would you describe the TEA program manager's or other staff's role in the development of the TALA content?
 - a. What tasks were they responsible for carrying out?
 - b. What decisions were they involved in making?
10. How would you describe the role(s) of any other people (e.g., content advisory teams, external experts) of in the development of the TALA content?
 - a. What tasks were they responsible for carrying out?
 - b. What decisions were they involved in making?

Training of Trainers

11. How were the trainers at all levels selected to participate?
 - a. Master trainers?
 - b. State trainers?
 - c. Regional trainers?
12. Are there clear descriptions of the roles the trainers will have when they facilitate TALA academies?
13. What instructional strategies (e.g., lecture, modeling) were TALA regional trainers taught in the training of trainers (TOTs) to use to facilitate teacher participant learning?
14. How would you rate the training that trainers received?
15. Do you think the training of trainers (TOTs) at all levels to date is sufficient for their roles as trainers? Please explain why or why not.

Statewide Implementation of TALA Grade 6 (June-December 2008)

16. Which teachers were targeted to participate in TALA? In other words, were teachers from schools with particular characteristics (e.g., academically unacceptable) targeted? How were sixth grade teachers targeted? How were seventh and eighth grade teachers targeted?
 - a. To what extent were these targeted teachers served?
 - b. What other characteristics of teachers served did you observe?
17. What was the process ESCs went through to plan the TALA Grade 6 teacher trainings in their region? What was the process ESCs went through to plan the TALA Grade 7 and Grade 8 teacher trainings in their region?
18. Describe the process ESCs went through to recruit participants from their regions to participate in TALA Grade 6 academies. Describe the process ESCs went through to recruit participants from their regions to participate in TALA Grade 7 and Grade 8 academies
19. How did ESCs register participants for TALA Grade 6 academies? How did ESCs register participants for TALA Grade 7 and Grade 8 academies?
20. What barriers, if any, did ESCs encounter while implementing any of the TALA Grade 6 academies in their regions? If so, please describe. How were these barriers overcome for the 2009 TALA Grade 6 and Grades 7-8 academies?
21. How would you evaluate the TALA Grade 6 content and materials overall based on feedback you have received from trainers and participants?
 - a. What changes were made to the TALA content and materials based on this feedback?
22. What changes, if any, were made to TALA Grades 7-8 implementation processes based on the TALA Interim Evaluation Report #1 findings?

Cost and Sustainability

23. In general, how were funds allocated and used to develop TALA content?
 - a. Tell me about the decision to allocate funding for stipends for participation versus using the funds in other ways to support TALA training.

24. In general, how were funds allocated and used by the regional ESCs to disseminate TALA?
 - a. Were ESCs more concerned about getting initial attendance or supporting teachers in an ongoing way?

25. To what extent is there cost-savings related to TALA?
 - a. Have you been able to calculate how much TALA Grade 6 cost per teacher served by ESC region?

26. What factors, if any, are contributing to the sustainability of the TALA initiative?

27. What barriers, if any, are prohibiting the sustainability of the TALA initiative?

Wrap Up

28. Is there anything else you would like to add about the development, training of trainers, implementation, or cost/sustainability of TALA?

Appendix E: TALA Surveys

Appendix E: TALA Surveys

TALA Teacher Participant Survey

ICF International, in conjunction with the Texas Education Agency, encourages you to participate in the evaluation of the Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies (TALA). The purpose of the survey is to obtain your feedback on the training and to collect information about the implementation of the TALA training. You are being asked to respond to a series of survey items related to the following topics:

- Information about your professional background and experience.
- Beliefs about your impact as an educator.
- Your perceptions of the TALA training in which you participated in Summer and Fall 2008.

The survey should take about 30 minutes to complete. By participating in the survey, you are giving permission for ICF International to use your information for evaluation purposes.

All data that you provide will be kept strictly confidential, and only summary data will be reported. Your individual responses will be disassociated with any personal identifying information in any final databases or reports.

If you have questions concerning the evaluation or your rights as a participant, please contact Thomas J. Horwood, Evaluation Deputy Project Manager for ICF, at 703-385-3200.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Consent statement:

I have read the preceding information describing this evaluation and the purpose of this survey. I freely consent to participate. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to stop the survey at any time.

Signature

Date

Part I: Current Primary Job

1. What is the full name of the DISTRICT/ CHARTER SCHOOL/ESC where you were assigned last year (2007-2008) and where you are assigned this year (2008-2009)?

2007-2008 _____

2008-2009 _____

2. What is the full name of the CAMPUS/SCHOOL (if applicable) where you were assigned last year (2007-2008) and where you are assigned this year (2008-2009)? (If not applicable, type N/A in both text boxes.)

2007-2008 _____

2008-2009 _____

3. What category most accurately represents your current primary job?

- Classroom Teacher
- Special Education Teacher/Specialist
- Campus-based Reading/ELA Specialist
- Campus-based Content Area Specialist (e.g., Science, Math)
- Campus Administrator
- District-based Reading/ELA Specialist
- District-based Content Area Specialist (e.g., Science, Math)
- District Administrator
- Regional Education Service Center Staff Member
- Other (please specify) _____

Part II: Teaching Satisfaction (Classroom Teachers ONLY)

In this section, we would like to learn about your satisfaction with teaching.

Select one response for each statement to indicate how much you disagree or agree with the statement.

| | Strongly Agree | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | Agree | | | | |
| | Neither Disagree or Agree | | | | |
| | Disagree | | | | |
| | Strongly Disagree | | | | |
| 1. In most ways, being a teacher is close to my ideal..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. My job surroundings (e.g., campus, classroom) are excellent..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. I am satisfied with being a teacher... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. So far, my career as a teacher has been rewarding..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. If I could choose my career over, I would change almost nothing..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Part III: Background and Experience

1. How many years of experience have you EVER had as a classroom teacher?

- Zero years
- Less than 1 year
- 1-3 years
- 4-10 years
- More than 10 years

2. How many years of experience have you EVER had as a SIXTH GRADE classroom teacher?

- Zero years
- Less than 1 year
- 1-3 years
- 4-10 years
- More than 10 years

3. Which of these grade levels do you CURRENTLY teach (or help teachers in)? (Select all that apply)

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Pre-K | <input type="radio"/> 4 | <input type="radio"/> 9 |
| <input type="radio"/> K | <input type="radio"/> 5 | <input type="radio"/> 10 |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | <input type="radio"/> 6 | <input type="radio"/> 11 |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | <input type="radio"/> 7 | <input type="radio"/> 12 |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 | <input type="radio"/> 8 | <input type="radio"/> None of these |

4. Which of these grade levels have you EVER taught? (Select all that apply)

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Pre-K | <input type="radio"/> 4 | <input type="radio"/> 9 |
| <input type="radio"/> K | <input type="radio"/> 5 | <input type="radio"/> 10 |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | <input type="radio"/> 6 | <input type="radio"/> 11 |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | <input type="radio"/> 7 | <input type="radio"/> 12 |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 | <input type="radio"/> 8 | <input type="radio"/> None of these |

5. Which of these subject areas do you CURRENTLY teach (or help teachers in)? (Select all that apply)

- Language arts
- Mathematics
- Reading
- Science
- Social studies
- Other (please specify) _____
- None of the above

6. Which of these subject areas have you EVER taught? (Select all that apply)

- Language arts
- Mathematics
- Reading
- Science
- Social studies
- Other (please specify) _____
- None of the above

7a. What is your current teaching certification? (Select all that apply)

- I am currently certified to teach in Texas.
- I am currently certified to teach in another state.
- I am working to obtain Texas teaching certification.
- I am not certified to teach and not working to obtain teaching certification.

7b. If you are currently certified to teach, or working toward getting certified to teach in Texas, what was/is your certification route?

- College/university undergraduate certification program
- Alternative certification program (ACP)
- College/university post-bachelor certification program

Part IV: TALA Participation

The following questions pertain to the Texas Adolescent Literacy Academy that you attended in Summer or Fall 2008.

1. Which Texas Adolescent Literacy Academy did you attend?

- English Language Arts (ELA) Academy
- Content Area Academy
- I did not attend TALA

IF YOU ANSWERED "English Language Arts (ELA) Academy," PLEASE complete "Part V: TALA ELA Academy."

IF YOU ANSWERED "Content Area Academy," PLEASE complete "Part VI: TALA Content Area Academy."

IF YOU ANSWERED "I did not attend TALA," PLEASE STOP. This survey is for teachers and other staff who attended TALA. Thank you for your time.

Part V: TALA ELA Academy

1. When did you attend TALA?

- Summer 2008 (before the school year started)
- Fall 2008 (during the school year)

2. Did you complete the TALA practicum follow-up with online documentation?

- Yes
- No

3. Please answer the following questions using the scale that ranges from "very poor" to "excellent".

| | Very Poor | Below Average | Average | Above Average | Excellent |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| How would you rate the overall quality of the training you received? | <input type="radio"/> |
| How would you rate the overall effectiveness of the presenters? | <input type="radio"/> |
| How would you rate the overall quality of the workshop content? | <input type="radio"/> |

4. How would you rate the effectiveness of the following aspects of the TALA Academy that you attended using a scale that ranges from "very ineffective" to "highly effective"?

| | Very Ineffective | Ineffective | Neither Effective nor Ineffective | Effective | Highly Effective |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Training structure (i.e., time to learn everything; time for reflection)..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Opportunities for active learning (i.e., participant-centered learning)..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Training content (i.e., vocabulary instruction)..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Training materials (e.g., binder)..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Knowledge of presenters..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Skills of presenters in providing professional development for teachers.. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Environment..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Videos and other visual stimuli..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

5. Using a scale that ranges from "not at all prepared" to "very well prepared", to what extent do you feel PREPARED TO implement the following instructional routines covered at the TALA Academy you attended to help students, especially struggling readers, in your classroom? (Or, if you are in a position to help teachers, to what extent do you feel PREPARED TO help teachers implement the instructional routines?)

| | Not At All Prepared | Somewhat Prepared | Fairly Well Prepared | Very Well Prepared | I Don't Know |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Selecting words | <input type="radio"/> |
| Pronouncing words..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Defining words | <input type="radio"/> |
| Generating examples and nonexamples | <input type="radio"/> |
| Building background knowledge..... | <input type="radio"/> |

| | I Don't Know | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | Very Well Prepared | | | | |
| | Fairly Well Prepared | | | | |
| | Somewhat Prepared | | | | |
| | Not At All Prepared | | | | |
| Identifying main ideas in text..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Writing summaries | <input type="radio"/> |
| Identifying text structures..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Using graphic organizers..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Identifying syllable structures..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Conducting morphemic analysis..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Generating level I, II, and III questions.. | <input type="radio"/> |

6. Using a scale that ranges from "never" to "frequently", how frequently have you ACTUALLY implemented the following instructional routines covered at the TALA Academy you attended to help all students, especially struggling readers, in your classroom? (Or, if you are in a position to help teachers, about how frequently have they implemented the instructional routines?)

| | Frequently | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | Occasionally | | | | |
| | Sometimes | | | | |
| | Rarely | | | | |
| | Never | | | | |
| Selecting words | <input type="radio"/> |
| Pronouncing words..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Defining words | <input type="radio"/> |
| Generating examples and nonexamples | <input type="radio"/> |
| Building background knowledge..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Identifying main ideas in text..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Writing summaries | <input type="radio"/> |
| Identifying text structures..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Using graphic organizers..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Identifying syllable structures..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Conducting morphemic analysis..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Generating level I, II, and III questions.. | <input type="radio"/> |

7. To what extent do you feel PREPARED TO implement each of the following strategies covered at the TALA Academy you attended in your classroom (or to help teachers implement them)?

| | I Don't Know | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | Very Well Prepared | | | | |
| | Fairly Well Prepared | | | | |
| | Somewhat Prepared | | | | |
| | Not At All Prepared | | | | |
| Adapt instruction to structure learning opportunities for all students..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Foster student engagement..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Group or pair students..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Facilitate partner reading..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Actively involve students (i.e., Think-Pair-Share, Tell-Help-Check, Generate-Share)..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Provide explicit instruction using scaffolding (i.e., I Do, WE Do, YOU Do)..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Select appropriate text for fluency instruction | <input type="radio"/> |
| Administer the Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment (TMSFA)..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Interpret the results of the Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment (TMSFA).. | <input type="radio"/> |

8. To what extent do you ACTUALLY implement each of the following strategies covered at the TALA Academy you attended in your classroom (or do you help teachers implement them)?

| | Frequently | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | Occasionally | | | | |
| | Sometimes | | | | |
| | Rarely | | | | |
| | Never | | | | |
| Adapt instruction to structure learning opportunities for all students..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Foster student engagement..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Group or pair students..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Facilitate partner reading..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Actively involve students (i.e., Think-Pair-Share, Tell-Help-Check, Generate-Share)..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Provide explicit instruction using scaffolding (i.e., I Do, WE Do, YOU Do)..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Select appropriate text for fluency instruction | <input type="radio"/> |
| Administer the Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment (TMSFA)..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Interpret the results of the Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment (TMSFA).. | <input type="radio"/> |

9. To what extent do you feel PREPARED TO design appropriate instruction for all students that you teach (or to help teachers work with these students), including those who are struggling with reading due to:

| | I Don't Know | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | Very Well Prepared | | | | |
| | Fairly Well Prepared | | | | |
| | Somewhat Prepared | | | | |
| | Not At All Prepared | | | | |
| Limited English proficiency..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Learning disabilities | <input type="radio"/> |
| Dyslexia | <input type="radio"/> |
| Being from a low socioeconomic environment | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other risk factors for reading difficulties. | <input type="radio"/> |

Other (please specify)

10. To your knowledge, about how many sixth grade ELA/reading teachers from your campus (or the campuses you help teachers at) attended the TALA ELA Academy (either with you or during a different session)?

- None of the ELA/reading teachers from my campus(es)
- Just me
- A few of the ELA/reading teachers from my campus(es)
- Most or all of the ELA/reading teachers from my campus(es)
- I do not know

11. To your knowledge, about how many sixth grade content area (mathematics, science, social studies) teachers from your campus (or the campuses you help teachers at) attended the TALA Content Area Academy?

- None of the content area teachers from my campus(es)
- One of the content area teachers from my campus(es)
- A few of the content area teachers from my campus(es)
- Most or all of the content area teachers from my campus(es)
- I do not know

12. Please respond to each question based on your experiences in your CURRENT primary position. If you are a teacher who works directly with students, indicate the extent to which you do each. If you are in a position where you help teachers (e.g., curriculum/instructional specialist, coach, administrator), indicate the extent to which you help teachers do each.

To what extent do you (or do you help teachers):

| | A Great Deal | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | Quite A Bit | | | | |
| | To Some Degree | | | | |
| | Very Little | | | | |
| | Not At All | | | | |
| adjust reading strategies based on ongoing informal assessments of students? | <input type="radio"/> |
| use a variety of informal and formal reading assessment strategies? | <input type="radio"/> |
| provide natural learning situations in which language arts (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) can be developed together for real purposes? | <input type="radio"/> |
| provide specific, targeted feedback to students during oral reading? | <input type="radio"/> |
| adjust writing strategies based on ongoing informal assessments of students? | <input type="radio"/> |
| use a student's oral reading mistakes as an opportunity to teach effective reading strategies? | <input type="radio"/> |
| model effective writing strategies? | <input type="radio"/> |
| meet the needs of struggling readers?.. | <input type="radio"/> |
| get students to use independent reading time productively? | <input type="radio"/> |
| implement word study strategies to teach spelling? | <input type="radio"/> |
| get students to read a wide variety of genres? | <input type="radio"/> |
| help students figure out unknown words when they are reading? | <input type="radio"/> |
| use flexible grouping to meet individual student needs for reading instruction?... | <input type="radio"/> |
| model effective reading strategies? ... | <input type="radio"/> |
| get students to read fluently during oral reading? | <input type="radio"/> |
| use students' writing to teach grammar and spelling strategies? | <input type="radio"/> |
| get students to use independent writing time productively? | <input type="radio"/> |
| provide appropriate challenges for high ability readers? | <input type="radio"/> |
| get students to talk with each other in class about books they are reading? | <input type="radio"/> |
| provide students with writing opportunities in response to reading? ... | <input type="radio"/> |
| adjust reading materials to an individual student's level? | <input type="radio"/> |
| get students to value reading? | <input type="radio"/> |

13. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements using a scale that ranges from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree".

| | Strongly Agree | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | Agree | | | | |
| | Neither Disagree nor Agree | | | | |
| | Disagree | | | | |
| | Strongly Disagree | | | | |
| Reading instruction is primarily the role of elementary school teachers..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| If reading skills are mastered in the elementary grades, students require no further direct instruction in the upper grade levels..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Students should be entering middle grades (6-8) already knowing how to read proficiently..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Content area teachers (e.g., mathematics, science, social studies) who teach middle grades (6-8) are responsible for teaching reading as well as teaching content..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| If reading skills need to be taught in middle grades (6-8), they should be integrated into the language arts curriculum and taught by English teachers..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Students' struggles with understanding content vocabulary contribute to their struggles with reading in their content courses (e.g., science, mathematics, social studies)..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Please continue to Part VII: TALA Training

Part VI: TALA Content Area Academy

- When did you attend TALA?
 - Summer 2008 (before the school year started)
 - Fall 2008 (during the school year)
- Did you complete the TALA practicum follow-up with online documentation?
 - Yes
 - No
- Please answer the following questions using the scale that ranges from "very poor" to "excellent".

| | Excellent | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | Above Average | | | | |
| | Average | | | | |
| | Below Average | | | | |
| | Very Poor | | | | |
| How would you rate the overall quality of the training you received? | <input type="radio"/> |
| How would you rate the overall effectiveness of the presenters? | <input type="radio"/> |
| How would you rate the overall quality of the workshop content? | <input type="radio"/> |

4. How would you rate the effectiveness of the following aspects of the TALA Academy that you attended using a scale that ranges from "very ineffective" to "highly effective"?

| | Highly Effective | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | Effective | | | | |
| | Neither Effective nor Ineffective | | | | |
| | Ineffective | | | | |
| | Very Ineffective | | | | |
| Training structure (i.e., time to learn everything; time for reflection)..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Opportunities for active learning (i.e., participant-centered learning)..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Training content (i.e., vocabulary instruction)..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Training materials (e.g., binder)..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Knowledge of presenters..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Skills of presenters in providing professional development for teachers.. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Environment..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Videos and other visual stimuli..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

5. Using a scale that ranges from "not at all prepared" to "very well prepared", to what extent do you feel PREPARED TO implement the following instructional routines covered at the TALA Academy you attended to help students, especially struggling readers, in your classroom? (Or, if you are in a position to help teachers, to what extent do you feel PREPARED TO help teachers implement the instructional routines?)

| | I Don't Know | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | Very Well Prepared | | | | |
| | Fairly Well Prepared | | | | |
| | Somewhat Prepared | | | | |
| | Not At All Prepared | | | | |
| Selecting words | <input type="radio"/> |
| Pronouncing words..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Defining words | <input type="radio"/> |
| Generating examples and nonexamples | <input type="radio"/> |
| Building background knowledge..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Identifying main ideas in text..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Writing summaries | <input type="radio"/> |

6. Using a scale that ranges from "never" to "frequently", how frequently have you ACTUALLY implemented the following instructional routines covered at the TALA Academy you attended to help all students, especially struggling readers, in your classroom? (Or, if you are in a position to help teachers, about how frequently have they implemented the instructional routines?)

| | Frequently | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | Occasionally | | | | |
| | Sometimes | | | Rarely | |
| | Rarely | | Never | | |
| | Never | | | | |
| Selecting words | <input type="radio"/> |
| Pronouncing words..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Defining words | <input type="radio"/> |
| Generating examples and nonexamples | <input type="radio"/> |
| Building background knowledge..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Identifying main ideas in text..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Writing summaries | <input type="radio"/> |

7. To what extent do you feel PREPARED TO implement each of the following strategies covered at the TALA Academy you attended in your classroom (or to help teachers implement them)?

| | I Don't Know | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | Very Well Prepared | | | | |
| | Fairly Well Prepared | | | Somewhat Prepared | |
| | Somewhat Prepared | | Not At All Prepared | | |
| | Not At All Prepared | | | | |
| Adapt instruction to structure learning opportunities for all students..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Foster student engagement..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Group or pair students..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Facilitate partner reading..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Actively involve students (i.e., Think-Pair-Share, Tell-Help-Check, Generate-Share)..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Provide explicit instruction using scaffolding (i.e., I Do, WE Do, YOU Do)..... | <input type="radio"/> |

8. To what extent do you ACTUALLY implement each of the following strategies covered at the TALA Academy you attended in your classroom (or do you help teachers implement them)?

| | Frequently | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | Occasionally | | | | |
| | Sometimes | | | Rarely | |
| | Rarely | | Never | | |
| | Never | | | | |
| Adapt instruction to structure learning opportunities for all students..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Foster student engagement..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Group or pair students..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Facilitate partner reading..... | <input type="radio"/> |

| | Frequently | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | Occasionally | | | | |
| | Sometimes | | | Rarely | |
| | Rarely | | Never | | |
| | Never | | | | |
| Actively involve students (i.e., Think-Pair-Share, Tell-Help-Check, Generate-Share)..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Provide explicit instruction using scaffolding (i.e., I Do, WE Do, YOU Do)..... | <input type="radio"/> |

9. To what extent do you feel PREPARED TO design appropriate instruction for all students (or to help teachers work with these students), in the content area(s) that you teach, including those who are struggling with reading due to:

| | I Don't Know | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | Very Well Prepared | | | | |
| | Fairly Well Prepared | | | Somewhat Prepared | |
| | Somewhat Prepared | | Not At All Prepared | | |
| | Not At All Prepared | | | | |
| Limited English proficiency..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Learning disabilities | <input type="radio"/> |
| Dyslexia | <input type="radio"/> |
| Being from a low socioeconomic environment | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other risk factors for reading difficulties..... | <input type="radio"/> |

Other (please specify)

10. To your knowledge, about how many sixth grade content area teachers from your campus (or the campuses you help teachers at) attended the TALA Content Area Academy (either with you or during a different session)?

- None of the content area teachers from my campus(es)
- Just me
- A few of the content area teachers from my campus(es)
- Most or all of the content area teachers from my campus(es)
- I do not know

11. To your knowledge, about how many sixth grade ELA/reading teachers from your campus (or the campuses you help teachers at) attended the TALA ELA Academy?

- None of the ELA/reading teachers from my campus(es)
- One of the ELA/reading teachers from my campus(es)
- A few of the ELA/reading teachers from my campus(es)
- Most or all of the ELA/reading teachers from my campus(es)
- I do not know

12. Please respond to each question based on your experiences in your CURRENT primary position. If you are a teacher who works directly with students, indicate the extent to which you do each. If you are in a position where you help teachers (e.g., curriculum/instructional specialist, coach, administrator), indicate the extent to which you help teachers do each.

IN THE CONTENT AREA(S) THAT YOU TEACH, to what extent do you (or do you help teachers):

| | A Great Deal | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | Quite A Bit | | | | |
| | To Some Degree | | | | |
| | Very Little | | | | |
| | Not At All | | | | |
| provide natural learning situations in which language arts (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) can be developed together for real purposes? | <input type="radio"/> |
| provide specific, targeted feedback to students during oral reading? | <input type="radio"/> |
| model effective writing strategies? | <input type="radio"/> |
| meet the needs of struggling readers? | <input type="radio"/> |
| help students figure out unknown words when they are reading? | <input type="radio"/> |
| model effective reading strategies? | <input type="radio"/> |
| get students to read fluently during oral reading? | <input type="radio"/> |
| use students' writing to teach grammar and spelling strategies? | <input type="radio"/> |
| provide appropriate challenges for high ability readers? | <input type="radio"/> |
| provide students with writing opportunities in response to reading? ... | <input type="radio"/> |

13. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements using a scale that ranges from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree".

| | Strongly Agree | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | Agree | | | | |
| | Neither Disagree nor Agree | | | | |
| | Disagree | | | | |
| | Strongly Disagree | | | | |
| Reading instruction is primarily the role of elementary school teachers..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| If reading skills are mastered in the elementary grades, students require no further direct instruction in the upper grade levels..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Students should be entering middle grades (6-8) already knowing how to read proficiently..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Content area teachers (e.g., mathematics, science, social studies) who teach middle grades (6-8) are responsible for teaching reading as well as teaching content..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

| | Strongly Agree | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | Agree | | | | |
| | Neither Disagree nor Agree | | | | |
| | Disagree | | | | |
| | Strongly Disagree | | | | |
| If reading skills need to be taught in middle grades (6-8), they should be integrated into the language arts curriculum and taught by English teachers..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Students' struggles with understanding content vocabulary contribute to their struggles with reading text in the content area(s) that I teach. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I am able to teach reading skills to students in the content area(s) that I teach. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I am willing to teach reading skills to students in the content area(s) that I teach. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I find it difficult to see myself teaching reading skills to students in the content area(s) that I teach..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I am able to motivate my students to read in the content area(s) that I teach. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I often avoid teaching reading skills in order to make sure students understand the content area(s) that I teach..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have the necessary training to provide adequate instruction in reading in the content area(s) that I teach..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Part VII: TALA Training

1. To what extent are you incorporating what you learned at the TALA training into your instruction or helping teacher incorporate strategies and practices into their instruction?

- Not At All
- Very Little
- To Some Degree
- Quite a Bit
- A Great Deal

2. In what ways are you incorporating what you learned at the TALA training into your instruction or in helping teachers improve their instruction? _____

3. What would you definitely not want to change, if anything, about the TALA training you attended? _____

4. What aspects of the TALA training you attended, if any, could have been improved? Any suggestions for ways to make these improvements?

5. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements using a scale that ranges from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree".

| | Strongly Agree | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | Neither Disagree nor Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly Disagree |
| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Disagree nor Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| The TALA training I attended was appropriate for teachers who teach the subjects that I teach..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| The TALA training I attended helped me improve my teaching in the subjects that I teach..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

6. Please answer the following questions using the scale that ranges from "definitely not" to "definitely".

| | Definitely | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | Probably Not | | Probably | | Definitely |
| | Definitely Not | Probably Not | Probably | Not Sure | Definitely |
| Would you recommend the TALA training to 6th grade ELA/reading teachers?..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Would you recommend the TALA training to 6th grade social studies teachers?..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Would you recommend the TALA training to 6th grade science teachers?..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Would you recommend the TALA training to 6th grade math teachers?..... | <input type="radio"/> |

7. Please indicate the level of development/implementation of the following policies and practices at the campus where you work (or among campuses that you work with) to support the implementation of TALA.

| | Fully Implemented | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | Partially Implemented | | In Development | |
| | Not Planned | Partially Implemented | In Development | Fully Implemented |
| Support from administrators..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Assessment of students in reading..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Creation of literacy intervention plans..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Improvement of school climate..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

| | Fully Implemented | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | Partially Implemented | | In Development | |
| | Not Planned | Partially Implemented | In Development | Fully Implemented |
| Strengthening of core instructional programs..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Provision of teacher professional development..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

8. Since attending TALA, how often have you met with the following groups of teachers to discuss implementation of TALA at your campus?

| | More Than Once a Month | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| | About Once a Month | | Once or Twice | |
| | Never | About Once a Month | Once or Twice | More Than Once a Month |
| ELA/Reading Teachers..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Mathematics Teachers..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Science Teachers..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Social Studies Teachers..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other Teachers..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Other (please specify)

9. Since attending TALA, how often have you met with the following administrators to discuss implementation of TALA at your campus?

| | More Than Once a Month | | | |
|---|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| | About Once a Month | | Once or Twice | |
| | Never | About Once a Month | Once or Twice | More Than Once a Month |
| Campus Administrator(s) (e.g., principal, assistant principal)..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Curriculum Specialists..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other Administrators..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Other (please specify)

10. Is there anything else you would like to add about your TALA training experience?

Thank you for your time and effort in completing this survey.

TALA Administrator Survey

ICF International, in conjunction with the Texas Education Agency, encourages you to participate in the evaluation of the Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies (TALA). TALA academies are intended to acquaint ELA/reading and content area (math, science, and social studies) teachers with successful, research-based strategies for improving students' academic literacy through professional development training sessions. In addition, the academies are framed within a school-wide approach to addressing the needs of struggling adolescent readers. This survey focuses on the sixth grade implementation, since only sixth grade teachers participated in the summer and fall 2008 academies, and is being sent to principals of all campuses in Texas with sixth grade and the administrators who participated in the TALA administrator overview training.

The purpose of the survey is to obtain your feedback about the implementation of TALA strategies at your campus(es). You are being asked to respond to a series of survey items related to the following topics:

- Information about your professional background and experience.
- Characteristics about your campus(es).
- The implementation of TALA at your campus(es).
- Your perceptions of the TALA Administrator Overview Training (if you participated).

The survey should take about 30 minutes to complete. By participating in the survey, you are giving permission for ICF International to use your information for evaluation purposes.

All data that you provide will be kept strictly confidential, and only summary data will be reported. Your individual responses will be disassociated with any personal identifying information in any final databases and reports.

If you have questions concerning the evaluation or your rights as a participant, please contact Thomas J. Horwood, Evaluation Deputy Project Manager for ICF, at 703-385-3200. If you have any questions for TEA, please contact Barbara O'Donnel, Manager External Projects in the Office of Evaluation, at Barbara.ODonnel@tea.state.tx.us.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Consent statement:

I have read the preceding information describing this evaluation and the purpose of this survey. I freely consent to participate. I understand that I am free to stop the survey at any time.

Signature

Date

Part I: Background and Experience

1. What is your job title?
 Principal
 Assistant Principal
 Curriculum/Instructional Specialist
 Grant Coordinator
 Other (please specify) _____

2. How long have you been in this position at the campus(es) to which you are assigned?
 Less than 1 year
 1-3 years
 4-10 years
 More than 10 years

3. What is the full name of the DISTRICT/CHARTER SCHOOL where you were assigned last year (2007-2008) and where you are assigned this year (2008-2009)?
 2007-2008 _____
 2008-2009 _____

4. What is the full name of the CAMPUS(ES)/SCHOOL(S) (if applicable) where you were assigned last year (2007-2008) and where you are assigned this year (2008-2009)? (If you are not assigned to a particular campus, type N/A in both text boxes.) (If you are responding in regard to multiple campuses, enter all campuses with a comma in between each campus name.)
 2007-2008 _____
 2008-2009 _____

Part II: Campus Characteristics

1. What reading/English language arts curriculum do you implement at your campus(es)? _____

2. In what professional development initiatives other than TALA (both literacy and non-literacy focused), if any, have teachers at your campus(es) participated? _____

3. What are some of the literacy programs for students other than TALA, if any, being implemented on your campus(es)? _____

4. To your knowledge, about how many sixth grade ELA/reading teachers from your campus(es) attended the TALA ELA Academy?
 None of the ELA/reading teachers from my campus(es)
 One of the ELA/reading teachers from my campus(es)
 A few of the ELA/reading teachers from my campus(es)
 Most or all of the ELA/reading teachers from my campus(es)
 I do not know

5. To your knowledge, about how many sixth grade content area (mathematics, science, social studies) teachers from your campus(es) attended the TALA Content Area Academy?
 None of the content area teachers from my campus(es)
 One of the content area teachers from my campus(es)
 A few of the content area teachers from my campus(es)
 Most or all of the content area teachers from my campus(es)
 I do not know

Part III: TALA Implementation

1. Please indicate the extent to which you believe TALA will achieve the following at your campus(es):

| | A Great Deal | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | Quite A Bit | | | | |
| | To Some Degree | | | | |
| | Very Little | | | | |
| | Not At All | | | | |
| Help teachers design appropriate instruction and curriculum..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Improve student achievement (TAKS scores) at your campus..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Help adolescent students who struggle with reading..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Improve student outcomes in reading/English language arts..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| Improve student outcomes in the content areas (social studies, science, math)..... | <input type="radio"/> |

2. Please indicate the policies and practices that are being implemented at your campus(es) to support TALA.

| | Not Planned | In Development | Partially Implemented | Fully Implemented |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Support from administrators..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Assessment of students in reading..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Creation of literacy intervention plans..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Improvement of school climate..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Strengthening of core instructional programs..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Provision of teacher professional development..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

3. What changes, if any, have you made or do you plan to make at your campus(es) this year (e.g., organizational, scheduling, staffing) to achieve the goals of TALA?

TALA ELA and Content Area Academy teacher participants received training in research-based literacy strategies that will assist students in comprehending and learning the content in their classroom materials. ELA Academy participants also were trained to use a progress monitoring assessment to inform their instruction applying aligned intervention strategies designed to meet struggling readers' individual needs.

TALA addressed a number of key topics, including:
General education instructional routines

- Modules that address school-wide intervention, effective instruction, vocabulary, and comprehension
- Integrated scaffolding for English language learners and students with disabilities
- Content-specific examples
- Connections to TEKS and TAKS
- Time for practical application/lesson planning

Intervention components (ELA only)

- Modules that address word recognition, fluency, and comprehension
- Reinforcement of the general education instructional routines to promote transfer of skills
- Sample lessons appropriate for a dedicated reading intervention class at the middle school level

Diagnostic and progress monitoring instrument (ELA only)

- Modules on assessing word identification, fluency, and comprehension in struggling adolescent readers
- Decision-making tools for tracking progress and planning instruction
- Practice administering assessments and interpreting results

4. What plans, if any, do you have for supporting teachers in implementing TALA strategies and routines in their classrooms?

Part IV: TALA Administrator Overview Training

Have you participated in the TALA Administrator Overview Training?

- Yes
- No

IF YOU ANSWERED "Yes," PLEASE complete items 1-7 in "Part IV: TALA Administrator Overview Training."

IF YOU ANSWERED "No," PLEASE STOP. Thank you for your time.

1. Which TALA administrator overview training did you complete? (Select all that apply)

- Online TALA administrator overview training
- TALA administrator overview training offered by one of the ESCs
- Other (please specify) _____

2. How would you rate the effectiveness of the following aspects of the TALA administrator overview training that you attended using a scale that ranges from "very ineffective" to "highly effective"?

| | Very Ineffective | Ineffective | Effective | Highly Effective |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Training structure (i.e., time to learn everything; time for reflection)..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Training content (i.e., instructional routines)..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Training materials (e.g., PowerPoint slides)..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

3. How would you rate the overall quality of the training you received?

- Excellent
- Above Average
- Average
- Below Average
- Very Poor

4. How effective was the training in preparing you as an administrator to support your teachers in implementing TALA?

- Highly Effective
- Effective
- Neither Effective nor Ineffective
- Ineffective
- Very Ineffective

5. What would you definitely not want to change, if anything, about the training you attended? _____

6. What aspects of the training you attended, if any, could have been improved? Any suggestions for ways to make these improvements? _____

7. Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience with TALA administrator overview training? _____

Thank you for your time and effort in completing this survey.

2009 TALA Trainer Survey

ICF International, in conjunction with the Texas Education Agency, encourages you to participate in the evaluation of the Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies (TALA). You are being asked to respond to a series of survey items related to the following topics:

- Information about your professional background and experience.
- Your perceptions of training in which you participated to become a TALA trainer (in May 2009).
- Information about preparing for your roles and responsibilities as a TALA trainer.

The survey should take about 30 minutes to complete. The purpose of the survey is to obtain information on the implementation of the May 2009 TALA training in order to provide feedback on the training. By participating in the survey, you are giving permission for ICF International to use your information for evaluation purposes.

All data that you provide will be kept strictly confidential, and only summary data will be reported. Your individual responses will be disassociated with any personal identifying information in any final databases or final reports.

If you have questions concerning the evaluation or your rights as a participant, please contact Rosemarie O'Conner, Evaluation Project Manager for ICF, at 703-385-3200 or at RO'Conner@icfi.com.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Consent statement:

I have read the preceding information describing this evaluation and the purpose of this survey. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to stop the survey at any time. I freely consent to participate.

Signature

Date

Part I: Background and Experience

Please respond to the following questions about your professional background and experiences related to your role as a TALA trainer preparing for the 2009 TALA academies.

1. Which of these positions do you currently hold **or** have you held in the past? (Select **all** that apply.)

- Teacher
- Content area consultant (e.g., science consultant)
- Content area coordinator (e.g., math coordinator)
- Curriculum specialist (e.g., reading and writing specialist)
- Librarian
- Other (please specify): _____

***If you did not select “Teacher,” skip to question 2.**

1a. Are you currently a teacher?

- Yes
- No

1b. How many years of experience have you had as a teacher?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-3 years
- 4-10 years
- More than 10 years

1c. Which instructional level(s) do/did you teach? (Select **all** that apply)

- Primary (PK-2)
- Elementary (3-5)
- Middle (6-8)
- High school (9-12)
- Other (please specify): _____

1d. Which subject area(s) do/did you teach? (Select **all** that apply)

- Language arts
- Mathematics
- Reading
- Science
- Social studies
- Other (please specify): _____

1e. What is your current teaching certification(s)? (Select **all** that apply)

- I am currently certified to teach in Texas
- I am currently certified to teach in another State
- I am working to obtain Texas teaching certification
- I am working to obtain teaching certification in another State
- I am not certified and not working to obtain certification
- Other (please specify): _____

Part I: Background and Experience (continued)

2. Do you have prior experience providing professional development to teachers?

- Yes
- No

3. Do you have content area leadership or curriculum development experience?

- Yes
- No

4. How were you selected to be a TALA trainer? (Select **all** that apply)

- I was nominated by a supervisor
- I was asked to participate based on my middle school teaching experience
- I completed a formal application
- I am a returning TALA trainer from 2008
- I do not know
- Other (please specify): _____

Part II: Training to Become a TALA Trainer

For questions 5-16, think about the quality, effectiveness, and your satisfaction with the May 2009 TALA Training of Trainers that you attended to become a 2009 TALA trainer.

Please answer the following questions using the scale that ranges from "Very Poor" to "Excellent".

| Question | Very Poor | Below Average | Average | Above Average | Excellent |
|---|-----------|---------------|---------|---------------|-----------|
| 5. How would you rate the overall quality of the training you received? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 6. How would you rate the overall effectiveness of the presenters? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 7. How would you rate the overall quality of the workshop content? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Please answer the following questions using the scale that ranges from "Not at All Effective" to "Extremely Effective".

| Question | Not at All Effective | Slightly Effective | Moderately Effective | Very Effective | Extremely Effective |
|--|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| 8. To what extent was the workshop structure effective in meeting your learning needs? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 9. How effective was the training of trainers you attended in preparing you for your roles/responsibilities as a TALA trainer? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Please answer the following questions using the scale that ranges from "Not at All Conducive" to "Extremely Conducive".

| Question | Not at All Conducive | Slightly Conducive | Moderately Conducive | Very Conducive | Extremely Conducive |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 10. To what extent was the environment conducive to your individual professional exploration? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 11. To what extent was the environment conducive to you being able to share ideas with other participants (i.e., future trainers)? | <input type="radio"/> |

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statement using the scale that ranges from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree".

| Statement | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Disagree nor Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 12. The TALA training of trainers I attended provided me with the requisite knowledge and skills to fulfill my responsibilities as a TALA trainer. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Please answer the following question using the scale that ranges from "Definitely Not" to "Definitely".

| Question | Definitely Not | Probably Not | Not Sure | Probably | Definitely |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 13. Would you attend a similar training of trainers in the future? | <input type="radio"/> |

14. What would you definitely not want to change, if anything, about the training you attended? In other words, what aspects of the training did you like best?

15. What aspects of the training you attended, if any, could have been improved? Any suggestions for ways to make these improvements?

16. Have you ever been a TALA trainer in the past?

- Yes
- No

***If you did not select "Yes," skip to question 17.**

16a. How has the TALA training improved since you attended in 2008?

17. Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience in becoming a TALA trainer?

Part III: Preparing for Your Roles and Responsibilities as a TALA Trainer

Whether through the training of trainers you attended, or through other means, think about preparing for your roles and responsibilities as a 2009 TALA trainer when answering questions 18-20.

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements using the scale that ranges from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree".

| Statement | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Disagree nor Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|----------------------------|-------|----------------|
| 18. The goals of TALA were clearly articulated to me. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 19. My responsibilities as a trainer were clearly defined for me. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

20. Which of the following activities did you do in preparation for presenting the TALA training sessions to which you were assigned (Select **all** that apply)?

- Attended the statewide training of trainers for regional trainers
- Reserved the training space
- Arranged the training space
- Contacted participants regarding session logistics
- Set an agenda for the session
- Met with co-presenters
- Assigned specific responsibilities to each of the presenters with whom I was preparing to present
- Studied the sections of the training materials that I was assigned to present
- Studied the sections of the training materials that my co-presenter(s) was/were assigned to present
- Worked with co-presenter(s) to ask questions of one another
- Practiced the demonstrations
- Previewed the training videos
- Prepared activity materials
- Reviewed the 2008 training materials (if applicable)
- None of the above

Thank you for your time!

Appendix F: Teacher Survey Validation

Appendix F: Teacher Survey Validation

The ICF evaluation team created a teacher participant survey using newly developed items and items from existing surveys. The validation of the survey subsections for ELA and content area teachers is discussed in this section.

We created a 52-item *TALA Teacher Participant Survey* consisting of dichotomous, multiple-choice, rating scale, filter/contingency, and open-ended items. The survey included skip logic patterns to ensure that the survey respondents attended TALA during 2008. The skip logic patterns also directed TALA participating respondents to items geared for ELA teachers and content area teachers. The survey collected descriptive demographic information, perceptions of TALA training, perceptions of school/campus support for TALA, and implementation of TALA instructional routines and strategies in the classroom. In addition, three scales were created to collect teaching satisfaction, literacy instruction behaviors, and beliefs about teaching reading. The teaching satisfaction scale was adapted from Ho and Au's (2006) *Teacher Satisfaction Survey*.⁵⁸ The literacy instruction behaviors scale included modified items from Tschannen-Moran and Johnson's (2004) *Teacher Self-Efficacy Literacy Scale (TSELS)*. The items measuring beliefs about teaching reading were developed for the current evaluation. The survey subsections, the number of items, and type of items are listed in Table F-1.

Table F-1. TALA Teacher Participant Survey

| Part | Survey Subsection Title | Number of Items* | Types of Items |
|----------|------------------------------|------------------|--|
| Part I | Current Primary Job | 3 | open-ended; multiple-choice |
| Part II | Teaching Satisfaction | 5 | rating scale |
| Part III | Background and Experience | 7 | multiple-choice; filter/contingency |
| Part IV | TALA Participation | 1 | filter/contingency |
| Part V | TALA ELA Academy | 13 | dichotomous; rating scale; multiple-choice |
| Part VI | TALA Content Area Academy | 13 | dichotomous; rating scale; multiple-choice |
| Part VII | TALA Training/Campus Support | 9 | rating scale; open-ended |

*Rating scale items are listed as one composite item, however, the rating scale item had multiple items comprising each (e.g., ELA beliefs about teaching reading rating scale item had 6 items assessing the construct).

The ELA academy and content area academy sections of the survey assessed the classroom teachers' perceptions of the TALA classroom teacher academies in which they participated in summer and fall 2008. It also assessed their perceived preparedness to use the TALA instructional routines and the frequency that they used the routines in their classrooms. In addition, participants were asked about their literacy instruction behaviors in the classroom and beliefs about teaching reading.

⁵⁸ Validation of the modified *Teacher Satisfaction Scale* is available at www.tea.state.tx.us/opge/progeval/ProfessionalDevelopment/BTIM_Evaluation_Jan_2009.pdf.

Literacy Instruction Behaviors

The *Literacy Instruction Behaviors Scale* contains 22 items and uses a five-point scale ranging from *not at all* to *a great deal*. The scale includes modified items from Tschannen-Moran and Johnson's (2004) *TSELS*. Sixteen items assess reading behaviors in the classroom and six items assess writing behaviors in the classroom. ELA participants responded to this scale in the survey.

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to determine the link between observed and latent constructs. A common factor analysis was conducted and Cronbach's alpha reliability was calculated for scores in each derived dimension. Scores were predicted by two factors according to Kaiser's criterion ($\lambda > 1$) and the scree plot. The factors were rotated using Varimax rotation because we hypothesized that the underlying factor structures were orthogonal (not related). This two-factor structure explained 57.9% of the variance in scores. Factor I, Reading Behaviors, explained 37% of the variance. Factor II, Writing Behaviors, explained 20.9% of the variance. The reliability coefficient for the Reading Behaviors factor was .95 and .90 for the Writing Behaviors factor. Table F-2 presents the items and respective factor loading for each dimension.

Table F-2. Factor Loadings: ELA Literacy Instruction Behaviors Scale

| Factor | Item Number | Item | Loading |
|-------------------|-------------|---|---------|
| Reading Behaviors | 14 | To what extent do you model effective reading strategies? | .81 |
| | 8 | To what extent do you meet the needs of struggling readers? | .80 |
| | 15 | To what extent do you get students to read fluently during oral reading? | .76 |
| | 2 | To what extent do you use a variety of informal and formal reading assessment strategies? | .76 |
| | 12 | To what extent do you help students figure out unknown words when they are reading? | .75 |
| | 21 | To what extent do you adjust reading materials to an individual student's level? | .73 |
| | 1 | To what extent do you adjust reading strategies based on ongoing informal assessments of students? | .73 |
| | 6 | To what extent do you use a student's oral reading mistakes as an opportunity to teach effective reading strategies? | .73 |
| | 4 | To what extent do you provide specific, targeted feedback to students during oral reading? | .73 |
| | 13 | To what extent do you use flexible grouping to meet individual student needs for reading instruction? | .71 |
| | 9 | To what extent do you get students to use independent reading time productively? | .67 |
| | 11 | To what extent do you get students to read a wide variety of genres? | .64 |
| | 22 | To what extent do you get students to value reading? | .63 |
| | 18 | To what extent do you provide appropriate challenges for high ability readers? | .59 |
| | 3 | To what extent do you provide natural learning situations in which language arts (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) can be developed together for real purposes? | .51 |
| | 19 | To what extent do you get students to talk with each other in class about books they are reading? | .49 |

| Factor | Item Number | Item | Loading |
|-------------------|-------------|--|---------|
| Writing Behaviors | 17 | To what extent do you get students to use independent writing time productively? | .88 |
| | 16 | To what extent do you use students' writing to teach grammar and spelling strategies? | .81 |
| | 7 | To what extent do you model effective writing strategies? | .80 |
| | 5 | To what extent do you adjust writing strategies based on ongoing informal assessments of students? | .70 |
| | 20 | To what extent do you provide students with writing opportunities in response to reading? | .69 |
| | 10 | To what extent do you implement word study strategies to teach spelling? | .49 |

(n=925)

Source: TALA Participating Teacher Survey

For content area participants, the ICF evaluation team reduced the *Literacy Instruction Behaviors Scale* to 10 items, and only included items applicable to content area teachers. We tested the two-factor structure using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Due to problems associated with the Chi Square statistic, we did not use it to assess model fit. The Chi Square statistic is influenced by sample size, and is sensitive to non-normality⁵⁹. Instead, a variety of indices were used to assess model fit: the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Incremental Fit Index (IFI), and the Root Mean Square Residual (RMR).

The CFA supported the two-factor solution. The model possessed an RMR of .05, and GFI, CFI, and IFI ranging from .91 to .97. The reliability coefficient for the Reading Behaviors factor was .91 and .86 for the Writing Behaviors factor. The factor loadings are presented in Table F-3.

Table F-3. Standardized Factor Loadings: Content Area Literacy Instruction Behaviors Scale

| Factor | Item Number | Item | Loading |
|-------------------|-------------|---|---------|
| Reading Behaviors | 7 | To what extent do you get students to read fluently during oral reading? | .85 |
| | 6 | To what extent do you model effective reading strategies? | .81 |
| | 4 | To what extent do you meet the needs of struggling readers? | .80 |
| | 2 | To what extent do you provide specific, targeted feedback to students during oral reading? | .77 |
| | 9 | To what extent do you provide appropriate challenges for high ability readers? | .76 |
| | 5 | To what extent do you help students figure out unknown words when they are reading? | .75 |
| | 1 | To what extent do you provide natural learning situations in which language arts (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) can be developed together for real purposes? | .71 |
| Writing Behaviors | 10 | To what extent do you provide students with writing opportunities in response to reading? | .85 |
| | 3 | To what extent do you model effective writing strategies? | .82 |
| | 8 | To what extent do you use students' writing to teach grammar and spelling strategies? | .80 |

(n=800)

Source: TALA Participating Teacher Survey

⁵⁹ McDonald, R. P. (1999). *Test theory: A unified treatment*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Publishers.

Beliefs about Teaching Reading

The *Beliefs about Teaching Reading Scale* is a 12-item scale used with content area participants. The items assess participant beliefs about teaching reading using a five-point scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. Items include beliefs about the responsibility for teaching reading, the role of content area teachers in reading instruction, and middle school students' preparedness to read. Content area participants responded to this scale in the survey.

EFA was used to determine the underlying factor structure. The common factor analysis yielded a two-factor structure (Positive Beliefs about Teaching Reading and Negative Beliefs about Teaching Reading). A common factor analysis was conducted and Cronbach's alpha reliability was calculated for scores in each derived dimension. Scores were predicted by two factors according to Kaiser's criterion ($\lambda > 1$) and the scree plot. The factors were rotated using Varimax rotation. This two-factor structure explained 37.5% of the variance in scores. Factor I, Positive Beliefs about Teaching Reading, explained 23.3% of the variance. Factor II, Negative Beliefs about Teaching Reading, explained 14.2% of the variance. The reliability coefficient for the Positive Beliefs about Teaching Reading factor was .76 and .68 for the Negative Beliefs about Teaching Reading factor. Table F-4 presents the items and respective factor loading for each dimension. Two scale items had factor loadings below .40. After reviewing the reliability coefficient if an item was deleted, we decided to delete items 6 and 3. This improved the Positive Beliefs about Teaching Reading factor reliability coefficient to .78 and the Negative Beliefs about Teaching Reading factor reliability coefficient to .70.

Table F-4. Factor Loadings: Content Area Beliefs about Teaching Reading

| Factor | Item Number | Item | Loading |
|---|-------------|--|---------|
| Positive Beliefs about Teaching Reading | 7 | I am able to teach reading skills to students in the content area(s) that I teach. | .80 |
| | 8 | I am willing to teach reading skills to students in the content area(s) that I teach. | .74 |
| | 10 | I am able to motivate my students to read in the content area(s) that I teach. | .65 |
| | 12 | I have the necessary training to provide adequate instruction in reading in the content area(s) that I teach. | .61 |
| | 4 | Content area teachers (e.g., mathematics, science, social studies) who teach middle grades (6-8) are responsible for teaching reading as well as teaching content. | .47 |
| | 6 | Students' struggles with understanding content vocabulary contribute to their struggles with reading text in the content area(s) that I teach. | .31 |
| Negative Beliefs about Teaching Reading | 2 | If reading skills are mastered in the elementary grades, students require no further direct instruction in the upper grade levels. | .67 |
| | 1 | Reading instruction is primarily the role of elementary school teachers. | .67 |
| | 9 | I find it difficult to see myself teaching reading skills to students in the content area(s) that I teach. | .50 |
| | 11 | I often avoid teaching reading skills in order to make sure students understand the content area(s) that I teach. | .44 |
| | 5 | If reading skills need to be taught in middle grades (6-8), they should be integrated into the language arts curriculum and taught by English teachers. | .38 |
| | 3 | Students should be entering middle grades (6-8) already knowing how to read proficiently. | .36 |

(n=754)

Source: TALA Participating Teacher Survey

A 6-item version of the *Beliefs about Teaching Reading* scale was used with ELA participants. We tested the two-factor structure using CFA. The two-factor structure did not function for the ELA survey, resulting in poor model fit.

Appendix G: Characteristics of Campuses Selected for Classroom Observations

Appendix G: Characteristics of Campuses Selected for Classroom Observations

Following is a breakdown of the 20 schools selected for observations:

| Region | # ELA | # Content | Total # Teachers Attending TALA | # Grade 6 Teachers At Campus | % Met Standard in Reading | % Teacher Participation | Campus Classification |
|--------|-------|-----------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| 1 | 6 | 9 | 15 | 43 | 71.93 | 34.88 | High Teacher Participation/ Low Achievement |
| 1 | 6 | 8 | 14 | 45 | 65.89 | 31.11 | High Teacher Participation/ Low Achievement |
| 1 | 7 | 6 | 13 | 74 | 62.02 | 17.57 | Low Teacher Participation/ Low Achievement |
| 4 | 7 | 7 | 14 | 35 | 77 | 40 | High Teacher Participation /Low Achievement |
| 4 | 6 | 7 | 13 | 38 | 74.66 | 34.21 | High Teacher Participation/ Low Achievement |
| 4 | 5 | 5 | 10 | 58 | 71.5 | 17.24 | Low Teacher Participation/ Low Achievement |
| 4 | 17 | 4 | 21 | 162 | 90.96 | 12.96 | Low Teacher Participation/ High Achievement |
| 5 | 6 | 2 | 8 | 49 | 67.85 | 16.33 | Low Teacher Participation/ Low Achievement |
| 6 | 8 | 18 | 26 | 65 | 96.99 | 40 | High Teacher Participation/ High Achievement |
| 6 | 4 | 8 | 12 | 74 | 99.1 | 16.22 | Low Teacher Participation/ High Achievement |
| 6 | 5 | 5 | 10 | 100 | 93.83 | 10 | Low Teacher Participation/ High Achievement |
| 7 | 0 | 7 | 5 | 86 | 92.69 | 5.81 | Low Teacher Participation/ High Achievement |
| 10 | 4 | 12 | 16 | 28 | 98.54 | 57.14 | High Teacher Participation/ High Achievement |
| 10 | 12 | 13 | 25 | 48 | 93.81 | 52.08 | High Teacher Participation/ High Achievement |
| 10 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 13 | 70 | 46.15 | High Teacher Participation/ Low Achievement |
| 10 | 7 | 7 | 14 | 88 | 94.33 | 15.91 | Low Teacher Participation/ High Achievement |
| 13 | 6 | 8 | 14 | 38 | 95.31 | 36.84 | High Teacher Participation/ High Achievement |
| 13 | 6 | 3 | 9 | 52 | 65.27 | 17.31 | Low Teacher Participation/ Low Achievement |
| 19 | 11 | 3 | 14 | 9 | 88.89 | 60 | High Teacher Participation/ High Achievement |
| 19 | 6 | 4 | 10 | 70 | 75.03 | 14.29 | Low Teacher Participation/ Low Achievement |

Appendix H: Technical Advisory Board Biographies

Appendix H: Technical Advisory Board Biographies

William Brozo, George Mason University

William G. Brozo is a Professor of Literacy in the Graduate School of Education at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. He earned his bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina and his master's and doctorate from the University of South Carolina. He has taught reading and language arts in junior and senior high school in the Carolinas. He is the author of numerous articles on literacy development for children and young adults. His books include *To Be a Boy, To Be a Reader. Engaging Teen and Preteen Boys in Active Literacy* (International Reading Association); *Readers, Teachers, Learners: Expanding Literacy Across the Content Areas* (Merrill/Prentice Hall); *Content Literacy for Today's Adolescents: Honoring Diversity and Building Competence*(Merrill/Prentice Hall); *Principled Practices for Adolescent Literacy: A Framework for Instruction and Policy* (Erlbaum); *50 Content Area Strategies for Adolescent Literacy* (Merrill/Prentice Hall); and *Setting the Pace: A Speed, Comprehension and Study Skills Program* (Merrill). His newest books, *Supporting Content Area Literacy with Technology: Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners*, and *The Adolescent Literacy Inventory*, are forthcoming by Allyn and Bacon. Dr. Brozo is also an author/consultant for *Jamestown Reading Navigator*, a program for struggling adolescent readers. He serves on the editorial review boards of the *Reading Research Quarterly*, *Reading Research and Instruction*, and the *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*. He co-edits/writes "Content Literacy," a column for *The Reading Teacher* and also writes a column for *Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking's Thinking Classroom* entitled "Strategic Moves." Dr. Brozo is a past member of the International Reading Association's (IRA) Commission on Adolescent Literacy and current member of the Adolescent Literacy Committee and Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) /Progress in International Literacy Study (PIRLS) Task Force. As an International Development Division-IRA consultant, Dr. Brozo has traveled regularly to Macedonia, where he provides technical support to secondary teachers. He was a co-investigator on a Carnegie Grant team that compiled an important report on best practice in adolescent literacy. He regularly speaks at professional meetings around the country and consults with teachers and administrators to discuss ways of enriching the literate culture of middle and secondary schools, enhancing the literate lives of boys, and making teaching more responsive to the needs all students.

Danielle Dennis, University of South Florida

Danielle Dennis completed her doctorate in literacy education at the University of Tennessee. Through her dissertation research, Dr. Dennis developed cognitive profiles of struggling adolescent readers, as a lens to view the abilities these students bring to the classroom, in order to inform policy and instruction. Additionally, Dr. Dennis has recently had articles accepted in the *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy* and the *Reading Teacher*, both relating to developmentally appropriate instruction of adolescent readers across the curriculum. She is the co-author of two book chapters relating to assessment in secondary literacy and thoughtful literacy at the middle and high school level. Her research interests include struggling adolescent readers, literacy assessment, and educational policy. In addition, Dr. Dennis is interested in the role of teacher talk as it pertains to both facilitating children's learning and as used to demonstrate change in teacher expertise of literacy instruction.

Janice Dole, University of Utah

Dr. Dole's university experience includes positions held at the University of Denver, the Center for the Study of Reading at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and Michigan State University. She has published widely in the areas of comprehension instruction and conceptual change learning and more recently in professional development and school reform. Her publications include articles in journals such as *Reading Research Quarterly*, *Review of Educational Research*, *The Elementary School Journal* and *Reading and Writing Quarterly*. She is also coauthor of the recently published book, *Adolescent Literacy: Research to practice*. From 1992-2002, Dr. Dole served as a member of the reading development panel for the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP). She also was a panel member of the RAND Reading Study Group on reading comprehension. In addition, Dr. Dole is currently a National Reading First consultant on comprehension instruction. She also has served on national review panels for the Institute of Educational Services (IES) and the National Institute of Child and Human Development. Finally, Dr. Dole is currently serving on the *Committee on the Study of Teacher Preparation Programs* for the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences.

In 1996, Dr. Dole began to conduct research on school reform in reading and professional development in high poverty schools. She co-authored Utah's Reading Excellence Act (REA) and Utah's Reading First for the Utah State Office of Education (OSOE) and was project co-coordinator as well as state technical assistant for the REA grant from 1999 - 2001. Thereafter, along with two colleagues in special education at the University of Utah, Dr. Dole became co-principal investigator on the evaluation of Utah's Reading First grant. Additionally, Dr. Dole is an investigator with Mathematica on a four-year IES national study of the effectiveness of comprehension interventions in fifth-grade high-poverty classrooms throughout the U.S. Finally, Dr. Dole is co-principal investigator on an IES research grant to develop a teacher knowledge assessment of reading and writing.

Russell Gersten, Instructional Research Group

Dr. Russell Gersten is executive director of Instructional Research Group, a nonprofit educational research institute, as well as professor emeritus in the College of Education at the University of Oregon. Main areas of expertise include instructional research on English Language Learners (ELLs), reading comprehension research and evaluation methodology. In 2002, Dr. Gersten received the Distinguished Special Education Researcher Award from the American Educational Research Association's Special Education Research Division. He currently serves as Principal Investigator for the *What Works Clearinghouse* on the topic of instructional research on ELLs, and was recently appointed to the National Mathematics Advisory Panel, a Presidential committee created to develop research-based policy in mathematics for American schools.

Dr. Gersten has over 150 publications in scientific journals such as *Review of Educational Research*, *American Educational Research Journal*, *Reading Research Quarterly*, *Educational Leadership* and *Exceptional Children*. He is the senior author of a forthcoming Best Practice Guide for Teaching ELLS, and is currently the principle investigator of three large Institute of Education Sciences (IES) projects involving randomized trials in the areas of Reading First professional development, reading comprehension research, and early mathematics curricula.

Tamara Jetton, Central Michigan University

Dr. Tamara Jetton is the Marie Berrell Endowed Professor in Developmental Literacy at Central Michigan University (CMU). She previously was an associate professor in the Department of Reading at James Madison University in Virginia, and a faculty member at the University of Utah. She received her Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction with a specialization in reading and writing from Texas A&M University. At CMU, Dr. Jetton teaches undergraduate and graduate literacy courses in teacher education and is actively involved in community outreach through the department's Reading Clinic. Her research addresses reading in the content areas, reading strategies, and discourse processes.

Dr. Jetton has numerous publications in scholarly journals such as *Adolescent Literacy Research and Practice*, *Reading Research Quarterly*, and *Review of Educational Research*. She has also co-authored book chapters in the *Handbook of Discourse Processes* and the *Handbook of Reading Research* and is the co-author of the recently published book, *Adolescent Literacy: Research to Practice*.

Appendix I: Descriptive Information about the Evaluation Participants

Appendix I: Descriptive Information about the Evaluation Participants

Survey Participants⁶⁰

ELA Teacher Background Information

Table I-1. Years of Experience as a Classroom Teacher

| Years | Percentage Selecting Response (n=997) |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Zero years | <1% |
| Less than 1 year | 2% |
| 1-3 years | 12% |
| 4-10 years | 27% |
| More than 10 years | 54% |

Table I-2. Years of Experience as a Sixth Grade Teacher

| Years | Percentage Selecting Response (n=997) |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Zero years | 3% |
| Less than 1 year | 5% |
| 1-3 years | 31% |
| 4-10 years | 41% |
| More than 10 years | 20% |

Table I-3. Grade Levels Currently Taught

| Grade Level | Percentage Selecting Response (n=997) |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Pre-Kindergarten | <1% |
| Kindergarten | 1% |
| 1 | 2% |
| 2 | 1% |
| 3 | 4% |
| 4 | 5% |
| 5 | 13% |
| 6 | 94% |
| 7 | 37% |
| 8 | 33% |
| 9 | 4% |
| 10 | 4% |
| 11 | 3% |
| 12 | 2% |
| None of these | <1% |

⁶⁰ Where survey respondents were asked to "select all that apply," percentages add to more than 100%.

Table I-4. Grade Levels Ever Taught

| Grade Level | Percentage Selecting Response (n=997) |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Pre-Kindergarten | 9% |
| Kindergarten | 15% |
| 1 | 23% |
| 2 | 26% |
| 3 | 29% |
| 4 | 35% |
| 5 | 40% |
| 6 | 90% |
| 7 | 60% |
| 8 | 54% |
| 9 | 20% |
| 10 | 16% |
| 11 | 16% |
| 12 | 13% |
| None of these | 1% |

Table I-5. Subjects Currently Taught

| Subject | Percentage Selecting Response (n=997) |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Language arts | 75% |
| Mathematics | 18% |
| Reading | 66% |
| Science | 12% |
| Social studies | 20% |
| Other | 10% |
| None of the above | <1% |

Table I-6. Subjects Ever Taught

| Subject | Percentage Selecting Response (n=997) |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Language arts | 91% |
| Mathematics | 55% |
| Reading | 82% |
| Science | 49% |
| Social studies | 59% |
| Other | 21% |
| None of the above | <1% |

Table I-7. Current Teaching Certification

| Certification | Percentage Selecting Response (n=997) |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| I am currently certified to teach in Texas. | 99% |
| I am currently certified to teach in another state. | 6% |
| I am working to obtain Texas teaching certification. | 1% |
| I am not certified to teach and not working to obtain teaching certification. | <1% |

Table I-8. Certification Route

| Certification | Percentage Selecting Response (n=997) |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| College/university undergraduate certification program | 58 % |
| Alternative certification program (ACP) | 23% |
| College/university post-bachelor certification program | 19% |

Content Area Teacher Background Information

Table I-9. Years of Experience as a Classroom Teacher

| Years | Percentage Selecting Response (n=832) |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Zero years | <1% |
| Less than 1 year | 2% |
| 1-3 years | 15% |
| 4-10 years | 34% |
| More than 10 years | 49% |

Table I-10. Years of Experience as a Sixth Grade Teacher

| Years | Percentage Selecting Response (n=832) |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Zero years | 3% |
| Less than 1 year | 6% |
| 1-3 years | 37% |
| 4-10 years | 34% |
| More than 10 years | 20% |

Table I-11. Grade Levels Currently Taught

| Grade Level | Percentage Selecting Response(n=832) |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Pre-Kindergarten | 1% |
| Kindergarten | 1% |
| 1 | 2% |
| 2 | 2% |
| 3 | 2% |
| 4 | 4% |
| 5 | 10% |
| 6 | 95% |
| 7 | 28% |
| 8 | 24% |
| 9 | 4% |
| 10 | 3% |
| 11 | 4% |
| 12 | 3% |
| None of these | <1% |

Table I-12. Grade Levels Ever Taught

| Grade Level | Percentage Selecting Response |
|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Pre-Kindergarten | 6% |
| Kindergarten | 11% |
| 1 | 17% |
| 2 | 19% |
| 3 | 23% |
| 4 | 30% |
| 5 | 40% |
| 6 | 91% |
| 7 | 53% |
| 8 | 48% |
| 9 | 19% |
| 10 | 16% |
| 11 | 16% |
| 12 | 14% |
| None of these | 1% |

Table I-13. Subjects Currently Taught

| Subject | Percentage Selecting Response (n=832) |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Language arts | 16% |
| Mathematics | 48% |
| Reading | 17% |
| Science | 38% |
| Social studies | 34% |
| Other | 6% |
| None of the above | <1% |

Table I-14. Subjects Ever Taught

| Subject | Percentage Selecting Response (n=832) |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Language arts | 52% |
| Mathematics | 71% |
| Reading | 52% |
| Science | 63% |
| Social studies | 62% |
| Other | 17% |
| None of the above | 1% |

Table I-15. Current Teaching Certification

| Certification | Percentage Selecting Response (n=832) |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| I am currently certified to teach in Texas. | 98% |
| I am currently certified to teach in another state. | 6% |
| I am working to obtain Texas teaching certification. | 2% |
| I am not certified to teach and not working to obtain teaching certification. | - |

Table I-16. Certification Route

| Certification | Percentage Selecting Response(n=832) |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| College/university undergraduate certification program | 55% |
| Alternative certification program (ACP) | 26% |
| College/university post-bachelor certification program | 19% |

Administrator Background Information

Table I-17. Job Title

| Job Title | Percentage Selecting Response* (n=331) |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Principal | 60% |
| Assistant Principal | 6% |
| Curriculum/Instructional Specialist | 19% |
| Other* | 15% |

* Other includes Assistant Superintendent; Dean of Instruction; Director of Accountability and Research; Director of Elementary Instruction and Assessment; Director of Guidance and Assessment; District Curriculum Director; Education Service Center Consultant; Executive Director; Literacy Specialist; Special Education Coordinator; and Superintendent

Table I-18. Years in Current Position

| Number of Years in This Position | Percentage Selecting Response* (N=331) |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Less than 1 year | 17% |
| 1-3 years | 40% |
| 4-10 years | 35% |
| More than 10 years | 8% |

TALA Trainer Background Information

Table I-19. Current and Past Positions Held

| Position | Percentage Selecting Response (n=251) |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Teacher | 71% |
| Content area consultant (e.g., science consultant) | 19% |
| Content area coordinator (e.g., math coordinator) | 10% |
| Curriculum specialist (e.g., reading and writing specialist) | 39% |
| Librarian | 1% |
| Other | 27% |

Table I-20. Currently Teaching

| Position | Percentage Selecting Response (n=251) |
|----------|---------------------------------------|
| Yes | 42% |
| No | 29% |

Table I-21. Years of Teaching Experience

| Years | Percentage Selecting Response (n=251) |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1-3 years | 1% |
| 4-10 years | 22% |
| More than 10 years | 48% |

Table I-22. Levels Taught

| Level | Percentage Selecting Response (n=251) |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Primary (PK-2) | 15% |
| Elementary School (3-5) | 27% |
| Middle School (6-8) | 60% |
| High School (9-12) | 24% |
| Other* | 7% |

** Other includes: adults, adult education, Bachelor courses for COE at university level, college level, college freshman, graduate level, community college, 7th-8th, professional development for teachers, secondary literacy coach (6-12), teacher training, and university adjunct.

Table I-23. Subjects Taught

| Subject | Percentage Selecting Response (n=251) |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Language Arts | 55% |
| Mathematics | 22% |
| Reading | 35% |
| Science | 25% |
| Social Studies | 27% |
| Other* | 11% |

* Other includes: Art; At-risk Readers; Special Education; Bible and SAT; Bilingual Education; Character Education; Computer Classes; Creative Writing; Yearbook and Newspaper; Drama; Dyslexia Intervention; ESL; French; Gifted and Talented Teacher Training; Time Management and Study Skills; Science, Social Studies, and Math for third grade only; Religious Education; Journalism; Latin; Physical Education; Music; TAG; Technology; Ecology; and GED prep courses.

Table I-24. Current Teaching Certification

| Certification | Percentage Selecting Response (n=251) |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| I am currently certified to teach in Texas | 71% |
| I am currently certified to teach in another state | 3% |
| I am working to obtain Texas teaching certification | <1% |
| Other** | 3% |

* Other includes: Administration (principle) certification; one-year Texas certification and should be certified by August 2008 and still hold California certification; Elementary General 1-8; Elementary Math 1-8; Elementary Reading 1-8; ELS; working to obtain administrative certification; also certified as a Reading Specialist in Texas and a Master Reading Teacher.

Table I-25. Prior Experience

| Trainers' Prior Experience | Percentage Selecting Response "Yes" (n=251) |
|--|---|
| Providing professional development to teachers | 95% |
| Content area leadership or curriculum development experience | 93% |

TALA Grade 6 Online Follow-up Participants

Table I-26. TALA Grade 6 Online Follow-Up Training Participants, ELA and Content Area by ESC Region

| ESC Region | ELA N | ELA % | Content Area N | Content Area % | Total N | Total % |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|
| ESC Region 1 | 323 | 9.1% | 198 | 10.0% | 521 | 9.4% |
| ESC Region 2 | 74 | 2.1% | 55 | 2.8% | 129 | 2.3% |
| ESC Region 3 | 66 | 1.9% | 52 | 2.6% | 118 | 2.1% |
| ESC Region 4 | 490 | 13.8% | 209 | 10.5% | 699 | 12.6% |
| ESC Region 5 | 58 | 1.6% | 13 | 0.7% | 71 | 1.3% |
| ESC Region 6 | 109 | 3.1% | 60 | 3.0% | 169 | 3.0% |
| ESC Region 7 | 157 | 4.4% | 96 | 4.8% | 253 | 4.6% |
| ESC Region 8 | 73 | 2.1% | 51 | 2.6% | 124 | 2.2% |
| ESC Region 9 | 40 | 1.1% | 24 | 1.2% | 64 | 1.2% |
| ESC Region 10 | 663 | 18.7% | 411 | 20.7% | 1074 | 19.4% |
| ESC Region 11 | 355 | 10.0% | 184 | 9.3% | 539 | 9.7% |
| ESC Region 12 | 103 | 2.9% | 83 | 4.2% | 186 | 3.4% |
| ESC Region 13 | 172 | 4.8% | 129 | 6.5% | 301 | 5.4% |
| ESC Region 14 | 54 | 1.5% | 34 | 1.7% | 88 | 1.6% |
| ESC Region 15 | 44 | 1.2% | 12 | 0.6% | 56 | 1.0% |
| ESC Region 16 | 84 | 2.4% | 42 | 2.1% | 126 | 2.3% |
| ESC Region 17 | 113 | 3.2% | 64 | 3.2% | 177 | 3.2% |
| ESC Region 18 | 68 | 1.9% | 32 | 1.6% | 100 | 1.8% |
| ESC Region 19 | 288 | 8.1% | 159 | 8.0% | 447 | 8.1% |
| ESC Region 20 | 220 | 6.2% | 80 | 4.0% | 300 | 5.4% |
| Total | 3554 | 100% | 1988 | 100% | 5542 | 100% |

ELA Teacher Participants

Overall, 2,277 TALA Grade 6 ELA Online Follow-Up Training Participants completed the documentation and could be matched to PEIMS data. Tables I-27 through I-30 include their demographic characteristics.

Table I-27. ESC Region Where TALA Grade 6 ELA Teacher Participants Who Completed Online Training Teach

| ESC Region | N | % |
|---------------|--------------|-------------|
| ESC Region 1 | 218 | 9.6% |
| ESC Region 2 | 56 | 2.5% |
| ESC Region 3 | 54 | 2.4% |
| ESC Region 4 | 366 | 16.1% |
| ESC Region 5 | 40 | 1.8% |
| ESC Region 6 | 30 | 1.3% |
| ESC Region 7 | 105 | 4.6% |
| ESC Region 8 | 45 | 2.0% |
| ESC Region 9 | 24 | 1.1% |
| ESC Region 10 | 368 | 16.2% |
| ESC Region 11 | 186 | 8.2% |
| ESC Region 12 | 70 | 3.1% |
| ESC Region 13 | 118 | 5.2% |
| ESC Region 14 | 39 | 1.7% |
| ESC Region 15 | 32 | 1.4% |
| ESC Region 16 | 66 | 2.9% |
| ESC Region 17 | 70 | 3.1% |
| ESC Region 18 | 48 | 2.1% |
| ESC Region 19 | 185 | 8.1% |
| ESC Region 20 | 157 | 6.9% |
| Total | 2,277 | 100% |

Source: Online Follow-Up Training Database about Teachers Who Participated in TALA Grade 6 ELA Academies as Merged with PEIMS 2007-08 (N=2277)

Table I-28. Sex of TALA Grade 6 ELA Teacher Participants Who Completed Online Training

| Sex | N | % |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Female | 2,125 | 93.3% |
| Male | 152 | 6.7% |
| Total | 2,277 | 100% |

Source: Online Follow-Up Training Database about Teachers Who Participated in TALA Grade 6 ELA Academies as Merged with PEIMS 2007-08 (N=2277)

Table I-29. Race/Ethnicity of TALA Grade 6 ELA Teacher Participants Who Completed Online Training

| Race/Ethnicity | N | % |
|------------------|--------------|-------------|
| African American | 259 | 11.4% |
| Asian | 22 | 1.0% |
| Hispanic | 500 | 22.0% |
| Native American | 4 | 0.2% |
| White | 1,492 | 65.5% |
| Total | 2,277 | 100% |

Source: Online Follow-Up Training Database about Teachers Who Participated in TALA Grade 6 ELA Academies as Merged with PEIMS 2007-08 (N=2277)

Table I-30. Highest Degree Obtained by TALA Grade 6 ELA Teacher Participants Who Completed Online Training

| Highest Degree | N | % |
|--------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Doctorate | 5 | 0.2% |
| Master's | 485 | 21.3% |
| Bachelor's | 1,767 | 77.6% |
| No Bachelor's Degree or Higher | 20 | 0.9% |
| Total | 2,277 | 100% |

Source: Online Follow-Up Training Database about Teachers Who Participated in TALA Grade 6 ELA Academies as Merged with PEIMS 2007-08 (N=2277)

Content Area Teacher Participants

Overall, 1,037 TALA Grade 6 Content Area Online Follow-Up Training Participants completed the documentation and could be matched to PEIMS data. Tables I-31 through I-34 include their demographic characteristics.

Table I-31. ESC Region Where TALA Grade 6 Content Area Teacher Participants Who Completed Online Training Teach

| ESC Region | N | % |
|---------------|--------------|-------------|
| ESC Region 1 | 118 | 11.4% |
| ESC Region 2 | 35 | 3.4% |
| ESC Region 3 | 27 | 2.6% |
| ESC Region 4 | 120 | 11.6% |
| ESC Region 5 | 9 | 0.9% |
| ESC Region 6 | 19 | 1.8% |
| ESC Region 7 | 58 | 5.6% |
| ESC Region 8 | 20 | 1.9% |
| ESC Region 9 | 17 | 1.6% |
| ESC Region 10 | 217 | 20.9% |
| ESC Region 11 | 90 | 8.7% |
| ESC Region 12 | 43 | 4.1% |
| ESC Region 13 | 39 | 3.8% |
| ESC Region 14 | 27 | 2.6% |
| ESC Region 15 | 1 | 0.1% |
| ESC Region 16 | 5 | 0.5% |
| ESC Region 17 | 34 | 3.3% |
| ESC Region 18 | 14 | 1.4% |
| ESC Region 19 | 120 | 11.6% |
| ESC Region 20 | 24 | 2.3% |
| Total | 1,037 | 100% |

Source: Online Follow-Up Training Database about Teachers Who Participated in TALA Grade 6 Content Area Academies as Merged with PEIMS 2007-08 (N=1037)

Table I-32. Sex of TALA Grade 6 Content Area Teacher Participants Who Completed Online Training

| Sex | N | % |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Female | 858 | 82.7% |
| Male | 179 | 17.3% |
| Total | 1,037 | 100% |

Source: Online Follow-Up Training Database about Teachers Who Participated in TALA Grade 6 Content Area Academies as Merged with PEIMS 2007-08 (N=1037)

Table I-33. Race/Ethnicity of TALA Grade 6 Content Area Teacher Participants Who Completed Online Training

| Race/Ethnicity | N | % |
|------------------|--------------|-------------|
| African American | 66 | 6.4% |
| Asian | 15 | 1.4% |
| Hispanic | 243 | 23.4% |
| Native American | 3 | 0.3% |
| White | 710 | 68.5% |
| Total | 1,037 | 100% |

Source: Online Follow-Up Training Database about Teachers Who Participated in TALA Grade 6 Content Area Academies as Merged with PEIMS 2007-08 (N=1037)

Table 1-34. Highest Degree Obtained by TALA Grade 6 Content Area Teacher Participants Who Completed Online Training

| Highest Degree | N | % |
|--------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Doctorate | 5 | 0.5% |
| Master's | 214 | 20.6% |
| Bachelor's | 805 | 77.6% |
| No Bachelor's Degree or Higher | 13 | 1.3% |
| Total | 1,037 | 100% |

Source: Online Follow-Up Training Database about Teachers Who Participated in TALA Grade 6 Content Area Academies as Merged with PEIMS 2007-08 (N=1037)

Appendix J: Classroom Implementation of TALA Supporting Tables

Appendix J: Classroom Implementation of TALA Supporting Tables

**Table J-1. Comprehension Teaching Behaviors Observed in Sixth Grade Classrooms of
TALA Grade 6 ELA Teacher Participants**

| Comprehension Teaching Behaviors | Observed Sixth Grade ELA Classrooms (N=41) | | | | | |
|---|--|-------------|--|-------------|-------------------|--------------|
| | Teacher Models | | Teacher Explains, Reviews, or Provides Examples/Elaborations | | Students Practice | |
| | N (%) | Mean (s.d.) | N (%) | Mean (s.d.) | N (%) | Mean (s.d.) |
| 1. The teacher/student activates prior knowledge and/or previews text before reading (e.g., shares background information about the title, author, content, reviews relevant content from previous lessons, makes predictions, makes connections, addresses text features). | 1 (2%) | 5.00 (NA) | 18 (44%) | 8.28 (7.78) | 16 (39%) | 9.13 (6.50) |
| 2. Explicit comprehension instruction that teaches students about text structure (compare-contrast, cause-effect, problem-solution, time-order, story grammar, etc.) | 0 (0%) | NA | 5 (12%) | 5.20 (4.44) | 6 (15%) | 7.83 (3.82) |
| 3. Explicit comprehension instruction that teaches students how to use strategies such as, main idea, summarizing, drawing conclusions, visualizing events, making predictions during and after reading, evaluating predictions, identifying fact vs. opinion, monitoring for comprehension, other. | 3 (7%) | 1.00 (0.00) | 14 (34%) | 6.36 (4.05) | 15 (37%) | 6.87 (5.32) |
| 4. Explicit comprehension instruction that teaches students how to generate questions | 0 (0%) | NA | 1 (2%) | 4.00 (NA) | 5 (12%) | 6.40 (7.83) |
| 5. Explicit comprehension instruction that teaches text features (sub-heads, captions, charts, maps, graphs, pictures, sidebars, bold & italicized words) to interpret text | 0 (0%) | NA | 3 (7%) | 1.33 (0.58) | 3 (7%) | 1.33 (0.58) |
| 6. Teacher asks students to justify their responses (e.g., Teacher asks, “Why do you think/say that?” or, “How did you reach that conclusion?”). | | | | | 16 (39%) | 2.31 (1.20) |
| 7. Teacher asks questions based on material in the text that are beyond the literal level. | | | | | 20 (49%) | 8.10 (3.43) |
| 8. Teacher elaborates, clarifies, or links concepts during and after text reading. May be an elaboration of a student response. | | | | | 24 (59%) | 10.25 (5.46) |

Source: Classroom Observations of Teachers Who Participated in TALA Grade 6 ELA Academies

NOTE: Classroom observers were instructed to record the number of times each item was observed during each observation across the three types of instruction (teacher models, teacher explains, reviews, or provides examples/elaborations, and students practice). Therefore, the reported *N* represents the number of classrooms where this was observed, and the *mean* represents the average number of times each item was observed across all observations.

Table J-2. Vocabulary Teaching Behaviors Observed in Sixth Grade Classrooms of TALA Grade 6 ELA Teacher Participants

| Vocabulary Teaching Behaviors | Observed Sixth Grade ELA Classrooms (N=41) | |
|---|--|---------------|
| | N (%) | Mean (s.d.) |
| 1. The teacher provides an explanation and/or a definition or asks a student to read a definition. | 29 (71%) | 3.52 (3.67) |
| 2. The teacher provides: a) examples; b) contrasting examples; c) multiple meanings; d) immediate elaborations to students' responses. | 32 (78%) | 11.34 (8.43) |
| 3. The teacher uses visuals/pictures, gestures related to word meaning, facial expressions, or demonstrations to discuss/demonstrate word meanings. | 22 (54%) | 5.86 (6.25) |
| 4. The teacher teaches word learning strategies - using context clues, word parts, root meaning. | 8 (20%) | 3.88 (2.59) |
| 5. Students do or are asked to do something that requires knowledge of words (e.g., answer questions; define words; make sentences; find words based on clues; physically demonstrate meaning). | 33 (80%) | 11.82 (10.43) |
| 6. Students are given an opportunity to apply word learning strategies - using context clues, word parts, root meaning. | 12 (29%) | 6.25 (6.37) |

Source: Classroom Observations of Teachers Who Participated in TALA Grade 6 ELA Academies

NOTE: Classroom observers were instructed to record the number of times each item was observed during each observation. Therefore, the reported *N* represents the number of classrooms where this was observed, and the *mean* represents the average number of times each item was observed across all observations.

Table J-3. General Instructional Strategies Observed in Sixth Grade Classrooms of TALA Grade 6 ELA Teacher Participants

| General Instructional Strategies | Observed Sixth Grade ELA Classrooms (N=41) | | If “Yes” to the Main Question (N=# responding “yes” to the corresponding main question) | |
|--|--|-----|---|-----|
| | N | % | N | % |
| 1. Did the teacher adapt instruction during the lesson? | 19 | 46% | | |
| 2. Did the teacher foster student engagement? | 34 | 83% | | |
| 3. Did the teacher provide explicit instruction? | 33 | 81% | | |
| a. Teacher modeled the behavior | | | 5 | 15% |
| b. Teacher performed a think aloud | | | 4 | 12% |
| c. Students were guided by the teacher as they completed the task | | | 28 | 85% |
| d. Students completed the task in small steps at the same time as the teacher | | | 10 | 30% |
| e. Pairs of students practiced small steps of the task and provided feedback to each other | | | 7 | 21% |
| f. Students completed the task individually, in pairs, or in small groups | | | 24 | 73% |
| 4. Did the teacher provide feedback to the students? | 40 | 98% | | |
| a. Corrective | | | 33 | 81% |
| b. Positive | | | 37 | 90% |
| c. Negative | | | 9 | 22% |
| 5. Did the students work in groups? | 19 | 46% | | |
| a. Think-Pair-Share | | | 1 | 5% |
| b. Tell-Help-Check | | | 1 | 5% |
| c. Generate-Share | | | 9 | 45% |
| d. Partner Reading | | | 5 | 25% |
| e. Other | | | 7 | 35% |

Source: Classroom Observations of Teachers Who Participated in TALA Grade 6 ELA Academies (N=41)

NOTE: Classroom observers were instructed to respond to each of the questions, and the reported N and % for the main questions (1-5) are out of the 41 observed sixth grade ELA classrooms. Therefore, the percentages for the main questions (1-5) do not have to add to 100%. If the observer responded “no” to the main question, then the sub-items under that main question were also answered. Observers were to “select all that apply” to all sub-items, and these percentages do not have to add to 100%.

Table J-4. Vocabulary Instructional Routines Observed in Sixth Grade Classrooms of TALA Grade 6 ELA Teacher Participants

| Vocabulary Instructional Routines | Observed Sixth Grade ELA Classrooms (N=41) | | If “Yes” to the Main Question (N=# responding “yes” to the corresponding main question) | |
|--|--|-----|---|-----|
| | N | % | N | % |
| 1. Did the lesson include vocabulary instruction? | 33 | 81% | | |
| a. Did the teacher pre-teach vocabulary words? | | | 18 | 55% |
| b. Did the teacher teach academic vocabulary words? | | | 27 | 82% |
| c. Did the teacher teach content-specific vocabulary words? | | | 22 | 67% |
| d. Did the teacher teach the vocabulary words by pronouncing words? | | | 24 | 73% |
| e. Did the teacher teach the vocabulary words by defining words? | | | 28 | 85% |
| f. Did the teacher teach the vocabulary words by identifying characteristics of the words? | | | 19 | 58% |
| g. Did the teacher teach the vocabulary words by generating examples of the words? | | | 28 | 85% |
| h. Did the teacher teach the vocabulary words by generating non-examples of the words? | | | 14 | 42% |
| i. Did the teacher use everyday language to explain the meaning of vocabulary words? | | | 32 | 97% |
| j. Did the teacher use the <i>Fruyer Model</i> to teach vocabulary? | | | 11 | 33% |

Source: Classroom Observations of Teachers Who Participated in TALA Grade 6 ELA Academies (N=41)

NOTE: Classroom observers were instructed to respond to each of the questions, and the reported N and % for the main question is out of the 41 observed sixth grade ELA classrooms. If the observer responded “yes” to the main question, then the sub-items under the main question were also answered. Observers were to “select all that apply” to all sub-items, and these percentages do not have to add to 100%.

Table J-5. Comprehension Instructional Routines Observed in Sixth Grade Classrooms of TALA Grade 6 ELA Teacher Participants

| Comprehension Instructional Routines | Observed Sixth Grade ELA Classrooms (N=41) | | If “Yes” to the Main Question (N=# responding “yes” to the corresponding main question) | |
|--|--|-----|---|-----|
| | N | % | N | % |
| 1. Did the lesson include comprehension instruction? | 27 | 66% | | |
| a. Did the teacher build upon the students’ <i>background knowledge</i> prior to reading the text? | | | 19 | 70% |
| b. Did the teacher use <i>Anticipation-Reaction Guides</i> ? | | | 5 | 19% |
| c. Did the teacher instruct the students to identify the <i>main ideas</i> of the text? | | | 16 | 59% |
| d. Did the teacher state the primary focus of the text? | | | 4 | 15% |
| e. Did the teacher connect the text to prior learning? | | | 7 | 26% |
| f. Did the teacher identify the main ideas of each paragraph? | | | 13 | 48% |
| g. Did the teacher record important details related to the main ideas? | | | 10 | 37% |
| h. Did the teacher compose a main idea of the section statement? | | | 1 | 4% |
| i. Did the teacher use the <i>Notes Log</i> when teaching about main ideas? | | | 2 | 7% |
| j. Did the teacher use the <i>Get the Gist</i> routine to find the main ideas of the paragraph? | | | 2 | 7% |
| k. Did the teacher instruct the students to <i>summarize</i> the text? | | | 7 | 26% |
| l. Did the teacher use the <i>Notes Log</i> when teaching about writing summaries? | | | 2 | 7% |

Source: Classroom Observations of Teachers Who Participated in TALA Grade 6 ELA Academies (N=41)

NOTE: Classroom observers were instructed to respond to each of the questions, and the reported N and % for the main question is out of the 41 observed sixth grade ELA classrooms. If the observer responded “yes” to the main question, then the sub-items under the main question were also answered. Observers were to “select all that apply” to all sub-items, and these percentages do not have to add to 100%.

Table J-6. Word Study Instructional Routines Observed in Sixth Grade Classrooms of TALA Grade 6 ELA Teacher Participants

| Word Study Instructional Routines | Observed Sixth Grade ELA Classrooms (N=41) | | If “Yes” to the Main Question (N=# responding “yes” to the corresponding main question) | |
|---|--|-----|---|-----|
| | N | % | N | % |
| 1. Did the lesson include word study? | 10 | 24% | | |
| a. Did the teacher instruct students to recognize syllable patterns? | | | 2 | 20% |
| b. Did the teacher teach closed syllable patterns? | | | 1 | 10% |
| c. Did the teacher teach open syllable patterns? | | | 0 | 0% |
| d. Did the teacher teach vowel-consonant-e (silent e) syllable patterns? | | | 1 | 10% |
| e. Did the teacher teach vowel- <i>r</i> syllable patterns? | | | 0 | 0% |
| f. Did the teacher teach vowel pair syllable patterns? | | | 0 | 0% |
| g. Did the teacher teach consonant- <i>le</i> syllable patterns? | | | 0 | 0% |
| h. Did the teacher teach about irregular words? | | | 1 | 10% |
| i. Did the teacher use direct instruction to teach the syllable patterns? | | | 2 | 20% |
| j. Did the teacher discuss the distinguishing feature of each syllable type to teach syllable patterns? | | | 0 | 0% |
| k. Did the teacher discuss the effect of the syllabic pattern on the vowel sound to teach syllable patterns? | | | 0 | 0% |
| l. Did the teacher practice the types of syllables (identifying/sounding out) to teach syllable patterns? | | | 1 | 10% |
| m. Did the teacher generalize the syllable patterns to new words to teach syllable patterns? | | | 0 | 0% |
| n. Did the teacher instruct students to recognize morphemes by using direct instruction of roots and affixes? | | | 3 | 30% |
| o. Did the teacher instruct students to recognize morphemes by generating examples of the morphemes? | | | 4 | 40% |
| p. Did the teacher instruct students to recognize morphemes by generating non-examples of the morphemes? | | | 0 | 0% |
| q. Did the teacher instruct students to recognize morphemes by generalizing the morphemes to new words? | | | 6 | 60% |
| r. Did the teacher instruct students to use the morphemic analysis routine to determine the meaning of words by finding the root of the word? | | | 6 | 60% |
| s. Did the teacher instruct students to use the morphemic analysis routine to determine the meaning of words by thinking about what the root means? | | | 6 | 60% |
| t. Did the teacher instruct students to use the morphemic analysis routine to determine the meaning of words by finding the prefixes and suffixes? | | | 4 | 40% |

| Word Study Instructional Routines | Observed Sixth Grade ELA Classrooms (N=41) | | If “Yes” to the Main Question (N=# responding “yes” to the corresponding main question) | |
|---|--|---|---|-----|
| | N | % | N | % |
| u. Did the teacher instruct students to use the morphemic analysis routine to determine the meaning of words by thinking about what the prefixes and suffixes mean? | | | 4 | 40% |
| v. Did the teacher instruct students to use the morphemic analysis routine to determine the meaning of words by combining the meaning of the word parts? | | | 4 | 40% |
| w. Did the teacher instruct students to use the morphemic analysis routine to determine the meaning of words by trying the possible meaning in a sentence? | | | 0 | 0% |

Source: Classroom Observations of Teachers Who Participated in TALA Grade 6 ELA Academies (N=41)
NOTE: Classroom observers were instructed to respond to each of the questions, and the reported N and % for the main question is out of the 41 observed sixth grade ELA classrooms. If the observer responded “yes” to the main question, then the sub-items under the main question were also answered. Observers were to “select all that apply” to all sub-items, and these percentages do not have to add to 100%.

Table J-7. Fluency Instructional Routines Observed in Sixth Grade Classrooms of TALA Grade 6 ELA Teacher Participants

| Fluency Instructional Routines | Observed Sixth Grade ELA Classrooms (N=41) | | If “Yes” to the Main Question (N=# responding “yes” to the corresponding main question) | |
|--|--|----|---|-----|
| | N | % | N | % |
| 1. Did the lesson include fluency instruction? | 2 | 5% | | |
| a. Did the teacher read the passage aloud? | | | 1 | 50% |
| b. Did students follow along and underline words to review? | | | 1 | 50% |
| c. Did the teacher and students repeat any underlined words? | | | 0 | 0% |
| d. Did the students provide the main idea of the passage? | | | 0 | 0% |
| e. Did the students engage in partner reading? | | | 1 | 50% |
| f. Did the students read a passage for one minute? | | | 0 | 0% |
| g. Did the student partner follow along and underline errors or skipped words? | | | 1 | 50% |
| h. Did the student partner circle the last word read? | | | 0 | 0% |
| i. Did the student partner conduct the error correction procedure? | | | 0 | 0% |
| j. Did the student partner calculate words correct per minute? | | | 0 | 0% |
| k. Did the students switch duties? | | | 0 | 0% |

Source: Classroom Observations of Teachers Who Participated in TALA Grade 6 ELA Academies (N=41)

NOTE: Classroom observers were instructed to respond to each of the questions, and the reported N and % for the main question is out of the 41 observed sixth grade ELA classrooms. If the observer responded “yes” to the main question, then the sub-items under the main question were also answered. Observers were to “select all that apply” to all sub-items, and these percentages do not have to add to 100%.

Table J-8. Inferential Comprehension Instructional Routines Observed in Sixth Grade Classrooms of TALA Grade 6 ELA Teacher Participants

| Inferential Comprehension Instructional Routines | Observed Sixth Grade ELA Classrooms (N=41) | | If “Yes” to the Main Question (N=# responding “yes” to the corresponding main question) | |
|---|--|-----|---|-----|
| | N | % | N | % |
| 1. Did the lesson include monitoring comprehension? | 5 | 12% | | |
| a. Did the teacher explain the purpose for generating questions while reading? | | | 1 | 20% |
| b. Did the teacher show students how to generate questions while reading? | | | 3 | 60% |
| c. Did the teacher instruct students to generate questions by reading the passage aloud? | | | 2 | 40% |
| d. Did the teacher instruct students to generate questions by discussing what the passage was about? | | | 2 | 40% |
| e. Did the teacher instruct students to generate questions by identifying a fact in the passage that was a who, what where, when, why, or how? | | | 1 | 20% |
| f. Did the teacher instruct students to generate questions by modeling how to turn a fact into a question? | | | 0 | 0% |
| g. Did the teacher instruct students to generate questions by checking the answer in the passage? | | | 0 | 0% |
| h. Did the teacher instruct students to generate questions by locating related facts from at least two different places in the text? | | | 0 | 0% |
| i. Did the teacher instruct students to generate questions by combining facts to make a question? | | | 0 | 0% |
| j. Did the teacher instruct students to generate questions by showing how to put information together to answer the question? | | | 0 | 0% |
| k. Did the teacher instruct students to generate questions by relating something in the passage to something the class studied, read, or experienced? | | | 2 | 40% |
| l. Did the teacher instruct students to generate questions by using stems to generate a question? | | | 1 | 20% |
| m. Did the teacher instruct students to generate questions by modeling how to combine information in the passage with the prior knowledge to answer the question? | | | 0 | 0% |
| n. Did students work as partners to generate questions? | | | 1 | 20% |
| o. Did students discuss questions and answers as partners? | | | 1 | 20% |
| p. Did students work independently to generate questions? | | | 0 | 0% |
| q. Did students discuss questions and answers with the whole class to generate questions? | | | 0 | 0% |
| r. Did the students use question cards? | | | 0 | 0% |

Source: Classroom Observations of Teachers Who Participated in TALA Grade 6 ELA Academies (N=41)

NOTE: Classroom observers were instructed to respond to each of the questions, and the reported N and % for the main question is out of the 41 observed sixth grade ELA classrooms. If the observer responded “yes” to the main question, then the sub-items under the main question were also answered. Observers were to “select all that apply” to all sub-items, and these percentages do not have to add to 100%.

Table J-9. Comprehension Teaching Behaviors Observed in Sixth Grade Classrooms of TALA Grade 6 Content Area Teacher Participants

| Comprehension Teaching Behaviors | Observed Sixth Grade Content Area Classrooms (N=37) | | | | | |
|---|---|-------------|--|-------------|------------------|---------------|
| | Teacher Models | | Teacher Explains, Reviews, or Provides Examples/Elaborations | | Student Practice | |
| | N (%) | Mean (s.d.) | N (%) | Mean (s.d.) | N (%) | Mean (s.d.) |
| 1. The teacher/student activates prior knowledge and/or previews text before reading (e.g., shares background information about the title, author, content, reviews relevant content from previous lessons, makes predictions, makes connections, addresses text features). | 0 (0%) | NA | 9 (24%) | 4.44 (3.17) | 8 (22%) | 4.75 (2.87) |
| 2. Explicit comprehension instruction that teaches students about text structure (compare-contrast, cause-effect, problem-solution, time-order, story grammar, etc.) | 0 (0%) | NA | 0 (0%) | NA | 0 (0%) | NA |
| 3. Explicit comprehension instruction that teaches students how to use strategies such as, main idea, summarizing, drawing conclusions, visualizing events, making predictions during and after reading, evaluating predictions, identifying fact vs. opinion, monitoring for comprehension, other. | 1 (3%) | 1.00 (NA) | 4 (11%) | 4.50 (4.51) | 2 (5%) | 8.50 (3.54) |
| 4. Explicit comprehension instruction that teaches students how to generate questions. | 0 (0%) | NA | 0 (0%) | NA | 4 (11%) | 5.25 (4.03) |
| 5. Explicit comprehension instruction that teaches text features (sub-heads, captions, charts, maps, graphs, pictures, sidebars, bold & italicized words) to interpret text. | 1 (3%) | 1.00 (NA) | 5 (14%) | 1.40 (0.55) | 2 (5%) | 1.50 (0.71) |
| 6. Teacher asks students to justify their responses (e.g., Teacher asks, “Why do you think/say that?” or, “How did you reach that conclusion?”). | | | | | 9 (24%) | 4.00 (2.96) |
| 7. Teacher asks questions based on material in the text that are beyond the literal level. | | | | | 13 (35%) | 8.08 (6.64) |
| 8. Teacher elaborates, clarifies, or links concepts during and after text reading. May be an elaboration of a student response. | | | | | 18 (49%) | 13.11 (10.35) |

Source: Classroom Observations of Teachers Who Participated in TALA Grade 6 Content Area Academies (N=37)

NOTE: Classroom observers were instructed to record the number of times each item was observed during each observation across the three types of instruction (teacher models, teacher explains, reviews, or provides examples/elaborations, and students practice). Therefore, the reported *N* represents the number of classrooms where this was observed, and the *mean* represents the average number of times each item was observed across all observations.

Table J-10. Vocabulary Teaching Behaviors Observed in Sixth Grade Classrooms of TALA Grade 6 Content Area Teacher Participants

| Vocabulary Teaching Behaviors | Observed Sixth Grade Content Area Classrooms (N=37) | |
|---|---|------------------|
| | N (%) | Mean (s.d.) |
| 1. The teacher provides an explanation and/or a definition or asks a student to read a definition. | 27 (73%) | 4.26 (3.07) |
| 2. The teacher provides: a) examples; b) contrasting examples; c) multiple meanings; d) immediate elaborations to students' responses. | 32 (86%) | 14.63 (10.64) |
| 3. The teacher uses visuals/pictures, gestures related to word meaning, facial expressions, or demonstrations to discuss/demonstrate word meanings. | 30 (81%) | 7.13 (7.01) |
| 4. The teacher teaches word learning strategies - using context clues, word parts, root meaning. | 5 (14%) | 1.20 (0.45) |
| 5. Students do or are asked to do something that requires knowledge of words (e.g., answer questions; define words; make sentences; find words based on clues; physically demonstrate meaning). | 32 (86%) | 14.94 (11.09) |
| 6. Students are given an opportunity to apply word learning strategies – using context clues, word parts, root meaning. | 13 (35%) | 2.15 (2.08) |

Source: Classroom Observations of Teachers Who Participated in TALA Grade 6 Content Area Academies (N=37)

NOTE: Classroom observers were instructed to record the number of times each item was observed during each observation. Therefore, the reported *N* represents the number of classrooms where this was observed, and the *mean* represents the average number of times each item was observed across all observations.

Table J-11. General Instructional Strategies Observed in Sixth Grade Classrooms of TALA Grade 6 Content Area Teacher Participants

| General Instructional Strategies | Observed Sixth Grade Content Area Classrooms (N=37) | | If “Yes” to the Main Question (N=# responding “yes” to the corresponding main question) | |
|--|---|-----|---|-----|
| | N | % | N | % |
| 1. Did the teacher adapt instruction during the lesson? | 14 | 38% | | |
| 2. Did the teacher foster student engagement? | 34 | 92% | | |
| 3. Did the teacher provide explicit instruction? | 27 | 73% | | |
| a. Teacher modeled the behavior | | | 5 | 19% |
| b. Teacher performed a think aloud | | | 5 | 19% |
| c. Students were guided by the teacher as they completed the task | | | 19 | 70% |
| d. Students completed the task in small steps at the same time as the teacher | | | 8 | 30% |
| e. Pairs of students practiced small steps of the task and provided feedback to each other | | | 5 | 19% |
| f. Students completed the task individually, in pairs, or in small groups | | | 19 | 70% |
| 4. Did the teacher provide feedback to the students? | 36 | 97% | | |
| a. Corrective | | | 27 | 75% |
| b. Positive | | | 32 | 89% |
| c. Negative | | | 7 | 19% |
| 5. Did the students work in groups? | 14 | 38% | | |
| a. Think-Pair-Share | | | 0 | 0% |
| b. Tell-Help-Check | | | 1 | 7% |
| c. Generate-Share | | | 7 | 50% |
| d. Partner Reading | | | 2 | 14% |
| e. Other | | | 6 | 43% |

Source: Classroom Observations of Teachers Who Participated in TALA Grade 6 Content Area Academies (N=37)
NOTE: Classroom observers were instructed to respond to each of the questions, and the reported N and % for the main questions (1-5) are out of the 37 observed sixth grade content area classrooms. If the observer responded “yes” to the main question, then the sub-items under the main question were also answered. Observers were to select all that apply” to all sub-items, and these percentages do not have to add to 100%.

Table J-12. Vocabulary Instructional Routines in Sixth Grade Classrooms of TALA Grade 6 Content Area Teacher Participants

| Vocabulary Instructional Routines | Observed Sixth Grade Content Area Classrooms (N=37) | | If “Yes” to the Main Question (N=# responding “yes” to the corresponding main question) | |
|--|---|-----|---|-----|
| | N | % | N | % |
| 1. Did the lesson include vocabulary instruction? | 28 | 76% | | |
| a. Did the teacher pre-teach vocabulary words? | | | 17 | 61% |
| b. Did the teacher teach academic vocabulary words? | | | 11 | 39% |
| c. Did the teacher teach content-specific vocabulary words? | | | 24 | 86% |
| d. Did the teacher teach the vocabulary words by pronouncing words? | | | 15 | 54% |
| e. Did the teacher teach the vocabulary words by defining words? | | | 18 | 64% |
| f. Did the teacher teach the vocabulary words by identifying characteristics of the words? | | | 15 | 54% |
| g. Did the teacher teach the vocabulary words by generating examples of the words? | | | 23 | 82% |
| h. Did the teacher teach the vocabulary words by generating non-examples of the words? | | | 9 | 32% |
| i. Did the teacher use everyday language to explain the meaning of vocabulary words? | | | 26 | 93% |
| j. Did the teacher use the <i>Fruyer Model</i> to teach vocabulary? | | | 6 | 21% |

Source: Classroom Observations of Teachers Who Participated in TALA Grade 6 Content Area Academies (N=37)
NOTE: Classroom observers were instructed to respond to each of the questions, and the reported N and % for the main question is out of the 37 observed sixth grade content area classrooms. If the observer responded “yes” to the main question, then the sub-items under the main question were also answered. Observers were to “select all that apply” to all sub-items, and these percentages do not have to add to 100%.

Table J-13. Comprehension Instructional Routines Observed in Sixth Grade Classrooms of TALA Grade 6 Content Area Teacher Participants

| Comprehension Instructional Routines | Observed Sixth Grade Content Area Classrooms (N=37) | | If “Yes” to the Main Question (N=# responding “yes” to the corresponding main question) | |
|--|---|-----|---|-----|
| | N | % | N | % |
| 1. Did the lesson include comprehension instruction? | 13 | 35% | | |
| a. Did the teacher build upon the students’ <i>background knowledge</i> prior to reading the text? | | | 11 | 85% |
| b. Did the teacher use <i>Anticipation-Reaction Guides</i> ? | | | 0 | 0% |
| c. Did the teacher instruct the students to identify the <i>main ideas</i> of the text? | | | 7 | 54% |
| d. Did the teacher state the primary focus of the text? | | | 3 | 23% |
| e. Did the teacher connect the text to prior learning? | | | 2 | 15% |
| f. Did the teacher identify the main ideas of each paragraph? | | | 4 | 31% |
| g. Did the teacher record important details related to the main ideas? | | | 4 | 31% |
| h. Did the teacher compose a main idea of the section statement? | | | 3 | 23% |
| i. Did the teacher use the <i>Notes Log</i> when teaching about main ideas? | | | 0 | 0% |
| j. Did the teacher use the <i>Get the Gist</i> routine to find the main ideas of the paragraph? | | | 0 | 0% |
| k. Did the teacher instruct the students to <i>summarize</i> the text? | | | 3 | 23% |
| l. Did the teacher use the <i>Notes Log</i> when teaching about writing summaries? | | | 1 | 8% |

Source: Classroom Observations of Teachers Who Participated in TALA Grade 6 Content Area Academies (N=37)

NOTE: Classroom observers were instructed to respond to each of the questions, and the reported N and % for the main question is out of the 37 observed sixth grade content area classrooms. If the observer responded “yes” to the main question, then the sub-items under the main question were also answered. Observers were to “select all that apply” to all sub-items, and these percentages do not have to add to 100%.

Table J-14. Word Study Instructional Routines Observed in Sixth Grade Classrooms of TALA Grade 6 Content Area Teacher Participants

| Word Study Instructional Routines | Observed Sixth Grade Content Area Classrooms (N=37) | | If “Yes” to the Main Question (N=# responding “yes” to the corresponding main question) | |
|---|---|-----|---|-----|
| | N | % | N | % |
| 1. Did the lesson include word study? | 8 | 22% | | |
| a. Did the teacher instruct students to recognize syllable patterns? | | | 1 | 13% |
| b. Did the teacher teach closed syllable patterns? | | | 0 | 0% |
| c. Did the teacher teach open syllable patterns? | | | 0 | 0% |
| d. Did the teacher teach vowel-consonant- <i>e</i> (silent <i>e</i>) syllable patterns? | | | 0 | 0% |
| e. Did the teacher teach vowel- <i>r</i> syllable patterns? | | | 0 | 0% |
| f. Did the teacher teach vowel pair syllable patterns? | | | 0 | 0% |
| g. Did the teacher teach consonant- <i>le</i> syllable patterns? | | | 0 | 0% |
| h. Did the teacher teach about irregular words? | | | 0 | 0% |
| i. Did the teacher use direct instruction to teach the syllable patterns? | | | 0 | 0% |
| j. Did the teacher discuss the distinguishing feature of each syllable type to teach syllable patterns? | | | 0 | 0% |
| k. Did the teacher discuss the effect of the syllabic pattern on the vowel sound to teach syllable patterns? | | | 0 | 0% |
| l. Did the teacher practice the types of syllables (identifying/sounding out) to teach syllable patterns? | | | 1 | 13% |
| m. Did the teacher generalize the syllable patterns to new words to teach syllable patterns? | | | 0 | 0% |
| n. Did the teacher instruct students to recognize morphemes by using direct instruction of roots and affixes? | | | 3 | 38% |
| o. Did the teacher instruct students to recognize morphemes by generating examples of the morphemes? | | | 5 | 63% |
| p. Did the teacher instruct students to recognize morphemes by generating non-examples of the morphemes? | | | 1 | 13% |
| q. Did the teacher instruct students to recognize morphemes by generalizing the morphemes to new words? | | | 5 | 63% |
| r. Did the teacher instruct students to use the morphemic analysis routine to determine the meaning of words by finding the root of the word? | | | 5 | 63% |
| s. Did the teacher instruct students to use the morphemic analysis routine to determine the meaning of words by thinking about what the root means? | | | 7 | 88% |
| t. Did the teacher instruct students to use the morphemic analysis routine to determine the meaning of words by finding the prefixes and suffixes? | | | 4 | 50% |
| u. Did the teacher instruct students to use the morphemic analysis routine to determine the meaning of words by thinking about what the prefixes and suffixes mean? | | | 4 | 50% |
| v. Did the teacher instruct students to use the morphemic analysis routine to determine the meaning of words by combining the meaning of the word parts? | | | 4 | 50% |
| w. Did the teacher instruct students to use the morphemic analysis routine to determine the meaning of words by trying the possible meaning in a sentence? | | | 0 | 0% |

Source: Classroom Observations of Teachers Who Participated in TALA Grade 6 Content Area Academies (N=37)

NOTE: Classroom observers were instructed to respond to each of the questions, and the reported N and % for the main question is out of the 37 observed sixth grade content area classrooms. If the observer responded “yes” to the main question, then the sub-items under the main question were also answered. Observers were to “select all that apply” to all sub-items, and these percentages do not have to add to 100%.

Table J-15. Fluency Instructional Routines Observed in Sixth Grade Classrooms of TALA Grade 6 Content Area Teacher Participants

| Fluency Instructional Routines | Observed Sixth Grade Content Area Classrooms (N=37) | | If “Yes” to the Main Question (N=# responding “yes” to the corresponding main question) | |
|--|---|----|---|------|
| | N | % | N | % |
| 1. Did the lesson include fluency instruction? | 1 | 3% | | |
| a. Did the teacher read the passage aloud? | | | 0 | 0% |
| b. Did students follow along and underline words to review? | | | 0 | 0% |
| c. Did the teacher and students repeat any underlined words? | | | 0 | 0% |
| d. Did the students provide the main idea of the passage? | | | 0 | 0% |
| e. Did the students engage in partner reading? | | | 1 | 100% |
| f. Did the students read a passage for one minute? | | | 1 | 100% |
| g. Did the student partner follow along and underline errors or skipped words? | | | 0 | 0% |
| h. Did the student partner circle the last word read? | | | 0 | 0% |
| i. Did the student partner conduct the error correction procedure? | | | 0 | 0% |
| j. Did the student partner calculate words correct per minute? | | | 0 | 0% |
| k. Did the students switch duties? | | | 1 | 100% |

Source: Classroom Observations of Teachers Who Participated in TALA Grade 6 Content Area Academies (N=37)
NOTE: Classroom observers were instructed to respond to each of the questions, and the reported N and % for the main question is out of the 37 observed sixth grade content area classrooms. If the observer responded “yes” to the main question, then the sub-items under the main question were also answered. Observers were to “select all that apply” to all sub-items, and these percentages do not have to add to 100%.

Table J-16. Inferential Comprehension Instructional Routines Observed in Sixth Grade Classrooms of TALA Grade 6 Content Area Teacher Participants

| Inferential Comprehension Instructional Routines | Observed Sixth Grade Content Area Classrooms (N=37) | | If “Yes” to the Main Question (N=# responding “yes” to the corresponding main question) | |
|---|---|----|---|-----|
| | N | % | N | % |
| 1. Did the lesson include monitoring comprehension? | 2 | 5% | | |
| a. Did the teacher explain the purpose for generating questions while reading? | | | 1 | 50% |
| b. Did the teacher show students how to generate questions while reading? | | | 1 | 50% |
| c. Did the teacher instruct students to generate questions by reading the passage aloud? | | | 0 | 0% |
| d. Did the teacher instruct students to generate questions by discussing what the passage was about? | | | 0 | 0% |
| e. Did the teacher instruct students to generate questions by identifying a fact in the passage that was a who, what where, when, why, or how? | | | 0 | 0% |
| f. Did the teacher instruct students to generate questions by modeling how to turn a fact into a question? | | | 1 | 50% |
| g. Did the teacher instruct students to generate questions by checking the answer in the passage? | | | 1 | 50% |
| h. Did the teacher instruct students to generate questions by locating related facts from at least two different places in the text? | | | 0 | 0% |
| i. Did the teacher instruct students to generate questions by combining facts to make a question? | | | 1 | 50% |
| j. Did the teacher instruct students to generate questions by showing how to put information together to answer the question? | | | 1 | 50% |
| k. Did the teacher instruct students to generate questions by relating something in the passage to something the class studied, read, or experienced? | | | 1 | 50% |
| l. Did the teacher instruct students to generate questions by using stems to generate a question? | | | 0 | 0% |
| m. Did the teacher instruct students to generate questions by modeling how to combine information in the passage with the prior knowledge to answer the question? | | | 1 | 50% |
| n. Did students work as partners to generate questions? | | | 1 | 50% |
| o. Did students discuss questions and answers as partners? | | | 1 | 50% |
| p. Did students work independently to generate questions? | | | 1 | 50% |
| q. Did students discuss questions and answers with the whole class to generate questions? | | | 1 | 50% |
| r. Did the students use question cards? | | | 0 | 0% |

Source: Classroom Observations of Teachers Who Participated in TALA Grade 6 Content Area Academies (N=37)
NOTE: Classroom observers were instructed to respond to each of the questions, and the reported N and % for the main question is out of the 37 observed sixth grade content area classrooms. If the observer responded “yes” to the main question, then the sub-items under the main question were also answered. Observers were to “select all that apply” to all sub-items, and these percentages do not have to add to 100%.

Appendix K: Level of TALA Implementation

Appendix K: Level of TALA Implementation

The TALA instructional routines were designed to provide evidence-based techniques for teaching reading. After attending TALA, teachers would have a variety of routines to add to their teaching techniques. Teachers from campuses with an academically unacceptable rating in reading were required to attend TALA (n=21) and all other campuses were invited to attend. One of the challenges for the evaluation team is to identify what comprises a high level of TALA implementation. Merely attending an ELA or Content Area Academy is not indicative of high or low implementation.

Data Sources⁶¹

To develop a typology, the evaluation team turned to the fidelity of implementation literature, particularly those involving response to intervention (RTI). There are several approaches that can be used to assess fidelity (Roach & Elliott, 2008):

- Self report data - The person who is delivering the intervention keeps a log or completes a checklist which records the critical components of the intervention. In the TALA Teacher Participant Survey, teachers are asked to report the extent to which they implemented the TALA strategies and routines on a scale from never to frequently.
- Extant Data/Products - Data and artifacts/documentation of the implementation of the intervention are analyzed to determine if critical components were followed. The teachers are required to complete an online follow-up to receive the second part of their stipends.
- Observations - Observations are conducted of the delivery of the intervention, checking for the presence or absence and accuracy of implementation and critical intervention components. Classroom observations were conducted, including whether or not TALA routines were implemented.

Although the purpose is not to measure the fidelity of TALA implementation, the evaluation team believes that the use of these data sources can help to measure the campus level of TALA implementation.

To answer the outcome evaluation questions, the evaluation team created a school level of TALA implementation that is comprised of several variables:

- Percent of sixth grade teachers who attended TALA at the campus/school
- Percent of TALA participants from each school/campus who completed the Online Follow-up Documentation
- Teacher self-reported implementation of the TALA instructional routines and strategies in the TALA Teacher Participant Survey.
- Campus support as reported in the Administrator Survey and TALA Teacher Participant Survey

⁶¹ Initially classroom observation data was proposed as a data source. However, it would dramatically reduce the number of campuses used to develop the typology.

Each survey item has a total number of possible points. In the case of a yes/no response, the maximum number of points that could be received is one. For an item that used a rating scale (e.g., ranging from never to frequently), the maximum number of points will be based on the number of levels (either 3 or 4).

To develop the level of implementation typology, threshold analysis was used. Threshold analysis tries to answer the question of “How good is good enough?” It answers the question of “is an object meeting a set criteria?” by rating the object based on whether they score above or below a pre-established threshold. The method is simple. By scoring a number of implementation features – which is based on the identification of “tipping points” in expected performance – one can add up those scores and arrive at a composite figure for how well each campus is implementing TALA. The prerequisite to employing this methodology is knowledge of what constitutes a high implementing TALA campus. Using the four variables listed above and the total possible points that one could receive for each element in the variable allows us to identify what constitutes a high implementing TALA campus.

Tables K-1 and K-2 illustrate the survey items that comprise the teacher level of TALA implementation for ELA and Content area teachers, the coding of the responses, and the total possible points that could be obtained on each item. In addition, the total possible points for teacher level of TALA implementation scale scores are presented.

**Table K-1. ELA Teacher - TALA Level of Implementation
(77 TOTAL Possible Points)**

| Survey Item | Coding of Response | Total Possible Points |
|---|--|-----------------------|
| Did you complete the TALA practicum follow-up with online documentation? | 0 points for No 1 point for Yes | 1 |
| To what extent are you incorporating what you learned at the TALA training into your instruction? | 0 points for Not at All 1 point for Very Little 2 points for To Some Degree 3 points for Quite a Bit 4 points for A Great Deal | 4 |
| Implementation of TALA Instructional Routines (40 possible points) | | |
| Selecting words | 0 points for Never 1 point for Rarely 2 points for Sometimes 3 points for Occasionally 4 points for Frequently | 4 |
| Pronouncing words | 0 points for Never 1 point for Rarely 2 points for Sometimes 3 points for Occasionally 4 points for Frequently | 4 |
| Defining words | 0 points for Never 1 point for Rarely 2 points for Sometimes 3 points for Occasionally 4 points for Frequently | 4 |
| Generating examples and nonexamples | 0 points for Never 1 point for Rarely 2 points for Sometimes 3 points for Occasionally 4 points for Frequently | 4 |
| Building background knowledge | 0 points for Never 1 point for Rarely 2 points for Sometimes 3 points for Occasionally 4 points for Frequently | 4 |
| Identifying main ideas in text | 0 points for Never 1 point for Rarely 2 points for Sometimes 3 points for Occasionally 4 points for Frequently | 4 |
| Writing summaries | 0 points for Never 1 point for Rarely 2 points for Sometimes 3 points for Occasionally 4 points for Frequently | 4 |
| Identifying syllable structures | 0 points for Never 1 point for Rarely 2 points for Sometimes 3 points for Occasionally 4 points for Frequently | 4 |
| Conducting morphemic analysis | 0 points for Never 1 point for Rarely 2 points for Sometimes 3 points for Occasionally 4 points for Frequently | 4 |

| Survey Item | Coding of Response | Total Possible Points |
|---|--|-----------------------|
| Generating level I, II, and III questions | 0 points for Never 1 point for Rarely 2 points for Sometimes 3 points for Occasionally 4 points for Frequently | 4 |
| Implementation of TALA Strategies (32 possible points) | | |
| Adapt instruction to structure learning opportunities for all students | 0 points for Never 1 point for Rarely 2 points for Sometimes 3 points for Occasionally 4 points for Frequently | 4 |
| Foster student engagement | 0 points for Never 1 point for Rarely 2 points for Sometimes 3 points for Occasionally 4 points for Frequently | 4 |
| Group or pair students | 0 points for Never 1 point for Rarely 2 points for Sometimes 3 points for Occasionally 4 points for Frequently | 4 |
| Facilitate partner reading | 0 points for Never 1 point for Rarely 2 points for Sometimes 3 points for Occasionally 4 points for Frequently | 4 |
| Actively involve students (i.e., Think-Pair-Share, Tell-Help-Check, Generate-Share) | 0 points for Never 1 point for Rarely 2 points for Sometimes 3 points for Occasionally 4 points for Frequently | 4 |
| Provide explicit instruction using scaffolding (i.e., I Do, WE Do, YOU Do) | 0 points for Never 1 point for Rarely 2 points for Sometimes 3 points for Occasionally 4 points for Frequently | 4 |
| Administer the Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment (TMSFA) | 0 points for Never 1 point for Rarely 2 points for Sometimes 3 points for Occasionally 4 points for Frequently | 4 |
| Interpret the results of the Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment (TMSFA) | 0 points for Never 1 point for Rarely 2 points for Sometimes 3 points for Occasionally 4 points for Frequently | 4 |

The ICF evaluation team created a level of implementation for each ELA teacher, which would then be aggregated at the school/campus level.

**Table K-2. Content Area Teacher - TALA Level of Implementation
(57 TOTAL Possible Points)**

| Survey Item | Coding of Response | Total Possible Points |
|---|--|-----------------------|
| Did you complete the TALA practicum follow-up with online documentation? | 0 points for No 1 point for Yes | 1 |
| To what extent are you incorporating what you learned at the TALA training into your instruction? | 0 points for Not at All 1 point for Very Little 2 points for To Some Degree 3 points for Quite a Bit 4 points for A Great Deal | 4 |
| Implementation of TALA Instructional Routines (28 possible points) | | |
| Selecting words | 0 points for Never 1 point for Rarely 2 points for Sometimes 3 points for Occasionally 4 points for Frequently | 4 |
| Pronouncing words | 0 points for Never 1 point for Rarely 2 points for Sometimes 3 points for Occasionally 4 points for Frequently | 4 |
| Defining words | 0 points for Never 1 point for Rarely 2 points for Sometimes 3 points for Occasionally 4 points for Frequently | 4 |
| Generating examples and nonexamples | 0 points for Never 1 point for Rarely 2 points for Sometimes 3 points for Occasionally 4 points for Frequently | 4 |
| Building background knowledge | 0 points for Never 1 point for Rarely 2 points for Sometimes 3 points for Occasionally 4 points for Frequently | 4 |
| Identifying main ideas in text | 0 points for Never 1 point for Rarely 2 points for Sometimes 3 points for Occasionally 4 points for Frequently | 4 |
| Writing summaries | 0 points for Never 1 point for Rarely 2 points for Sometimes 3 points for Occasionally 4 points for Frequently | 4 |
| Implementation of TALA Strategies (24 possible points) | | |
| Adapt instruction to structure learning opportunities for all students | 0 points for Never 1 point for Rarely 2 points for Sometimes 3 points for Occasionally 4 points for Frequently | 4 |

| Survey Item | Coding of Response | Total Possible Points |
|---|--|-----------------------|
| Foster student engagement | 0 points for Never 1 point for Rarely 2 points for Sometimes 3 points for Occasionally 4 points for Frequently | 4 |
| Group or pair students | 0 points for Never 1 point for Rarely 2 points for Sometimes 3 points for Occasionally 4 points for Frequently | 4 |
| Facilitate partner reading | 0 points for Never 1 point for Rarely 2 points for Sometimes 3 points for Occasionally 4 points for Frequently | 4 |
| Actively involve students (i.e., Think-Pair-Share, Tell-Help-Check, Generate-Share) | 0 points for Never 1 point for Rarely 2 points for Sometimes 3 points for Occasionally 4 points for Frequently | 4 |
| Provide explicit instruction using scaffolding (i.e., I Do, WE Do, YOU Do) | 0 points for Never 1 point for Rarely 2 points for Sometimes 3 points for Occasionally 4 points for Frequently | 4 |

The evaluation team created a level of implementation for each content area teacher, which would then be aggregated at the school/campus level.

The evaluation team also created a campus support variable using administrator and teacher survey data. Table K-3 illustrates the survey items that comprise the campus support variable, the coding of the responses, and the total possible points that could be obtained on each item. In addition, the total possible points for campus support scale scores are presented.

**Table K-3. Campus Support
(61 TOTAL Possible Points)**

| Survey Item | Coding of Response | Total Possible Points |
|--|--|-----------------------|
| Teacher reported Campus Support (42 possible points)⁶² | | |
| Support from administrators | 0 points for Not Planned 1 point for In Development 2 points for Partially Implemented 3 points for Fully Implemented | 3 |
| Assessment of students in reading | 0 points for Not Planned 1 point for In Development 2 points for Partially Implemented 3 points for Fully Implemented | 3 |
| Creation of literacy intervention plans | 0 points for Not Planned 1 point for In Development 2 points for Partially Implemented 3 points for Fully Implemented | 3 |
| Improvement of school climate | 0 points for Not Planned 1 point for In Development 2 points for Partially Implemented 3 points for Fully Implemented | 3 |
| Strengthening of core instructional programs | 0 points for Not Planned 1 point for In Development 2 points for Partially Implemented 3 points for Fully Implemented | 3 |
| Provision of teacher professional development | 0 points for Not Planned 1 point for In Development 2 points for Partially Implemented 3 points for Fully Implemented | 3 |
| How often met with ELA/Reading Teachers | 0 points for Never 1 point for Once or Twice 2 points for About Once a Month 3 points for More than Once a Month | 3 |
| How often met with Mathematics Teachers | 0 points for Never 1 point for Once or Twice 2 points for About Once a Month 3 points for More than Once a Month | 3 |
| How often met with Science Teachers | 0 points for Never 1 point for Once or Twice 2 points for About Once a Month 3 points for More than Once a Month | 3 |
| How often met with Social Studies Teachers | 0 points for Never 1 point for Once or Twice 2 points for About Once a Month 3 points for More than Once a Month | 3 |
| How often met with Other Teachers | 0 points for Never 1 point for Once or Twice 2 points for About Once a Month 3 points for More than Once a Month | 3 |
| How often met with Campus Administrators | 0 points for Never 1 point for Once or Twice 2 points for About Once a Month 3 points for More than Once a Month | 3 |

⁶² The evaluation team created a reported campus support for each teacher, which would then be aggregated at the school/campus level.

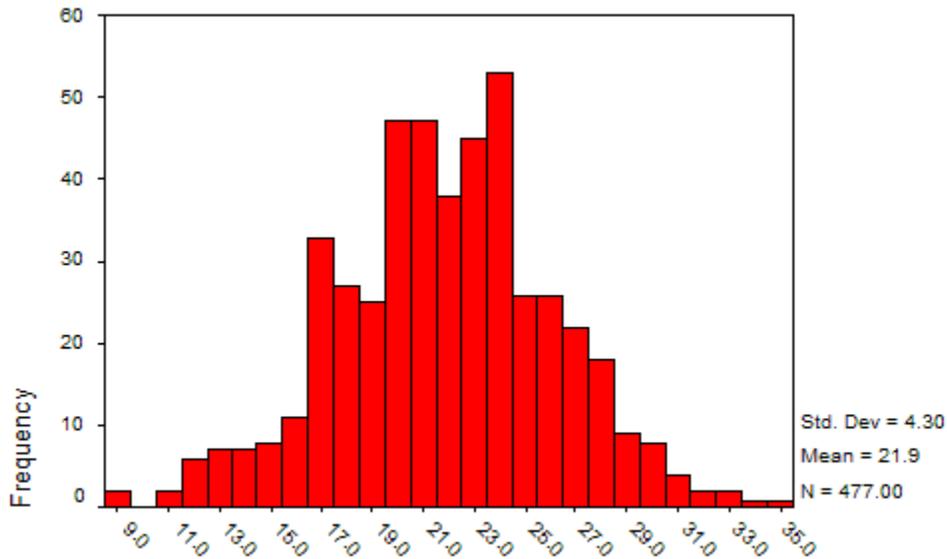
| Survey Item | Coding of Response | Total Possible Points |
|---|--|-----------------------|
| How often met with Curriculum Specialists | 0 points for Never 1 point for Once or Twice 2 points for About Once a Month 3 points for More than Once a Month | 3 |
| How often met with Other Administrators | 0 points for Never 1 point for Once or Twice 2 points for About Once a Month 3 points for More than Once a Month | 3 |
| Administrator reported Campus Support (19 possible points) | | |
| Have you participated in the Administrator Overview Training? | 0 points for No 1 point for Yes | 1 |
| Support from administrators | 0 points for Not Planned 1 point for In Development 2 points for Partially Implemented 3 points for Fully Implemented | 3 |
| Assessment of students in reading | 0 points for Not Planned 1 point for In Development 2 points for Partially Implemented 3 points for Fully Implemented | 3 |
| Creation of literacy intervention plans | 0 points for Not Planned 1 point for In Development 2 points for Partially Implemented 3 points for Fully Implemented | 3 |
| Improvement of school climate | 0 points for Not Planned 1 point for In Development 2 points for Partially Implemented 3 points for Fully Implemented | 3 |
| Strengthening of core instructional programs | 0 points for Not Planned 1 point for In Development 2 points for Partially Implemented 3 points for Fully Implemented | 3 |
| Provision of teacher professional development | 0 points for Not Planned 1 point for In Development 2 points for Partially Implemented 3 points for Fully Implemented | 3 |

To minimize the overrepresentation of one data source (some data sources had more elements than others), all data sources were placed on a 10-point scale. The points for each level of implementation scale were summed (adding the points for each item representing the scale), and divided by the total number of points possible per scale, and multiplied by 10. The data sources in percent were converted to a 10-point scale by multiplying the percent by .10. Once the implementation scores were scaled, they were summed. This resulted in a maximum level of implementation score of 40 points.

To create a high level of implementation, medium level of implementation, and a low level of implementation, the distribution of scores was divided into thirds. The graphical display of data illustrated the potential cut scores for low, medium, and high implementation (see figure K-1). Upon consultation with TEA staff, the level of implementation was classified as follows:

- Scores 25 and higher = high implementers
- Scores below 20 = low implementers
- Every score in between = medium implementers

Figure K-1. Distribution of Level of Implementation Scale Score



When the four sources of data were merged, there were 1,651 campuses. Of those campuses, only 477 campuses had complete data across all four variables.⁶³ The classification resulted in 105 high implementing campuses, 224 medium implementing campuses, and 148 low implementing campuses.

Table K-4 illustrates the distribution of scores across the three campus types.

Table K-4. Distribution of Scores

| | % Grade 6 Teachers Who Attended TALA | % of TALA Attendees Who Completed online Follow-up | Level of Teacher Implementation in % | Level of Campus Support in % | Level of Implementation Score (Out of 40 Points) |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Low Implementing | 34.5% | 46.5% | 66.3% | 22.6% | 17 |
| Medium Implementing | 44.1% | 66.7% | 75.8% | 37.6% | 22.4 |
| High Implementing | 63.1% | 78.7% | 81.4% | 53.3% | 27.7 |

⁶³ The evaluation team decided to keep all four data sources and have a smaller sample of schools since the data sources represent key elements of campus level of implementation.

Appendix L: Propensity Score Matching Process and Results

Appendix L: Propensity Score Matching Process and Results

From the 105 schools categorized as high implementing TALA campuses, 101 (68 middle, 26 high, and 6 schools serving multiple grades)⁶⁴ were matched to non-participating schools serving sixth graders on the following school variables: percent of sixth grade students eligible for the free or reduced-price lunch program, percent of sixth grade Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students, sixth grade enrollment, percent of sixth grade students passing TAKS reading and math, school size, locality of school, campus type, and instructional type.

Specifically, schools were exactly matched on instructional type (Regular, Alternative, DAEP), charter type (charter, not a charter school), urbanicity type (rural, suburban, urban) and school enrollment type. The urbanicity variable was created by grouping the various 'community type' categories as those are classified by TEA into the following three categories: (a) Suburban (Major Metropolitan Suburban; Other Central City Suburban); (b) Urban (Major Urban); and (c) Rural (included Independent Town, Other Central City, Non-Metropolitan, and Rural). Moreover, based on school size, schools were grouped into the following five categories: 1) very small schools with fewer than 300 students, 2) small schools with 300-599 students, medium sized schools (600-899 students), 4) large schools (900-1,999 students), and 5) very large schools with 2,000 or more students.

The majority of the high implementing TALA schools are regular instructional type (98%), small sized sites (67%). On average, 28% of their student populations are in sixth grade. The pool of non-participating schools (n=680) included all school that did not send sixth grade teachers to the TALA trainings.

1-to-1 nearest neighbor match on a logistic-regression based propensity score within caliper restrictions was followed here through a precise algorithm applied through a computer-based macro, called *MatchIt* (Ho, Imai, King, & Stuart, 2007). The default nearest neighbor matching method in *MatchIt* is "greedy" matching, where the closest control match for each treated unit is chosen one at a time. The procedure chooses one control case that is closest to the treated case on a 'distance' measure (by default it is the logit) without replacement. The number of standard deviations of the distance measure within which to draw control cases was set to 0.25.

Table L-1 summarizes the characteristics of the resulted matched schools. The highlighted variables are the ones on which schools were exact matched. The balance results also indicate that in the resulting matches, there were no systematic or significant (mean) differences between the matched pairs of schools (matched pairs have a standardized mean difference on the key matching variables below 0.25).

⁶⁴ M T Enterprise HS and Haynes school were not matched in absence of their baseline information in the 2007-08 AEIS database

Table L-1. Summary of Balance for Matched Data

| Matching Variables – 6th Grade | TALA Schools | Non-TALA Schools | Std. Mean Difference |
|--------------------------------|--------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Economically Disadvantaged | 60% | 56.5% | 0.24 |
| LEP | 3.3% | 2.6% | 0.03 |
| Enrollment | 28.6% | 29.4% | 0.17 |
| Percent Passed TAKS Math | 82% | 82.4% | 0.03 |
| Percent Passed TAKS Reading | 93.4% | 94.3% | 0.15 |
| School Type | | | |
| Elementary School | 26.7% | 26.7% | 0.00 |
| Middle School | 67.3% | 67.3% | 0.00 |
| Serving multiple grades | 5.9% | 5.9% | 0.00 |
| Instructional Type | | | |
| Regular | 98% | 98% | 0.00 |
| Locality | | | |
| Rural | 43.6% | 43.6% | 0.00 |
| Suburban | 38.6% | 38.6% | 0.00 |
| Urban | 14% | 14% | 0.00 |
| School Size | | | |
| Very Small | 21.8% | 21.8% | 0.00 |
| Small | 35.6 | 35.6 | |
| Medium | 24.8% | 24.8% | 0.00 |
| Large | 17.8% | 17.8% | 0.00 |
| Very Large | - | - | |