

Reading Specialists: Do They Do What They “Do?”

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In this article, using interview data from eight reading specialists, we examine the roles and responsibilities assumed by reading specialists. Although identifying the essence of what it means to be a reading specialist is a continuing goal for researchers, during the past decade, several studies have more clearly defined the roles and responsibilities of this important group of reading professionals. Several studies reveal that the *International Reading Association Standards for Reading Professionals* (Professional Standards and Ethics Committee of the International Reading Association, 1998) are being used in whole or in part by teacher preparation programs in the United States (Barclay & Thistlewaite, 1992; Gelheiser & Meyers, 1991; Tancock, 1995; Bean, Trovato, Armitage, Bryant, & Dugan, 1993; Bean, Trovato, Hamilton, 1995).

These standards, revised in 2003, provide criteria for developing and evaluating preparation programs for reading professionals. At the time of this study, the revised standards (Professional Standards and Ethics Committee of the International Reading Association, 2003) were not available. Although these standards emphasize the performance, knowledge, and skills of candidates completing a preparation program, they indicate a caliber of higher performance expected of a seasoned professional reading specialist. Standards states, “The increased focus on candidate performance . . . is a response to the shifts in the field of education toward a focus on the outcomes of learning rather than inputs” (2003).

Since the roles and responsibilities of reading specialists are constantly changing, administrators and reading specialists often perceive reading specialists’ roles differently (Barry, 1997). Classroom teachers’ expectations for a reading specialist are different still (Maleki & Herman, 1994; Tancock, 1995). Other factors, like Title I funding guidelines, contribute to the changing role of a reading specialist (Quatroche, Bean, & Hamilton, 2001). Only recently have researchers actually surveyed reading specialists to determine who they are, what they do, and the changes they perceive in their roles (Bean, Cassidy, Grumet, Shelton, and Wallis, 2002). However, these large survey studies have been unable to gather the more detailed descriptions possible through one-on-one interviews and classroom observations. This more detailed description is what we set out to do.

Methods

Procedures

One of the authors contacted, via e-mail or telephone, 22 reading specialists that she knew through graduate courses and professional settings. The participants were selected if they currently served as reading specialists and were willing and available to

be interviewed. Eight reading specialists volunteered for this study. All of the participants, identified by pseudonyms, were female and were employed at various rural, suburban, and urban schools in southwestern Ohio (Table 1). They all taught in primary and/or intermediate settings. The eight participants had a wide range of years of experience, both as classroom teachers and as reading specialists. The reading programs, in which six out of the eight reading specialists worked full time, were funded by U.S. federal government Title I monies, district monies, or a combination of both. Seven out of the eight participants had earned their masters' degrees as well as an Ohio Reading Endorsement. In Ohio a Reading Endorsement may be added to any standard teaching license and is valid for teaching learners in grades P-12. One participant was currently working toward both her master's degree in reading and the Ohio reading endorsement. If a reading specialist responded favorably to being interviewed and observed, a mutually agreeable time and location to meet was established. At that initial meeting, the goals of the research were described, participants read and signed informed consent forms and an interview and/or observation time was established. The interviews took place in the various workplaces (e.g., school classrooms and offices) of the participants.

Data were collected in the late summer and early autumn of 2003. The following data were gathered to capture the actions, beliefs, responses and voices of the reading specialists: (a) audio taped interviews of each reading specialist to be transcribed, (b) written notes of each interview with reading specialist, and (c) informational material volunteered by the participants.

The interview questions (Table 2) were adapted from the results of a study by Bean et al. (2002) and focused on the roles of reading specialists. Participants' responses to questions were audio taped. Each of the informal semi-structured interviews lasted between 35 and 50 minutes. Initially there was a period of introductions and polite conversation in an effort to make the interviews as informal and non-threatening as possible. To transition to the actual interview the interviewer presented the purpose of the study as "finding out what reading specialists do." The interviews started with collecting background information about the participant, followed by open-ended questions to gather information about her role as a reading specialist. The interviewer asked several more specific questions as needed for clarification and ended the session by asking if the participant could add anything not yet discussed that would aid the researchers in their goal of exploring the role of reading specialists. After analysis of the data, some follow-up questions to gain and clarify information were asked via e-mail.

Data Analysis

Following each audio-taped interview, questions and responses were transcribed. A total of 360 minutes of interview data were recorded. Once transcribed, the interview transcripts amounted to 72 single-spaced pages of interview questions and responses. Using content analysis techniques established by Holsti (1969), Miles & Huberman (1984) and Viney (1983), the transcribed interviews were analyzed. The transcriptions were read and reread. Initially, the survey literature, our own experiences, and the IRA competencies suggested codes.

Using colored pencils, descriptive codes, such as “responsibilities for assessment,” “serving as a resource,” or “responsibilities for instruction,” were assigned to sentence or multi-sentence segments. Codes were changed, deleted and added as seemed appropriate. Eventually, the single most appropriate code was assigned to each segment. Not every piece of the interview was coded. Looking for patterns, themes, causal links, and repetitive emergent categories were noted. The original twelve codes were eventually expanded into 64 categories (Table 3).

In addition to coding, reflections were jotted down as marginal notes or remarks. These captured feelings and new hypotheses about what was being said, doubts about the quality of the data, second thoughts about the meaning of the speakers, mental notes to be pursued later, or cross-allusions to something that appeared in another interview.

Results

Our professional organization’s recommendations for the roles of the reading specialist (International Reading Association, 2000) relate to three specific areas: instruction, assessment, and leadership.

Instruction

In the area of instruction, the professional organization argues that reading specialists are to “support, supplement and extend classroom teaching.” These multiple roles created some concern for our participants. The sample reported guided reading as the most used method of instruction. All participants mention some form of phonemic awareness or word study instruction, as well as independent or semi-independent reading, as part of their repertoire. This reading instruction occurred in several different settings.

All eight reading specialists reported being involved in some form of “pull out” instruction, although only one used it exclusively. This is not in synch with the 37% reported by Bean and her colleagues (2002), but more congruent with Quatroche, Bean, and Hamilton (2001), who acknowledge an increased focus on in-class programs. Six out of the eight instructed in a “push in” setting in the classroom, and a few also taught the students as a whole group within the classroom. One district opted to spend their Title I monies in a way that allowed their reading specialists to work with any student in the school. This instruction was delivered in a combination of pull out, push in, and team teaching whole groups. The sentiments involved in trying to “support, supplement and extend classroom teaching” depended on the setting for instruction.

Regarding the small group pull out, one participant expressed, “It’s a more informal comfortable atmosphere. I mean I think that . . . they’ll go ahead and try and sound the word out. And the other children, because they struggle, are not so fast to correct them. They’ll give them the time that they need. Whereas in a regular setting they often times are corrected by other kids even when they make the attempt.” Several participants admitted that the small-group pull out program was more comfortable. They

liked having their own reading room. It provided a quiet environment where they could access their supplies at any moment. “Instructionally, I’m making more progress when I pull them out,” says another participant, “as far as the amount of material and really getting at their individual needs.”

Those teachers who engaged in a push in program had mixed feelings. Noise, having to carefully plan, and having to tote around supplies were listed as disadvantages in these programs. In support of pushing in, our informants believed that their students experienced a sense of community and felt better about themselves. Several reading specialists strongly advocated going into the classroom to work with children. “The reality is that there are special projects or things that the students need assistance with, and I find it very helpful . . .,” stated one informant. “The students in the building kind of know who I am and they don’t think of me as only working with certain students because technically I can assist other kids.” Another participant in a push in program acknowledged that she favors teaching in the classroom:

I really like working in the regular teacher’s classroom because the kids aren’t missing much from that classroom. I’m in there. I see what’s going on. It helps me to support what’s going on in reading and writing in the classroom, and I can help. . . . I see how my kids perform as opposed to what might be the median in the class as well as the top of the class. I see how they are grasping things, so I, um, get to see an awful lot of their interactions in the classroom with their teachers, with their peers, with the subject matter that is being taught. . . . The kids I deal with, by and large, are the least capable of going back and picking things up in the classroom. So I really like the in-class work a whole lot better.

Within the area of instruction, the IRA standards also point to the need for collaboration. The issue of collaboration emerged among our participants as a point of contention. Many of our informants, although they incorporated information from the regular teacher’s classroom, planned their lessons alone. The communication ranged from a very routine exchange of plans (“Every week they fill out a form, telling me what skills, what stories they’re working on, and anything they specifically want.”) to a harried chat (“I spend a lot of my planning time before and after school hours running from classroom to classroom and just talking briefly, trying to catch a teacher and talk. . .”). Informants who provided reading services to students in more than one classroom had to coordinate with an average of eight different classroom teachers. These reading specialists then wrote their plans individually, using the classroom teachers’ input as a guide.

Several reading specialists remarked about the lack of scheduled planning time within the school day. One participant’s only scheduled planning time was during lunch/recess time, and due to a rotating cafeteria and recess duty schedule, she lost that planning time once or twice a week. Two of the eight reading specialists traveled to other schools during the day reported that this was a significant constraint on their time for planning. As a result, our informants were forced to plan before and after school.

One reading specialist's schedule required establishing co-planning time with every one of her students' teachers. This accounted for 25% of her school day. "Every week I meet at least once to have contact and receive updating about their reading goals for their students that week." Despite the scheduled time, she said she feels like she gets more done on her own. "Sometimes planning with the other teachers is worthwhile and sometimes it's not. And it really depends on the type of personality you're working as to whether they're up to co-planning or [not]."

Although assessment results were used to design and deliver individualized instruction, directives from classroom teachers were stronger influences in overall planning for our informants. Our data indicate a stronger influence than presented in Bean et al. (2002). For instance, one participant remarked:

If the regular teacher says we're working on cause and effect this week . . . then I'll make sure that my kids are also learning cause and effect. . . . If they're working on fantasy then we'll work on fantasy. . . . I'll work on just whatever the grade level goals are. I match those goals, but I'll use readability material at a lower level.

A few participants expressed frustration at changes in directives and information given to them by the regular classroom teachers, even after communicating about plans. "I mean sometimes I have what I think I'm going to work on that day, but when I arrive the teacher will indicate that, you know, there is something of higher priority. And so I just do whatever I'm told." One reading specialist alluded to a perceived hierarchy between classroom teacher and reading specialist. "I really feel like in a way they are my boss. I do what they need and work in what the students need at the same time."

Nearly twenty years ago, Fraatz (1987), in her case study interviews with regular classroom teachers and reading specialists, found a similar phenomenon, reading specialists often defined the special needs of their students in terms of the needs of the regular classroom teacher. She called this "the tail wagging the dog (p. 19)." In an effort to be supportive of the classroom teacher, the reading specialist often set aside her own expertise and what she knows is best for the child. The reading specialists in our study felt this same need to be supportive of the regular classroom teacher. In Fraatz's study as well as in ours, reading specialists were often concerned that they were helping the regular classroom teacher or the school's testing mandate more than they were helping the children.

Assessment

In the area of assessment, the IRA position statement (International Reading Association, 2000) maintains that reading specialists have "specialized knowledge of assessment and diagnosis that is vital for developing, implementing, and evaluating the literacy program in general, and in designing instruction for individual students." Moreover, he or she "can assess the reading strengths and needs of students and provide that information to classroom teachers, parents, and specialized personnel such as

psychologists, special educators, or speech teachers, in order to provide an effective reading program.” Despite this “specialized knowledge of assessment and diagnosis” only two of the eight reading specialists reported being involved in the assessment that qualifies the students for the instructional programs implemented by the reading specialist. Most of the qualifying assessments were in the form of formal standardized tests, administered in a whole group setting. The qualifying assessments were not always uniform from grade to grade, thus the eligible scores differed from grade to grade. When the state mandated achievement test results were available, those scores took precedence over other standardized assessments in determining eligibility in the reading program. The two reading specialists involved in the qualifying assessment employed reading inventories and/or the standardized assessment from the Reading Recovery Council of North America.

Regarding informal assessments, reading specialists reported using running records as a primary assessment tool. Bean et al. (2002) found observations to be the primary assessment tool used by reading specialists. Although many of our informants mentioned using observation to get a better sense of their students, they did not refer to observation as an assessment tool.

The nature of providing the assessment information to others differed according to the audience. Seven out of eight of our reading specialists stated that they communicated student assessment results to teachers informally. “I just try to be proactive as far as making myself available. Getting into the classrooms and talking specifically to them about what they’re seeing as opposed to what I’m seeing or confirmation as to what I’m seeing. Sharing work samples, and asking to see samples of the work that they are doing in the classroom,” said one informant, a Reading Recovery teacher in a pull out program. Many conveyed that they met with teachers at lunchtime, before and after school, and at grade level meetings to talk about students. The reading specialists who said they communicate with parents about students’ performance explained that this information is exchanged mostly during parent-teacher conferences. Two informants reported providing a supplemental progress report, and one specialist actually gave reading grades to the students for their pull-out reading performance. One participant said she assisted the regular classroom teacher with grade reports but was not responsible for them. Most of our informants stated that they were not involved in this aspect of assessment. Providing information to administrators and specialized personnel about students’ assessments occurred at more formal times, as reported by our informants. Individual student results were discussed at formal IEP or MFE meetings. Rankings of students’ scores were transmitted in formal reports.

When asked about areas of change in her role as a reading specialist, informants with more than four years of experience as reading specialists expressed that assessment, both formal and informal, had increased. However the perceived purpose for the increased testing varied among our informants. One reading specialist used assessments to “[design] instruction for individual students,” the purpose established by her professional association (International Reading Association, 2000). On the other hand, one of our informants pointed to the fact that assessment could help her make the most of

her limited time with individual students. Another experienced reading specialist viewed assessment as removed from instruction. “There is much more reliance on [assessments] to measure student progress, school progress, district progress. You know, it’s just across the board of a school district, so that’s, that’s been huge.” Another participant felt that state mandates were responsible for the increased testing. “It just depends year to year of what the state wants.”

Leadership

Finally, our professional organization’s position statement (International Reading Association, 2000) argues that reading specialists provide leadership and serve as a resource to other educators, parents and the community. This leadership role, as reflected by the responses of our eight informants, is evident in several different ways. Reading specialists reported serving as a resource to teachers, especially those teachers with less experience in education. Informally, when solicited by other teachers, the participants said they offered their opinions about students, both who did and did not qualify for specialized reading services. Several reading specialists also shared book titles, ideas, and strategies with their colleagues. More formally, five out of the eight participants modeled reading lessons in a whole group setting while the regular classroom teacher observed. The reading specialists also indicated that they lead staff development programs on various topics such as types of assessment, state mandated testing, and writing prompts. Often these topics were suggested by an administrator who did not stay for the staff development session. “[They] definitely pop-in when we’re doing [in-services], but they don’t normally sit through them and take notes,” said one of our informants.

This same informant spends the majority of her time in “professional development with classroom teachers in a more formal leadership role” (International Reading Association, 2002). She reported that her job consists of going into the classroom and modeling reading lessons, and observing and serving as a coach to the 70 classroom teachers with whom she works. This reading specialist provides full day and after school sessions for teachers. She also teaches graduate level courses and professional development workshops. Part of her duties also includes serving as a resource to parents in the community. This parental resource role was common among our informants.

Reading specialists noted that early on in their intervention efforts, parents have many questions about the reading program, criteria for qualifying, and scheduling conflicts with other classes. Many of these questions are addressed at parent information nights in the beginning of the year. Later in the year, information about literacy is conveyed during parent-teacher conferences, telephone conversations, and/or through written notes. Several reading specialists said they send home “Reading Connection,” a newsletter with tips for families on reading and literacy. Reading specialists said they trained parent volunteers for special programs like Ohio Reads, a program that allows volunteers to work with children having difficulty. One participant also provides modeled teaching to parents. “I find that with parents they mainly want to know about

how to help their own child. They are not interested in, like, reading theory or how we teach reading here . . . or what resources are available. They want to know what I can do to help my child.”

A few reading specialists in this study shied away from the formal title of “reading specialist,” although seven out of eight participants had earned an Ohio reading endorsement and at least a master’s degree. The eighth participant was currently working toward her endorsement and master’s degree in reading. All had assumed many of the roles of reading specialists in their schools, but some feared being seen as a pseudo-administrator; they worried that in the role of a reading specialist they would no longer be viewed as a teacher. One said, “I hate to use the word “specialist” because I like to put myself as an equal to every classroom teacher and not someone that is a step above them.” Some participants brought in experts from outside the school to speak with teachers about literacy issues, one participant said, “[because] we kind of thought maybe it was better to have an outside person introduce some of the things, so it didn’t seem like we were saying, ‘Here – you need to do this.’” Studies by Fraatz (1987) and Tancock (1995) echo our findings. The reading specialists in Fraatz’s study “approached classroom teachers with caution and a measure of deference” (p. 70). They downplayed their supervisory functions and treated classroom teachers as peers. Tancock found that elementary teachers in her study viewed reading specialists as supportive, rather than as a source of special expertise and leadership.

Some of our informants were annoyed by the administrative duties they had to assume, duties that pulled them away from the day-to-day interactions with children. Many counted paperwork among the least important aspects of their job, except when it related to helping them address the individual needs of their students. Even with that type of paperwork, several participants spoke of the disproportionate amount of time they spent on the details of those tasks compared to the help it afforded the children. One specialist commented on the legal aspects of this paperwork: “The state has changed the volume of paperwork that they require; some of it is obviously for legality reasons In the past students maybe have been placed in special programs, and maybe inappropriately placed. So we’re being, you know, extremely cautious to make sure there are a lot of paperwork items that are required for that.”

All of our informants found that more and more was being put on their plates. One of the most demanding parts of their jobs related to testing. Several informants named testing as one of the greatest areas of change in their position over the years. Although testing was not listed in Bean et al. (2002) as a major area of change, paperwork and accountability were. Several reading specialists acknowledged the dramatic increase in paperwork and accountability was due to an increase in testing and other assessments. Many felt that although their expertise was in reading, writing and language instruction, increasingly they were being forced to provide instruction in test taking strategies. Six of the eight reading specialists felt that this added responsibility for teaching test taking strategies left less time for reading instruction.

Two of the participants in the same school district were under an administrative mandate to meet specific curricular standards from the state. The district was a low income, urban district whose students often moved both within the district and out of the district. The rationale for the administrative mandate, as stated by our two participants, was to establish consistency within district building and across districts within the state. Teachers, according to this administrative argument, would have a better understanding of the background knowledge of a student moving in from another district or moving from one building to another within the district. Each week teachers were given a specific set of skills and strategies, to be replaced with new skills and strategies in the following weeks. One reading specialist described the mandate as “test driven” and “developmentally inappropriate for [her students].” Another respondent expressed frustration at having plans placed on her by administrators who do not understand her students’ needs:

For example this week it says, identify or recognize short and long vowel patterns. Well, most of the first graders that I’m working with don’t know all of their short vowels yet. And we’re actually working on trying to get them to notice ending sounds. So to compensate . . . I’m really just incorporating short vowels even though I know they don’t all have ending sounds yet, and I’m just starting in the short vowels. . . . That’s not very appropriate for them.

Several of our informants told us that state mandated tests and other assessments left little time for much else. As one participant put it:

I think as the curricular demands get stronger, there is so little time for me or anybody else that teaches to do the kinds of things that I used to do. I mean, I used to be able to visit classrooms and do read alouds. I used to visit classrooms and do book reviews. . . . For a couple years, I would invite the [students] five at a time, to have lunch with me, and we would read books. I’d read to them, and then they were invited to bring a special book with them and tell how much they liked it. Oh, it was just great! It was just wonderful. But there’s no time for that anymore. It’s just, I can’t do it, just isn’t time and I miss that.

Conclusions and Implications

The reading specialist’s role in instruction and collaboration is a complex one affected by curriculum, interpersonal relationships, and the needs and wants of others. It is not enough to give reading specialists more time to collaborate with their colleagues, although time is severely limited. It is necessary to prepare reading specialists and other teachers to use that collaboration time effectively to meet the needs of the students (Quatroche, Bean, & Hamilton, 2001). Too often, as in our study, the reading specialist feels compelled to support the classroom teacher’s existing program, rather than draw on her own expertise and training to help the children.

Testing affects whether or not students qualify for assistance from the reading specialist, and it affects instruction because in often falls to the reading specialist to set aside reading instruction for test taking instruction. Success to some degree is measured by performance on these tests. It is clear from our respondents that assessments, especially state mandated tests, have a powerful influence on their day-to-day lives. Administrators, in conjunction with reading specialists, need to reevaluate the time devoted to testing. Within schools, and across the wider community, professionals need to decide how much of the reading program is about teaching children to read and how much is about teaching children to take tests.

Our data suggests there is some sort of perceived hierarchy within schools, particularly among classroom teachers and reading specialists. Some research indicates that some elementary teachers view reading specialists as support staff ready to aide the regular classroom teacher in her requests (Fraatz, 1987, Tancock, 1995), suggesting that they hold a lower place on this perceived hierarchy. Yet our data indicate that some reading specialists take leadership roles within their schools and districts. However, when they use their expertise to provide professional development, they are often viewed as administrators. These findings need to be explored further. These perceptions affect interpersonal relationships and have an impact on the quality of the instruction that children receive.

Our findings have implications for the design of preparation programs for both reading specialists and classroom teachers. The revised standards (Professional Standards and Ethics Committee of the International Reading Association, 2003) place added emphasis on leadership and student advocacy. However, our findings, as well as those of Fraatz (1987) and Tancock (1995), reveal that both classroom teachers and reading specialists have some apprehension about these new roles. Teacher preparation programs can help both classroom teachers and specialists begin to see how specialists can use the expertise they gained through training and experience and more competently serve as literacy leaders and student advocates in the school community.

Bringing about a meaningful change in a complex setting like a school building requires collaboration. Fullan (2001) describes the fragile nature of these collaborative efforts:

When we try to look at change directly from the point of view of each and every individual affected by it, and aggregate these individual views, the task of educational change becomes a bit unsettling. When we are dealing with reactions and perceptions of diverse people in diverse settings, faulty communication is guaranteed. People are a nuisance but the theory of meaning says that individual concerns come with the territory; addressing these concerns is educational change. (p. 295)

Despite the changing demands on reading specialists, the informants in our study all agreed that students' needs should determine the role of a reading specialist (Bean,

Trovato, & Hamilton, 1995). As students' needs change, so does the role of the reading specialist.

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Table 1
Study Participants

Reading Specialist	Current Teaching Assignment	Location	Full or Part Time	Years of Experience as Reading Specialist	Years of Experience in Education	Graduate Degree Earned	Special Literacy Training	Program Funding
Belinda	Primary, intermediate, middle	Rural	Full	4	9	Masters in Literacy	Reading Recovery training & Ohio reading endorsement	District
Dee	Primary	Urban	Full	10	15	Masters in Literacy	Reading Recovery training & Ohio reading endorsement	Title I
Erin	Primary	Urban	Full	2	2 plus	Currently working on Masters in Reading	Currently working on Ohio reading endorsement	Title I
Franki	Primary & intermediate	Suburban	Full	9	30	Masters plus 60 hours	Ohio reading endorsement & Ohio reading supervisor's license	Title I & district
Jill	Intermediate	Suburban	Part	4	16	Masters in Education	Ohio reading endorsement	Title I & district
Randi	Primary	Suburban	Full	10	20	Masters in Literacy	Ohio reading endorsement; Reading Recovery trained	District
Sarah	Primary	Suburban	Full	17	17	Masters in Literacy	Reading Recovery training & Ohio reading endorsement	Title I & district
Sheri	Primary & Intermediate	Suburban	Part	23	30	Masters in Reading	Ohio reading endorsement	Title I & district

Table 2
Interview Protocol

At what school-age level(s) do you work?

Level: Primary Intermediate Middle School H.S. College

What developmental area is your school?

School: Suburban Urban Rural

Do you work part-time or full-time as a reading specialist?

Working as a reading specialist: Part-time Full-time Other:

How many years have you worked as a reading specialist?
worked in education?

How many years have you

Number of years experience: Reading Specialist: _____ In education: _____

What is the source of funding for your reading program?

Funding: Federal Government Title 1 Grant Other:

Function: Please tell me about your job.

Instruction: What is your role in instruction of students? How often do you instruct students? What are the groupings for instruction (individual, small group, large group)? What percentage of your time is instructional? Do you work with teachers, administrators, parents, etc.? Tell me about that. Where does this instruction of students take place? What are the advantages and disadvantages of pullout, push-in, or both, whatever applies to your situation?

Assessment: Tell me about assessing students. How much time do you spend assessing? What assessment tools do you use? How often do you rely on each assessment tools?

Resources to teachers, school, etc.: Do you ever serve as a resource to the people you work with? (Teachers, Administrators, Parents) What kind of leadership roles do you take??

Administration: What administrative tasks do you have? How often do you do them? What are your views on administrative tasks? Do you have any other duties like cafeteria, recess, etc.?

Beliefs: Can you comment on the importance of the tasks you do? Which tasks seem most important? Which tasks seem least important? Are you consistent in performance with the level of importance you assign to each task? Is the amount of time you spend reflective of the quality and importance you assign to each tasks?

Changes: Have you noticed changes in your role within the past 5-6 years? What have been the areas of greatest change? Have your roles changed? Has there been a decrease or increase in: Paper work, resource to teachers, instruction in c/r, involvement in special education, with parents? What has been the area of greatest change?

Table 3
Original Codes & Expanded Categories

Assessment done by reading specialist

- Running records
- Phonemic awareness / word study
- Inventories
- Standardized
- Work samples
- Sight words
- Self-assessment
- General
- Formal
- Assessing teachers

Assessment qualifying for program

- General
- Formal

Administrative tasks

- Reports
- Scheduling
- General
- Attendance
- Report cards / Progress reports

Beliefs on tasks

- Time fits
- Time doesn't fit
- Most important
- Least important

Changes in role

- Testing / Assessment
- Trends in reading
- General
- Time
- Accountability
- Viewed as a pseudo-administrator

Communication

- Teachers
- Administrators
- Parents

Grouping

- Push in
- Pull out
- Whole group
- General
- Teacher attitude

Instruction

- Phonemic awareness / word study
- Independent reading
- Strategies and skills
- Guided reading
- Literature circles
- Vocabulary
- Content comprehension
- Minilessons
- General
- Writing
- Test taking skills

Miscellaneous

- Duties
- Management
- Accommodations / Test administration
- Training
- Professional development
- Professional service

Planning

- On own
- With teachers
- With administration
- By administration

Resource

- Teachers
- Administrators
- Parents
- Mentorship from others
- Feelings

Special Needs Students

- Academic
- Behavior
- Physical