How Preservice Teachers Use Learner Knowledge for Planning and In-the-Moment Decisions During Guided Reading

Allison Davis, Dr. Robin Griffith, Dr. Michelle Bauml
Outline

- Background
- Research Questions
- Basics
- Research Process: Participants, methods, data sources
- Findings
- Why it Matters
- Limitations & Future Research
- Questions
Project Background

- **Who** → Allison Davis, Dr. Griffith, Dr. Bauml
- **What** → Departmental Honors Thesis
- **Where** → TCU College of Education
- **When** → November 2016 to present
- **Why** → Desire to research a literacy-related topic
We utilized qualitative case study methodology to answer:

*How, during guided reading lessons, do preservice teachers (PSTs) use knowledge of the learner to make:*

1. **Planning** decisions?

2. **In-the-moment** (ITM) teaching decisions?
The Basics
Who are PSTs?

- Preservice teachers
- Teachers-in-training enrolled in an undergraduate certification program
- Practicing teachers: field and classroom

How, during guided reading lessons, do PSTs use knowledge of the learner to make:
1) Planning decisions?
2) ITM teaching decisions?
What is Guided Reading?

- **Small group** instructional context

- **Teacher supports** each reader’s development of systems of strategic actions for processing new texts at increasingly challenging levels of difficulty” (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017, p. 12).

- **Readers**: Word solving, building meaning, and developing fluency & expression

- **Tailored instruction**: Strengths and needs of individual students → fertile ground for teaching decisions.

- **Knowledge of learner is key**

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How, during guided reading lessons, do PSTs use knowledge of the learner to make:
1) Planning decisions?
2) ITM teaching decisions?

What is knowledge of the learner?

- Specific **information about students**:
  - Reading abilities
  - Reading behaviors
  - Reading level
  - Personality
  - Interests
  - Behavior

How, during guided reading lessons, do PSTs use knowledge of the learner to make:
1) Planning decisions?
2) ITM teaching decisions?

Image Source: http://www.ncfamily.org/school-choice/
What is teacher decision making?

- Teaching is decision making (Shavelson, 1973)

- “Any teaching act is a result of a decision, whether conscious or unconscious” (p. 18).

- Teaching decisions may occur in two key contexts

How, during guided reading lessons, do PSTs use knowledge of the learner to make:
1) Planning decisions?
2) ITM teaching decisions?
Types of Teaching Decisions

**Planning**
- Prior to the lesson

**In-the-Moment (ITM)**
- During the lesson
- Unplanned


Research Process
Participants

- Twelve PSTs
  - Purposively selected (Creswell, 2009) from 61 PSTs seeking early childhood certification
    - Enrolled in Dr. Griffith’s required Reading Methods course (Spring 2016)
  - Taught Kindergarten **guided reading lessons**
    - Four weeks
    - Local elementary school
- Completed lesson plans and reflections → **Guided Reading Projects**
Data Sources

- **Guided Reading Project** → comprised of four assignments
  - Specific portions analyzed that pertained to planning and ITM decisions
  - 12-13 written artifacts analyzed for each case
Sample Prompts

Planning:
1. What level is this text?
2. Why did you select this particular book?
3. Carefully consider the characteristics that make this text easy/hard and explain how these characteristics match the strengths/needs of the readers.

In-the-Moment:
1. What “in-the-moment” teaching decisions did you make?
2. Why did you make them?
3. What sources of teacher knowledge were you drawing upon to make those decisions?
4. Were they effective and how do you know?
Coding Process

- 4 phases:
  1) Examples of **knowledge of the learner** noted by PSTs
  2) **Planning** and ITM decisions
  3) What **aspect of knowledge of the learner** did PSTs use to make each decision?
  4) What **element of the guided reading lesson** did the decision pertain to?
Phase 1

- Examined what PSTs noticed and learned about their Kindergarten students → knowledge of the learner

- Each aspect of knowledge of the learner was coded

- PSTs noted their learners’ abilities related to:
  - Concepts about print
  - Comprehension
  - Monitoring and/or self-correcting
  - Cross-checking
  - Word-solving
  - Fluency
  - Expression
  - Reading level
Phase 2

- PSTs’ teaching decisions related to knowledge of the learner → coded as either “planning” or “ITM”

- 206 coded decisions directly related to knowledge of the learner
  - Planning: 71% (147 decisions)
  - ITM: 29% (59 decisions)
Phase 3

What aspect of knowledge of the learner did PSTs use to make each decision?

Planning:
- Student interests
- Student personality
- Student reading level
- Student needs
- Student strengths
- Student reading goals

ITM:
- Student personality
- Student needs
- Student strengths
- Student reading goals
- Student behaviors (classroom management)
- Student reading behaviors displayed (watching student read)
- Student comprehension levels displayed
Phase 4

What element of the guided reading lesson was each decision related to?

**Planning:**
- Text selection
- Pacing/sequencing of lesson
- Book introduction
- Teaching points
- Word solving
- Student involvement

**ITM:**
- Pacing/sequencing of lesson
- Book introduction
- Teaching points
- Word solving
- Student involvement
- Comprehension building
- Comprehension assessing
- Reinforcement/praising
Key Findings
## Decision Types

### PST Decisions

Total: 206 coded decisions

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<th>Text Selection</th>
<th>Word Solving</th>
<th>Other</th>
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<th>Comprehension</th>
<th>Reinforcing reader’s actions</th>
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<tr>
<td>65%</td>
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<td>15%</td>
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100% of planning decisions

100% of ITM decisions
## Decision Types

**PST Decisions**

*Total: 206 coded decisions*

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### Text Selection

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Why it Matters

- PSTs:
  - Drew upon **multiple facets of the learner** to plan and teach guided reading lessons
  - Demonstrated appreciation for:
    - Knowing the learner → Basis of all decisions
    - Purposeful text selection
    - Supporting word solving
    - Responsive teaching
    - Reading as a process → Scaffolding
    - Reflection
    - Comprehension → Purpose for reading
Why it Matters

- PSTs → Capable of making developmentally appropriate teaching decisions when armed with the powerful knowledge of their learners

- Importance of teacher preparation programs

- **Planning** → PSTs are able to use knowledge of learner in tandem with an understanding of text selection components

- **ITM** → “Teaching must be responsive to the learner” (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017, p. 367)
Limitations

- Guided Reading Project:
  - Four weeks
  - Only Kindergarten students

- Unclear → How PSTs would make decisions in other contexts and over time

- Self-reported teaching decisions; reflective rather real-time
Future Research

- Examine the *effectiveness* of PST decisions
  - Student outcomes of those decisions

- PST decisions in more diverse contexts:
  - Grade levels
  - Ages
  - Subjects
Thank you very much!
Questions?