

Improving Goal Setting and Curriculum Development in Response to Intervention (RtI)

Improving Goal Setting and Curriculum Development in Response to Intervention (RtI):
Guided Collaboration Between General Education Teachers and Academic Intervention
Specialists.

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Abstract:

Response to intervention (RtI) is intended to support educational institutions and classroom educators in providing additional, targeted instruction to struggling students. Many schools across the country have adopted this framework as a means to close the achievement gap (Hernandez Finch, 2012; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2007). However, if interventions are not planned according to individual student needs and followed through consistently in the classroom and small group intervention settings, students can remain stuck in cycles of intervention without making needed growth (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2007; Fountas & Pinell, 2012).

This action research project sought to explore the effects of maximizing the collaboration between ABC school's general education teachers and Tribeca's academic intervention specialists in order to develop targeted individual growth plans and hopefully decrease the amount of intervention cycles students participate in before making adequate reading growth. The components of this action research project intervention were a guided initial collaborative meeting to analyze data and design individual Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) growth plans, two progress monitoring meetings, and a culminating data analysis meeting after the end of cycle DRA administration. Data collection included pre-interviews and surveys, DRA data, progress monitoring data, a researcher reflection journal, end of cycle DRA data, and post interview and survey data.

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As a result of this intervention teachers' collaborative practices and sense of efficacy increased when provided with facilitated time to meet. In addition, participants were able to make specific changes to intervention practices based on sharing progress monitoring data. These changes led to successful growth in reading skills for their students.

Introduction and Context

Instruction for Transformation (IFT), a charter management organization in Oakland, CA has partnered with Tribeca, in particular our Unconditional Education program, to provide response to intervention (RtI) services to the cluster of IFT schools located in the Fruitvale and Elmhurst neighborhoods. The researcher's role is as Unconditional Education Coach at ABC school, a public K-5 elementary school in Oakland, California that is part of the Instruction for Transformation charter management organization. It is located at the heart of the Fruitvale district and was established in 2009, eight years after the beginning of the small schools movement in 2001. The enrollment at ABC school during the 2015-2016 school year, was 421 students in grades kindergarten through fifth.

Student demographics at ABC are very diverse but the two main populations are African American and Latino students. Approximately 55% of the student population identifies as Latino, 22% are African American, and the remaining students represent a wide variety of ethnicities as well as students of mixed heritage. Ninety-seven percent of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch.

Tribeca's Unconditional Education program (UE) offers partner schools a multi-tiered intervention approach. Tribeca's multi-tiered model strives to serve approximately 80% of the school's students through Tier 1 interventions, 15% through Tier 2, and 5% in Tier 3, our most intensive level of service. Currently there are 31 students with IEPs (Individualized Education Plans) receiving Tier 3 services and approximately 98 students receiving Tier 2 support in either the Academic, Social Emotional, or Behavioral strands. It

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is worth noting that a number of students are receiving intervention in more than one strand.

The proposed action research project fell within the scope of the researcher's role as Unconditional Education Coach for ABC school. The Unconditional Education Coach is primarily responsible for coordinating a multi-tiered system of intervention for the school. This involves designing and coordinating implementation of Tier 1 (schoolwide) Positive Behavior Intervention Supports aimed at developing a culture and climate that is reflective of the school vision. The Coach also supervises and works closely with ABC's Family Resource Coordinator to provide services to parents and families. Lastly, and most relevant to this action research project, the UE Coach manages the team that provides Tier 3 special education and Tier 2 intervention services through the COST (Coordination of Services Team). The school's Coordination of Services Team, which includes all Tribeca providers and the school's administration, makes decisions about which students receive interventions, the type of intervention they will receive, and also makes a determination to move forward with assessment for special education qualifications.

Problem of Practice

This action research project focused on increasing the impact of Tier 2 reading interventions for first grade students. Students enter Tier 2 reading intervention groups based on the scores achieved on the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). If a student falls below basic (BB) or far below basic (FBB) for their grade level, the teachers in the grade level team, administrators, and the Tribeca intervention team recommend the student be a part of small group reading intervention. The goal is to accelerate students' growth in one year in order to increase their chances of catching up to grade level peers.

A cycle of intervention at ABC school lasts between 8-10 weeks and reading intervention is provided by Tribeca's academic intervention specialists. ABC's general education teachers use Guided Reading in the classroom, which organizes small group instruction based on students' DRA scores. In theory, this means a student who is struggling to achieve the necessary discreet skills to read at grade level can receive both Tier 1 and Tier 2 levels of intervention and quickly catch up to their peers (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2007; Fountas & Pinell, 2012).

When making determinations about the effectiveness of Tier 2 intervention, it is important to be able to say affirmatively that interventions by the general education teacher and the interventionist are aligned (Toste, J.R., et.al, 2014; Al Otaiba & Fuchs, 2006). This alignment is presently not in place at the school. There is some minimal weekly or bi-weekly collaboration between Tribeca academic interventionists and ABC general education teachers. In addition, interventionists try to sit in on grade level meetings to

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analyze data held at the end of each cycle. However, we are not currently incorporating an in depth analysis of the specific skills needed by each student to make a jump on the DRA that will move them to grade level performance. For this action research project collaboration refers to joint analysis of assessment results, planning instruction, and curriculum development. Currently, there is time set aside weekly for grade level general education teachers to work together for at least one to two hours. Collaboration between the interventionists and general education teachers has not been formalized, does not have a set aside time, and is inconsistent across grade levels.

Students with below grade level reading scores at ABC school are currently spending 3 or more cycles in Tier 2 reading intervention without showing adequate growth on the DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment). Having the same students repeat cycles of intervention means fewer students being served. General education teachers and academic interventionists are not maximizing their potential of collaborating using DRA and intervention data to set individual goals and develop instructional strategies for students in Tier 2 reading intervention. Sharing information and collaborating on individualized student plans could reduce the amount of intervention cycles needed for students to show growth.

The following research guided the development of my intervention to address the lack of individually student-centered, consistent, collaboration between Tribeca academic interventionists and ABC school's general education teachers.

Literature Review

Introduction

Providing equity in education is one of the cornerstones of Instruction for Transformation's theory of action in opening and managing community charter schools in the Fruitvale area of Oakland. Providing quality differentiated instruction with high expectations and a strong literacy focus drives the faculty at ABC school elementary school because they see this as the best path toward securing a better future for their students. The focus of this literature review is on the most effective ways to accelerate student learning utilizing IFT's main resource: its teachers and academic interventionists. Identifying students' needs through consistent assessment and progress monitoring, together with effective teacher collaboration, can lead to designing individualized learning experiences for struggling students. This, in turn, can result in increased student understanding, solid reading skills, and a closure of the gap between same-grade peers on the DRA.

Response to Intervention and DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment)

Response to Intervention, or RtI, has been described as a program aimed at providing early intervention for students struggling to grasp basic foundational reading and math skills (Fuchs and Fuchs, 2007; Fountas and Pinell, 2012; Toste et. al., 2014). Many students come to Kindergarten with a lack of vocabulary and number knowledge (Hart & Risely, 2003). This disparity in vocabulary is only one of the reasons why students are not able to make the expected growth in the classroom. Social emotional and behavioral

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challenges can also impact the degree to which students are able to be fully present and learning (Sprinson & Berrick, 2010). The initial work to get all students reading at grade level is carried out by classroom teachers and is commonly referred to as Tier 1 intervention. The use of guided reading is an example of a Tier 1 level of intervention because it calls for differentiating reading instruction in small groups based on students' current reading levels and is implemented by the classroom teacher (Fountas & Pinell, 2012). Ideally, this work is done by teachers who are well trained and calibrated (Fountas & Pinell, 2012; Connor et al., 2009). The reality, though, is that despite teachers' best efforts, a number of our students do not reach the benchmarks we have set for them in the amount of time that is expected and the response is to move them into Tier 2 reading or math interventions. Additionally, researchers point to a lack of consistency among providers of Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction. In other words, general education teachers and special educators do not always work together to plan interventions (Jones, N. D., Youngs, P., Frank, K. A., 2013). Often, once a student is identified as having a learning disability, the expectation is that the specialist will be responsible for designing and providing accommodations and simply informing the general education teacher about what they are (Altieri, Colley, Daniel & Dickenson, 2015; Toste et. al., 2014; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2007).

There is a consensus in the research that early intervention for students is one key to supporting more rapid growth so that they are on track to reach their expected grade level performance goals. The sooner they can receive differentiated reading support, the less likely they are to fall further behind their peers thus adding to an achievement gap in reading (Vernon-Feagans, et. al. 2014; Toste, et. al., 2014).

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The first step in providing further intervention is to identify the students most in need of additional supports because Tier 1 instruction has not been successful for them. Many schools use universal screeners to identify their Tier 2 students. There are several types of universal screeners: curriculum-based measurements (CBM), computer adaptive testing (CAT), and single-skill assessment, among others. The Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) is a curriculum-based measurement used by all IFT schools. (Ball & Christ, 2012)

At ABC school students in the general education classroom that are not making expected growth on the DRA are identified and recommended to receive Tier 2 reading intervention provided by Tribeca academic interventionists. Schools that use the DRA as their universal screener, have access to consistent and reliable data to analyze (National Center on Response to Intervention, 2013; SCDOE, 2008). While useful in assessing whether students are at risk, CBM screeners do not really point special educators in the right direction to provide individualized instruction for students. Research indicates that teachers and interventionists need additional information to determine individual students' needs (Stecker, Fuchs, and Fuchs, 2008); (Ball and Christ, 2012).

The research does not identify examples of successful use of basic assessment results from universal screeners as a way to determine the best type and duration of intervention for struggling students. However, there is literature to support the idea that teachers engaging in isolated intervention for students is not as effective as targeted intervention, based on specific ways students' learn, and designed by teachers working

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together (National Center on Response to Intervention, 2013; Jones, Youngs, & Franks, 2013; Nichols, Sheffield, & Cooley, 2014). In particular this is important for special education, intervention, and general education teachers who work with the same students. Fenty, McDuffie-Landrum, and Fisher tell us that “...few of the specialized instructional strategies that are the hallmark of good special education make their way into general education settings... One way to increase the likelihood that these strategies are used in general education settings is to improve meaningful collaboration between teachers when planning instruction.” (Fenty, McDuffie-Landrum, Fisher; 2012) The literature seems to suggest that if general education teachers and academic interventionists collaborate to determine individual goals for students they will be better equipped to design interventions that will best target the discreet reading skills the DRA assesses. They would also be able to consider whether these interventions should complement or mirror each other (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2007; Ball & Christ, 2012). Thus making an intentional decision about whether the general education teacher should use the same strategies in the classroom as the interventionist or if they will choose to tackle different skills according to the student’s needs. This type of collaboration could mean that students would participate in fewer cycles of intervention due to making significant growth along the DRA continuum.

Individualized goals and interventions

There is a lack of consensus in the literature about types and duration of intervention cycles that are most effective to develop needed skills for struggling readers.

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However, there does seem to be agreement that curriculum and interventions need to be differentiated for students to be able to demonstrate growth (Fountas and Pinell, 2012; Ball and Christ, 2012; National Center on Response to Intervention, 2012; Stecker, Fuchs, and Fuchs, 2008). Researchers studying unresponsiveness to intervention point out that it is likely that students showing a lack of similar skills will still have differing needs (Toste et al., 2012). Thus, even when working in small groups students can benefit from a level of differentiation that addresses their individual needs (Tomlinson, 1999).

Using data from continuous progress monitoring, teachers can develop tailor-made, differentiated curriculum and instruction aimed at increasing students' skills in a short amount of time, thus enabling them to catch up with their peers and close, or at least narrow, the achievement gap (CDE, 2015; Ball and Christ, 2012).

Examples of successful interventions can be found throughout the literature but the results of many studies do not seem to be consistent or point to a magic combination of curriculum, instruction, duration, and frequency that works for all students and can be implemented by all teachers (Al Otaiba & Fuchs, 2006; Feagans et al., 2010; Toste et al., 2014)). Although in this area there is no consensus in the literature on the exact frequency and duration that is most effective, Fuchs & Fuchs, two of the foremost researchers in RtI, have held that 45minutes 5 times a week is advisable (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2007). That level of intervention is not possible right now at ABC school but the individualized focus on each student could be implemented with current resources.

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To support students catching up to their grade level peers, ABC school general education teachers and intervention specialists meet once at the beginning of each intervention cycle to decide which students will be included in Tier 2 reading interventions and agree on goals for the intervention groups. Examples of these group goals are achieving mastery of 10 sight words or increasing accuracy to 80% from 70%. The collaboration between the teachers usually lasts only 15-20 minutes and therefore does not include an in-depth discussion of each individual student's current skills, how long they have been in intervention, what strategies have been tried in the classroom or in prior intervention groups, nor can they reach an agreement on what curriculum or instruction should be used to support them in getting to the next level on the DRA, both in the general education classroom and during pull out sessions with the interventionist. Research on collaborative practice shows that effective and enduring teacher collaboration, is supported by frequent meetings that are not overly lengthy but provide sufficient time to complete a protocol for in depth discussion and an analysis of student work (Wood, 2007; Santagata & Guarino, 2012).

This AR intervention focused on providing teachers the opportunity to collaborate to develop differentiated intervention plans for each student in Tier 2 reading intervention and guide them through an in depth analysis of progress monitoring data to inform any needed changes to the goals and focus of intervention prior to the end of the cycle.

Teacher collaboration

The benefits of teacher collaboration have been extensively researched and it is promising that at ABC school there is already a very strong culture of teacher collaboration (Dufour, 2004; Thessin, 2015; Hoagland et al. 2014). Leadership at ABC school has prioritized embedded teacher planning time for grade level teams and recent discussion around site planning and their upcoming charter renewal have inspired discussion around increased opportunities for joint planning and exploration within and across grade levels.

The research tells us that in order for collaboration to be effective and meaningful teachers must have a strong sense of collegial trust and confidence not only in their own ability but in that of their colleagues as well (DuFour, 2004; Little, 1987 & 1989). When you are working with new teachers, then, it becomes that much more important to provide many opportunities for professional growth, coaching, and feedback so that they can build the skills needed to be an active part of a collaborative team (Jones, N. D., Youngs, P., Frank, K. A., 2013)

An effective classroom teacher is constantly collaborating with colleagues to analyze student work and assessment data to determine which students need additional support and which students are ready to move on (National Center on Response to Intervention, January, 2013). In addition to determining together which students should be part of intervention groups, it might be beneficial to differentiate each student's goals and ensure that both teachers are in agreement about how to best meet those goals (Ball & Christ, 2012; Fenty, McDuffie-Landrum, and Fisher, 2012) . Consistent progress monitoring, that

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is shared by the general education teacher and the interventionist will likely increase the effectiveness of their work to meet intervention cycle goals and raise students' DRA scores (National Center on Response to Intervention, January 2013).

The literature on professional learning communities emphasizes that, to be effective, teacher collaboration should be grounded in a shared vision and understanding of goals (Dufour, 2004; Thessin, 2015; Hoaglund et al. 2014; Cooley & Sheffield, 2014). Norms that are agreed upon by the group must be developed and adhered to. Especially with newer teachers, it is important to provide a structure to collaborative meetings that will be conducive to effective use of time, a sense of efficacy, and also a fostering of relational trust (Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Fenty, McDuffie-Landrum, and Fisher, 2012; Altieri, Colley, Daniel & Dickenson, 2015). Setting precise goals, norms, and expectations with the team is essential to effective and meaningful collaboration (Cooley & Sheffield, 2014; Joyce & Showers, 2002). Facilitation is a component of my intervention because establishing a protocol and structure and guiding them through it will allow teachers to focus on the exchange of knowledge and information as well as provide an initial scaffold to analyzing data and then using it to plan interventions together (Jones, Youngs, & Frank (2013).

It is especially important to promote the in depth collaboration of our academic interventionists and general education teachers because of the history of isolation that characterizes most educational practice (Altieri, Colley, Daniel & Dickenson, 2015). There are still many schools where special education and intervention teachers operate almost entirely separate from the general education teacher and there is a disconnect between the

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curriculum and instruction in the classroom and what struggling students receive through RtI (Altieri, Colley, Daniel, & Dickenson, 2015). This can lead to misalignment in goals and services instead of a joint effort to engage students where they are and use of collaborative time to really look at current student work, assessment results, and identify gaps that can, and should, be filled by both teachers (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2007; Jones, N. D., Youngs, P., Frank, K. A., 2013; Hoagland et al, 2014).

The literature speaks to the need for ongoing support from leadership and explicit coaching to help teachers understand the links between using assessment information and developing the appropriate strategies (Vernon-Feagans et. al., 2010). The literature clearly shows that the next step in maximizing the efforts of both general education teachers and academic interventionists is to increase the depth and breadth of their collaboration and add a facilitative component to support their collaborative analysis of data and subsequent curriculum planning and design.

Conclusion

Response to intervention is an effective way to attack the disparity in achievement that exists in schools that see it as their priority to support students who are struggling readers. Regular collaboration between academic interventionists and general education teachers to design interventions aligned to individual student needs and track the effectiveness of those interventions can lead to more rapid growth. Furthermore, this in depth collaboration, planning, and monitoring can be helpful in reducing the amount of Tier 2 intervention cycles students participate in because researchers such as Fuchs and

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Fuchs claim that RtI, when implemented with fidelity, is the right way to identify students that would benefit from special education services as opposed to students who simply need effective Tier 2 reading intervention. In order to be able to say we are implementing RtI with fidelity it is necessary for Tier 1 and Tier 2 services to be aligned and for the providers of instruction in these two tiers to have a solid collaborative practice. In this way, coordination of services teams can better determine whether 2, 3, or 4 cycles of intervention for a particular student without achieving adequate growth are an indicator of a deeper learning difficulty (Fuchs, Fuchs &, Stecker, 2008; Hoover, 2010).

The research on collaborative practices indicated that new endeavors in collaboration would benefit from initial facilitation and a set protocol to help guide discussion and planning (Nichols, Cooley, Sheffield; 2014). This is especially true with newer teachers who have not built relational trust yet and who may not feel that they are implementing instruction with efficacy (Jones, Youngs, Frank; 2013).

From analyzing the literature I concluded that facilitated discussion of individual student needs and an agreement on what strategies to use to improve their discreet reading skills could potentially lead to targeted intervention that yields faster improvement thus decreasing the number of cycles of intervention students participate in. My action research intervention sought to provide teachers a time and space to have in depth discussions on each student in the participating first grade Tier 2 reading intervention groups and develop a plan that addressed their needs. The facilitation of this collaborative time was intended to guide teachers in using a protocol that would maximize the time

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allotted and engage in reflection that would yield data on the their sense of efficacy as collaborators and also improve the structure of the collaborative planning and progress monitoring sessions.

Theory of Action

Problem of Practice	Literature Review	Intervention	Expected Change
<p>-Students at ABC school are spending 3 or more cycles in Tier 2 reading intervention without showing adequate growth on the DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment).</p> <p>-General education teachers and academic interventionists are not maximizing their potential to collaborate using DRA data to set individual goals and develop instructional strategies for students in Tier 2 reading intervention.</p>	<p>-Differentiation is key for student learning and reading development specifically.</p> <p>-The sooner students receive differentiated reading support, the less likely they are to fall further behind.</p> <p>-Teacher collaboration must be supported by school leadership and time must be allotted to allow for meaningful discussion and analysis of data.</p>	<p>-Targeted beginning of cycle collaborative planning meeting to develop curriculum and individual growth goals and bi-weekly progress monitoring meetings between general education teachers and academic interventionists.</p>	<p>-Academic interventionists and general education teachers will express higher effectiveness of collaboration.</p> <p>-Academic interventionists and general education teachers will increase their knowledge of curriculum and strategies that best support movement along the DRA continuum.</p> <p>-Students will have individual DRA growth plans and will show higher comparable growth on the DRA.</p>

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Intervention Action Plan

This intervention consisted of several meetings. The initial collaboration and planning session to set goals and design intervention strategies, two progress monitoring meetings, and one final analysis of end of cycle data and reflection.

Intervention Action Plan

	Component	Activities	Participants	Purpose/Questions to be answered	Data to be Collected	Type of Data (process v. impact)
1	Teacher survey	Survey general education teacher and academic interventionist	1 st Grade general education teacher Academic Intervention Specialist	<i>Establish a baseline for collaboration</i> What is the current level and frequency of collaboration between teachers and interventionists to determine goals and intervention plans for students? What are teachers' thoughts on effectiveness of collaboration? What are teachers' thoughts on use of students' DRA exam results for goal-setting and curriculum design and the impact this can have on student growth? What do these teachers know about what is happening in each other's practice?	-Response to scale question -Open ended responses -Researcher Reflective Journal	Impact
2	Pre Intervention Interviews	Conduct interviews with general education teacher and academic interventionist	1 st Grade General Education Teacher Academic Intervention Specialist	<i>Establish a baseline for collaboration</i> What is the current level and frequency of collaboration between teachers and interventionists to determine goals and intervention plans for students? What are teachers' thoughts on effectiveness of collaboration? What are teachers' thoughts on use of students' DRA exam results for goal-setting and curriculum design and the impact this can have on student growth? What do these teachers know about what is happening in each other's practice	-Pre Intervention Interview Transcripts	Impact/ Process

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3	Collaborative planning meeting	<p>Design agenda and guidelines for a collaborative intervention planning meeting.</p> <p>Facilitate a planning meeting between academic interventionist and general education teacher.</p>	<p>1st Grade General Education Teacher</p> <p>Academic Intervention Specialist</p> <p>Unconditional Education Coach <i>(Researcher)</i></p>	<p>Create a supportive space for teachers to share information, analyze data, and create an individualized DRA growth plan for each student.</p> <p>Provide consultation and materials to facilitate decisions regarding curriculum and interventions.</p> <p>Build capacity among teachers so that they will continue to collaborate without researcher facilitation.</p>	<p>-Individual DRA growth plans. -Meeting notes. -Audio transcript of meetings. -Researcher's reflective journal.</p>	Process/Impact
4	Progress monitoring meetings (twice a cycle)	<p>Design agenda and guidelines for a collaborative progress monitoring check-in meeting.</p> <p>Facilitate a progress monitoring meeting between academic interventionist and general education teacher.</p>	<p>1st Grade General Education Teacher</p> <p>Academic Intervention Specialist</p> <p>Unconditional Education Coach <i>(Researcher)</i></p>	<p>Guide teachers through analysis of current student progress and interventions.</p> <p>Help determine if changes need to be made to DRA growth plans.</p>	<p>Meeting notes. Student data. DRA growth plans. Researcher's Reflective Journal</p>	Process/Impact

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5	End of Intervention Cycle meeting	Facilitate a closing meeting between academic interventionist and general education teacher.	1 st Grade General Education Teacher Academic Intervention Specialist Unconditional Education Coach <i>(Researcher)</i>	Analyze end of cycle student data and review effectiveness of collaboration and DRA growth plans.	Meeting notes Researchers Reflective Journal	Process/ Impact
6	Post survey	Administer post survey to general education teacher and academic interventionist	1 st Grade general education teacher Academic Intervention Specialist	Gather data on changes to teachers' understanding of DRA growth and how to move students. Gather data on teachers' new understanding (if any) of effective collaboration through planning, sharing information about practice, and progress monitoring together.	Post Intervention Surveys	Impact
7	Post interviews	Conduct post intervention interviews with general education teacher and academic interventionist	1 st Grade general education teacher Academic Intervention Specialist	Gather data on changes to teachers' understanding of DRA growth and how to move students. Gather data on teachers' new understanding (if any) of effective collaboration through planning, sharing information about practice, and progress monitoring together.	Post Intervention Interview Transcripts	Impact

Intervention Design

The intervention plan consisted of an initial planning meeting at the beginning of the third intervention cycle of the 2015-2016 school year, between the general education teacher and the academic interventionist, facilitated by this researcher. An initial planning meeting with time to develop individualized plans for students, in the intervention groups was supported by the literature on RtI and teacher collaboration. It was clear that there was a need to give teachers adequate time to discuss each student and agree on goals and strategies. Based on literature review research stating how important consistent data analysis was to student growth and that the data needed to be shared by both the general education teacher and the specialist, this initial meeting would be followed by two progress monitoring meetings and a final end of cycle closing meeting to discuss the collaborative process and next steps for supporting the students in the two intervention focus groups.

During the initial planning meeting the objectives were to establish meeting and collaboration norms and to develop an individualized learning plan for each student in the Tier 2 intervention groups the academic interventionist would be working with weekly.

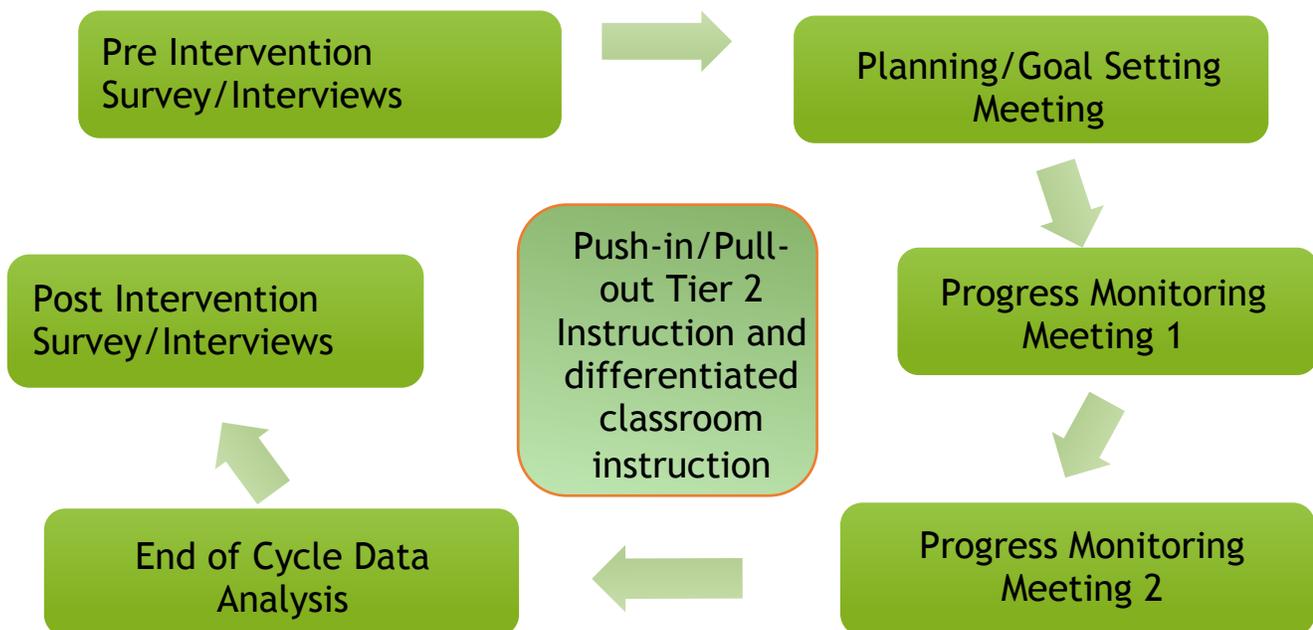
The two subsequent progress monitoring meetings would serve to check in on student progress, exchange observations and data, and make any needed changes to what was happening in the classroom with the general education teacher and/or what was happening during Tier 2 pull out and push-in sessions by the academic interventionist.

These meetings would be a place where the participants could also exchange knowledge on intervention and specific curriculum they found to be effective or identify areas of support or gaps in knowledge that the facilitator could help to provide. The final

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meeting at the end of the intervention cycle was designed to be an analysis of student results on the DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment) as well as their final achievement on individual intervention goals, set by the academic interventionist. In addition, this meeting would serve as an opportunity to share suggestions for the following intervention cycle.

Figure 1: Collaborative Meeting Cycle



Research Methods

This action research project focused on the work of two teachers, an academic interventionist from the Tribeca team and a first grade general education teacher from ABC school. They already had students in common and were engaged in occasional collaboration but had expressed a high interest in increasing the amount and depth of their collaboration.

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Throughout this process, the researcher collected impact data to assess whether the intervention was increasing the effectiveness of the collaboration between the general education teacher and academic interventionist, and to determine if they had common goals for their shared students. Process data was also collected to help improve the intervention design and potentially take it to a larger scale. Data collection methods included interviews, surveys, and facilitator notes from planning session and progress monitoring meetings, and a researcher reflective journal.

Impact data

Impact data was collected through pre- and post-interviews with teachers participating in the intervention as well as pre- and post-surveys. Sagor writes about the usefulness of interviews for collecting cognitive and affective data. Interviewing participants can also set the tone for the intervention and help bring focus. (Sagor, 1993). Through these interviews, I collected data on how teachers collaborated prior to the intervention as well as what knowledge they had about each other's practice.

Impact/Process Data Chart

Expected Change	Data source #1	Data source #2	Data source #3
Academic interventionists and general education teachers will express higher effectiveness of collaboration.	Pre- and Post- Intervention Interviews (See Appendix A and Appendix B)	Pre- and Post- Intervention Surveys (See Appendix C and Appendix D)	Researcher Journal

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Academic interventionists and general education teachers will increase their knowledge of curriculum and strategies that best support movement along the DRA continuum.	Pre- and Post- Intervention Interviews (See Appendix A and Appendix B)	Pre- and Post- Intervention Surveys (See Appendix C and Appendix D)	Progress monitoring meeting agenda and notes (See Appendix E)
Students will have individual DRA growth plans and will show higher comparable growth on the DRA.	Pre- and Post- Intervention Interviews (See Appendix A and Appendix B)	Pre- and Post- Intervention Surveys (See Appendix C and Appendix D)	End of Cycle 3 student DRA scores and intervention goal results

Process Data

Throughout the intervention I also collected data to inform changes to the implementation design. The sources that provided the bulk of my implementation data were a researcher reflective journal used after each meeting between the teachers and brief exit slips given to teachers after each meeting asking specifically about the meeting protocol. In addition, the post-interviews and surveys included questions about the usefulness of the intervention design.

Figure 2: Process Data Collection (Exit Slip)

<p>Post Planning Meeting Exit Slip</p> <p>Survey for teachers to determine usefulness and value of planning meeting agenda</p> <p>Please rate the overall effectiveness of today's meeting protocol:</p> <p>Very effective</p> <p>Effective</p>
--

Somewhat effective
Not effective

What were the strengths of this meeting protocol?

Your answer

What was the most useful part of this meeting?

Your answer

How can this meeting protocol be improved?

Your answer

SUBMIT

Figure 3: Process Data Collection (Exit Slip)

Post Progress Monitoring Meeting Exit Slip

Survey for teachers to determine usefulness and value of progress monitoring meeting agenda

Please rate the overall effectiveness of today's meeting protocol:

Very effective
Effective
Somewhat effective
Not effective

What were the strengths of this meeting protocol?

Your answer

What was the most useful part of this meeting?

Your answer

How can this meeting protocol be improved?

Your answer

SUBMIT

Data Analysis Methods

Data collected consisted of pre and post interviews and surveys from the academic interventionist and first grade general education teacher, transcripts from the initial planning meeting and subsequent progress monitoring meetings, notes taken after each meeting in a researcher's journal, a short post-meeting survey, and student DRA scores (from the beginning of the intervention cycle and at the end).

Pre and post interviews were transcribed and sentences were copied into a spreadsheet, then coded. Data from the surveys was also added to the spreadsheet in addition to researcher's observations. Codes were initially based on the three main areas of my problem of practice but then broken down into subsets to delve deeper and support further analysis of the impact of the intervention.

The surveys and interviews with the participants yielded the most data on the impact on collaboration while my own observations and post-meeting surveys provided the best process/implementation data.

I found that it was difficult to maintain consistency with the researcher's reflective journal. There are only three entries in the journal whereas my intention was to capture ideas and experiences after each session with the participants.

Student progress monitoring data was captured in a Google spreadsheet with a row for each student and columns that included headings for the data we wished to analyze at each meeting. After the initial planning meeting I added a column for my own notes on observations of the meeting process and two columns to try to capture AIS and general education teacher comments and suggestions.

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In addition we relied on ABC school's DRA data tracker, a Google spreadsheet that captures student scores on the DRA. This tracker is organized by grade and teacher and is updated after each DRA administration.

Data Analysis and Findings

The main concern stated in the problem of practice centered around students remaining in Tier 2 reading intervention for 3 or more cycles without making enough growth on the DRA to be able to exit intervention. The research points to several reasons why students might not respond to intervention. One of those is a lack of collaboration and alignment between general education teachers and academic specialists (Toste et. al., 2014; Altieri, Colley, Daniel & Dickenson, 2015). This action research project sought to determine whether teacher collaboration and the relationship between Tier 1 classroom instruction and Tier 2 reading intervention could be improved upon through more targeted collaboration and planning.

Teachers benefited from this intervention in regards to concrete action planning to support students and also in learning about what a collaborative process between general education teachers and academic interventionists could be like when they are provided time and facilitation. Analysis of DRA scores, progress monitoring data, and anecdotal observations led to insights about students' needs and allowed participants to make changes to intervention that they believe led to successful growth in reading skills for their students. In addition, they forged a stronger collaborative relationship and have a clearer idea of what they would like to see in future planning and progress monitoring meetings.

Impact Data Analysis

The findings detailed below reflect the impact on teachers' sense of the effectiveness of collaboration, the degree to which they increased their knowledge of how to move students on the DRA, and to what extent the process of establishing facilitated collaboration and developing individualized student growth plans had an impact on student achievement.

Effectiveness of collaboration

Post intervention data shows that this was the most effective aspect of the intervention. Both participants had very clear views of what they thought collaboration should look like prior to the beginning of our sessions. The academic interventionist (Participant A) said, "You can get so much more from the teacher if you can sit down and have a collaborative meeting, delving deeper into the DRA or delving deeper into progress monitoring tools, or look at past phonics screeners so you can see where kids are at and that's the first step in the collaboration process." (Participant A)

While the general education teacher (Participant B) indicated that, "[It] involves clear communication between teacher and interventionist, to have a solid understanding of where students currently are, goals for where we want students to be and by when, aligned strategies for meeting those goals." (Participant B).

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They were also on the same page about the fact that their current level of collaboration was lacking. Participant A described short check-ins in the hallway or at most 15 minute meetings to discuss setting goals for the upcoming cycle. Participant B shared that although the academic interventionist (Participant A) did a great job of sharing goals and progress monitoring data with teachers, "...it's a hand off, no discussion about it." This seemed to support the academic interventionist's suspicion that teachers were probably not able to really read and analyze everything she shared with them. In fact, the general education teacher did say during the pre-interview that even when she did receive data from the interventionist: "It's hard to say if I know whether that's growth or not growth because I don't have a great understanding of the data she's collecting and the data that she collected in the beginning and the data from the progress monitoring." (Participant B).

The pre-intervention survey data indicates that both participants felt their collaboration was "minimal" and both participants voiced a desire for increased collaboration time.

The initial planning meeting was an opportunity to set norms for collaboration and the meetings themselves. Both participants wanted to use norms that were already part of their respective teams' regular check in meetings and there was a lot of overlap in the basic agreements about how to bring voices together to have a discussion around a common problem. One of the statements from Participant B stood out to because it was one of the expected changes I hoped to see as a result of the intervention. In response to what they hoped to come away from the meeting with she said, "I feel I am missing the process of what to do to get them there." Meaning that both participants felt confident about

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determining goals for each student but there was a sense from the general education teacher that she needed more support with the actual instructional strategies to get students to where they needed to be. As it turned out this was one of the successes and at the same time an area to improve upon for this intervention. This honesty and vulnerability right from the start was appreciated by all of us and acknowledged directly by the academic interventionist who stated that she also struggled with knowing if she was doing the right thing all the time. I took the opportunity to name explicitly that collaboration on strategies and curriculum between special education teachers and general education teachers had been shown to be one of the best ways to accelerate growth for struggling students and, in addition, supported new teachers in remaining in the teaching profession (Jones, N. D., Youngs, P., Frank, K. A., 2013).

The initial planning session was effective in a practical sense for both participants. They were able to share data on each student and compare their opinions about which skills students needed the most support with. They laid out the curriculum they would be using and it was interesting to hear them discuss for the first time the reasons for using that particular curriculum. They also shared observations and “noticings” about student learning styles, behaviors during small group intervention, and little things they both appreciated and loved about each student.

A few eye-opening facts emerged that unfortunately, I don't feel we came back to in subsequent meetings and I did not follow up on during post-interviews. The academic interventionist and the general education teacher had set different developmental reading

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assessment (DRA) goals for their students. The academic interventionist's goals were only one to two levels above where students were currently performing while the general education teacher had set the goal for all her students to be at grade level DRA or higher. This confirmed for me what both participants had stated during pre-intervention interviews and on their surveys that communication around student goals was minimal. Even beyond that it pointed to a lack of alignment between Tier 1 and Tier 2 support for students because there did not appear to be a mandate or even suggestion that all of those working with these students should have common goals. I noted this difference in goal-setting but only probed gently about why they had chosen different goals. The academic interventionist indicated she had consulted with her Tribeca peers and based on students' previous scores and performance during the 1st and 2nd intervention cycles, she felt the goals were realistic. The general education teacher said she was setting a higher goal based on what she felt the students would be able to achieve working in small Guided Reading groups and with the additional support of the interventionist. I do wonder, although I did not directly ask, whether she also wanted to set goals that fit in with the grade-level team and administrative expectations. In as much as the teacher has expressed a commitment to bringing this level of collaboration to her peers and sharing her desire for increased alignment, this intervention may have encouraged further conversation between ABC school's teachers and administration about what realistic goals for guided reading groups should look like.

I did recognize this as a missed opportunity to step in and suggest a need for more direct goal alignment. I think in response to time running out and what I saw as a deviation

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from the protocol, I let it go and re-directed us to continue discussing the plan for how to support the students.

It also became clear during this initial meeting that the level of support and collaboration within their teams looked different for these teachers. The academic interventionist spoke of weekly opportunities to check in with her colleague (who was also her supervising interventionist) about individual students, teaching strategies, curriculum, and whether the goals she had set for students were still appropriate. In both her pre-interview and during this initial meeting, she credited these sessions with giving her confidence and a sense of efficacy which the literature tells us is key to developing trust and supporting teachers in the profession (Dufour, 2004; Thessin, 2015; Hoagland et al. 2014).

In contrast, the general education teacher, while praising her colleagues and expressing a strong sense of camaraderie with them, was not engaging in the same level of discussion around specific literacy skills and instructional practice that would support individual students. “What we want is norming on guided reading strategies and practices, as a team we want to create how we want to teach, know what students should be able to do across grade level. Currently guided reading now is totally separate, we share some ideas on DRA levels, norming procedures around assessment, but reading instruction is completely independent right now.” (Participant B)

One of the positive practices that emerged from this initial planning meeting was an agreement on which skills each teacher would focus on and sharing specific curriculum and

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strategies. Participant A had designed flash cards to target CVC words which Participant B was open to trying with her students. As a consequence of this, students were able to get a double dosage of practice in this skill area. Although Participant B told us during our last end of cycle meeting that she had not used the cards as often as she hoped, she did attribute the growth her students made to the fact that both she and the interventionist had both spent time on CVC words and blending. In addition, through the subsequent progress monitoring meetings, participants were able to agree on skill areas they would focus on separately. The general education teacher put more emphasis on comprehension strategies while the academic interventionist zeroed in on sight words and retell. In her post-intervention interview the general education teacher named this differentiation as a reason she thinks her students were able to reach proficient DRA levels. “Especially with retell focus group, so clear that she had the skill and objective, they practiced and succeeded with it. I think that is in part because I decided to do different things. When I did the reading test I noticed that, boom, they were able to do it because they got it with her.” (Participant B)

Another example of the success of collaborative progress monitoring was the sharing of behavior management ideas and a chance to brainstorm ways to support each other and the students in this area. During the first progress monitoring meeting, as we discussed a particular student, both participants commented on how they felt she was easily distracted and they weren't sure if she was actually reading during small group intervention. “She seems like she's reading. Maybe a goal for both of us could be to monitor

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her. “So maybe making sure she's right next to me, cause Jenny’s¹ always right next to me.

(Participant A) The general education teacher agreed with the plan and they checked in about it during the second progress monitoring meeting.

Knowledge of skills and strategies to move students on the DRA

Although both participants reported feeling the intervention was effective in terms of increased collaboration and both credited their increased communication with improving their students’ outcomes, neither felt they had increased their knowledge of how to move students on the DRA through this intervention.

Participant A stated there was very little change in her practice around using DRA data, including running records, but that she had added specific DRA reading passages to her curriculum based on her conversation with the general education teacher. Both felt using the passages would expose students to the types of words they needed to master for increasing their fluency.

Participant B indicated slight changes in practice in terms of looking at skills lacking for each student individually, not just the guided reading group as a whole, but felt the connection to the academic interventionist’s practice was not made. She said, “Yeah, I guess, every time we updated we asked what was missing, but still separate from her data, it was still based on my test and what I was seeing. “ “That is the piece that still feels like it was missing. Our aligned goals. We didn’t have a space or maybe we just didn’t get there.”

(Participant B)

¹ Students’ names have been changed.

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Individualized growth plans

The importance and positive effects of differentiating instruction has been researched extensively but in this intervention the intention was to make sure all aspects of support for struggling students were considered. Developing an individualized growth plan for each student in the Tier 2 intervention groups was intended as a way to streamline instruction to their needs and provide a way to track their growth. As originally designed each student would have a tab in a spreadsheet shared with the academic interventionist, the general education teacher, and the facilitator. Each tab would include the following:

- The criteria for inclusion in Tier 2
- Amount of intervention cycles student had participated in and notes about their performance
- Current and prior DRA scores (if applicable)
- Current and prior goals (if applicable)
- Beginning of cycle observations from general education teacher and academic interventionist
- Proposed intervention plan

During the initial planning meeting this spreadsheet was shared with the participants and they agreed to move forward with it. As the planning meeting proceeded and teachers engaged in discussion about students it became clear that both participants were missing information about their students. We agreed that I would go back and fill in the missing information at a later time so that we could continue discussing next steps. This may have affected their perception of the importance of maintaining a record of each students' individual needs and how they would be addressed. As the intervention progressed throughout the cycle our discussion became generalized and despite occasional

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specific mention of individual students, a majority of the planning and suggested changes to curriculum or strategies were aimed at the whole group. This points to a lack of knowledge of how to differentiate for each student within a small group intervention, both during pull out intervention and within classroom guided reading groups. This intervention did not provide enough planning time or instructional support to the participants to really dive into what individualized instruction could or should look like within the time constraints of 15-20 minute sessions.

In the end I was the one who populated the spreadsheet with data and went back to add notes and updates after our progress monitoring meetings. Although shared on the Google doc, neither participant would refer to the student plans unless we were looking at them together. In future, I will include teachers and academic interventionists in the design of the individualized student plans prior to the intervention and will populate the spreadsheet with available data prior to the meetings so that it does not take up extra time which can be used for more productive discussion by participants (DuFour, 2007).

Students that participated in the two intervention groups that were part of this study made growth on the DRA, with two exceptions. One student, who demonstrated significant progress during the cycle, remained at the same DRA score he had at the beginning of the cycle despite meeting the goals set by the academic intervention specialist. Both participants were at a loss to explain what happened as they had both reported seeing the same improvement in this student during the progress monitoring meetings. The other student who did not make growth was in a different general education teacher's classroom

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which could further be evidence to support an argument to increase the amount and depth of collaboration between interventionists and general education teachers.

Figure 4-Student DRA results

Students	Pre Intervention DRA score	Post intervention DRA score
Student 1	3	3
Student 2	3	4
Student 3	3	3
Student 4	4	12
Student 5	4	10
Student 6	4	8
Student 7	4	8

At this time it is not possible to say that this action research intervention, as currently designed, had the impact desired. Impact data shows that more than one cycle of collaboration and student progress is needed to reach an accurate conclusion. Ultimately, both participants decided to recommend that all students in the intervention groups continue to be part of small group intervention for the following cycle, which will begin in the fall. Students in this study will therefore be participating in yet another cycle of intervention before potentially catching up to their grade level peers. Tier 2 reading intervention with increased collaboration resulted in student growth during this cycle but decreasing the amount of cycles of intervention struggling students participate in remains a long term process.

Although the collaboration between the academic interventionist and general education teacher supported through this action research intervention was successful, it

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should be considered only a first step toward more in-depth alignment between Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction and differentiation. Both teachers expressed a desire to share what they felt to be the best aspects of the collaborative model with their peers and are hopeful that they will be able to continue meeting on a more regular basis and for longer periods of time.

Process Data Analysis

Researcher reflection

The implementation of this intervention was successful in bringing the participants together and supporting a higher level of collaboration. However, it presented a greater degree of difficulty in terms of scheduling than I had anticipated. Some unexpected personal events contributed to scheduling conflicts for one of the participants and all of our work schedules were difficult to juggle. This resulted in the intervention starting later than planned and some of the meetings and post intervention interviews feeling rushed. That was mitigated by the participants' real enthusiasm and commitment to getting as much as possible out of the intervention but it showed me the importance of having these meetings planned prior to the beginning of the school year, preferably as part of the professional development schedule of the school.

Process data showed that time set aside at the beginning, during, and at the end of intervention cycles supported teachers' collaboration, but a further analysis points to potential improvements on the meeting protocols and shows that an increase in time might have a stronger impact. In post intervention interviews and surveys both participants expressed that 45minutes was insufficient time to thoroughly discuss and plan for the

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students in the intervention groups individually, especially because we spent some time filling each other in on new scores, progress monitoring observations, and analysis of student behaviors and growth. My own reflection after the first and second progress monitoring meetings supports this as well.

The intervention design called for the initial planning session to last one full hour. Unfortunately, we were only able to meet for 30 minutes for a part 1 and then came together again the following morning for part 2. In an attempt to try and make this work we looked at Student Group 1 on the first day and Student Group 2 on the next. The first part of the meeting protocol was norm-setting and we got through that fairly quickly. However, it soon became clear that I would have to make some adjustments to the protocol to accommodate the participants' enthusiasm and tendency to agree with each other and jump in, often over the other's voice. As the participants became more animated they were not following our agreed upon protocol and norms. In addition to not waiting until the other person was completely finished with their comment, I noted in my post-meeting reflection journal that both participants also began comparing students within the group or pairing them together based on a common goal or skill needed. The meeting notes thus reflect that the intention of analyzing each student individually and figuring out what would move them individually along the DRA was somewhat lost and participants left with an intervention plan to use with the whole group, with only a couple of exceptions.

I also noted that taking notes while facilitating each meeting became increasingly difficult. In addition, I found myself making observations about how the teachers interacted with each other, their body language, words and phrases that seemed to trigger certain

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responses, etc. and had no way to capture this at the same time that I was trying to capture notes to help them develop the individual student growth plans. In future, it might be helpful to obtain permission from participants to film the meetings in addition to recording them so as to be able to analyze all aspects of collaboration at a later time.

Process Data

Participant feedback on surveys, interviews, and post-meeting exit slips in addition to the researcher's reflection serve to provide different means to corroborate process findings. Participants found the meeting protocol to be effective in organizing their conversation about students. They expressed satisfaction with the structure of the meeting protocol and the time allotted. This last data point does not, however, match with data from the post-intervention interviews which indicated more time was needed to discuss and agree upon a specific plan for each student. Desirability bias may be a factor in that teachers were happy overall with the meetings themselves and their opportunity to collaborate so they may have responded more favorably to the intervention as a whole while not specifically critiquing the meeting protocol itself.

The following tables capture participant responses as to the effectiveness of the meeting protocols.

Figure 5: **Post Initial Planning Meeting Exit Slips (Responses)**

Please rate the overall effectiveness of today's meeting protocol:	What were the strengths of this meeting protocol?	What was the most useful part of this meeting?	How can this meeting protocol be improved?
Very effective	Finding goals that we both want to work on for students. Especially knowing that our goals may	Making a plan around students (baseline for lowest group on reading CVC words in context) and communication. The communication around what	Think it went well.

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	look different in intervention and classroom goals (for example DRA level goal).	we will be working on that week. Had a plan to give sight words to Ms. Ann* and did so we are working on same words.	
Effective	used guiding questions to facilitate conversation, we were efficient, everyone participated and shared info	setting foundation for discussions about students, using what we've seen and noticed	More actionable steps (which I know is to come...)

Figure 6: Progress Monitoring Meeting 1 Exit Slip (Responses)

Please rate the overall effectiveness of today's meeting protocol:	What were the strengths of this meeting protocol?	What was the most useful part of this meeting?	How can this meeting protocol be improved?
Effective	We had enough time set aside to review what we've been working on and what new goals we had.	Sharing information from progress monitoring.	Clearer next steps to determine if we're on the same page, trying different things, etc...
Effective	having time to talk about student's specific needs, what our goals are for students and what they need to work on most (what Ann* will work on and what I will work on)	strategizing our plan for students	there are a lot of students to go over so maybe using a time limit on each group so we can make sure we spend sufficient amount of time on each group

**Name of teacher changed*

Figure 7: Progress Monitoring Meeting 2 Exit Slip (Responses)

Please rate the overall effectiveness of today's meeting protocol:	What were the strengths of this meeting protocol?	What was the most useful part of this meeting?	How can this meeting protocol be improved?
Effective	Reviewing data, sharing information and teaching goals.	Following a clear agenda.	More room to discuss specific strategies and support needed for students.
Very effective	It was really nice having a plan for each student and knowing which goals we want to work on and how.	Talking about strategies for students so that we know what we specifically want to work on with the students.	I think it went well as is

Implications and Conclusion

The results of my action research have several implications for teacher and interventionist collaboration and support for student academic growth on the DRA. First, the findings confirm what is captured in the literature on professional learning communities and teacher collaboration as it relates to frequency and quality of the interactions between these two equally important roles. When general education teachers and academic interventionists meet regularly with a set agenda and are able to focus on student performance scores together with observational data, they are able to work better as a team to support student growth and their sense of efficacy increases. Second, there should be a more direct connection between planning and doing. In other words, participants would likely have benefitted from further guidance on how to implement the instruction of the skills they identified their students needed as well as encouragement to use individualized student plans to be able to access each other's data more frequently. Finally, further discussion and analysis is needed school wide on the relationship between Tier 1 and Tier 2 levels of academic intervention and the expectations around common goals, best instructional practices, and differentiated learning experiences for students.

Participants in this action research project reported that they were able to form a stronger collaborative relationship and dive deeper into student skill deficits and how they planned to address them. This was possible because they had time set aside to meet in a

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relaxed setting and facilitation to provide probing questions and support sticking to an agenda and following a protocol. Given the difficulty of scheduling adequate time, both participants indicated wanting even more time to analyze student data and reach agreement on how they would each be providing intervention.

Another implication of my action research project is that there should have been a more clearly defined purpose for individualized student plans and a directive approach from the facilitator on their use. It is also likely that obtaining participant input on the design of the plans prior to the intervention would have increased the use of the student spreadsheet for tracking and sharing information and resulted in accountability for the participants to not only reference the data but utilize it to support and modify intervention. In addition, participants reported that what seemed to be missing was the detail of next steps and follow up. Because neither participant accessed the student spreadsheet (either to add or find new data) progress monitoring meetings were mostly a quick report out of current progress monitoring scores and anecdotal descriptions of how students had performed during small group interventions. This seems like an area where facilitation can play a better role. In future I would set a clear expectation of the use of the individual student plans having sought teacher and interventionist input on what to include in them and laid out the benefits of creating and using them.

Finally, Tribeca academic interventionists and ABC school administrators and teachers should have an open and frank discussion about the role of Tier 1 versus Tier 2 interventions for struggling students and the role general education teachers and interventionists currently play in implementing them. During this project the participants

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made quick informal decisions about whether to double up on or use different instructional strategies and supports for students. In the case of a majority of the students in this study their choices worked. However, both participants still expressed doubt about whether they had made the correct choices and seek further knowledge of the right frequency, duration, and curriculum to use with struggling readers in first grade.

This action research project sought to find out if targeted, individualized intervention plans could be a way to accelerate students' growth on the Developmental Reading Assessment, thus helping them exit Tier 2 intervention cycles sooner. The path to this desired outcome was through increased, and facilitated collaboration between a general education teacher and the academic interventionist working with her Tier 2 reading intervention students. The intervention resulted in a stronger and more trusting relationship, a commitment to continued collaboration and a desire to expand the depth and frequency of meetings to the rest of the grade level teams the academic interventionist works with.

Participants were able to engage in inquiry around their approaches to intervention by making informed, intentional decisions to either jointly attack a specific skill or target different skills for a group of students. The general education teacher and academic interventionist both saw student growth that they attributed to the decisions that came out of their collaborative meetings:

“It made me see that she was taking care of comprehension with my lowest group. I had the stamina and ability to do reading, sight words and accuracy and she was holding comprehension and she knew that I was holding sight words. They did sight words with

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buddies so they did that in the classroom too but she knew that I was holding it and was progress monitoring more often.”(Participant A)

“Especially with retell focus group, [it was] so clear that she had the skill and objective, they practiced and succeeded with it. I think that is in part because I decided to do different things. When I did the reading test I noticed that, boom, they were able to do it because they got it with her.” (Participant B)

The inequities that have led to the current disparity in learning and achievement of our students will take much longer to be resolved than just one or two cycles of intervention or even one to two school years. As the partnership between Tribeca and Instruction for Transformation continues to grow and change, the need for clarity of purpose and consistent communication between general education teachers and academic interventionists must keep pace. Applying an inquiry mindset to teacher collaboration and small group intervention while providing the space, time, and guidance for teachers and interventionists to work together holds great promise for making slow but steady change towards educational equity.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Pre Intervention Interview Questions

1. Tell me your thoughts on the role of collaboration in Response to Intervention.
2. Describe how you have collaborated (or currently collaborate) with other (general education teachers/academic interventionists). What was (or is) the impact on your practice?
3. Please describe what current collaboration between Gen Ed teachers and AISs looks like.
4. How do you use DRA data, including running records, to design intervention?
5. How do you know if a student is making growth during the intervention cycle?
6. What do you do if they aren't making growth during the cycle?
7. Are you aware of what the (general education teacher/academic interventionist) is focusing on with your students?
8. If yes, does that knowledge impact your planning and teaching in any way? Please elaborate.
9. Anything else you would like to add?

APPENDIX B: Post Intervention Interview Questions

1. Have your thoughts on the role of collaboration in Response to Intervention changed after this intervention cycle?
2. Describe how you collaborated with other (general education teachers/academic interventionists) during this cycle. What was the impact on your practice?
3. Please describe your current collaboration with the (general education teacher/academic interventionist).
4. Did your use of DRA data, including running records, to design intervention change during this cycle? Please elaborate.
5. How did you know if a student was making growth during the intervention cycle?
6. What did you do if students were not making growth during the cycle?
7. Are you aware of what the (general education teacher/academic interventionist) focused on with your students during intervention? This could include strategies, curriculum, etc.
8. How did this knowledge impact your planning and teaching in any way? Please elaborate.
9. Did your collaboration with the (general education teacher/academic interventionist) result in new knowledge for you? Please elaborate.
10. What are your main "takeaways" from this intervention? Please elaborate.

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APPENDIX C: Pre Intervention Survey

You are a:

General education teacher _____

Academic Interventionist _____

1- Describe the agenda you follow during collaboration with your partner.

2- Does your current collaboration provide a thorough understanding of what your partner is doing to move students on the DRA? Please elaborate.

3- Describe how you use collaboration time to develop individualized growth plans for students.

4- Does your knowledge of your collaborative partner's work inform your intervention planning? Please elaborate.

5- My current collaboration with the (general education teacher/academic interventionist) is:

Very effective	Effective	Somewhat effective	Minimal	Not effective
5	4	3	2	1

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APPENDIX D: Post Intervention Survey

You are a:

General education teacher _____

Academic Interventionist _____

1- Describe the agenda you followed during collaboration with the (general education teacher/academic interventionist).

2- Did the collaboration meetings you participated in provide a shared understanding of what your partner was planning to do, and did, to move students on the DRA? Please elaborate.

3- Describe the use of collaboration time to develop individualized growth plans for students.

4- Did your knowledge of your collaborative partner's work inform your intervention planning? Please elaborate.

5- My current collaboration with the (general education teacher/academic interventionist) is:

Very effective

Somewhat effective

Not effective

5

4

3

2

1

Please elaborate on your answer:

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APPENDIX E: Initial Planning Meeting Agenda and Notes Template

Time	Topic	Notes
4 min	Check in	
6 min	Agree on meeting norms: What are our expectations from today's meeting? How do we want to be with each other? What do we do when we disagree?	
10 min	-Review intervention group students and briefly share criteria for inclusion. -Share proposed intervention schedules.	
35min	Individual student analysis and growth plans: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/13TKuTY79tcLcyPXy1qD0bv0SKniSSKsV21VFqeSCKAU/edit#gid=0	
5 min	-Set a date for Part 2 of planning meeting -Review next steps and progress monitoring meeting dates -Closing and appreciations	

APPENDIX F: Progress Monitoring Meeting Agenda and Notes Template

Time	Topic	Notes
1 min	Check in	
1 min	Review meeting norms:	
40 min	Individual student review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review end of cycle goals ● Look at current progress monitoring results (baseline vs. Week 7 score) ● Successes/Challenges ● What curriculum was used by general education teacher? ● What curriculum was used by AIS? ● Were there common interventions that you both used? ● Were there things you decided to do differently in order to complement your interventions? ● Next steps (do we need to change intervention, frequency, duration?) 	
3min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review next steps ● Closing and appreciations 	

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APPENDIX G: Progress Monitoring Meeting Agenda and Notes Template

Students	Pre Intervention DRA score	Post intervention DRA score
Student 1	3	3
Student 2	3	4
Student 3	3	3
Student 4	4	12
Student 5	4	10
Student 6	4	8
Student 7	4	8