An Evaluation of Texas Reading First Activities, Materials and Providers

Final Report to the Texas Education Agency

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Reading First is the cornerstone of the *No Child Left Behind* legislation. The goal of this program is that every child in America will read at grade level by the end of grade 3. The state of Texas submitted an ambitious application to *Reading First* in 2003 and was awarded approximately $532.5 million for a six-year period. Integral to the receipt of this money was a promise of accountability. *Texas Reading First* has instituted multiple accountability measures and has gone beyond federal accountability guidelines to require an evaluation of the *Texas Reading First* leadership. This report, prepared by Hezel Associates, LLC, provides the results of such an evaluation and focuses upon *Reading First* activities, materials and providers in the state of Texas predominantly in school year 2005-2006.

Major findings of this report include:

- In May, 2005, a Manager of *Reading First* Grants and Partnerships was appointed. This Manager has provided exceptional leadership to *Reading First* and has been

INTRODUCTION

The State of Texas applied in April, 2003 for *Reading First* (RF) funding and was awarded approximately $532.5 million over a period of six years to implement and evaluate RF across Texas. Written into this original application was a plan to evaluate RF activities, materials and providers at the level of the *Texas Reading First* leadership. In August of 2006, Hezel Associates, LLC was awarded a contract to carry out the evaluation. This report presents the results of our evaluation. The evaluation covers and reports upon school year 2005-2006 except in specific instances at which time we make clear that the discussion pertains to a different but important time period.

This evaluation was driven by the seven research questions posed within the original 2003 application to *Reading First* (p. 143-4) and repeated within the Request for Proposals. The questions were:

1.

6. To what extent is training provided to Reading Technical Assistant Specialists (RTAs) of high quality and timely?

7. To what extent do RTAs feel that they are being provided with the amount and quality of training, materials, leadership, and technical assistance required to be successful? To what extent have the Texas Education Agency and its *Reading First* partners been responsive to RTAs?

process (from an administrative standpoint), and the organizational and presentational quality of the materials.

The Hezel team analyzed each and every product (ten in total), summarized in chart form in "Evaluation Activity 2: Professional Development Materials," using a 0-4 rating scale (page 15). The team determined that strands 1-3, concerned as they are about the five components of learning to read, direct and explicit instruction, and data-driven instruction, should receive greater weight since they are most integral to good pedagogy. Strands 4 and 5, concerned as they are about the professional development process

1. The Center for Academic and Reading Skills (CARS)

In year 2005-2006, CARS was charged with 44 activities leading up to deliverables in 11 areas. Staff members from CARS reported:

- 44 (100%) activities were completed on time

In addition to providing all deliverables in a timely manner, Hezel also notes that CARS delivered at least two reports in addition to what was expected of them. These were (1) a critical elements analyses for "Success for All," and (2) a critical elements analyses for "Reading Mastery." These are two of the most frequently used reading programs in Texas schools.

2. The Texas Institute for Measurement Evaluation and Statistics (TIMES)

In year 2005-2006, TIMES was charged with 46 activities leading to deliverables in 5 areas. Staff members from TIMES reported:

- 29 (63%) activities were completed on time
- 16 (34%) activities were completed but later than originally scheduled
- One (2%) activity is ongoing (2.10)

Sixteen of 46 TIMES activities (34%) were completed, but not by the original due date agreed upon with the Manager of *Reading First* Grants and Partnerships. According to explanations provided by TIMES, ten activities (1.1, 1.3, 1.8, 1.11, 1.12, 1.13, 1.14, 1.15, 3.1 & 4.2) were late due to campuses, vendors and test publishers returning data (assessments and surveys) to TIMES later than was scheduled. The Manager of *Reading First* Grants and Partnerships and TIMES have since worked to alleviate this problem. The resolution is as follows: If a campus, vendor or test publisher does not turn in agreed-upon data by deadline, TIMES makes contact with the campus, vendor or test publisher, discusses the reason the data is late, and sets a new due date. If the data is not turned in by the new due date, this information is given to the Manager of *Reading First* Grants and Partnerships. The matter may then be treated as a non-compliance issue.

Activity (1.4) was completed, but not by its original due date. According to the annotation of TIMES' activity spreadsheet, the online survey for teachers, local campus coaches, principals and reading technical assistants was completed three to four months later than originally scheduled because of a lack of funding.

Deliverable 1.6, the collection of "rostering" information for funded and non-funded campuses was late , according to TIMES respondents, because staff members at TIMES were unable to obtain the type of electronic rosters necessary with the type of data necessary from the LCCs. TIMES did find a method to secure this information and provided this rostering information in their 2005-2006 final evaluation report.

In year 2005-2006, UTS was charged with seven major deliverables (with many sub-activities leading up to each of these seven major deliverables), each intended to help RTAs deploy trainings to the districts they serve:

The new Executive Director of UTS identified the purpose of the list of deliverables as helping the RTAs deploy the trainings conducted by CARS and VGC to the school districts they serve. She estimated that in 2005-2006:

- Approximately 70% of the trainings were completed and delivered on time.

For 2005-2006, UTS was to submit a monthly report to TEA documenting the time RTAs spent at the schools and any significant accomplishments and/or challenges they encounter. This was not accomplished because the reporting format was not considered appropriate by staff working at UTS in the 2005-2006 year. To alleviate this concern, a different reporting format has been developed for 2006-2007.

Also for 2005-2006, UTS required RTAs to spend time on-site, and the RTAs targeted approximately 60-70 percent of time to be spent on-site. Although RTAs did spend time on-site, they did not reach the targeted level due to the extensive travel time required of some of the RTAs who had responsibility for large territories. Expectations of time on campus are being revised, because it is nearly impossible for RTAs to spend a great deal of time on remote campuses that require three hours of driving time to reach them. Adjustments have been made to Wireless Generation, software (developed by staff at UTS) so that the RTAs can log their accomplishments. UTS staff members believe these adjustments will help improve the accuracy of the reporting by separating travel time from on-campus time.

In a related vein, UTS raised the point that for the year 2005-2006, the Wireless Generation program which RTAs use to log their activity only tracked quantitative information such as how long a RTA spent in a school. UTS suggested that it was important to also be able to enter qualitative information such as what was done during a school visit. UTS has responded to this issue, and Hezel Associates notes that the November 2006 report of RTA activity now includes qualitative information obtained from Wireless generation about how the RTAs were spending their time. To gain further insight still into what RTAs do in the schools, two UTS staff members plan to spend time with the RTAs at the schools on a regular basis during 2006-2007.

An additional deliverable goal for UTS during 2006-2007 will be to support the districts and campuses in the implementation of the trainings. In the past, some RTAs have considered delivering professional development as their sole responsibility. Staff members at UTS are working to expand the role of the RTAs by providing them with more tools (e.g., training in communication skills) to expand their role at the schools. In this new capacity they will work with both RTAs and principals. It is hoped that this

will help with the implementation of the principles of *Reading First* throughout all classrooms.

Finally, to give the best professional development possible to the RTAs, UTS suggests that it needs timely achievement data from TIMES. While this is not always possible due to both the practical matter of how long it takes to "turnaround" most data (two months) and privacy concerns, it is recommended that UTS, TIMES and VGC collaborate on this issue to best satisfy the data needs of all.

4. The Vaughn Gross Center (VGC)

In year 2005-2006, VGC was charged with 122 activities leading up to deliverables in 42 areas. Staff members from VGC reported:

- 34 (29%) activities were completed on time
- 23 (19%) activities were completed but later than originally scheduled
- 44 (36%) activities are ongoing as was planned
- 19 (15 %) activities have not been completed (4.5, 4.6, 10.2, 16.3, 17.1, 17.2, 27.3, 27.4, 31, 31.1, 31.2, 32.2, 32.3, 32.4, 32.5, 32.6, 32.7, 32.8, 32.9 – Please note that because 31 was not completed, all subsequent activities with a 31 or 32 at the beginning of the activity number could not be completed.)
- One (1%) activity was completed by a Partner (18.1)
- Hezel has no information on the progress and completion of one other activity (39.1).

VGC reported that 19 (15%) activities for 2005-2006 have not been completed. Of these activities, 11 are related to the development and testing of an online taxonomer. Because the taxonomer was not completed and tested (activity 31), ten subsequent activities (31, 31.1, 31.2, 32.2, 32.3, 32.4, 32.5, 32.6, 32.7, 32.8, 32.9) could not be completed. The development and testing of the taxonomer has been added to VGC's workplan for 2006-2007.

VGC reported that technology issues stood in the way of completion of other activities. CDs needed to be reversioned before certain professional development activities (4.5 & 4.6) could be carried out. Dissemination of other professional development CDs (27.3 & 27.4) was not completed because of the need for an application licensing update. The conversion of professional development CDs to an internet-based delivery system for 1-OTRA (26.1) and 2-OTRA (26.2) was not completed.

Other not-completed activities were attributed to (1) a TEA decision not to conduct a Superintendent Needs Survey (17.1 & 17.2)

EVALUATION ACTIVITY 2: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MATERIALS

This portion of the evaluation responds to the question: To what extent do the professional development materials for Kindergarten through Grade 3 reading curriculum and the scientific basis for reading instruction meet the highest standards for quality of professional development materials?

To answer this question Hezel Associates evaluated five sets of professional development materials from each of two *Texas Reading First* partners: The Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts (VGC), and The Center for Academic & Reading Skills (CARS). The professional development materials were ones that each of these agencies supplied in response to our request that five representative sets of professional development support materials be provided for our evaluation—materials that would best provide us with an understanding of how each partner supports professional development initiatives for teachers, coaches, principals, and RTAs.

Based on our evaluation, all ten products were judged to meet the highest standards for quality of professional development materials. In the next section we offer a description of each product and a discussion of its strengths and suggestions for the next iteration.

A. ESTABLISHING CRITERIA FOR OUR ANALYSIS

To establish criteria for our evaluation of *Texas Reading First* professional development Tfu Grade 3 rea

- Vocabulary Development
- Text Comprehension

Criterion 2: Evaluating the extent to which the professional development materials support teachers in applying the 3-Tier Reading Model to differentiate instruction[2] and provide intervention support for students struggling with reading concepts.[3]

- Tier 1: Effective core instruction, assessment and progress monitoring for all students.
- Tier 2: Supplemental instruction and intervention
- Tier 3: Tertiary Intervention: Intensive support

Criterion 3: Evaluating the extent to which the professional development materials support teachers in *explicit* and *systematic* reading instruction.

- Techniques presented to support explicit instruction
- Techniques presented to support systematic instruction

Criterion 4: Evaluating the extent to which the materials support the professional development *process*, from an administrative standpoint.

- Encourage collaboration and the sharing of knowledge among teachers, coaches, principals, on-site coordinators, and so on?
- Support coaches and administrators in assuming a leadership role?
- Demonstrate how to teach, and then discuss, a model lesson?
- Demonstrate how to use test data to inform reading instruction?
- Conduct ongoing, focused meetings with teachers and principals to discss how best to meet specific *Texas Reading First* objectives?
- Refer teachers to additional resources that promote further professional growth

Criterion 5: Evaluating the *quality* of professional development materials for reading instruction.

- Clarity of Presentation
- Pedagogy
- Professionalism
- Aesthetics / Appeal

B. E

Both parts 1 and 2 pose questions that encourage analytical thinking, such as, how to analyze student progress data by combining two different data sets: one set of observations made by the reading coach and a second set of observations made by the principal.

banners) reinforce the point of each lesson. One lesson, for example, focuses on a teacher giving explicit instructions on how to summarize text; we then see children practicing this skill independently.

- *Effective Reading Interventions*

This video zeroes in on the importance of assessing each child to inform decisions about grouping students. We also see ho

Finally, a glance at the agendas for each session reveals that participants are given several take-away materials. For example, educators who attended the October, 2005 session received ten different products including a series of videos, "Put *Reading First* Parent Information Brochures" in English and Spanish, and the "First Grade Texas Teacher Reading Academies": Presenter Guides, a CD, and videos.

b) Discussion

While the professional development materials created for high-level HEC conferences are impressive in regard to their scope and the expertise of the presenters, it is difficult to evaluate their impact at the campus, let alone the classroom level. In regard to future development of the HEC, it would be interesting to see a blueprint demonstrating how the knowledge gleaned at these conferences is disseminated to educators who have more direct contact with children. While this mechanism is probably well understood by participants of HEC, it may remains somewhat opaque to the outsider.

Next we reviewed five products developed by the Center for Academic & Reading Skills in Houston. The products, each one encased in a clearly labeled plastic portfolio, are summarized on the following chart.

C. Evaluation of Center for Academic & Reading Skills (CARS) Professional Development materials

Hezel Associates evaluated five different professional development products developed by the Center for Academic Study & Reading Skills. In what follows, we provide first a chart which shows the name of each product and our judgment of their quality. Then we focus on each product, describing and discussing each one in turn.

- Four DVDs: one DVD offers a wealth of video footage, while the remaining three serve as a digital method for archiving relevant files;
- A spiral-bound notebook entitled "*Texas Reading First* Advanced Coaching Institute: Houston" (May 9-10, 2006), which contains PowerPoint presentations focused on effective coaching practices;
- A brochure entitled "Classroom Coaching: A Closer Look," mainly promotional literature about coaching seminars; and
- A program summarizing the Institute's upcoming events entitled "Professional Development Opportunities."

The DVD component with its video segments greatly enhances the print materials. Through video footage, participants can view model lessons interspersed with footage of children actively engaged in reading activities. In general, the videos target the coaching process and exemplary reading instruction by depicting:

- Teachers in action;
- Coaches in action;
- Children engaged in reading activities; and
- Native Spanish speakers receiving reading instruction by a skilled teacher.

One of the strengths of the videos is that they depict real world problems. For example, in one segment the viewer sees how a local campus coach facilitates discussions and offers a colleagues advice, suggests next steps for teachers, models a demonstration lesson, and so forth. In another segment the viewer sees a local campus coach engage in an informal debriefing session with the school principal. Ultimately, the coaches walk Izr(vitCID 9 ٨

Rather than simply presenting information lecture-style, the presenter occasionally encourages audience participation. For example, one activity invites educators to volunteer what they *already know* about *Reading First* and No Child Left Behind (NCLB), what people *want to know* about this topic, and what they *learned*.

As with the first CARS product, the structural underpinnings of the presentations make for a coherent discussion of substantial amounts of information. Typically,

- The first slides outline the problem, specifically that "approximately 60 percent of students with reading difficulties are identified too late to derive full benefit from any intervention" (p. 2 of printout).
- Subsequent slides provide an overview of NCLB and situate *Reading First* within

regulating skills," centers on a scenario that demonstrates how to talk to students about working independently. A script is offered, which begins, "Boys and girls I am going to show you how I expect you to work on your own. First, it is important that you listen carefully to all directions. When you have a question you will use the *Ask-Three-Before-Me* procedure," (p. 6, slide 3).

The Make-N-Take kits consist of clear plastic bags containing directions (in English and Spanish) and manipulative materials—silver disks and a magnetic tape, and so on. Teachers are given directions for making an activity called "Do You Know Your Syllables?"

The CD-rom
The CD-rom is an archive of all of the material that is in the packet, in the form of Word or PowerPoint documents.

b) Discussion

Small group instruction is a vital part of the *Reading First* instructional model. This professional development product would serve teachers who are new to a small-group approach or who need further professional development in this important area. The video of exemplary teachers would, we feel, be especially helpful to teachers learning about and refining this method of teaching. The handouts and PowerPoint presentation would be strong adjuncts to the video in helping RTAs lead teachers through professional development on this topic.

4. CARS Product 4: Explaining the Superintendent Summit Data, or Identify a Growth Measure for Both PM & Outcome TRF Measures

a) Description

This product consists of several print documents:

- A PowerPoint Presentation entitled "Explaining the Superintendent Summit Data"
- Two worksheets called Using Assessment Data, State Level: Example, and Analyzing Student Assessment Data to Support Action Plans
- A "Cheat Sheet" for using assessment data

The topics covered in the PowerPoint presentation include:

- A definition of "proficiency";
- How to read outcome graphs and tables;
- Comparing performance using the "outcome across years" graphs and outcomes by demographics;
- End of year (EOY) data across years by domain;
- Additional graphical aspects of the "TPRI/TJL domain across years";
- Examples of data from Year 3 of *Texas Reading First*; and
- A final section called "Linking task to domain performance."

As near as we can tell, the data analysis in the presentation is an accurate take on how to read data from examining pictographs and bar graphs. But we're not 100 percent certain because our printout shows the slides greatly reduced with poor resolution.

As noted previously, the two sets of worksheets, designed to illustrate the themes presented, add much-needed real-world context to the experience. Audience members, for example, can learn how to use a table of information about children's reading from K-3 to answer questions such as: *"From 2004-05 to 2005-06, did the percentage of students 'still developing' ('SD') decrease (--), increase (+), or stay the same (SS) within each domain?"* (p. 5).

Toward the end of the packet (p. 9), is a one-page synthesis of all the data. This information serves as an answer key for the exercises.

The packet concludes with a handout called "Analyzing Student Assessment Data to Support Action Plan" that strives to pinpoint "areas of need" by grade level. This model concludes with a template for educators to use in creating their own action plans. Such plans should include: "priorities for addressing need," "initial steps to take," and "areas of action plan to address need" (*e.g.*, leadership, assessment, core reading program).

Last, the portfolio includes a "Cheat Sheet" for using assessment data, which educators will surely appreciate.

b) Discussion

Building capacity in this weighty subject must be a prime concern of all *Reading First* programs. Understanding student achievement data and its relationship to school-based action is an essential tenet of most school reform programs including *Reading First*; yet, Schools of Education have only recently begun to teach about this topic. The newness of this approach to school reform makes it critical that states such as Texas provide solid professional development on this topic, and it is our opinion that this professional development session will go some distance to improving educational leaders' knowledge of assessment data and how to utilize this data in instructional decision making.

In addition to noting the important intent of this professional development product, we also make note of the coherence of the product which we believe would provide step-by-step support in understanding this topic. And, as noted previously, we believe that the two sets of worksheets, designed to illustrate and further probe the topic of

e.g.,

5. CARS Product 5: Texas Reading First : Campus Implementation Review 'DRAFT'

a) Description

The "Campus Implementation Review" product, also packaged in a clear plastic portfolio, contains these materials:

- A survey focused on implementation of *Reading First* at the campus level;
- A set of rating criteria for campus implementation review, both a draft version and a finalized document (Spring, 2006); and
- Printouts of a PowerPoint presentation (May, 2006) in two different formats (i.e., 6 slides per page versus one slide per page with speaker notes included).

Consistent with *Reading First* guidelines, the RTAs are asked to review by way of a

b) Discussion

The product fully demonstrates what we have come to understand as an absolute strength of CARS: the capacity to understand what teachers need to most effectively and efficiently perform their jobs. This product is well organized, coherent, and thoughtful in the presentation supports it offers the RTAs.

D. SUMMARY

This evaluation activity focused on the extent to which the professional development materials (grades K-3) reading curriculum meet the highest standards for professional development materials in relation to the goals of *Texas Reading First*. To answer this question we devised a set of criteria to guide our examination of ten products, produced by VGC and CARS, across the following dimensions:

- The five components of learning to read
- Differentiated instruction
- The provision for explicit and systematic instruction
- The extent to which the materials support the professional development process
- The organization and presentation quality of the materials

Overall, there is an apparent deep commitment to the *Texas Reading First* Initiative guidelines—a commitment that is clearly reflected in this collection of professional development materials. All of goals bulleted above have clearly been met in the form of presentations with accompanying data or graphic organizers, "Make-N-Take" workshops, a simulation, and video footage of exemplary practice involving coaches, teachers, and of course, children. Often SBRR discussions are used as a way to motivate the audience to retool their practice. That is, once teachers become well-versed in the research base that shows the efficacy of a particular practice, say, for developing students' vocabulary, they will be more motivated to add it to their teaching repertoire.

In sum, both partners should be applauded for having created professional development materials that address the ever-present challenge of developing knowledge of SBRR and then bridging SBRR with practice.

EVALUATION ACTIVITY 3: QUALIFICATIONS OF READING FIRST PERSONNEL AT THE TEA AND PARTNERSHIP ORGANIZATIONS

For this part of the evaluation, Hezel Associates responded to the question: What are the qualifications of individuals and organizations providing services under *Reading First*, including the TEA, the Center for Academic and Reading Skills at the University of Texas Health Science Center (CARS), the University of Texas System (UTS), the Vaughn Gross Center (VGC), and the Texas Institute for Measurement, Evaluations and Statistics (TIMES)?

To answer this question, we collected resumes and job descriptions for all key individuals within all *Reading First* Partners. We collected information on academic degrees, referred and non-referred publications, academic and non-academic presentations, and work experience including experience with work similar to what is being done for *Texas Reading First*. Where necessary, we supplemented this with clarifying telephone interviews of personnel. Based on our professional opinions, we then determined an overall fit between each person as represented by his or her resume and the given job description.

A. FINDINGS

Without exception, the qualifications for all *Reading First* personnel at the TEA and the partner organizations are strong and aligned well with their respective job descriptions.

EVALUATION ACTIVITY 4: LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION

For this part of the evaluation, Hezel Associates responded to the question: How have the Texas Education Agency and its various *Reading First* partners functioned individually and collectively to provide leadership to the State in implementing *Reading First* and to ensure the goals of *Reading First* are met? What procedures and mechanisms have been put in place to facilitate communication amongst these parties and enhance leadership across the State? Where has leadership been lacking, and what steps need to be taken to improve it?

A. FINDINGS

1. Providing leadership to the State in implementing Reading First and ensuring the goals of Reading First are met

Leadership and support were provided in several ways according to the partners Hezel Associates interviewed. First, the Manager of *Reading First* Grants and Partnerships provided structure and guidance to the partners and local education agencies. Second, *Reading First* partners each bring a unique skill set and perspective to the partnership that they shared with each other.

2. Procedures and mechanisms to facilitate communication among TEA and the Reading First partners

Officially, TEA and the *Reading First* partners meet once per month for an all-day session that lasts until all agenda items have been addressed. Agenda items must be submitted in advance, so that the meetings can stay focused. Each *Reading First* partner organization decides who among its staff will attend the monthly meetings. Typically, two staff members from each organization attend. All meetings emphasize consensus and collaboration.

In addition to the monthly partner meetings, quarterly meetings are held for director-level staff. These are seen as excellent opportunities for program directors to communicate. In addition, end-of-year meetings are held to review yearly progress.

A great deal of communication, in person, via conference calls, and via e-mail, occurs in between the monthly meetings. In addition,Td(and colfBDC 0.7(d81g)Tj-0.0cp[eetingin pquestionnaire)PF*

as "open-door and collaborative." Staff members are evaluated on an annual basis using the University of Houston protocol.

The *Reading First* project at VGC is divided into three teams: 1) Online; 2) the Higher Education Collaborative, and 3) the Technical Assistance / Professional Development team. Full staff meetings occur approximately every month. In addition, each team has its own meetings. The Online team meets once per week or every two weeks depending on their timelines. The Higher Education Collaborative team, because it is quite small, meets less frequently. The Technical Assistance / Professional Development team meets approximately every three weeks; this may increase to every two weeks. The meetings are usually agenda-driven. E-mail is used frequently to stay in touch, in particular with the Technical Assistance / Professional Development team members who

task of understanding, interpreting, and using assessment data. Other leadership-related difficulties involving the Reading Technical Assistants were mentioned as well. Basically, because the 67 RTAs are spread across the state, it was difficult to manage them. Originally there were three Project Managers to oversee the Reading Technical Assistants; now there are five to provide additional leadership. It will be determined in 2006-2007 if this level of leadership is sufficient.

EVALUATION ACTIVITY 5: REVIEW OF QUALITY CONTROL PROCEDURES

became a sample of convenience, with diminished capability to serve as meaningful basis of comparison to the *Reading First* schools.

Although this situation appears to have been well beyond the control of the program evaluators, it is unclear from the 2005-2006 draft report just how comparable the treatment and comparison groups ultimately were in terms of demographics and student performance. The report does indicate that prior academic performance was not taken into account, and that this will be done in the upcoming longitudinal study. The report also states that the groups were generally comparable at the end of the 2004-2005 year, but with no substantiating data. No data is given to indicate the comparability of the comparison schools to RF schools in terms of demographics. Such data would have been useful to give some context to the reported statistical analyses. Finally, the evaluation report makes no mention of problems in constructing the comparison group. (The information about problems with the comparison group was learned in a telephone interview with TIMES staff.)

Other problems included a very low rate of return on surveys in the comparison group, as well as many teachers not providing student achievement data. For instance, the comparison sample sizes for the teacher survey of self-reported instructional practices are as follows (see also page 21 of the 2005-2006 Summary Evaluation Report draft):

K	6
Gr 1	8
Gr 2	4
Gr 3	3

Putting aside the issue of the representativeness of these teachers, such small samples are too small for meaningful statistical analyses, particularly when they are done by grade level, as they were in this instance (see page 23 of the 2005-2006 Summary Evaluation Report draft)**.** A similar example from the leadership survey analysis is the sample size of only eight principals from comparison schools.

The implication of these problems with the comparison group is that many of the reported analyses for 2005-2006 are un-interpretable. Apparent advantages for the *Reading First* group may be spurious, and the few instances of apparent advantage for the comparison group schools may also be spurious. Since comparison schools were not able to be matched to *Reading First* schools as planned, it would have been useful to control statistically for school demographics and prior performance and for respondent (teacher, coach, principal, etc.) characteristics. Presumably this is planned in the three-year longitudinal analysis. Alternatively, for cross-sectional data as gathered for the 2005-2006 report, the data might better be reported descriptively rather than to attempt an inferential analysis.

factor-based) scales for analysis. For independent judgment, presenting tables of factor loadings for all items would also be helpful, as well as explaining what decision rules were used about the needed size of an item's factor loading to justify its retention in the scale. For instance, it appears that only on

EVALUATION ACTIVITIES 6 AND 7: HIGH QUALITY, TIMELY AND RESPONSIVE TRAINING TO THE READING TECHNICAL ASSISTANTS

In this part of our evaluation, Hezel Asso

b) Usefulness of professional development sessions

Similarly, most all of the RTAs and other professionals who attended the professional development sessions responded that the training was useful to them. In most cases, well over 90% agreed with the following statements:

- "This training is an effective approach to teaching students at any grade level"
- "The students will benefit from the school's use of this training"
- "I am confident that I can implement this training in the manner intended"
- "Using this training will increase teachers' ability to effectively teach students to read"

Exceptions included 85 percent of respondents at English Language Learner trainings who agreed that they were confident that that they could implement the training in the manner intended, and 89 percent of Special Education training participants who agreed that using the training would increase teachers' ability to effectively teach students to read. Respondents were less positive regarding the time it takes to teach the new material. Only 80 percent agreed to the item "It is easy to allot the time required to teach reading when using this training."

2. Responsiveness to RTA needs by Texas Reading First leadership

Overall, according to the *Reading First* partners interviewed, the partner organizations worked hard to provide the RTAs with the tools necessary to do their work during 2005-2006 and were proud of the professional development provided. Still, RTA's needs arose throughout the year, and the partners addressed them in a variety of ways.

a) Determining RTA Needs

The *Reading First* partners used various means to determine the needs of the RTAs. CARS reported learning about RTA needs by "getting out in the field with them," a practice initiated at CARS at the end of 2005. UTS Project Managers are also in the field with the RTAs as many as four days per week. Other staff members at UTS who have not traditionally spent time with the RTAs plan to visit the schools with them once or twice a month during 2006-2007. Also during 2006-2007, the Higher Education Collaborative will begin an initiative called the "*Reading First* Liaison," in which selected professors will participate in VGC professional development and visit RTAs in the field with the same purpose in mind: understanding the work of the RTAs better by knowing more about what goes on in the field.

Anecdotal information regarding RTA needs is obtained on an ongoing basis as the RTAs ask the partners for support. For example, in response to problems in the field, RTAs requested that VGC staff members visit to provide technical assistance. While on these visits, VGC staff members learned that some aspects of the *Reading First* implementation were not going as well as planned: The level of dissemination of *Reading First* knowledge from RTAs to teachers was not as great as what was assumed

by VGC. In response to this finding, VGC staff decided to initiate proactive visits during which they provided the RTAs with assistance requested in advance.

To determine whether the professional development sessions provided by the *Reading First* partners meet the needs of the RTAs, the RTAs are asked to evaluate each of the trainings they attend.

In addition, information about the RTAs' field experiences is collected, as previously discussed, using *Wireless Generation*, a personal digital assistant application developed by staff at UTS. The RTAs input data after each school visit. Program Managers typically receive weekly reports generated by the application that include by RTA, the amount of time they spent on-site, contacts on the sites, their phone and e-mail contacts, and the amount of time they spend planning the work that they do in the schools." Total time spent at the school and descriptions of any problems encountered are also included. Collecting such information has helped UTS to see, for example, the need to factor in such issues as extensive travel time for RTAs as they travel around the large state of Texas. Currently, a UTS staff member is revising the program to disaggregate travel time to and from the site from timeIn addition, itdet Tc 0 Tdw 2as.245le1 Tc Td(do h sw 1o evalu

Another problem RTAs reported was that some of the trainings they received were simply too long to take into the field practically. The RTAs may have had a two- or three-day training on a topic but would not receive equivalent time in the schools to provide similar professional development for the teachers. In response, CARS helpfully "repackaged" professional development presentations into various lengths, for example, a 45 minute presentation, an hour presentation or a half-day presentation.

During 2005-2006, anecdotal reports from UTS Project Managers revealed that a small number of RTAs were not taking their jobs as seriously as was expected. To address this issue, a fifth Project Manager was added to provide additional supervision of the RTAs. In addition, six RTAs were fired for non-performance. At the same time, UTS worked strategically to hire highly-skilled and competent replacements.

For 2006-2007, RTAs are being asked to re-focus their efforts somewhat, and the *Reading First* partners are working to ensure they have adequate training to do so. First, the RTAs are being tasked with customizing their technical assistance to the needs of particular campuses on the basis of assessment results. To prepare the RTAs for this task, the *Reading First* partners agreed to emphasize training on data usage. In addition, staff at UTS are working to get assessment data for the RTAs so that they can target campuses in need. Staff members at UTS believe that, ideally, the RTAs in the field would have benchmark data available, by school, to help them target needy campuses.

In addition, the RTAs are being asked to spend more time supporting campus and district staff members in implementing *Reading First*. Previous to 2006-2007, the primary responsibility of the RTAs was to deliver professional development. Now, the RTAs are being asked to perform more like consultants in that they will be expected to support the more specialized needs of principals and other people on campuses. Training on topics such as "how to have a difficult conversation" and other communication skills is being offered to the RTAs.

CONCLUSION

In August of 2006, Hezel Associates, LLC was charged with the evaluation of *Texas Reading First* activities, materials and providers for school year 2005-2006. To conduct this evaluation, a wide variety and volume of documents were examined and multiple interviews were conducted. From this research, a number of major findings emerged.

In May, 2005, a Manager of *Reading First* Grants and Partnerships was appointed. This Manager has provided exceptional leadership to *Reading First* and has been a strong source of support to the leadership partnership. The qualifications of all *Reading First* personnel currently at the Texas Education Agency and the other partner organizations are strong and a good fit for their respective positions and, during 2005-2006, all members of the leadership partnership communicated well with one another.

Organizations in the *Texas Reading First* leadership partnership completed most of their required deliverables for 2005-2006 on time. All professional development products developed for *Reading First* by two the leadership organizations (the Center for Academic Reading and Skills, and the Vaughn Gross Center) and evaluated for this study are of the highest quality. In addition, high quality and timely training was given by the partners to the *Reading First* Reading Technical Assistants (RTAs) and the partner organizations were responsive to their evolving needs.

For some deliverables, partners reported being hindered in specific instances in 2005-2006 by receipt of partner funding from TEA later in the year than expected, and by difficulties in obtaining student data. Partner funding issues have largely been resolved in 2006-2007, and *Texas Reading First* is working to resolve the problems with obtaining student data.

Regarding the required state-wide evaluation of student achievement data, the quality of this evaluation has been compromised by many factors, some not in the control of the evaluator. The planned longitudinal analysis covering three years of data will provide a more meaningful analysis of the impact of the program on student outcomes.

In sum, the activities, materials and providers for *Texas Reading First* during school year 2005-2006 were in their majority of the highest quality. Where problems have been noted, the Manager of *Reading First* Grants and Partnerships is already working to resolve these issues. Hezel Associate's has full confidence that full and positive resolution will be achieved.

Appendices

Appendix A:
Tables of Partner Deliverables

[redacted]

Activity	Due	Actual deliverable date
9.4 Deliverable – Demonstration and samples of activities (as appropriate)	Spring 06	Spring 06
9.5 Deliverable – Flexible presentation plan that outlines various training options for the TOT (e.g. 2 hour presentation, 45 minute presentation, ½ hour presentation)	Spring 06	Spring 06
9.6 Deliverable – Index with all materials in the TOT package	Spring 06	Spring 06
10. Assist Partner in conducting the 2006 Summer Coaching Institute	Summer 06	Summer 06
10.1. Deliverable – TOT Package	Summer 06	Summer 06
11. Assist Partners in conducting the 2006 Leadership Conference	Summer 06	Summer 06
11.1. Deliverable – All conference materials	Summer 06	Summer 06

Table 2. TIMES' Deliverables

Activity	Due Date	If due date not met, why not? Reasons given by TIMES
Planning, Administration and Evaluation: Overall Evaluation of the Reading First Initiative		
1.1 Identification of all instruments being used in comparison schools at each grade level	On August 26, all forms were due to TIMES from Campuses. COMPLETED*	All data submitted by submission due date were received and included in the database. TIMES continued to receive data submitted late throughout the fall. These have also been included in the database.
1.2 Hiring/scheduling/ coordinating and training classroom implementation observation staff	COMPLETED	
1.3 TIMES receipt of BOY assessment data	On November 4, all BOY data due to TIMES from Campuses and vendors. COMPLETED*	All data submitted by submission due date was received and included in our database. We continued to receive data after November 4. All late data has been included in database.
1.4 Online Surveys for Teachers, LCC, Principals and RTAs	Scheduled for completion August-September/ Completed November-December COMPLETED*	Completed later in the fall due to lack of funding.
1.5 Collection of comparison sample contact information, scheduling of data collection efforts	October – December COMPLETED	

Activity	Due Date	If due date not met, why not? Reasons given by TIMES
1.6 Collection of rostering information from funded and non-funded campuses	COMPLETED*	
1.7 Collection of beginning of year classroom observation data in Comparison schools	October-December COMPLETED	
1.8 TIMES receipt of MOY assessment data from campuses and vendors	Originally, all MOY data was due in January, but this deadline was changed to February 10 COMPLETED*	TIMES began receiving some data in January, but the MOY assessment was not completed at most campuses until the end of January. The February submission date gave time for campuses and vendors to collect data to be sent to TIMES. All data submitted by submission due date was received and included in the database. We continued to receive date submitted late throughout the year and are still receiving outstanding data from vendors through the fall of 2006. All late data have been included in the database.
1.9 Spring 2006 assessment for all comparison campuses	COMPLETED	
1.10 Collection of end-of-year		

Activity	Due Date	If due date not met, why not? Reasons given by TIMES
		fall of 2006.
1.16 Inclusion of Comparison school observation data in analyses for full evaluation report and preparation of reports for TEA and USDOE	October 30 COMPLETED	
1.17 Analysis of 2005-2006 evaluation data, and preparation of reports for TEA and USDOE	October 30 COMPLETED	
Technical Assistance: Reading Assessments		
2.1 Collection of implementation monitoring data at all funded and control campuses	December – January COMPLETED	
2.2 Work with RF Partner Centers to Develop Technical Assistance Materials for Tejas LEE, including tools for grouping students, mapping test results to curriculum materials, and tools to assist in administering, interpreting, and reporting results of Tejas LEE	January – August COMPLETED	
2.3 Collection of all training materials targeting assessment that are being used by UT-CARS, cont. - VGCRLA and UT-System in 2005-2006	October – August COMPLETED	
2.4 Consulting with UT-CARS, VGCRLA and UT-System on the development and refinement of professional development content	COMPLETED	
2.5 Work with CARS, VGCRLA and UT-System to develop new guidelines on assessment use as necessary	COMPLETED	
2.6 Provide written and verbal technical assistance to schools, CARS, VGCRLA, and TXRF RTAs on assessment use as needed	October – August COMPLETED	
2.7 Provide training to Texas service centers, RF Partner Centers, and RTAs on appropriate use, interpretation, and reporting of Tejas LEE, including training in the use of resource materials	October – August COMPLETED	

Activity	Due Date	If due date not met, why not? Reasons given by TIMES
2.8 Review feedback from training sessions and modify and update training, as necessary, to meet the needs of Texas teachers and schools, and the RF Partners who are working to assist them	October – August COMPLETED	
2.9 Provide assessment summary reports to RF Partners and LEAs at the conclusion of each assessment cycle (BOY, MOY, EOY)	October – August COMPLETED*	
2.10 Develop summary of technical assistance activities and guidelines for assessment use for incorporation into TXRF Evaluation report	October – August ONGOING	To be included in Year 3 Report
2.11 Assist TEA in updating the SEDL database with information collected from Campus Information Forms and Implementation Monitoring Visits	October-August COMPLETED	
2.12 Collection of implementation monitoring data at all funded and control campuses	April – May COMPLETED	
Professional Development Activities		
3.1 Updating information on assessment instruments being used in TXRF funded schools at each grade level	August 26 all forms were due to TIMES from Campuses. COMPLETED*	All data submitted by submission due date were received and included in the database. TIMES continued to receive date submitted late throughout the fall of 2006. These data have also been included in the database.
3.2 Hiring/scheduling/ coordinating and training classroom implementation observation staff	August-September COMPLETED	
3.3 Identification of TXRF Cycle 3 Evaluation Sample, collection of Sample contact information, scheduling of data collection efforts with schools	October -December COMPLETED	
3.4 Train site coordinators in on-line data collection procedures	October – December COMPLETED	
3.5 Collection of pre-professional development training data on Cycle 1, Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 TXRF Evaluation Samples	October – December COMPLETED	

Activity	Due Date	If due date not met, why not? Reasons given by TIMES
3.6 Collection of all training materials being used by UT-CARS, VGCRLA and UT-System during 2005-2006	October – August COMPLETED	
3.7 Update all professional development evaluation surveys, implementation observation protocols, and feedback measures as necessary	October – August COMPLETED	
3.8 Coordinate collection of training session survey data with UT-CARS, VGCRLA and UT-System	October – August COMPLETED	
3.9 Collection of all training feedback survey data; surveys will roll out at the beginning of each type of professional development training and will follow the schedules outlined by CARS, VGCRLA and UT-System	October – August COMPLETED	Partner decision not to have surveys collect training-specific knowledge as the information was not available in time to create forms. A further Partner decision was made to make training specific-knowledge testing the responsibility of the individuals providing training, if the trainers so desired.
3.10 Collection of end of year professional development training data on Cycle 1, Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 TXRF Evaluation Samples	October – August COMPLETED	Partner decision not to have surveys collect training-specific knowledge as the information was not available in time to create forms. A further Partner decision was made to make training specific-knowledge testing the responsibility of the individuals providing training, if the trainers so desired.
3.11 Data analyses and report writing (to go to RF Partners) on all trainings and implementation observations from August 2005 to May 2006	May – June COMPLETED	
3.12 Inclusion of data and analyses of current year professional development activities in full evaluation report, and preparation of reports on Professional Development for TEA and USDOE	July-September; new due date was October 30 COMPLETED	
LEA Reading First Funds: Student Assessments		
4.1 Orders for all outcome assessments processed for all funded LEAs.	December COMPLETED	

Activity	Due Date	If due date not met, why not? Reasons given by TIMES
4.2 TIMES receipt of Spring assessment data and reports from test publishers.	June; completed in August COMPLETED*	Data not received until June and throughout July and August. Last data received on August 15. Reports generated throughout August and final reports generated on Sept 2 for Superintendent Summit.
Non-Reading First Funded Activities		
5.1 TIMES will send TEA the detailed lists of the contents of each box submitted that are attached to the packing slip as stated in the Call for Early Reading Instruments posted in the Texas Register December 30, 2005.	December; completed April 17 COMPLETED*	Due to the small response to the first posting by TEA, TEA reposted in January then sent out a listserv message. The publisher submission date was extended by TEA until March 27. The deadline was then also moved to provide TIMES the time needed to complete inventories.
5.2 Conduct reviews of submitted Early Reading Assessments	April – June **COMPLETED***	Due to the extended deadline by TEA for publishers' submissions, the TIMES deadline was moved forward by 6 weeks.
5.3 Submission of final report written by TIMES documenting its review and recommendations of early Reading Assessments for consideration by the Commissioner. TEA will publish and/or distribute the Commissioner's List and/or direct TIMES to do so via distribution to the Reading First Partners and RTAs.	June 20 **COMPLETED***	TIMES deadline moved forward because of extended deadline by TEA for publishers' submissions.

Completed* = completed but later than original due date

Table 3. UTS Deliverables

	Goals
A.	Success of TRF is contingent upon implementing a robust PD program that provides funded LEAs with focused and specific support to meet their district and campus reading improvement goals. UT System provides overall leadership among RTAs and their professional development. This year all decisions will be based on data for planning and deployment of PD. Changes this year: * From 65 to 66 RTAs * 1 new PM * 1 contracted data person to work/train sites/RTAs on using data effectively to drive instruction Measurement of infrastructure effectiveness: Lower Project Manager to RTA ratio to improve internal communication processes and provide more consistent oversight for RTA PD deployment efforts to funded LEAs. Evidence of success will be demonstrated through monthly PLOG reports. For contracted data services, evidence of success will be demonstrated through established consultant reports.
B.	Major responsibilities of RTAs for 05/06: assist districts/campuses in building capacity to sustain training delivered thus far, customize training based on the LEA's K-3 student achievement data, and build capacity in LEAs to sustain reading improvement efforts beyond grant period. Measurement of RTA effectiveness: Based on LEA student achievement results, focused deployment of required professional development to district administrators and Local Campus Coaches. Evidence of success will be demonstrated through data collected in the UT System PLOG platform.
C.	Resource Management: In an attempt to maximize use of grant funds, UT System utilizes the following: * PM to RTA ratio and a RTA to campus ratio * State contracts for purchasing and travel * Program imposed restrictions on travel reimbursements * Multi-level review/approval process for all purchases requests * Use of established UT System departments/offices for internal functions which are not funded by grant Measurement of effectiveness: Decrease in number of centralized RTA training days, increased use of alternative methods for PD deployment to RTAS (webcast, teleconferencing, web-based conferencing opportunities, etc.), and increased time spent in direct service to funded LEAs.
D.	UT System will work collaboratively with CARS and VGCRLA to ensure the appropriate and efficient dissemination of training materials in conjunction with the implementation of a program of PD. Measurement of effectiveness: Decreased number of centralized RTA training days, established critical training sessions based on LACIR model, increased use of alternative methods for PD deployment to RTAS (webcast, teleconferencing, web-based conferencing opportunities, etc.), and increased time spent in direct service to funded LEAs.

Activity	Due	Actual deliverable date	If date not met, why not? Responses provided by VGC
5. Introduce the online resource taxonomer and provide updates as new resources are added to it (webcasts)	12/16/05 3/05, 6/05	4/26/06 10/13/06 completed*	
6. Conduct PD session on incorporating 5 Components into Learning Centers	Spring 06	1/24/06 completed	
7. Conduct PD session on components across OTRAs (one component across grade levels)	TBD	TBD (maybe 2/20/07) ongoing	Taxonomer not completed. Activity added to 06-07 grant as a pilot mini-course.
8. Conduct PD sessions (including regional) for RTAs serving bilingual schools	TBD	6/06-present ongoing	
8.1 ESL Strategies (Maria Elena Arguelles)	12/8/05	12/8/05 completed	
8.2 3-Tier Decision-making: Bilingual MOY (NOT SPELLED OUT IN GRANT)	Spring	Not completed	Partners did not include in RTA 05-06 PD calendar.
8.3 Provide session on New Light on Literacy (Spanish intervention)	Spring	1/24/06 completed	
9. Build capacity by partnering with UTS Project Managers and RTAs in delivering RF PD to LEAs (as needed/regionally)	Ongoing	6/06-present ongoing	
10. Develop and conduct RTA/ESC PD sessions using simulated school data to inform 3-Tier model implementation	No info given	8/31/05 2/24/06 completed	
10.1 Conduct RTA/ESC PD session on using MOY school data to inform 3-Tier model implementation	Spring	2/24/06 completed	
10.2 Conduct RTA/ESC follow-up session on technical assistance questions for 3-Tier Model (Part 2) (NOT SPELLED OUT IN GRANT)	Spring	Not completed	Partners did not include in RTA 05-06 PD calendar. VG began providing more direct technical assistance related to the 3-Tier Model to schools through RTA TA requests instead.
10.3 Conduct RTA/ESC PD session on simulated school data using DIBELS to monitor student progress	Spring	2/24/06 completed	
10.4 Assist CARS by conducting PD session on administering/using DIBELS	TBD	7/12-7/13/06 7/27/06 8/26/06 complete d	CARS did not need our assistance for 7/12-13/06 PD, but one VG team member did help in one district with PD sessions on 7/27& 8/26
11. Develop and conduct RTA/ESC PD using simulated MOY data to help principals and coaches monitor progress toward school goals.	Spring 06	3/8/06 completed	
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Activity	Due	Actual deliverable date	If date not met, why not? Responses provided by VGC
elements of the 3-Tier Reading Model			

Activity	Due	Actual deliverable date	If date not met, why not? Responses provided by VGC
collaborative community (CLOC)		ongoing	
26. Using as much existing KLS technology as feasible, convert the CDs to an Internet based delivery system.		9/05-present ongoing	Order was reversed: KOTRA & 3OTRA done; 1OTRA & 2OTRA underway. Target date is 11/1/06 for Searchlight pilot of knowledge learning system.
26.1 1-OTRA	6/06	Not completed	
26.2 2-OTRA	8/31/06	Not completed	
26.3 3-OTRA and K-OTRA (as many additional OTRAs as possible)	TBD	9/06 completed	
27. Launch dissemination of the SERP CDs to teachers, including K-12 special educators, and make them available to non-RF campuses via the VGC Online Store.	No info given	6/06 complete d	Elementary CDs disseminated; Secondary CDs completed but had to be reversioned due to licensing requirement – will be in store 11/06 for dissemination.
27.1 Provide CDs to RTAs for delivery to Elementary SERP CDs to elementary RF campuses	12/05	10/06 completed*	
27.2 Disseminate to non-RF campuses via Online Store	12/05 & ongoing	10/06 Completed*	
27.3 Mailout Secondary SERP CDs to secondary RF campuses	2/06	Not completed	Dissemination delayed due to changes needed at release date (application licensing update)
27.4 Disseminate to non-RF campuses via Online Store	2/06 and ongoing	Not completed	
27.5 Hire and provide training to online experts	11/05	6/06-present ongoing	
28. Provide technology support to users, award CEUs to teachers for completion, and provide progress monitoring information to principals & teachers.	No info given	6/06-present ongoing	
28.1 Technology help request status logs	Ongoing	6/06-present ongoing	
28.2 Monthly reports of CEUs awarded	Ongoing	6/06-present ongoing	
29. Provide online experts to answer participant questions within 48 hours	No info given	6/06-present ongoing	
29.1 Answers to participant questions on server for participant viewing	Ongoing	6/06-present ongoing	
29.2 Online experts' discussions in online collaborative community	Ongoing	6/06-present ongoing	
30. Develop a web site like that developed for the 4-OTRA CD for the legacy CDs	8/31/06	9/30/06 10/13/06 11/1/06 completed*	Beta version shown in webcast. Pilot to be done 11/1/06-1/31/07.
31. Complete and test online taxonomer tool	8/31/06	Begins 11/1/06 Not completed	
31.1 Complete usability testing on prototype	10/10/05	Begins 11/1/06 Not completed	
31.2 Develop specifications for	11/01/05	Begins 11/1/06	

Activity	Due	Actual deliverable date	If date not met, why not? Responses provided by VGC
taxonomer improvement		Not completed	
31.3 Secure resources for taxonomer development (contract)	12/01/05	3/06 completed*	
31.4 Continue disaggregating and classifying OTRA and VGC materials	Ongoing	9/05-present ongoing	
32. Add 1-OTRA and 2-OTRA information to assist educators in searching VGC online reading resources and in compiling topic-related PD or instructional packets. (CHANGE "1OTRA & 2OTRA" TO "KOTRA & 3OTRA")	No info given	Begun ongoing	
32.1Conduct acceptance testing on Taxonomer with KOTRA & 3OTRA	2/06	9/15/06 Completed*	
32.2 Revise taxonomer to fix "bugs"	3/01/06	3/06-present Not completed	
32.3 Conduct acceptance testing on release version	3/15/06	Not completed	
32.4 Release taxonomer version with 1-OTRA	4/1/06	Not completed	
32.5 Add 2-OTRA	6/1/06	Begun Not completed	
32.6 Conduct acceptance testing and develop report	6/15/06	Not completed	
32.7 Revise taxonomer	7/3/06	3/06-present Not completed	Started with KOTRA & 3OTRA. By 11/1/06, added 1 & 2OTRAs so pilot of Searchlight learning component has all 4 OTRAs.
32.8Conduct acceptance testing on version with 2-OTRA and develop report	7/21/06	Not completed	
32.9 Release taxonomer version with 2-OTRA	8/15/06	Not completed	
33. Update website to include links to Texas RF websites and resources	Ongoing	9/05-present ongoing	
34. Improve, maintain and facilitate CLOC as a virtual technical assistance tool for RTAs to communicate with each other and with other Statewide Coordinators in password-protected communities.		9/05-present ongoing	
34.1 Reorganize data in CLOC to make website more user friendly and easier to locate information, including posting FAQs in Library	10/15/05	10/1/05 completed*	
34.2 Conduct an RTA focus group to identify ways that CLOC can be improved to promote knowledge sharing and develop report	10/30/05	11/16/05 completed*	
34.3 Develop features to meet user needs, including notification feature	Ongoing	12/1/05 ongoing	
34.4 Facilitate the RTA community and respond to specific technical assistance requests	Ongoing	9/05-present ongoing	
34.5 Provide training to Partners in posting documents to CLOC	10/30/05	10/14/05 completed	

Appendix B:
Interview Protocol

Interviewer: _____

Interviewee: _____ Position: _____

Date:_____

Top Line Notes: *(Use this space to record key words, impressions, phrases, insights, etc., immediately after the interview):* **_____**

_____.

EVALUATON OF READING FIRST ACTIVITIES, MATERIALS, AND PROVIDERS IN TEXAS

HEZEL ASSOCIATES, LLC

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW GUIDELINE

I. _____

- Let's discuss the deliverables that your organization is responsible for. The broad categories are as follows:

- Which of the deliverable goals *have* been met?

- Were thes

- What are some of the obstacles that members of your organization sometimes have to overcome to achieve their goals?

- What's your analysis of the strengths of your organization's leadership team?

- In your opinion, in what ways is the overall organization leadership lacking?

- Can you talk about the communication between your organization and *Texas Reading First* Leadership?
  - Does the *Texas Reading First* Leadership Team invite your participation? Does it invite your input?
  - If so, how (*e.g.*, meetings, events)?
  - If not, why not?

- Do you feel that your organization has influence on the *Texas Reading First* Partnership?
  - If so, in what way?
  - If not, why not?

- How could the Partnership strengthen its *communication*?

- How do you think your organization could play a leadership role in implementing these improvements?

VI. FINAL THOUGHTS

- Is there anything else about the deliverable goals assigned to your organization, and which have and haven't been met in a timely way that you'd like to tell me?

Appendix C:
Evaluation of Texas Reading First Professional Development Materials

- modeling fluent reading?

____ *0, not at all* _____ *1, somewhat* _____ *2, a fair amount* _____ *3, excellent*

Vocabulary Development

Are teachers provided with adequate support in the following aspects of vocabulary development:

- helping students learn unfamiliar words indirectly (such as by reading books)?

____ *0, not at all* _____ *1, somewhat* _____ *2, a fair amount* _____ *3, excellent*

- providing direct instruction for some vocabulary words?

____ *0, not at all* _____ *1, somewhat* _____ *2, a fair amount* _____ *3, excellent*

- providing extended and active engagement with vocabulary?

____ *0, not at all* _____ *1, somewhat* _____ *2, a fair amount* _____ *3, excellent*

- fostering word consciousness among students?

____ *0, not at all* _____ *1, somewhat* _____ *2, a fair amount* _____ *3, excellent*

Text Comprehension

Are teachers provided with adequate support in the following aspects of text comprehension:

- teaching students how to use specific comprehension strategies, such as: monitoring comprehension; using graphic and semantic organizers; recognizing story structure; question-answer strategies; and summarizing?

____ *0, not at all* _____ *1, somewhat* _____ *2, a fair amount* _____ *3, excellent*

- using the following techniques to teach the strategies mentioned above: direct explanation; modeling; guided practice; and application?

____ *0, not at all* _____ *1, somewhat* _____ *2, a fair amount* _____ *3, excellent*

-

____ *0, not at all* _____ *1, somewhat* _____ *2, a fair amount* _____ *3, excellent*

- using cooperative learning strategies to help students understand texts?

____ *0, not at all* _____ *1, somewhat* _____ *2, a fair amount* _____ *3, excellent*

Total instructional design points for Section I: _____

Criterion II. Evaluating the extent to which the professional development materials support teachers in applying the 3-Tier Reading Model to differentiate instruction[5] and provide intervention support for students struggling with reading concepts[6]

A. Tier 1: Effective core instruction, assessment and progress monitoring for all students.

Are teachers provided with adequate support in the following aspects of Tier 1:

- how to select and administer assessment tools that are designed to screen children when they first begin to struggle in reading?

____ 0, not at all _____ 1, somewhat _____ 2, a fair amount _____ 3, excellent

- how to select and administer assessment tools that are designed to diagnose students' strengths and weaknesses as readers?

____ *0, not at all* _____ *1, somewhat* _____ *2, a fair amount* _____ *3, excellent*

- how to interpret the results of assessment data derived from various instruments?

____ *0, not at all* _____ *1, somewhat* _____ *2, a fair amount* _____ *3, excellent*

5

____ *0, not at all* _____ *1, somewhat* _____ *2, a fair amount* _____ *3, excellent*

- how to ensure that students involved in such programs are making adequate progress?

____ *0, not at all* _____ *1, somewhat* _____ *2, a fair amount* _____ *3, excellent*

- how to adapt curriculum for students who are experiencing extreme difficulty in learning to read?

____ *0, not at all* _____ *1, somewhat* _____ *2, a fair amount* _____ *3, excellent*

Total instructional design points for Section II: _____

IV. To what extent do the materials support the professional development process, from an administrative standpoint?

How effectively do the materials:

- encourage collaboration and the sharing of

V. Evaluating the *quality* of professional development materials for reading instruction.

A. Clarity of Presentation

To what extent do the materials:

- describe an idea or strategy clearly and explicitly?

____ *0, not at all* _____ *1, somewhat* _____ *2, a fair amount* _____ *3, excellent*

- offer concrete instructional examples?

____ *0, not at all* _____ *1, somewhat* _____ *2, a fair amount* _____ *3, excellent*

- provide additional teaching tips or strategies?

____ *0, not at all* _____ *1, somewhat* _____ *2, a fair amount* _____ *3, excellent*

- lend themselves to straightforward and efficient (*i.e.*, next day) implementation?

____ *0, not at all* _____ *1, somewhat* _____ *2, a fair amount* _____ *3, excellent*

B. Pedagogy

To what extent do the materials:

- integrate sound pedagogy consistently and coherently throughout the prouct?

____ *0, not at all* _____ *1, somewhat* _____ *2, a fair amount* _____ *3, excellent*

- align with *Texas Reading First* instructional goals, specifically *differentiated instruction*?

____ *0, not at all* _____ *1, somewhat* _____ *2, a fair amount* _____ *3, excellent*

- align with *Texas Reading First* instructional goals, specifically *systematic, direct instruction*?

____ *0, not at all* _____ *1, somewhat* _____ *2, a fair amount* _____ *3, excellent*

- help teachers rise to the challenge of teaching every child in their classroom to read?
  read?

____ *0, not at all* _____ *1, somewhat* _____ *2, a fair amount* _____ *3, excellent*

C. Aesthetics/appeal of the materials

- How professionally produced are the materials?