Evaluation of the Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies (TALA): Interim Report #1

Executive Summary and Evaluation Report

May 2009

Submitted to:
Texas Education Agency

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Executive Summary

According to several reading researchers and government agencies, there is a literacy crisis in middle schools across the United States (e.g., Kamil, Borman, Dole, Kral, Salinger, & Torgesen, 2008; Slavin, Chamberlain, & Daniels, 2007). Over 70 percent of adolescents struggle to read and enter high school reading below grade level (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2003; NASBE, 2006). Approximately two-thirds of eighth grade students read below the proficient level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and one-quarter read below the basic level (NASBE, 2006). In Texas, TAKS passing rates decrease in middle school. Since poor readers are at a greater risk for dropping out of high school (Snow & Biancarosa, 2003), adolescent literacy has become a "hot topic" for research and intervention (Cassidy & Cassidy, 2007). Additionally, research indicates that students with average reading ability are unprepared for reading in post-secondary education and the workforce (Kamil et al., 2008). The middle school years offer the last chance to build the foundation of literacy skills for high school success (Slavin et al., 2007).

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

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

Research and evaluation on reading initiatives at the federal (e.g., *Reading First*) and state levels indicate that there is much to be done in order to close the achievement gap for learners in reading (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2003; NASBE, 2006). Funding to close the achievement gap in reading has been focused on training and preparation of reading teachers, remediation for students reading below grade level, and an emphasis on early literacy strategies, including the promotion of family literacy. Over the last 12 years, Texas has focused on improving reading instruction in order to improve overall reading achievement for students at all grade levels. The most recent initiative is the Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies (TALA).

About TALA

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

The TALA Model

TALA instructional routines represent scientifically-based instructional strategies based on reading research. The emphasis is on implementation of a three-tier reading model consistent with an RTI model. This model emphasizes ongoing data collection and immediate intervention for students who demonstrate a need in one or more reading skills. TALA is tailored for the unique structure of middle schools and is framed within a school-wide approach to addressing the needs of struggling adolescent readers.

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

The TALA program consists of two separate academies: the ELA Academy and Content Area Academy. The ELA Academy is designed for reading and English language arts teachers. The Content Area Academy targets math, science, and social studies teachers. Both academies provide professional development in scientifically-based, general literacy instructional strategies. The ELA Academy also provides training in the use of a diagnostic and progress monitoring assessment and reading intervention instructional strategies.

The Format of TALA

The ELA Academies consist of three days of face-to-face training, followed by a one-day online practicum follow-up. The Content Area Academies consisted of 1.5 days of face-to-face training, followed by a half-day online practicum. TALA trainers provided examples of the strategies and their applications, both in hard copy and video formats, with appropriate subject area materials in the middle school classroom. The content is organized into seven units with individual modules that last between 30 and 75 minutes. Units 1-3 were covered in both ELA and Content Area Academies, while units 4-7 were only covered in the ELA Academies.

Implementation of TALA

Regional Education Service Center (ESC) leaders were in charge of operations for the implementation of TALA statewide. The Texas Education Agency established education service centers to serve as a first point of contact for school districts, parents, and other community stakeholders, and to provide leadership, training, and technical assistance. The ESC leaders scheduled TALA ELA and Content Area Academies in their respective regions, established locations, set dates and times, and worked with their IT staff to set up the registration information in their catalog and develop a registration database to track participants.

TALA utilized a training of trainers (TOT) model in order to prepare trainers for the implementation of TALA statewide. First, the State TOT was held in March 2008, where master trainers trained state trainers. Three Regional TOTs were conducted in May 2008 in which state trainers trained regional trainers. Finally, regional trainers conducted TALA Classroom Teacher Academies throughout the 20 ESC regions with a maximum of 50 participants. Teachers who teach at campuses that are rated Academically Unacceptable (AU) in reading were required to attend TALA. ESCs planned to conduct approximately 100 ELA classroom teacher academies and 100 Content Area classroom teacher academies between June 2, 2008 and August 15, 2008. Grade 6 teachers attended these trainings in the summer of 2008, while Grade 7 and Grade 8 teachers will attend trainings in summer 2009.

Approach to the TALA Evaluation

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

- Evaluate the quality of the TALA training, including the materials developed for use in training, the training of trainers, and the training of classroom teachers;

- Evaluate the quality and level of ongoing implementation of the TALA training in the classroom;

- Evaluate the effects of the TALA teacher training on student outcomes; and

- Conduct an analysis of financial data to assess the cost-effectiveness of TALA.

Phase One is an evaluation of the TALA training, including an evaluation of the quality of the content, the delivery of the training at the state, regional, and classroom teacher levels, and trainer perceptions of the training that they attended and conducted. Phase One also addresses Evaluation Objective 4, focusing on how funds were allocated to develop and implement TALA, while Phase Two of the evaluation addresses objectives 2-4. This report focuses on Phase One of the evaluation.[1]

Phase One Methodology

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

Several data sources were used to address the research questions for Phase One of the evaluation, including TALA archival planning materials (e.g., steering committee meeting minutes, program rules), TALA training materials, TALA training observations, state trainer interviews, and the regional trainer survey. Instruments developed in order to collect data from these sources included an expert review protocol, the TALA training observation protocol and semi-structured field note template, the state trainer telephone interview protocol, and the regional trainer survey. An expert review panel (consisting of five nationally recognized experts in literacy, professional development, and special education) reviewed the TALA content and materials. Members of the ICF evaluation team conducted observations of TALA trainings at all three levels (State TOT, Regional TOT, and Classroom Teacher Academies), conducted state trainer telephone interviews, and administered the regional trainer web-based survey.

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[1] Phase Two of the evaluation will be completed by August 31, 2009.

For this report on Phase One of the TALA program evaluation, researchers conducted a series of exploratory and descriptive analyses to understand the distributional properties of survey and observation data. This quantitative data were mixed with qualitative findings and content analyses to generate overall statements about the quality of TALA trainings, stakeholder perceptions, and budget allocations.

Phase One Findings

Expert Review of Materials

TALA instructional strategies were perceived by the Technical Advisory Board (TAB) members as important and necessary for adolescent readers. The routines require active teaching by the teacher, high levels of student participation, and require the students to become "more cognitively engaged in learning." Many of the instructional routines are representative of best practices in literacy and scientifically-based research practices. The TAB recommended that, in order to improve the implementation of TALA in the schools, teachers need systemic support from reading coaches and school administrators, on-going training, classroom follow-up, and opportunities to practice the routines with feedback. In addition, the TAB members suggested that teachers should see models in the classroom, during and after the training. Lastly, the TAB members felt that the trainers should use actual texts in training so the teachers will see how the material will work in their classrooms and to make sure that teachers are exposed to a large number of instructional routines that are taught in conjunction with their texts. In other words, this would help teachers learn how to fuse the content with the strategies.

Observations of TALA Training

The TALA Regional TOT and TALA Classroom Teacher Academies were highly rated by observers. Trainers at the Regional TOT and Classroom Teacher Academies were able to effectively implement the components of the TALA training. In both trainings, the presenters/trainers explained and reviewed TALA content, provided examples and elaborations, and distributed and used the handouts. Both trainings (Regional TOT and Classroom Teacher Academies) had lesser occurrences of modeling the routines and having the participants practice the routines independently or with each other. The trainers were less likely to use the videos in the Classroom Teacher Academies.

Regional and Classroom Teacher Academies were rated as being reflective of best practices for professional development and the culture of the training sessions facilitated the engagement of participants in the TALA training. However, observers were hesitant to report that the Regional TOT prepared participants to present the TALA training. For example, observers rated perceived preparation as low for "working with adult learners" and "differentiation of instruction for various learning styles."

Observers rated the TALA Regional TOT as exhibiting high implementation, following the activities and content as presented in the training materials. This rating is reflected in perceived preparedness of regional trainers to present the activities as outlined in the training. Also, the culture of the Regional TOT was perceived as positive as well as the perception of regional trainers to maintain a positive learning environment. However, there was less implementation of the TEKS and TAKS in the Regional TOT and observers reported lower beliefs that the training built participants' skill in linking their instruction to the TEKS and developed participants' understanding of the TAKS student assessment system.

Perceptions of TALA Training

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

Discussion and Next Steps for TALA

The overall findings of Phase One of the TALA evaluation provide evidence that TALA content is representative of best practices for literacy instruction and is explicitly aligned to national and state standards in English Language Arts (ELA) and Reading. Evidence is also presented for the effective implementation of TALA routines at all levels of training (state, regional, and classroom teacher). The TALA training had a positive climate, conducive to learning. The training of trainers prepared the state and regional trainers well for their role as a TALA trainer.

Phase Two of the evaluation will assess whether TALA classroom teacher academies led to a change in teaching practices and if the TALA influence student achievement. Finally, the cost-effectiveness and sustainability of TALA will be assessed in Phase Two.

1. Reading Initiatives in Texas and the Importance of Adolescent Literacy

This chapter introduces the background of the current evaluation. This includes a review of the recent literacy initiatives in the state, including the Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies (TALA) which are the subject of this evaluation. In addition, the chapter includes a review of the research on adolescent literacy and major findings about effective practices to set the stage for the TALA evaluation framework which will be discussed in Chapter 3. The chapter concludes with a discussion of Response to Intervention models (RTI), the underlying framework for TALA which will be discussed in Chapter 2.

Improving Reading Achievement in Texas

Research and evaluation on reading initiatives at the federal (e.g., *Reading First*) and state levels indicate that there is much to be done in order to close the achievement gap for learners in reading (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2003; NASBE, 2006). Funding to close the achievement gap in reading has been focused on training and preparation of reading teachers, remediation for students reading below grade level, and an emphasis on early literacy strategies, including the promotion of family literacy. Equally important are the pillars of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) that seek "to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to attain a high-quality education" and improve academic achievement of at-risk students (NCLB, 2002).

Over the last 12 years, Texas has focused on improving reading instruction in order to improve overall reading achievement for students at all grade levels. The Texas Reading Initiative, which began in 1996 as part of the Student Success Initiatives, emphasizes leadership development, diagnostic assessment, comprehensive research-based programs, intermediate intervention, progress monitoring, and end of the year student performance analysis to improve reading success of third grade students.[2] The Texas Teacher Reading Academies (TRAs), which started in 1999, provided teachers of students in kindergarten through Grade 3[3] with professional development in the areas of explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. In addition, the TRAs highlighted effective instructional practices such as grouping, monitoring student progress to inform instruction, and providing interventions for struggling readers. Findings from an evaluation of the TRAs were positive in terms of the content being research-based (based on expert review), student academic achievement, teacher and administrator perceptions, classroom practice, and cost-effectiveness.[4]

Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies (TALA)

House Bill 2237[5] (HB 2237) was passed by the 80th Texas Legislature on June 15, 2007, to take immediate effect for the 2007-08 school year.[6] The general purpose of programs created under HB 2237 was to improve high school success and increase college readiness in Texas public

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[2] *The Texas Reading Initiative,* http://www.tea.state.tx.us/reading/model/sixpillars.html
[3] According to the evaluation report, professional development materials were developed for fourth grade teachers, but they never attended training due to lack of funding.
[4] http://www.tea.state.tx.us/opge/progeval/ProfessionalDevelopment/teacher_academies_final_12_01_04.pdf
[5] http://www.legis.state.tx.us/tlodocs/80R/billtext/html/HB02237F.htm
[6] *Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies (TALA) Overview,* http://www.tea.state.tx.us/tala/about/about.html

schools. As a part of this initiative, HB 2237 provided direction and funding for the Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies (TALA).

TALA was legislated to provide reading academies for teachers who provide instruction to students at the sixth through eighth grade levels. The general instruction program is based on the theory (or concept) that "students who can read effortlessly with comprehension are better equipped to understand literature, science, social studies, and mathematical word problems."[7] In other words, developing basic reading skills will assist in the overall understanding of what is being read in the content areas. The reading intervention program is based on principles of intervention for struggling readers.

In order to achieve this goal, TALA focuses on improving teaching rather than directly on students. TALA provides English language arts/reading and content area teachers "successful, research-based strategies for improving their students' academic literacy."[8] The legislative requirements were that the program must provide training in:

- strategies to be implemented in English language arts and other subject areas for multisyllable word reading, vocabulary development, and comprehension of expository and narrative text;

- an adaptation framework that enables teachers to respond to differing student strengths and needs, including adaptations for students of LEP or students receiving special education services;

- collaborative strategies to increase active student involvement and motivation to read;

- other areas identified by the commissioner as essential components of reading instruction;

- administration and interpretation of the reading instrument and scientific research-based strategies for effective reading instruction, for long-term intensive intervention to target identified student needs in word recognition, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension; and

- strategies for incorporating reading instruction into the curriculum for the subject area taught by the teacher (for content area teachers).

In addition, the academies are framed within a school-wide approach to addressing the needs of struggling adolescent readers.

HB 2237, Section 4 outlines the TALA program for teachers of Grades 6-8. There are two separate academies, the ELA Academy for ELA and reading teachers and the Content Area Academy for teachers of mathematics, science, and social studies. The ELA Academy focuses on content literacy strategies, intensive intervention strategies, and reading assessment to inform instruction/intervention. The Content Area Academy focuses on content literacy strategies within each specific subject. Grade 6 teachers attended trainings in the summer of 2008, while Grade 7 and Grade 8 teachers will attend trainings in summer 2009. HB 2237, Section 4 also states that the academies are requirements for teachers who teach reading, mathematics, science, or social studies at campuses that are Academically Unacceptable (AU) in reading at any grade level at the campus. For the summer 2008 TALA, Grade 6 teachers from campuses who were rated AU in reading at the sixth grade level in the 2006-07 school year were required to attend.

The TALA ELA Academy provides training on the administration and use of the Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment (TMSFA). "The Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment

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[7] *Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies (TALA) Overview*, http://www.tea.state.tx.us/tala/about/about.html
[8] "Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies (TALA) FAQ," August 1, 2007.

(TMSFA) is a diagnostic and progress monitoring instrument for grades 6-8 students who do not meet the standard, or score below 2100, on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). For grade 7 students who failed the TAKS reading test as 6th graders, the administration of a diagnostic instrument is mandatory during the first six weeks due to TEC, §28.006(c-1), as added by HB 2237, in the 80th Texas Legislature, 2007."[9] Texas school districts are expected to administer the assessment to students in Grade 7 who did not demonstrate reading proficiency. Additionally, districts are to provide intensive instruction and intervention to these students based on the results of the assessment.

Overall, HB 2237 provides funding and guidelines to implement adolescent literacy academies. Through linking with the TMSFA, the legislation also provides educators with a tool to identify students who are struggling with literacy skills.

Research on Adolescent Literacy Instructional Strategies

According to several reading researchers and government agencies, there is a literacy crisis in middle schools across the United States (e.g., Kamil, Borman, Dole, Kral, Salinger, & Torgesen, 2008; Slavin, Chamberlain, & Daniels, 2007). Over 70 percent of adolescents struggle to read and enter high school reading below grade level (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2003; NASBE, 2006). Approximately two-thirds of eighth grade students read below the proficient level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and one-quarter read below the basic level (NASBE, 2006). In Texas, TAKS passing rates decrease in middle school. Since poor readers are at a greater risk for dropping out of high school (Snow & Biancarosa, 2003), adolescent literacy has become a "hot topic" for research and intervention (Cassidy & Cassidy, 2007). Additionally, research indicates that students with average reading ability are unprepared for reading in post-secondary education and the workforce (Kamil et al., 2008). The middle school years offer the last chance to build the foundation of literacy skills for high school success (Slavin et al., 2007).

Middle school students are viewed as "readers in transition" (Ivey & Broaddus, 2000, p. 68). The focus shifts from "learning to read" to "reading to learn." Despite the shift in focus, many middle school students are still learning to read. In the middle school years, the more basic texts of elementary school are replaced with more complex informational textbooks (Ataya & Kulikowich, 2002; Kucer, 2005). Students who are struggling to read may start to perform poorly in different subjects (e.g., science, social studies, math) due to this change in reading materials (NASBE, 2006). However, this middle school period presents an opportunity to influence reading achievement (Scammacca, Vaughn, Edmonds, Reutebuch, & Torgesen, 2007; Slavin et al., 2007). Unfortunately, middle school students are not receiving the individualized instruction that they need to read the more advanced academic discourses in mathematics, science, and social studies beginning to emerge at these grade levels (NASBE, 2006).

What Works in Adolescent Literacy Instruction?

The National Association of the State Boards of Education (2006) views literacy as the "linchpin of standards-based reform" and links the improvement of literacy skills to overall academic achievement (p. 5). Several reports reviewing the research on literacy have advocated explicit and systematic reading instruction for adolescents (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004; Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw, & Rycik, 1999; National Reading Panel, 2000; NASBE, 2006; RAND Group, 2002; Scammacca et al., 2007). Explicit instruction in four key areas has been found to lead to reading

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[9] http://loveladyisd.net/info/spotlight/info.aspx?id=187

improvement: (1) phonics, (2) fluency, (3) vocabulary, and (4) comprehension. The types of skills required for each area are explained below.

Phonics. Phonics is the system of relationships between letters and sounds. Systematic phonics instruction has been found to be effective for struggling readers. Increased word recognition leads to improved overall reading achievement for students struggling with multisyllabic words. At least 10% of middle school students have deficits in their ability to decode text (NASBE, 2006). Adolescents benefit from direct instruction "at the word level and at the text level" (Scammacca et al., 2007, p. 12). This means that students need explicit instruction in how to sound out words in addition to overall comprehension strategies of what is read. Moats (2001) recommends direct instruction in decoding the meaning in parts of words (e.g., prefixes, root words) to improve word recognition, vocabulary development, and subsequent reading comprehension.

Fluency. Fluency is the ability to read a text quickly, accurately, and with proper expression (National Reading Panel, 2000). The focus moves from decoding text[10] to comprehension when students are fluent readers. Reading research indicates that the use of repeated readings (where students read and reread text passages) improves reading fluency and overall reading achievement. However, it has been argued that for repeated readings to be effective in promoting fluency, students should read aloud with the teacher providing guidance and feedback (Torgesen & Hudson, 2006).

Vocabulary. Vocabulary refers to the knowledge of words and word meaning. Direct vocabulary instruction is critical to the development of reading skills (Kamil et al., 2008; NASBE, 2006). Adolescents have been found to benefit from strategies that allow them to identify, understand, and remember key vocabulary (Moore et al., 1999). Vocabulary development is also tied to successful reading comprehension in the content areas. Adolescents with reading difficulties benefit from improved knowledge of word meanings and concepts (Scammacca et al., 2007).

Comprehension. Comprehension is the process of understanding and constructing meaning from text. Reading comprehension is the most important cognitive skill and is considered the "essence of reading" (Durkin, 1993). This skill is necessary for success in all major subject areas (Kamil et al., 2008). Unfortunately, many adolescents "can read words accurately, but do not comprehend what they read" due to a lack of comprehension strategies (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004, p. 8). According to the National Reading Panel (2000), seven comprehension instruction strategies have demonstrated the best evidence of success: (1) comprehension monitoring, (2) cooperative learning, (3) curriculum, (4) graphic organization, (5) active listening, (6) mental imagery, and (7) mnemonic or multiple strategies.

As the research reports have indicated, instruction that focuses on only one component of reading is not sufficient to promote literacy in struggling readers. Phonics, fluency, and vocabulary are factors necessary for reading comprehension to occur. As a result, an emphasis on comprehension strategies alone will not increase reading ability, especially in students who are struggling readers. The inclusion of multiple reading components within the same intervention has been found to be the most effective to improve reading achievement (Scammacca et al., 2007).

The reading research supports Texas' focus on successful, research-based literacy strategies in both ELA and the content areas. Additionally, it supports teaching literacy strategies to middle

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[10] Decoding is the ability to figure out how to read unknown words by using knowledge of letters, sounds, and word patterns. http://www.readingsuccesslab.com/glossary.htm

school students, as well as teaching literacy skills within academic subjects to provide meaningful content.

Adolescent Literacy and Response-to-Intervention Models

Response-to-intervention (RTI) is a multi-tiered instructional model for educational assessment and intervention delivery. It is based on student progress data, which inform at what level intervention delivery should be provided to students who are not responding to their current program of instruction (Colorado State Department of Education, 2006; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1998; Fuchs & Vaughn, 2006; NASDSE, 2006). Increased interest in RTI is spurred by its relevance to key provisions of both the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA, 2004) and the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 (NCLB, 2002). This topic received the most comments and resulting revisions among the final IDEA regulations for Part B of the IDEA 2004 (Klotz, 2006). Although there are different RTI models, the approach is generally understood to include: (1) a way to recognize and respond to struggling students through providing proactive, early intervention, (2) a method of disability identification, and (3) sometimes both.

Proponents of RTI argue that it may reduce the number of students who will require special education and related services by providing early intervening services for those who are at-risk. They also argue that this approach reduces the likelihood of misidentification (as well as over-identification of minority students in special education). In addition, RTI offers a framework that may reduce identification bias that has historically been a concern in special education identification; furthermore, recent legislation at the federal level supports its use. Proponents attest that RTI can promote better alignment between assessment and instruction, and thus, produce positive outcomes for all students.

Many RTI models apply a three-tiered approach that entails primary (or universal), secondary, and tertiary instruction.[11] Each level is synonymous with a tier, and student movement among them is typically informed by progress monitoring data, as illustrated in Figure 1.1. Tier 1 is the core intervention offered to all students. Tier 2 represents interventions given to targeted students identified through assessment. Tier 3 is reserved for students who need the most intensive intervention as identified through assessment.

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[11] The three-tiered model has research support with younger readers and limited research with secondary school students.

Figure 1.1: Sample Response to Intervention Model
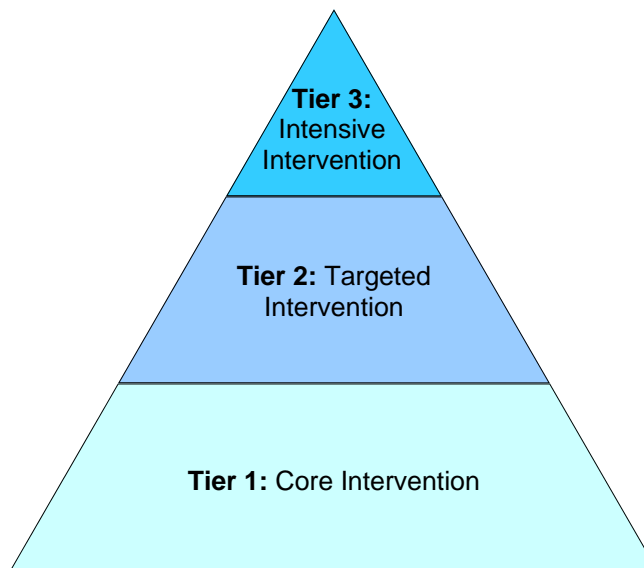
Tier 1 is characterized as high-quality (i.e., research-based) instruction provided to all students. There is a voluminous research base on Tier 1, primarily with elementary school students. Synthesis efforts by the National Reading Panel and International Reading Association clearly suggest that phonemic awareness, explicit instruction in phonics and comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary are essential. Although questions about high-quality reading instruction remain, the knowledge base is strong enough to provide benchmarks for Tier 1 curricula. However, explicit instruction in phonics would not be included in Tier 1 for adolescents.

Tier 2 instruction targets only those students who do not make adequate progress in reading after working with core curricula. In elementary schools, Tier 2 services typically entail 20-30 minute small-group interventions about three times per week to approximately 15-20 percent of students. Common Tier 2 interventions include tutoring or peer-assisted learning strategies. These interventions are well researched,[12] particularly in reading, although the majority of studies focus on elementary grades and the acquisition of reading as a fundamental skill, rather than its application in content areas such as social studies.

Students who do not respond sufficiently to Tier 2 intervention are targeted for Tier 3 interventions, which typically involve more comprehensive evaluation and intense services and might apply to about 5 percent of students. In the middle school, some students skip Tier 2 and move into Tier 3 because they are severely behind.

Finally, delivering tiered interventions in an RTI context can be informed by a standard protocol approach (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Compton, 2004; Vaughn, Linan-Thompson, & Hickman, 2003) or problem-solving model (Deno, 2002; Marston, Muyskens, Lau, & Canter, 2003; Tilley, Reschly, & Grimes, 1999). When using the standard protocol method, instructional decisions are made based on a standard protocol, and a given school selects one validated intervention to improve

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[12] Fuchs, L. S., Compton, D. L., Fuchs, D., Paulsen, K., Bryant, J. D., & Hamlett, C. L. (2005). The prevention, identification, and cognitive determinants of math difficulty. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 97*, 493–513.

the academic skills of its struggling learners. On the other hand, when the problem-solving model is used, a team makes instructional decisions based on an individual student's performance, and interventions are selected by a team from a pool of intervention options. The standard protocol method specifies the number of weeks to provide additional support for each instructional tier and is more proscriptive in its approach.

The TALA model utilizes a three-tier RTI approach. It endeavors to foster a school-wide approach in both reading instruction and the content areas. It appears to follow the principles of a standard protocol model and provides educators with the tools they need to meet student needs across the three tiers. There is explicit focus on the elements of high-quality reading instruction (i.e., improving students' word recognition, fluency, and comprehension, as well as reinforcement of the general education instructional routines to promote transfer of skills and sample lessons) which is bolstered by student progress monitoring techniques that can be applied in Grades 6-8.

Overview of Report

Chapter 2 presents the development and implementation of TALA. It includes a discussion of the development of the content and instructional routines as well as the plan to train classroom teachers across the state. Chapter 3 presents the evaluation approach used to assess the extent to which TALA was implemented as planned. It also presents the approach used to evaluate the quality of TALA materials.

Chapters 4 – 7 present the results of the evaluation. Chapter 4 includes the findings from the content review of TALA materials conducted by the Technical Advisory Board. Chapter 5 includes the findings from the observations of TALA trainings. Chapter 6 describes the perceptions of TALA training from the perspectives of the various stakeholders, presenters, and participants who were surveyed, interviewed, and observed. Chapter 7 includes the findings from the document analysis of the archival planning materials related to the use of funds for the development and dissemination of TALA. Chapter 8 presents the discussion of TALA findings and next steps in the evaluation.

2. Overview of the Development and Implementation of TALA

This chapter presents the development, planning, and implementation of TALA. It includes a discussion of the content and plans for implementation. The chapter is based on a review of public documents and archival data provided by TEA which included minutes and agendas from TALA steering committee meetings, minutes and agendas from videoconferences with ESC TALA contacts, and general information about TALA.

TALA Organization and Planning

Under HB 1 passed by the 79th Texas Legislature in 2005, TEA awarded a $4 million development contract to the Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts (VGC) at The University of Texas at Austin, in partnership with the Texas Institute for Measurement, Evaluation, and Statistics (TIMES) at the University of Houston, to create the content for TALA professional development training academies through the Texas Adolescent Literacy Project (TALP).[13] This included the development of the assessment instrument (TMSFA). The award also included the field test of the materials across the seven sites.[14]

In 2006, based on a review of the literature examining reading interventions with secondary school students and input from expert consultants, the VGC developed a three-tiered intervention approach for struggling middle school readers. Materials were developed for Tier 1 (school-wide focus on content teachers) and Tier 2 (explicit reading intervention in large groups of 8 - 16 students). Tier 3 included the same intervention as Tier 2 but in a smaller group if 3 - 6 students. Tier 1 materials included a small number of research based strategies (focusing on vocabulary and comprehension instruction) that could be implemented across all content areas. The materials were refined and condensed based on feedback from teachers and reviewers. Tier 2 materials focused on word recognition and fluency, in addition to comprehension and vocabulary instruction. Upon completion, the materials for Tiers 1 and 2 were vetted through content experts, ESC representatives, and middle school teachers.

Between January 1, 2006, and August 31, 2007, the researchers worked with teachers at seven campuses to field test the academic literacy strategies in content area classrooms, field test the intervention strategies with struggling readers, and validate the assessment measures. The VGC served as the lead organization in the development of TALA content and materials (including slides, training notes, sample lessons, and student work), working closely with the TEA director of special projects from the literacy area of the Division of Standards and Programs. The VGC was supported by Texas and national content experts, who helped by providing suggestions and reviewing materials at key points. Additionally, focus groups were conducted with teachers at the seven campuses. VGC developers further enhanced presentation slides, training notes, sample lessons, and student work that became the TALA training content. The TIMES developed the assessment measure and validated it at seven middle school campuses during the 2006-07 school year.

In June 2007, a TALA steering committee was formed and began to meet to help guide the development of TALA materials, as well as plan for and help oversee the implementation of

[13] Press Release, University of Texas at Austin, *University of Texas at Austin Vaughn Gross Center gets multimillion dollar award to study struggling adolescent readers*, May 17, 2006.
[14] Denton, C., Vaughn, S., Fletcher, J., & Francis, D. (2007). *Texas Adolescent Literacy Project Final Report.* Austin, TX: University of Texas at Austin, Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts.

TALA statewide. The steering committee consists of representatives from 6 of the 20 regional ESCs, the TEA director of *Reading First*, the TEA director of English language arts (ELA)/reading, and the developer of TALA. The steering committee began meeting monthly to address topics such as budget allocation, documents, resource books, quality control, and content issues.[15]

The ELA/Reading Content Review Team and the Content Area Content Review Team also were established at this time to review and meet as the content was developed. The ELA/Reading Content Review Team consists of the TEA director of ELA/reading, the TEA assistant director of ELA/Reading, the TEA director of RTI, and the TEA director/assistant director of Bilingual Education (BE)/English as a Second Language (ESL). The Content Area Content Review Team consists of the TEA director/assistant director of mathematics, the TEA director/assistant director of science, the TEA director/assistant director of social studies, the TEA director of RTI, and the TEA director/assistant director of BE/ESL. Figure 2.1 illustrates the structure of TALA organization.

Figure 2.1: TALA Organization Chart
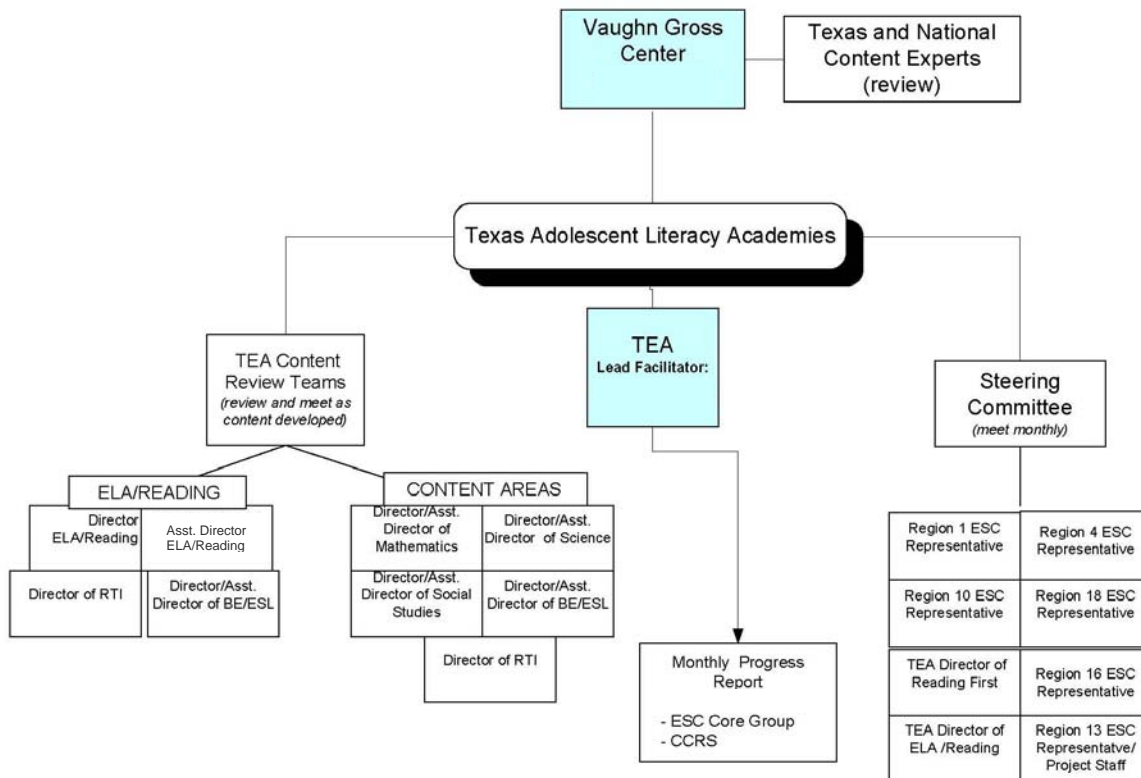
Source: Texas Education Agency

Development of TALA Content and Delivery Strategy

The initial materials from the TALP were provided to TEA on August 31, 2007. At TALA steering committee meetings, VGC developers presented the changes to TALA content. The steering

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[15] Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies, Minutes of Steering Committee Meeting, July 12, 2007.

committee reviewed draft materials developed by the VGC and discussed issues like time limits, the activities covered in each unit and module, which units and modules could be combined or shortened, and the order that units and modules were to be presented. The steering committee served as a sounding board for the VGC developers and approved materials along the way. Beginning in fall 2007, the VGC developers submitted draft materials to content advisory teams and external experts for review during development.

Theoretical Foundation

TALA is tailored for "the unique structure of middle schools" and is framed within a school-wide approach to addressing the needs of adolescent readers, including those who are struggling.[16] The TALA approach is a three-tier model of reading intervention, which is consistent with a response to intervention, or RTI, approach. Tier 1 applies to all students and includes general education instructional strategies. Tier 2, named "Strategic Intervention" in TALA content, is designed for students with reading difficulties that cannot be addressed in Tier 1. Tier 3, referred to as "Intensive Intervention," is designed for students with severe reading difficulties. TALA instructional routines represent scientifically-based instructional strategies based on reading research.

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

Format

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

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

- General education instructional routines, which includes school-wide intervention strategies, vocabulary and comprehension strategies, integrated scaffolding for English language learners (ELL) and students with disabilities, content-specific examples, connections to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and the TAKS test, and practical application/lesson planning;

- An intervention component, which includes training on instructional strategies appropriate for a reading intervention class geared at improving students' word recognition, fluency and comprehension, as well as reinforcement of the general education instructional routines to promote transfer of skills and sample lessons; and

- Training on a diagnostic and progress monitoring instrument (the TMSFA) that assesses student abilities in word identification, fluency, and comprehension; training in the use of decision-making tools for tracking progress and planning instruction; and practice administering assessments and interpreting results.

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[16] Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies, Information Flyer.

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

TALA developers provided examples of the strategies and their applications, both in hard copy and video formats, with appropriate subject area materials for the middle school classroom. The content is organized into seven units with individual modules that last between 30 and 75 minutes. The following outline describes TALA content. Units 1-3 were covered in both ELA and Content Area Academies (general instructional routines), while units 4-7 were only covered in the ELA Academies (reading intervention instructional routines). Table 2.1 presents the units and modules comprising both instructional routines.

Table 2.1: TALA General Intervention and Instructional Routines

General Instructional Routines	Intervention Instructional Routines
Unit 1: Overview of School-Wide Intervention ◆ Module 1 - A School Wide Approach to Reading Intervention ◆ Module 2 - Effective Instruction Techniques Unit 2: Vocabulary Instructional Routines ◆ Module 1 - Selecting Words ◆ Module 2 - Pronouncing and Defining Words ◆ Module 3 - Generating Examples and Non-Examples Unit 3: Comprehension Instructional Routines ◆ Module 1 - Building Background Knowledge With Anticipation-Reaction Guides ◆ Module 2 - Identifying Main Ideas in Text ◆ Module 3 - Writing Summaries	Unit 4: Using Diagnostic and Progress Monitoring Data ◆ Module 1 - Administering the Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment ◆ Module 2 - Interpreting and Implementing Assessment Results Unit 5: Word Study Routines ◆ Module 1 - Identifying Syllable Structures ◆ Module 2 - Morphemic Analysis Unit 6: Fluency Routine ◆ Module 1 - Building Fluency With Partner Reading Unit 7: Inferential Comprehension Instructional Routines ◆ Module 1 - Generating Questions to Monitor Comprehension, Level 1 ◆ Module 2 - Generating Questions to Monitor Comprehension, Level 2 ◆ Module 3 - Generating Questions to Monitor Comprehension, Level 3

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

Similarly, after attending a TALA academy, content area teachers select one of the training modules from the general educational instructional routines (units 1-3) and implement it in their classroom. The content area teachers then complete the online five-question quiz and documentation form for the module they implemented. The online follow-up module is available from September 1, 2008, to December 1, 2008.

The ELA Academies consisted of three days of face-to-face training (6 hours per day), followed by a one-day (approximately 6 hours) on-line practicum follow-up. The Content Area Academies consisted of 1.5 days of face-to-face training (6 hours on day one and 4 hours on day two), followed by a half-day on-line practicum (approximately 3 hours).

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

Development Processes

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

> **Box 1. Overview of the TALA Model**
>
> **ELA Academy model:**
> Grade 6 teachers trained in summer 2008
>
> Grades 7-8 teachers trained in summer 2009
>
> Ratio of 2 trainers to 50 participants
>
> $500 stipend:
>
> - ◆ $250 after attending all 3 days of the face-to-face session
> - ◆ $250 after completing the online follow-up
>
> 24 Continuing Professional Education credits for completion
>
> **Content Area Academy model:**
> Grade 6 teachers trained in summer 2008
>
> Grades 7-8 teachers trained in summer 2009
>
> Ratio of 2 trainers to 50 participants
>
> $250 stipend:
>
> - ◆ $125 after attending all 1.5 days of the face-to-face session
> - ◆ $125 after completing the online follow-up
>
> 12 Continuing Professional Education credits for completion

Implementation of TALA

The work of the VGC developers, TEA Division of Standards and Programs, TALA steering committee, and TALA content review teams led to the implementation of TALA throughout Texas for sixth grade teachers in the summer of 2008.[17] The following section presents the role of the Regional ESCs in TALA implementation, how state and regional trainers were nominated and selected for TALA, the training schedules, and the TALA registration process for classroom teachers.

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[17] During the 2008-09 school year, the TALA steering committee will be refining the materials to be appropriate for seventh and eighth grade teachers who will receive TALA training during the summer 2009.

Regional ESCs

Regional ESC leaders received TALA funds to assist TEA with training and other activities relating to the development and operation of reading academies. Regional ESC leaders scheduled TALA ELA and Content Area Academies in their respective regions, established locations, set dates and times, and worked with their IT (Information Technology) staff to set up the registration information in their catalog and develop a registration database. In addition, the TALA steering committee met regularly during the fall of 2007 to assist with the implementation of TALA in the 20 regions across Texas.

Nomination and Selection of State and Regional Trainers

TALA was designed to utilize a TOT model in order to prepare trainers for the implementation of TALA statewide. Figure 2.2 illustrates the plan for the flow of TALA trainers at all levels.

Figure 2.2: Organization of TALA Trainers
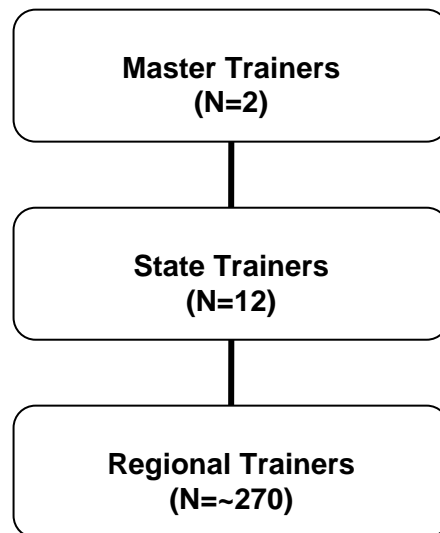
Two master trainers from the VGC were selected to conduct the state TOT. The TALA steering committee outlined guidelines for nomination and selection of TALA state trainers and TALA regional trainers. These guidelines included:

- Nominations should be restricted to teachers with teaching experience in Grades 5-8.

- Nominations should be solicited from both ESC staff and district superintendents.

- Nominations should be solicited by sending a letter to district superintendents asking for one ELA nomination and one Content Area nomination.

- Superintendents will submit nomination forms to their respective ESCs.

- Selected nominees will receive a letter and application to complete and return to their respective ESCs.

- TEA/VGC will approve state trainers, while ESCs will approve regional trainers.

- Commitment letters will be sent out to selected nominees with acceptance instructions.

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

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

Registration of Eligible Teachers, Including Those from Targeted Campuses

It was each ESC's responsibility to track participation and pay stipends to the participating teachers. Teachers assigned to instruct students in Grade 6 in the 2008-09 school year at a campus rated "academically unacceptable" (AU) in reading (based on the 2006-07 school year) were required to attend and complete the appropriate literacy academy by December 2008. Eligible teachers assigned to instruct students in Grades 7 or 8 in the 2009-10 school year at a campus rated AU in reading (based on 2006-07 school year) were required to attend and complete the appropriate literacy academy by December 2009. Attendance in person was required for each day of training at the appropriate literacy academy, and each ESC was responsible for determining the process for the makeup of any days missed due to emergencies on an individual basis.[18]

By the end of April 28, 2008, all academy training materials and DVDs were completed by the VGC developer and shipped to all ESCs. ESCs planned to conduct approximately 100 ELA classroom teacher academies and 100 Content Area classroom teacher academies between June 2, 2008, and August 15, 2008.[19]

TALA Administrator Overview Training

In addition to training materials for ELA and content area teachers, the VGC developed an online administrator overview training. The training describes the components of TALA and discusses the three tiers of intervention. It also provides information on implementing a school-wide reading intervention. The stated purpose of the administrator overview is to assist administrators in supporting classroom implementation of TALA.

Chapter 3 presents the evaluation approach used to assess the extent to which TALA was implemented as planned. It also presents the approach used to evaluate the quality of TALA materials.

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[18] Text of New 19 TAC, Chapter 102. Educational Programs, Subchapter HH. Commissioner's Rules Concerning the Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies.
[19] During summer 2008, 181 ELA academies and 192 Content Area academies were scheduled. The actual number of academies that were conducted is unknown.

3. Evaluation Approach

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

1. Evaluate the quality of TALA training, including the materials developed for use in training, the training of trainers, and the training of classroom teachers;

2. Evaluate the quality and level of ongoing implementation of TALA training in the classroom;

3. Evaluate the effects of TALA teacher training on student outcomes; and

4. Conduct an analysis of financial data to assess the cost-effectiveness of TALA.

At the center of this evaluation approach is the logic model depicted in Figure 3.1.[20] To understand the impact of TALA on student achievement, it is important to identify whether TALA training affects classroom instruction. TALA content and professional development activities during the levels of TALA training may impact the implementation of TALA strategies in the classroom. Other factors that may affect classroom practices include the teachers'

Figure 3.1: Logic Model for TALA Evaluation[21]

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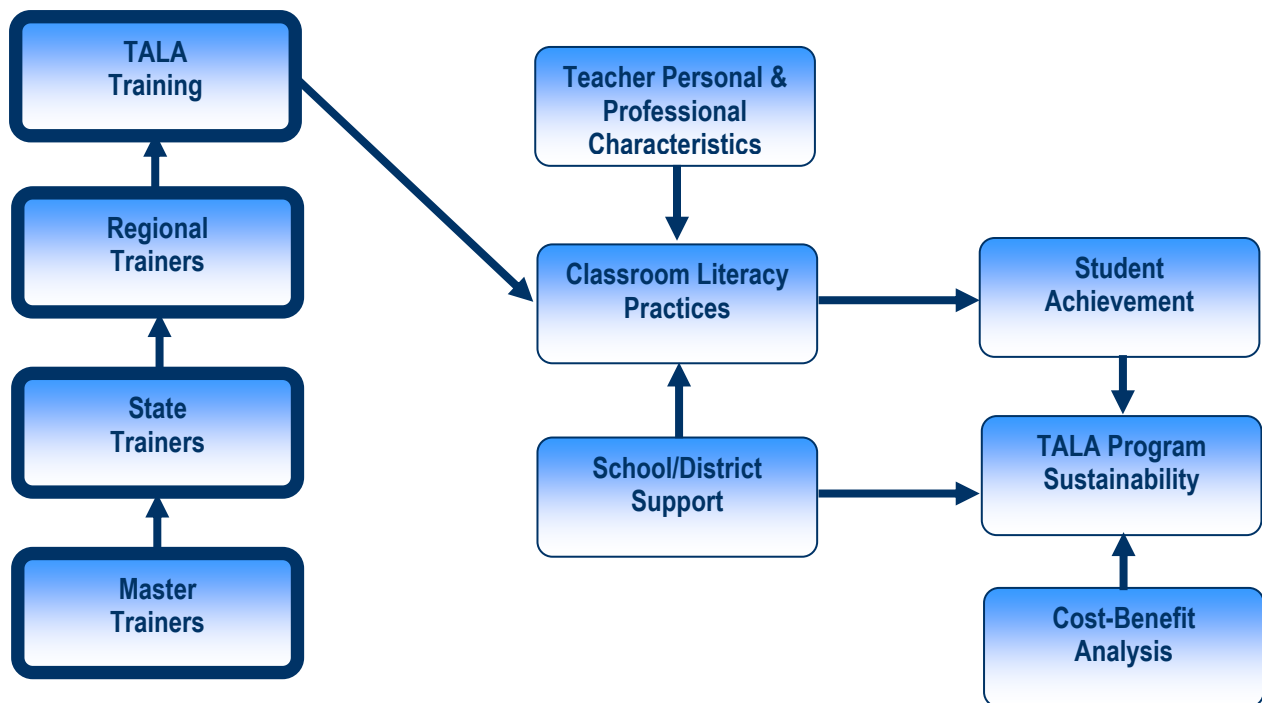
[20] A logic model is a systematic and visual way to create and present an understanding of the relationships among inputs and other key factors, program operations and the results sought by the program.
[21] Highlighted components are included in Phase One of the evaluation.

personal and professional characteristics, as well as school/district support for TALA. Student achievement, school/district support of TALA, and the cost-benefit analysis of TALA will impact the sustainability of the program.

Based on this logic model, the evaluation consists of two phases. Phase One is an evaluation of TALA training, addressing Evaluation Objective 1. This phase includes an evaluation of the quality of the content, the delivery of the training at the state, regional, and classroom teacher levels, and trainer perceptions of the training that they attended and conducted. Phase One also addresses Evaluation Objective 4, focusing on how funds were allocated to develop and implement TALA.

Phase One is the focus of this report as it applies to TALA Grade 6.[22] Phase Two of the evaluation addresses whether TALA participation leads to a change in teaching practices (Evaluation Objective 2) and whether this influences student achievement (Evaluation Objective 3) as measured by the TAKS. Phase Two also provides information on the cost-effectiveness and sustainability of TALA (Evaluation Objective 4).

Phase One Methodology

This is the report of findings of Phase One activities. In this section, we provide an overview of the evaluation design for Phase One. Technical detail is provided in appendices and referenced as appropriate.

Research Questions

Specific research questions were developed to address each of the four evaluation objectives. Phase One addressed the following research questions for evaluation objectives 1 and 4:

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

- To what extent does TALA content reflect best practices for literacy instruction according to experts in the field?

- To what extent is TALA content aligned with national and state standards in reading and ELA?

- What types of content were included as part of each level of training (training of state and regional trainers, as well as training of teachers and administrators)?

- What types of activities were included as part of each level of training (training of state and regional trainers, as well as training of teachers and administrators)?

- To what extent were participants engaged in TALA trainings?

- What types of instructional strategies (e.g., lecture, modeling) do TALA instructors use to facilitate participant learning?

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

- How were funds used to develop TALA content?

- How were funds used by the regional ESCs to disseminate TALA?

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[22] In addition, Phase One activities are planned which focuses on TALA in Grades 7 and 8.

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

Data Sources and Instrumentation

Several data sources were used to address the research questions for Phase One of the evaluation, relying heavily on extant TEA data while also collecting new data. Following is an overview of the types of data that were used in the TALA evaluation.

TALA Archival Planning Materials. TEA provided TALA archival planning materials. Materials included general information about TALA (e.g., description of TALA models, TALA FAQs, TALA organization chart, and timeline of events), TEA laws and rules regarding TALA (e.g., attendance requirements), and Steering Committee and ESC TALA contact meeting agendas and minutes. Training of trainer (TOT) materials (e.g., reflective questions from readings and trainer tips) and trainer forms (e.g., application form, trainer agreement letters, and the selection process for trainers) also were provided to the evaluation team, and TEA provided budget information pertaining to TALA (e.g., ESC allocations for the academies).

TALA Training Materials. TALA Content Area Instructional Routines to Support Academic Literacy (Units 1-3), TALA Assessment and Instructional Routines for Reading Interventions (Units 4-7), and the Administrator Overview Training were collected from TEA or the VGC. The Content Area Instructional Routine materials included a Presenter Guide consisting of PowerPoint presentation slides with notes, handouts for each module, and one DVD containing video files used in the training. The Assessment and Instructional Routines for Reading Interventions included a Presenter Guide consisting of PowerPoint presentation slides with notes, handouts for each module, two CDs (containing the Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment and the Reading Teacher's Sourcebook), and one DVD containing video/audio files. The Administrator Overview Training materials consisted of PowerPoint presentation slides with notes, handouts, and three video files.[23]

Expert Review Protocol. In order to evaluate the quality of TALA training materials, an expert review panel was created. This panel, the Technical Advisory Board (TAB), consisted of five nationally recognized experts in literacy, professional development, and special education. Using the Expert Review Protocol (Appendix A), the TAB reviewed TALA content and materials. Guiding questions were provided in the expert review protocol to assist in the content analysis of TALA content. TAB members were instructed to evaluate the content and materials in terms of best practices for literacy instruction. They evaluated the content in terms of national reading and ELA standards, as well as Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) ELA and Reading standards. In addition, the TAB evaluated the TALA training from the perspective of best practices in professional development. Each member of the TAB produced a written report of findings and participated in a conference call to discuss the synthesis of findings.

TALA Training Observations. To obtain comprehensive data on TALA training efforts, the evaluation team collected data at the State TOT, the Regional TOTs, and the Classroom Teacher Academies (attended ELA trainings in each of the 20 Texas regions and content trainings in 10 regions). During the observation of the State TOT, notes were collected to develop the observation protocol for Regional TOT and classroom teacher academy

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[23] These were the Administrator Overview Training materials that were meant to be provided to administrators in an online format. Some ESCs also provided administrator training in other formats, and it is unknown what materials other than these, if any, were used for these trainings.

observations. Observers[24] used the TALA Training Observation Protocol and the TALA Training Observation Semi-Structured Field Note Template to record observation activities at the Regional TOTs and classroom teacher academies.

- *TALA Training Observation Protocol* (Appendix B) assessed the learning environment by documenting the set-up and seating arrangement of training rooms and the equipment and materials utilized by trainers (e.g., handouts, poster boards, overhead projectors). The protocol was also used to document which modules were covered during each day of training and the frequency by which various activities took place during each module (e.g., group discussions, videos, modeling content, etc.). Finally, observers rated the major components of the trainings:

  - **Implementation** – the degree to which presenters implemented the training materials, including the degree to which trainers used questioning strategies, managed the training pace, and used modeling. This component is measured in both Regional and Classroom Teacher trainings.
  - **Culture** – the degree to which training participants were actively involved during the training and worked collaboratively. This component is measured in both Regional and Classroom Teacher trainings.
  - **Preparedness** – how prepared participants who attended this training will be to shift to the role of TALA presenter. This component is measured in the Regional trainings only.

- *TALA Training Observation Semi-Structured Field Note Template* (Appendix C) helped observers document changes made to the environment to accommodate the goals of each module, questions participants asked during each module, and participant behaviors and reactions to the module content. The regional field note template also documented the ways presenters provided direction to help participants make the shift from presenter-in-training to being a presenter of the content themselves.

State Trainer Interviews. Members of the evaluation team conducted telephone interviews using a semi-structured interview protocol with state trainers. The interview protocol consisted of 12 open-ended questions (Appendix D). The items were designed to collect professional background and experience information, as well as perceptions of the training they attended (State TOT) and training they conducted (Regional TOT). The items served to gather information about their opinions of the training in terms of strengths and weaknesses.

Regional Trainer Web-Based Survey. Data were collected through a web-based survey of the regional trainers who attended the Regional TOTs and facilitated TALA Classroom Teacher Academies (Appendix E). A 37-item survey was developed to capture regional trainer perceptions of TALA trainings they attended (Regional TOTs) and the training they conducted (Classroom Teacher Academies). The survey consisted of four parts. Part I included questions about the regional trainers' professional backgrounds and experiences. Part II assessed the trainers' perceptions of the Regional TOT in which they participated to become a TALA trainer. Part III collected information about preparing for their roles and responsibilities as a TALA trainer. Part IV assessed perceptions of TALA Classroom Teacher Academies that they conducted for teachers.[25]

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[24] More information about the observers is presented in Chapter 5.
[25] Regional trainers who attended Regional TOTs but did not end up conducting Classroom Teacher Academies only answered questions in Parts I-III.

Data Collection Activities

TALA Observations. To obtain comprehensive data on ELA training efforts, the evaluation team observed the initial training of state trainers (State TOT). This was followed by observations of the three sessions for regional trainers (Regional TOT) and 20 ELA Classroom Teacher Academies (one in each of the 20 ESCs). Ten Content Area Classroom Teacher Academies were also observed. Selection of the 10 regions for the content area training observations was determined after consultation with TEA. Regions with a large percentage of content area teachers were selected for observation.

- ◆ **State TOT.** Two members of the evaluation team attended the State TOT on March 3-6, 2008 in Austin, Texas. The purpose of the observation was to familiarize the evaluation team with the training content and provide a foundation for the development of the observation protocols for the regional and classroom teacher trainings.

- ◆ **Regional TOT.** The evaluation team observed each of the Regional TOTs (in Austin from May 5–8, 2008, in Houston from May 12–15, 2008, and in Dallas from May 19–22, 2008). Trained observers utilized the Regional TALA Training Observation Protocol and the Regional TALA Training Observation Semi-Structured Field Note Template to record their observations and field notes during both the two-day Content Area Regional TOTs and the four-day ELA Regional TOTs. Observers completed one observation protocol for each day they observed a training (e.g., two observation protocols were completed by observers of two-day long content trainings and four observation protocols were completed by observers of four-day long ELA trainings). Observers completed one Field Note Template for each training module they observed.

- ◆ **Classroom Teacher Academies.** The evaluation team observed 20 ELA Classroom Teacher Academies and 10 Content Area Classroom Teacher Academies between June 2, 2008, and August 13, 2008. Trained observers utilized the Classroom Teacher TALA Training Observation Protocol and the Classroom Teacher TALA Training Observation Semi-Structured Field Note Template to record their observations and field notes during the one and one-half day Content Area Classroom Teacher Academies and three-day ELA Classroom Teacher Academies. Observers completed one observation protocol for each day they observed a training (e.g., two observation protocols were completed by observers of one and a half-day long content trainings and three observation protocols were completed by observers of three-day long ELA trainings). Observers completed one field note template for each training module they observed.

State Trainer Telephone Interviews. Telephone interviews were conducted with all 12 state trainers (six ELA Academy and six Content Area Academy trainers) who participated in the State TOT. The interviews were conducted during late June and early July 2008. The duration of most interviews was between 30 and 60 minutes. State trainers signed a consent form to participate, as well as a form to either agree or decline having the interview recorded for note-taking purposes. Participants were informed that their responses would remain confidential in that specific responses would not be linked to names or other identifying information.

Regional Trainer Web-based Survey. The Regional Trainer web-based Survey was launched on July 31, 2008, and closed on August 20, 2008. TEA provided the evaluation team with the contact information for the regional trainers. An e-mail was sent two weeks prior to the survey launch date to identify incorrect email addresses. The two-week notification email: (1) introduced the survey and importance of the project, (2) provided contact information for

obtaining a paper version of the survey,[26] and (3) had an evaluation notification letter from TEA attached. E-mail invitations for the survey were sent to potential respondents that included: (1) a description of the evaluation, (2) the purpose of the study, and (3) contact information for key evaluation staff. Respondents were given three weeks to complete the survey. Weekly reminder emails were sent to those who did not respond to the survey.

Data Analysis

For this report on Phase One of the TALA program evaluation, researchers conducted a series of exploratory and descriptive analyses to understand the distributional properties of survey and observation data. The findings from quantitative analyses were integrated with qualitative findings and content analyses to generate overall statements about the quality of TALA trainings, stakeholder perceptions, and budget allocations. Content analyses were conducted on the TALA archival planning materials, TALA training materials, and state trainer interview data.

The following chapters include the findings from Phase One of the TALA evaluation. Chapter 4 includes the findings from the content review of TALA materials conducted by the TAB. Chapter 5 includes the findings from the observations of TALA trainings. Chapter 6 describes the perceptions of TALA training from the perspectives of the various stakeholders, presenters, and participants who were surveyed, interviewed, or observed. Chapter 7 includes the findings from the document analysis of the archival planning materials related to the use of funds for the development and dissemination of TALA.

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[26] Paper-based surveys were available in instances where on-line completion was problematic (e.g., computer difficulties when trying to submit the survey).

4. Content Analysis of TALA by the Technical Advisory Board

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

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

- TALA Content Area Instructional Routines to Support Academic Literacy: Presenter Guide with two CDs (video files) (Units 1-3)

- TALA Assessment and Instructional Routines for Reading Interventions: Presenter Guide with four CDs (Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment, the Reading Teacher's Sourcebook, and video/audio files) (Units 4-7)

- Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for ELA and Reading (sixth grade only; pages 1-40).

The TAB evaluated TALA content (instructional routines) in terms of best practices for literacy instruction. The TAB also evaluated the content relative to national reading and ELA standards,[27] as well as Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) ELA and Reading standards. Finally, the TAB evaluated TALA training from the perspective of best practices in professional development. Each member of the TAB produced a written report of findings and participated in a conference call to discuss the synthesis of findings.

This chapter presents the results of the TAB's review of TALA. It addresses the following questions:

- To what extent does TALA content reflect best practices for literacy instruction according to experts in the field?

- To what extent is TALA content aligned with national and state standards in reading and ELA?

Best Practices for Literacy Instruction

According to the TAB, TALA instructional routines represent "best practices" for literacy instruction. The routines represent a mix of what is "known" in the field through rigorous research and professional opinions of experts in the field.[28] The TAB noted that some routines were found to have a solid research base as being best practice for students at the elementary school level but research was lacking in the secondary grades (e.g., effects on middle school students). The TAB perceived TALA as an opportunity to test the instructional routines (such as

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[27] International Reading Association and National Council of Teachers of English. (1996). *Standards for the English Language Arts.*
[28] Some of the professional opinions are based on anecdotal evidence and are not supported by rigorous research evidence.

fluency routines) with adolescent readers. Table 4.1 summarizes the TAB's perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of TALA instructional routines.

Table 4.1: TAB Perceptions of TALA Instructional Routines

Strengths	Weaknesses

• General instructional practices:
  o Cooperative learning
  o Emphasis on curriculum-embedded instruction
  o Emphasis on student engagement
  o Explicit instruction
• Vocabulary instruction:
  o Creating student friendly definitions
  o Generating examples and nonexamples
  o Selection of vocabulary words
  o Use of graphic organizers
  o Use of word parts to pronounce vocabulary
• Comprehension instruction:
  o Activation of background knowledge
  o Identifying main ideas
  o Summarization strategy
• Inferential comprehension
	• Word study
	• Fluency instruction
	• Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment (TMSFA)
	• Missing instructional routines:
	  o Role of student motivation
	  o Text structures and text features
	  o Visualization/mental imagery
	  o Narrative text
	  o Discussion of text
	  o Writing strategies

Source: TAB content analysis of TALA training materials

The general instructional strategies that represent "best practices" include an emphasis on cooperative learning, curriculum-embedded instruction, and student engagement. The TAB praised the explicit instruction routine "I Do/We Do/You Do" and the way it is embedded throughout the modules. The gradual release of responsibility model and scaffolding were perceived as a "logical approach for developing older students' reading skills."

The vocabulary instructional routines (Unit 2), the emphasis on generating examples and nonexamples, creating student friendly definitions, how to select vocabulary words, and the use of graphic organizers (e.g., the Frayer Model[29]) was seen by the TAB as supported by research in vocabulary instruction. According to one expert, "The Frayer Model meets the criteria for promoting deep understanding and meaningful instruction." The use of word parts to pronounce vocabulary was linked to best practices for decoding multi-syllabic words (words that have two or more syllables). The use of cognates (words that have a common origin) has been linked to successful instruction for English Language Learners.

The comprehension instructional routines were perceived as an asset of the TALA model. According to the TAB, there is strong research support that the activation of prior knowledge facilitates comprehension (e.g., Levin & Pressley, 1981). The "Anticipation-Reaction Guide" activates prior knowledge and helps students link prior knowledge to new information, which the TAB perceived as a best practice for literacy instruction. Identifying main ideas using the "Getting the Gist" routine is also consistent with best practices in literacy instruction. The

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

"Summarizing" strategy is also representative of best practices and was perceived by one expert as "an important strategy for comprehension from text." The TAB commented that there are several comprehension strategies that were not included in TALA routines (e.g., questioning strategies and fix-up strategies).

Of the instructional routines geared to struggling adolescent readers, the focus on syllable patterns in the word study module were perceived as reflective of the current thinking in the field but lacked research support for use with middle school students. The morphemic analysis[30] routines have research support and were perceived as beneficial for middle school students. The repeated reading routines and partner reading in the fluency instruction module were associated with best practices in literacy instruction for elementary school students but lacked research support for adolescents. The focus on questioning strategies in the last module (inferential comprehension) was generally perceived by the TAB as an important instructional strategy for text comprehension. One expert perceived it as an effective way to "help students with weak comprehension learn how to make inferences from the text." Another expert believed that the module was not appropriately named since the aim of the module was not to teach students to infer from text.

Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment (TMSFA)

The TAB had the most comments about Module 4, pertaining to the use of the Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment (TMSFA). Positive perceptions of the TMSFA included the ease of learning the assessment without excessive training and the emphasis on expository prose (language that seeks to explain). The equating of passages was also perceived as a good feature. One expert liked the attention to frequent and ongoing progress monitoring. Another expert liked the addition of the word fluency lists and comprehension retells to the measure adding that "comprehension retells are helpful for students with good comprehension but poor decoding skills." However, the TAB stated that the comprehension measure (retells) lacks validity with other assessments and classroom practices.

The greatest issue that the TAB found with the TMSFA was its lack of ecological validity.[31] According to the TAB, the tests appear valuable but need evidence (i.e., research) supporting them. There is a lack of research to provide evidence about best practices in oral reading fluency in middle school. One expert was concerned with taking a "primary school model and using it in the middle school." Another concern with the measure was that it may impose a surface construct of fluency (focus on reading faster) and that it measures accuracy and speed of words in isolation. The TAB stated that the TMSFA needs to acknowledge the role of text difficulty in the calculation of words correct per minute (WCPM). There was also concern that the measure counts a consistent error numerous times instead of counting it as one error. The TAB stated that they believed the TMSFA was not an authentic indicator of what a middle school student must do to achieve fluency and comprehension in middle school since reading is more complex at that grade level.

The TAB expressed concern that inaccurate instructional decisions could be made based on the use of the TMSFA and perceived doing so as a "misuse of the test." The TAB recommended using the TMSFA as one measure and adding more complex measures to make a valid diagnostic assessment. The TAB recommended using a comprehension assessment for

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[30] Morphemic Analysis is a strategy in which the meanings of words can be determined or inferred by examining their meaningful parts (i.e., prefixes, suffixes, roots, etc.).
[31] Ecological validity, in this case, refers to the extent to which assessment results can be applied to real life situations.

screening students. One member suggested a cloze/maze approach[32], stating: "short authentic content area (ELA, science, social studies, math) passages can be used with selective high-yield terms deleted…it could be a more authentic progress monitoring tool than the WCPM approach for content literacy at the middle level and beyond."

Missing Instructional Routines

Although the TAB believed that the instructional routines were sound, they also expressed concerns about missing instructional routines. One element that the TAB perceived as missing was the role of student motivation. Another component that they believed should be included was the use of text structures and text features to aid in comprehension and teaching students about visualization and mental images. The TAB stated that there was too much focus on expository text and the developer should apply the routines to narrative text for ELA teachers. Additionally, the TAB recommended including more opportunities for students to engage in discussions of the text and the integration of more writing strategies.

Connection to National and State ELA/Reading Standards

TALA instructional routines were identified by the TAB as being clearly and explicitly linked to national (IRA/NCTE's *Standards for the English Language Arts*) and state (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills -TEKS) standards. Although national standards for ELA/reading are still being developed, TALA strategies are supported by IRA/NCTE's Standard 3:

> *Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics) (p.3).*

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the TEKS identify what students should know and be able to do in every grade level. The emphasis of TEKS in ELA and Reading is on listening/speaking, reading, and writing. In addition, the TEKS are the standards on which the TAKS is based. Relative to the TEKS, most of the state standards for sixth grade students are included in TALA. The TEKS standards that were emphasized in TALA included:

Standard 6.6: Reading/Word Identification

Standard 6.7: Reading Fluency

Standard 6.9: Reading/Vocabulary Development

Standard 6.10: Reading/Comprehension

Standard 6.11: Reading/Literary Responses (some elements)

Standard 6.13: Reading/Inquiry/Research (some elements)

Standard 6.14: Reading/Culture (some elements)

Standard 6.20: Writing/Inquiry/Research (some elements)

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[32] The cloze/maze approach is a reading comprehension assessment where words are removed systematically from a sentence (e.g. every seventh word), and students must select the correct word from a list of options (Carlisle & Rice, 2004).

According to the TAB, the strategies in TALA are process oriented with a focus on how students read, not what they read. As a result, standards dealing with what students should be reading in the sixth grade were not addressed by TALA.

Best Practices for Teacher Professional Development

The TAB perceived the practices used in the professional development component of TALA as strong. One expert referred to the training as "a well-balanced hybrid that allows teacher expertise to be integrated into a focused reading program, rather than scripting a program that teachers are to follow page-by-page day in and day out. This allows for teachers to use what they know about their students, the school curriculum, and their own teaching techniques to build a reading/content reading program." Another feature that the TAB praised was the use of modeling to instruct teachers how to use the strategies in the classroom.

The largest concern that the TAB had with TALA training associated with professional development was its short duration. A large amount of content was presented in a short amount of time. This was perceived as a more pressing concern for the content area teachers (1 ½ days of training) than ELA teachers. TAB members were concerned that the teachers will learn less information to adequately apply TALA content in the classroom due to the short amount of time for training. The structure of the training assumes teachers will have prior knowledge regarding reading development, instruction, and assessment, which may not be the case for all teachers (including ELA teachers).

The TAB referred to TALA as a great professional development opportunity for teachers. However, they expressed concern that the instructional routines learned in the training may not be implemented in the classroom. The TAB expressed a need for school support (i.e., administrator support) to make TALA work in the schools. In addition to the summer training, the TAB believed that teachers need on-going training and classroom follow-up. According to one expert, "without the classroom follow-up, TALA remains a one-shot-workshop." The TAB recommended using actual teacher texts in the training and viewing models of TALA routines in the classroom instead of videos.

Summary of the TAB Review and Recommendations from TAB

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

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

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

1. Teachers need systemic support from reading coaches and school administrators
2. Teachers need on-going training to assist them with classroom implementation

3. Teachers need classroom follow-up including an opportunity to practice the routines with feedback

4. Teachers should see models in the classroom – moving beyond TALA videos

5. Actual teacher texts should be used in training as this may allow the teachers to see how TALA instructional routines will work in their classrooms

6. Teachers are exposed to a large number of instructional routines that are taught in isolation of their texts; they need to learn how to fuse the content with the strategies.

Several recommendations are currently addressed in TALA training. TALA is designed as a "school-wide reading intervention" and depends on administrative support for successful implementation in the classrooms. TALA training includes such an administrator training that is designed to help support the implementation of TALA in the classroom. In addition, on-going training will assist teachers with classroom implementation. TALA training does include an online follow-up that provides teachers with an opportunity to submit documentation for an instructional strategy that they implemented in the classroom. Some ESCs are also implementing supplemental TALA training during the fall 2008 (e.g., training on the TMSFA), which will assist with implementing TALA in the classroom.

The TAB recommendations that are not addressed in TALA training include classroom observations with feedback provided to the classroom teacher and teacher observations of their peers during TALA implementation in the classroom. This could possibly be implemented at the individual school, district, or ESC level. Schools that sent several teachers to TALA training could arrange for observations of classroom practices among TALA participating teachers. Following the observations, the teachers could discuss the instructional routines that were implemented and if they were implemented as presented in the training. This would provide a deeper understanding and real-world application of TALA content.

The TAB's recommendations to include additional instructional routines may not be feasible due to the time limits for the training. A possible solution is to increase the number of days of training. Modification of current time limits is necessary to allow the changes that the TAB recommends.

Classroom teachers are instructed to bring their textbooks to the TALA training. The TALA developer may want to consider including the use of actual teacher participant texts in subsequent TALA trainings. This would provide a real-world application for classroom teachers, illustrating how the instructional routines pertain to their content area and textbooks.

5. Observations of TALA Training

This chapter includes results from data collected by observers of TALA Regional TOTs and the Classroom Teacher Academies. First, results relating to background characteristics of the observed trainings are presented using descriptive statistics. Next, synthesis ratings for three major training elements (implementation, culture, and preparedness) are conveyed. Throughout the chapter, syntheses of qualitative comments supplied by observers in their field notes are included with quantitative findings to provide a more comprehensive assessment of the Regional TOT and the Classroom Teacher Academies.

This chapter addresses the following questions:

- What types of content were included as part of each level of training (training of state and regional trainers, as well as training of teachers)?

- What types of activities were included as part of each level of training (training of state and regional trainers, as well as training of teachers and administrators)?

- To what extent were participants engaged in TALA trainings?

- What types of instructional strategies (e.g., lecture, modeling) do TALA instructors use to facilitate participant learning?

TALA State TOT

Two observers attended the State TOT on March 3-6, 2008, in Austin, Texas. The observers were members of the ICF evaluation team and possessed extensive experience conducting observations in professional development activities. The purpose of the observation was to familiarize the evaluation team with TALA content and the nature of the training. The information gathered at the State TOT was used to develop the observation protocols for the Regional TOTs and Classroom Teacher Academies.

Twelve participants attended the State TOT (6 ELA and 6 Content Area trainers). The duration of training was two days for Content Area trainers and four days for ELA trainers. Two master trainers from the VGC (including the primary developer of TALA content and materials) presented TALA training. The TEA director of special projects for the Division of Programs and Standards was also present at the training. On day three of training, one of the developers of the TMSFA (from the TIMES) was present to answer questions about the TMSFA and the interpretation of results. On day four of training, a nationally recognized expert in literacy was present to answer questions about the instructional routines.

TALA training was modeled by the master trainers with time designated to discuss tips for presenting the materials. The master trainers presented TALA instructional routines, including the videos and handouts, to the state trainers in the way that they were expected to train others at the regional training. Originally, TALA consisted of eight units. Due to time limits, TEA and VGC staff decided to remove the text structure unit. The text structure unit was the last unit in the general instructional routines.

TALA Regional TOT

Five trained observers attended three Regional TOTs between May 5, 2008, and May 22, 2008. One observer was present at each training. Three observers were members of the ICF

evaluation team, and two observers were professors of literacy at a Texas university.[33] All observers had previous experience conducting observations in professional development activities. The deputy director of the ICF evaluation team conducted the observer training over the telephone. Observers were provided with TALA Training Observation Protocol and TALA Training Observation Semi-Structured Field Note Template. The deputy director walked the observers through the observation measures and provided examples for each component. The deputy director responded to questions that the observers had about the observation measures.

At the Regional TOT, the training was delivered by the state trainers (who were trained in the State TOT).[34] The first two days of the Regional TOT included both ELA and Content Area trainers. Days three and four were designed for ELA trainers only.

Content Covered During TALA Regional TOT Units/Modules

Observers of TALA Regional TOTs completed an observation protocol for each training day they observed. The observation protocol was designed to capture the Content and Activities covered during each training unit/module. TALA ELA Regional TOTs covered all 7 units, which included a total of 16 modules, while TALA Content Area Regional TOTs covered the first 3 units, which included 8 modules.

Unit 1: Overview of School-wide Intervention. Unit 1 provided TALA Regional TOT participants with an overview of school-wide intervention. Unit 1 covered two modules: A School-wide Approach to Reading Intervention and Effective Instruction Techniques. Both ELA and content area trainers were trained in general instructional practices. TALA instructional routines of module 2 focused on adapting instruction and fostering student engagement. Throughout the units, an explicit instruction routine was used ("I Do/We Do/You Do"). TALA routines incorporated cooperative learning strategies and stressed the importance of teacher feedback.

Unit 2: Vocabulary Instructional Routines. Unit 2 focused on vocabulary instructional routines. Unit 2 included three modules: Selecting Words, Pronouncing and Defining Words, and Generating Examples and Non-Examples. The types of vocabulary words (academic and content-specific words) to teach as well as instruction in pronouncing and defining words were part of the unit. Using everyday language to define vocabulary words was a focus of the vocabulary instruction. Identifying characteristics of the words and generating examples and non-examples were also part of the unit. The routine used the Frayer model to teach vocabulary.

Unit 3: Comprehension Instructional Routines. Unit 3 provided training related to comprehension instructional routines. This unit consisted of three modules: Building Background Knowledge with Anticipation-Reaction Guides, Identifying Main Ideas in Text, and Writing Summaries. The unit used the *Get the Gist* routine to teach students how to identify the main idea in a paragraph. It also used a *Notes Log* during instruction on identifying main ideas and writing summaries.

Unit 4: Diagnostic and Progress Monitoring Data. Unit 4 provided regional TALA trainers with information pertaining to diagnostic and progress monitoring data. Unit 4 consisted of two

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[33] One observer knew one of the trainers at a Regional TOT. Following this event, steps were taken to ensure that observers did not know trainers.
[34] The primary developer of TALA and the TEA director of special projects for the Division of Programs and Standards were present at the regional training sessions.

modules: Administering the Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment (TMSFA) and Interpreting and Implementing Assessment Results.

Unit 5: Word Study Routines. Unit 5 covered word study routines and consisted of two modules: Identifying Syllable Structures and Morphemic Analysis. The unit provided instruction on the identification of syllable patterns (e.g., closed, open, vowel pair syllables). It also provided a morphemic analysis routine, including the root of a word, prefixes, and suffixes.

Unit 6: Fluency Routine. A fluency routine was the subject of Unit 6 and consisted of one module: Building Fluency with Partner Reading.

Unit 7: Inferential Comprehension Instructional Routines. Unit 7 provided training related to inferential comprehension instructional routines. Unit 7 consisted of three modules: Generating Questions to Monitor Comprehension -Level 1, Generating Questions to Monitor Comprehension - Level 2, and Generating Questions to Monitor Comprehension - Level 3.

Activities Covered During TALA Regional TOT Units/Modules

Observers indicated how often activities occurred in the observation protocol using tick marks to represent each occurrence during the individual modules. Following is a list of the activities included in the observation protocol:

- Presenter Facilitates (Whole or Small Group) Discussion

- Participants View Video

- Presenter Distributes and Uses Handouts

- Presenter Explains and/or Reviews TALA Content

- Presenter Provides Examples/ Elaborations of TALA Content

- Presenter Models TALA Content

- Participants Practice TALA Content with Presenter

- Participants Practice TALA Content with Each Other

- Participants Practice TALA Content Independently.

Activities that occurred most frequently during TALA training included explaining/reviewing and providing examples/elaborations of TALA content. Group discussions and distributing/using handouts also occurred frequently in the Regional TOTs. Activities that occurred less frequently included viewing videos, modeling TALA content, and participants practicing TALA content (either with the presenter, with other participants, or independently). Table 5.1 provides the average number of times each activity took place during Units 1 through 7 at the Regional TOTs. The frequency of activities differed based on the units and modules being presented.

Table 5.1: Average Number of Activities during Each Unit and Module of the Regional TOT

	Presenter Facilitates (Whole or Small Group) Discussion	Participants View Video	Presenter Distributes and Uses Handouts	Presenter Explains and/or Reviews TALA Content	Presenter Provides Examples/ Elaborations of TALA Content	Presenter Models TALA Content	Participants Practice TALA Content with Presenter	Participants Practice TALA Content with Each Other	Participants Practice TALA Content Independently
Unit 1: Module 1	0.83	1.00	2.17	4.83	3.17	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.00
Unit 1: Module 2	6.17	6.00	6.17	12.00	8.67	0.83	2.00	3.67	0.83
Unit 2: Module 1	3.60	1.00	2.40	6.33	5.83	0.83	0.83	1.67	0.17
Unit 2: Module 2	4.33	1.00	3.00	11.83	9.17	3.00	3.17	3.67	1.00
Unit 2: Module 3	3.83	2.00	6.00	8.50	4.83	1.17	1.00	2.33	0.67
Unit 3: Module 1	4.83	3.43	8.29	10.14	8.29	2.14	2.00	1.71	1.14
Unit 3: Module 2	3.67	1.67	7.67	9.00	8.83	1.83	1.50	1.00	1.33
Unit 3: Module 3	3.83	2.00	10.50	5.33	6.83	0.83	1.17	1.17	1.17
Unit 4: Module 1	9.33	4.00	6.00	15.00	25.67	2.67	2.00	1.00	3.00
Unit 4: Module 2	4.00	0.00	8.00	15.67	16.00	3.67	4.33	0.33	3.67
Unit 5: Module 1	6.50	2.00	6.50	8.50	4.50	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00

Table 5.1 (continued): Average Number of Activities during Each Unit and Module of the Regional TOT

	Presenter Facilitates (Whole or Small Group) Discussion	Participants View Video	Presenter Distributes and Uses Handouts	Presenter Explains and/or Reviews TALA Content	Presenter Provides Examples/ Elaborations of TALA Content	Presenter Models TALA Content	Participants Practice TALA Content with Presenter	Participants Practice TALA Content with Each Other	Participants Practice TALA Content Independently
Unit 5: Module 2	2.00	1.00	2.25	4.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Unit 6: Module 1	5.00	4.00	9.33	14.33	11.67	1.67	1.33	1.67	1.00
Unit 7: Module 1	3.00	2.00	3.33	8.00	6.00	1.67	1.00	1.33	1.00
Unit 7: Module 2	3.67	1.00	2.67	7.67	5.33	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Unit 7: Module 3	4.33	3.00	3.67	4.67	3.67	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00

Source: Regional TOT Observations

TALA Duration

The following section describes the amount of time to complete each module. Unit 1:2, "Effective Instruction Techniques," had the largest delivery time out of the eight general instructional TALA modules. The time to deliver the "Interpreting and Implementing Assessment Results" module (4:2) was almost double the amount of time than the other seven reading intervention TALA modules. Figure 5.1 illustrates the average duration of the general instructional units and intervention units.

Figure 5.1: Average TALA Module Duration – Regional TOTs
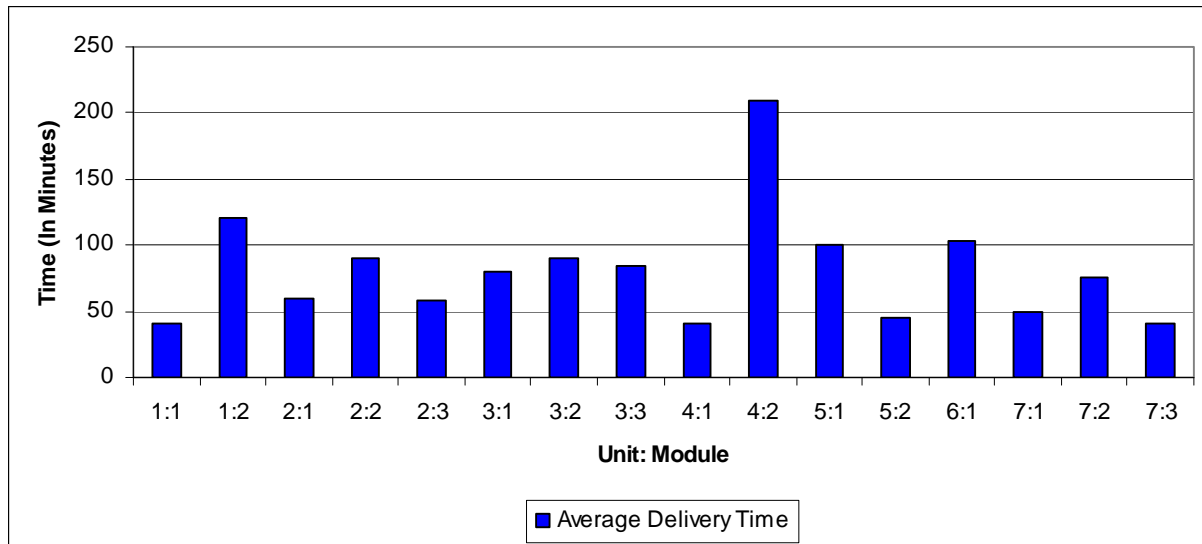
Source: Regional TOT Observations

Observer Ratings of Regional TOT Components

Observers rated three components of TALA Regional TOTs (implementation, culture, and preparedness) using a scale of 1 to 4, where 1=no evidence, 2=little evidence, 3=some evidence, and 4=strong evidence. Implementation was assessed by examining the degree to which trainers used questioning strategies, managed the training pace, and used modeling. The training culture was examined by having observers rate the degree to which training participants were actively involved during the training and worked collaboratively. Finally, observers examined how prepared they believed participants who attended Regional TOT would be to shift to the role of TALA presenter. The following sections present average observers' ratings for each of these components. Observer comments are included to provide context to the findings.

Implementation

Table 5.2 presents the average ratings for each of the key indicators within the implementation construct. The three indicators that were rated the highest for implementation included focusing on TALA instructional routines, using TALA videos in the modules effectively, and conducting formal presentations of TALA routines effectively. The connection of TALA routines to the TAKS and the TEKS was rated lowest by observers.

Table 5.2: Ratings for Perceptions of TALA Implementation at the Regional TOTs

Key Indicator	Mean*	S.D.
Presenter(s) focused on TALA instructional routines.	3.83	.38
Presenter(s) used TALA videos in the modules effectively.	3.78	.43
Presenter(s) carried out formal presentations of TALA routines effectively.	3.67	.49
Presenter(s) reinforced effective instructional activities by modeling them.	3.61	.50
Presenter(s) effectively used questioning strategies.	3.56	.51
Presenter(s) used TALA handouts in the modules effectively.	3.47	.51
Presenter(s) managed the pace of the training to meet the needs of participants.	3.11	.76
Presenter(s) connected TALA routines to English Language Learners.	3.11	.83
Presenter(s) connected TALA to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).	2.83	.92
Presenter(s) connected TALA to the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS).	2.78	.94

* 1=no evidence; 2=little evidence; 3=some evidence; 4=strong evidence
   Source: Regional TOT Observations

In addition to rating key indicators of training implementation, observers also provided an overall rating for the implementation of TALA routines and content using a scale of 1 (The implementation of TALA content [i.e., routines] was not at all reflective of best practice for professional development) to 5 (The implementation of TALA content [i.e., routines] was extremely reflective of best practice for professional development). The average implementation rating was 4.33, indicating that the implementation of TALA routines at the Regional TOT was reflective of best practice for professional development. Observers who provided higher ratings often commented that presenters used humor, personal examples, effective modeling, and kept a good pace. Observer comments that reflect higher implementation ratings included the following:

- *"Both presenters made connections to TEKS and TAKS by discussing them at the beginning of each module…The content made references to accommodations for ELL learners as well as scaffolding techniques for students who are struggling…A consistent procedure was recommended for scaffolding instruction to teach the routines. It was represented as an 'I do. We do. You do.' This protocol for explicit teaching of the routines was also used as a model for training. The pace was excellent. Participants were given an appropriate amount of time for completing activities and the time frame was adhered to consistently. Sufficient modeling, guided practice and independent practice for participants were given."*

- *"Presenters were really professional and engaging. Good sense of humor, good connections to their own teaching histories."*

- *"The materials and the training were organized around these components and the presenters stayed true to the routines included in the manuals."*

- *"The training was very well done. Modules delivered were clear and speakers took time to thoroughly answer participant questions."*

- *"Trainers did a nice job hitting all key points in the material while also tying in personal examples to help training resonate with participants."*

While overall implementation ratings were high, some observers noted that the training pace was too fast or instructors were not familiar with the content. Observer comments that reflect areas for improvement with TALA training implementation included the following:

- *"At times, elaborations on participants' responses to questions were limited. At other times, presenters would present a question or ask participants to think about an answer to a question. Instead of eliciting their responses, the presenters would answer the question themselves."*

- *"I scored the second section (Unit 3, Module 3) a '2' because participants seemed confused by it. The method was presented in a way to make it seem overly complicated. There was not enough time for participants to practice and get a good feel for how to do it (much less train it) effectively. I foresee a lot of problems with this module in the later sessions."*

- *"I thought the training was effective but could have been more so. Because the participants are going to train others, I felt that they needed more depth in each session. Perhaps they need more time? I also think that someone who is already experienced with the TALA methods should be doing the training."*

- *"Pacing was fast and presenters often overlooked participants' processing needs. In spite of the pacing, nearly every module ran over the allotted time."*

- *"The presenters did not emphasize the connections to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). Even though these connections were in the handouts, the presenters did not refer to them by discussing them at the beginning of each module like they did in previous modules…"*

- *"The presenters did nice job of hitting key points but at times, it appeared they were unfamiliar with some of the concepts. Ultimately, they were able to clearly articulate the concept but the hesitation disrupted flow. In addition, there were several technology issues."*

Culture

Table 5.3 presents the mean ratings for each of the key indicators within the culture construct. According to observer ratings, positive interactions with participants, respect for the contribution of all participants, and equal engagement of participants were the three highest rated elements of the training culture. All of the other indicators were rated above 3.5, indicating that there was at least some evidence of all of the culture components. The two lowest rated key indicators for culture included engagement in hands-on activities and encouragement of participants to generate questions.

Table 5.3: Ratings for Perceptions of TALA Training Culture at the Regional TOTs

Key Indicator	Mean*	S.D.
Presenter(s) were positive in their interactions with participants.	3.94	.24
Presenter(s) respected the contribution of all participants.	3.94	.24
Presenter(s) engaged participants equally.	3.94	.24
Interactions reflected collaborative working relationships between presenter(s) and participants.	3.83	.38
Presenter(s) encouraged active participation of all participants.	3.72	.46
Presenter(s) encouraged participants to generate questions.	3.56	.62
Participants were positive in their interactions with other participants.	3.89	.32
Participants actively participated in group discussions.	3.89	.32
Participants interacted with each other around content issues.	3.83	.38
There was a climate of respect among participants for what other participants contributed.	3.83	.38
Participants were on task.	3.78	.43
Participants enthusiastically engaged in hands-on activities.	3.56	.62

* 1=no evidence; 2=little evidence; 3=some evidence; 4=strong evidence
Source: Regional TOT Observations

In addition to rating key indicators of training culture, observers also provided an overall rating for the culture of TALA routines and content using a scale of 1 (The culture of the session interfered with engagement of participants in TALA training) to 5 (The culture of the session facilitated the engagement of participants in TALA training). The average culture rating was 4.56, indicating an environment conducive to participant engagement. Observers who provided higher ratings often commented that presenters did a good job engaging participants, were enthusiastic, and created a positive learning environment. Observer comments that reflect higher culture ratings included the following:

- *"The modules were delivered in a professional manner and participants were engaged and respectful of each other."*

- *"The participants did a great job getting involved and the presenters did a nice job fostering a collaborative and respectful exchange throughout the day. At times, there were a few side conversations but overall participants were focused."*

- *"The participants were positive and enthusiastic. The presenters encouraged participants to become actively involved with them and the others at their table. They encouraged them to ask questions that they could submit to the Parking Lot and during the day they addressed all the questions the participants asked."*

- *"The participants were positive and enthusiastic. The presenters set the tone for the day by encouraging participants to interact with them and the others at their table. They encouraged them to ask questions that they could submit to the Parking Lot and during the day they addressed all the questions the participants asked."*

- *"The presenters are really quite engaging and seemed to have developed real rapport with the participants over the four days."*

- *"The presenters have created an environment that is focused and serious, yet pleasant and conducive to learning. Presenters were respectful of their participants."*

While overall culture ratings were high (above 3.5), some observers noted that the presenters could have used more real-life stories to engage participants and ice breaker activities to get people connected. Observer comments that reflect areas for improvement with TALA training culture included the following:

- *"All training content was delivered and key concepts were highlighted. It appeared nearly all participants were engaged. However, there was little excitement around concepts. Participants were reserved. It might have been useful to use more ice breakers to get people connected."*

- *"As stated above, participants were excited about materials. However, there were times where there were a lot of side conversations in room, which distracted all participants. This was in part due to the inability of the presenters to hold the attention of participants and also because it was a large room and easy for people to talk on the edges of the room."*

- *"During the morning session, I would have given the culture a "5", but the mood shifted somewhat after lunch. However, in general, the mood was positive and supportive. Participants, for the most part, stayed on task, although, again, after lunch, there was more inattention. In fact, during the last session, the presenter had to ask participants to not have side conversations because they were distracting others."*

- *"This group did not seem to have issues with small group work and enjoyed talking with each other. The presenters "sh"-ed participants, but did not directly address side conversation by setting expectations of respectful listening or by reminding participants that others were talking."*

- *"While trainees certainly seemed to absorb the materials being presented, the relationship between the presenters and audience was lacking. Presenters needed to interject more real-life stories and audience questions."*

Preparedness

In addition to assessing the overall implementation and culture of TALA Regional TOTs, observers also rated the extent to which they believed trainings prepared participants to train others. Table 5.4 illustrates the mean ratings for each of the key indicators within the preparedness construct. Based on the Regional TOT, observers perceived that regional trainers were prepared to:

- Present TALA activities as outlined in the training materials;

- Help participants improve student outcomes in reading/English language arts; and

- Maintain a positive learning environment.

Regional trainers were perceived as least prepared to build participants' skill in linking their instruction to the TEKS and develop participants' understanding of the TAKS student assessment system.

Table 5.4: Ratings for Perceptions of Trainer Preparedness Based on the Regional TOT

Key Indicator	Mean*	S.D.
Present TALA activities as outlined in the training materials.	3.22	.43
Help participants improve student outcomes in reading/English language arts.	3.22	.43
Maintain a positive learning environment.	3.22	.65
Enhance participants' knowledge/skills so they can effectively teach adolescent students to comprehend academic texts.	3.17	.51
Help participants improve student outcomes in the content areas.	3.17	.51
Enhance participants' knowledge/skills so they can effectively teach adolescent students who struggle with reading. (ELA ONLY)	3.14	.90
Help participants learn to implement research-based strategies in academic literacy instruction.	3.11	.58
Motivate participants to learn.	3.00	.59
Work with adult learners.	2.94	.73
Differentiate instruction for various learning styles.	2.61	.92
Build participants' skill in linking their instruction to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).	2.50	1.10
Develop participants' understanding of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) student assessment system.	2.28	.96

* 1=no evidence; 2=little evidence; 3=some evidence; 4=strong evidence
Source: Regional TOT Observations

Observers also provided an overall rating for the preparedness construct using a scale of 1 (This session did not adequately prepare presenters to present TALA training) to 5 (This session very much prepared presenters to present TALA training). The average preparedness rating was 3.86. Some observers' comments suggested that the trainings were engaging and prepared participants to become trainers of the material. These observers commented that:

- *The trainers maintained an upbeat, engaging rapport with the participants. They encouraged questions and encouraged working together as a group. Overall, there have been very few references to TEKS and TAKS, if any, during the modules.*

- *Today's information was very straightforward and the participants should be able to translate this to their presentations to teachers in their regions and districts.*

- *This material is fairly straightforward and was presented with enough practice, so that the participants seemed to easily grasp the idea. Today differed just in the amount of information shared and that seemed to make a difference in how the participants interacted with the materials.*

Some observers felt that there was too much information covered during the trainings and participants would have a difficult time switching roles from participant to trainer. Some observers felt that participants' questions during the session reflected their lack of understanding of the material. Other observers felt that presenters did not fully grasp the content. Several observers recommended that participants be taught the content first and then be given instructions on how to train others on the content. The following comments reflect these findings:

- *"Participants asked good questions to help clarify their understanding of the content. These questions reveal in some ways the lack of understanding that some participants have about the content they will be teaching. Some participants seemed confused with the Raphael's Levels of Questioning."*

- *"Participants needed more in depth material and/or practice to help them be effective teachers of the material. It almost seemed like they needed to be taught the content first and then hear how to teach it second…Participants mentioned being overwhelmed by the amount of information during breaks. I feel that they have the basic knowledge to implement the training but they will not have depth to be able to respond to tough questions, criticisms of material, and/or ad lib…"*

- *"…For some of the participants this is their first exposure to this summary writing routine. This will make it difficult to present because they do not have personal experience of using this routine with students. They will need to deepen their understanding and knowledge about these literacy concepts so that they can respond adaptively to the questions/concerns teachers will have in implementing these routines."*

- *"The material is covered at a rapid pace with not much reflecting time. Much of the task of making the switch from participant to presenter will have to come as they reflect, review, and practice the training materials. The presenters do provide tips for their roles as trainers, but the participants must know the content first-and there is MUCH to know-especially for the content trainers. The content examples in the modules caused problems for the "trainers-to-be"-they feel uncomfortable with information outside their fields of study. They will have to be diligent in learning the training materials if they are to help the teachers understand the value of the routines."*

- *"The questions documented in the field notes serve as evidence for the fact that some participants will have to do some work in order to deliver this curriculum effectively. Some participants will need to deepen their understanding and knowledge about these literacy concepts so that they can respond adaptively to the questions/concerns teachers of teachers implementing these routines."*

- *"There is an enormous amount of content to be covered. While presenters took extra time to cover most of the content they still did not focus in depth on TEKS/TAKS connections, adapting to learning styles, or make explicit connections for content teachers."*

Observer Field Notes

Observers took notes to record their observations of changes that were made to the environment to accommodate the goals of each module, relevant questions that participants asked during each module, ways in which presenters directed the presentation off course from the materials, participant behaviors including reactions to content or examples, and ways in which presenters provided direction to help the participants make the shift from presenter-in-training to being a presenter of the content.

Changes Made to the Environment

Overall, across all three Regional TOTs, there were no significant changes (e.g., rearranging of chairs, joining together tables to combine groups) made to the environment to accommodate to the goals of any of the Regional TOTs modules and units.

Relevant Questions that Participants Asked During Each Module

While some TALA content seemed to be easily understood by participants (as reflected by a lack of questions about that specific content/instructional routines), other content proved more challenging for participants. The main themes of relevant questions and topics that were discussed by participants throughout the modules in Units 1-3 focused on the Frayer Model, how the trainer should present and teach the materials to the teachers, and background information on TALA. Other questions focused on time constraints and time management, and the need for further explanation on particular models that are used in training. The main themes of relevant questions and topics that were discussed by participants throughout the modules in Units 4-7 focused on Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment measures, pronunciation and comprehension problems among students from different cultures, and the sharing of ideas.

Off-Task Behaviors

The observers of all of the Regional TOTs stated that the presenters adhered to the agenda and did not veer off course when presenting the modules in Units 1-3 and in Units 4-7. During Units 1-3, observers noted that the presenters in one region offered a couple of personal stories to highlight why the concepts are important, The observers stated that this was engaging and did not detract from the training. In another region the presenters experienced difficulties with the computer and the video segments. For the modules in Units 4-7, the observers stated that the presenters from two of the regions provided a lot of background information about the development of TALA materials, and that the presenters spent a lot of time answering questions which were tangentially related to TALA content but were not part of the curriculum.

Participant Behaviors

The observers of the Regional TOTs noted that during Units 1-3, participants offered comments and observations from their personal experiences, and they seemed to be excited about the materials as they were actively looking over all of the handouts. In some cases, observers mentioned that presenters had some difficulty keeping the participants engaged and attentive in the later part of the afternoon (following lunch). Observers mentioned that the participants were engaged, that they often offered their opinions and asked questions, and that they were following along in their binders and seemed to enjoy the concepts and materials.

During Units 4-7, one observer noted that participants were extremely engaged, took many notes, and asked relevant questions, noting that participants' responses showed that they were

paying attention and were interested in the topic. Observers from the other regions mentioned that there were a lot of side conversations that became distracting. They also stated that participants were slow to respond because they were talking with each other rather than paying attention to the presentation.

Moving from Presenter-in-Training to Being a TALA Regional Trainer

Regional TOT observers indicated that presenters provided positive direction to the participants when making the shift to being the presenter by stressing the usage of the common language, allowing planning time at the end of the training, and emphasizing the need to take time and reflect on what has been taught in order to feel comfortable with the content. Toward the end of the sessions presenters reminded participants to become very familiar with the handouts, take time with the difficult exercises, keep everyone engaged by giving breaks within the time limits, and provide detailed examples.

The presenters provided positive direction to the participants when making the shift to being the presenter by stressing the following themes:

- the handouts are provided for them so that they do not need to go back to previous modules to get materials;

- there are websites and additional resources provided to support their instruction; tips were provided for handling technical issues with the video equipment;

- constantly be aware of time constraints;

- the importance of following the routines as they are presented; and

- the importance of using visual stimuli in the classroom (like posters, chalkboard, overheads) to help students fully understand routines.

Summary of the TALA Regional TOTs

Across all seven units, the length of time taken at the Regional TOTs to present each module exceeded the estimated time in the TALA training manual. In addition, the most frequent activities by presenters included group discussions, use of videos and handouts, reviewing TALA content and providing examples/elaborations of TALA content. Conversely, across all seven units fewer presenters modeled TALA content and had participants practice TALA content either with the presenter, other participants, or independently.

Observers rated three training components: training implementation, training culture, and training preparedness. Analyses revealed that the training culture was the highest ranked construct, followed by training implementation. Training preparedness received the lowest overall average rating. These findings suggest that, in general, observers perceived the implementation of TALA content was reflective of best practice for professional development and the culture of the training sessions facilitated the engagement of participants in the TALA training. However, observers were less inclined to report that the training prepared participants to present the TALA training.

Key indicators of training implementation revealed that presenters did an effective job focusing on TALA instructional routines, effectively using videos, and carrying out presentations. However, observer ratings suggest that presenters could do a better job connecting TALA to the TEKS and TAKS.

Key indicators of training culture suggest that presenters were positive in their interactions with participants, respected the contribution of all participants, and engaged participants equally. Potential areas for improvement within the culture construct include using more hands-on activities and encouraging participants to generate questions.

Within the preparedness component, observers believed that TALA activities were presented as outlined in the training materials; the training will ultimately help participants improve student outcomes in reading and ELA; and the training maintained a positive learning environment.

Overall, observers rated the Regional TOT as highly implemented (meaning that the trainer explicitly followed the activities and content as presented in the training materials) and representative of positive culture. However, the preparedness of regional trainers was perceived as relatively low. The implementation rating is reflected in perceived preparedness of regional trainers to present the activities as outlined in the training. Also, the culture of the Regional TOT was perceived as positive as well as the perception of regional trainers to maintain a positive learning environment. However, there was less implementation of the TEKS and TAKS in the Regional TOT and observers perceived the trainers as less prepared to link instruction to TEKS and develop understanding of TAKS.

In addition, some observers believed that there was too much information covered during the trainings. Consequently, they anticipated that participants would have a difficult time switching roles from participant to trainer. Observers believed that participants' questions during the session reflected their lack of understanding of the material.

TALA Classroom Teacher Academies

Thirty TALA Classroom Teacher Academies were observed between June 2, 2008, and August 13, 2008. Twenty of the trainings were ELA Academies and 10 trainings were Content Area Academies. ELA Academies contained an average of 25 participants, ranging from 10 to 41 participants, while Content Area Academies contained an average of 15 participants, ranging from 3 to 31 participants.

Content and Activities Covered During TALA Classroom Teacher Academies

The goal of the training of trainer model was that the delivery of TALA to classroom teachers would possess the same content, activities, and quality as if all teachers in the state had been trained by the master trainers. Therefore, the observation protocol was the same as the Regional TOT protocol. Observers of TALA Classroom Teacher Academies completed an observation protocol for each training day they observed. As in the Regional TOT, TALA ELA Classroom Teacher Academies covered all seven units, which included a total of sixteen modules, while TALA Content Area Classroom Teacher Academies covered just the first three units, which included eight modules. The content covered in both ELA and Content Area Academies is the same as the Regional TOT (see section "Content Covered During TALA Regional TOT Units/Modules").

Additionally, as in the Regional TOT, observers indicated how often activities occurred in the observation protocol using tick marks to represent each occurrence during the individual modules.

Activities that occurred most frequently during the TALA training included explaining/reviewing and providing examples/elaborations of TALA content. Group discussions and distributing/using handouts also occurred frequently in the Classroom Teacher Academies. Activities that occurred less frequently included viewing videos, modeling TALA content, and participants

practicing TALA content (either with the presenter, with other participants, or independently). Table 5.5 provides the average number of times each activity took place during Units 1 through 7. The frequency of activities differed based on the units and modules being presented.

**Table 5.5: Average Number of Activities Conducted during Each Unit and
Module of the Classroom Teacher Academies**

	Presenter Facilitates (Whole or Small Group) Discussion	Participants View Video	Presenter Distributes and Uses Handouts	Presenter Explains and/or Reviews TALA Content	Presenter Provides Examples/ Elaborations of TALA Content	Presenter Models TALA Content	Participants Practice TALA Content with Presenter	Participants Practice TALA Content with Each Other	Participants Practice TALA Content Independently
Unit 1: Module 1	1.21	1.00	2.00	5.59	2.48	0.00	0.00	0.14	0.00
Unit 1: Module 2	4.07	5.60	6.20	11.67	9.03	0.63	1.43	2.60	0.27
Unit 2: Module 1	2.17	1.03	2.50	6.53	3.27	0.30	0.70	1.43	0.37
Unit 2: Module 2	2.47	1.00	2.77	11.23	5.23	1.93	2.23	2.10	0.57
Unit 2: Module 3	2.50	1.97	6.33	7.10	2.97	0.90	0.97	1.77	0.77
Unit 3: Module 1	2.06	3.25	6.36	9.11	4.11	1.26	1.26	1.69	0.69
Unit 3: Module 2	3.13	1.93	9.60	11.20	4.93	2.00	1.53	1.40	0.77
Unit 3: Module 3	2.87	2.00	9.03	9.90	4.40	1.63	1.17	1.33	0.90
Unit 4: Module 1	2.45	3.77	6.27	14.41	5.09	2.32	2.23	1.50	3.32
Unit 4: Module 2	1.50	0.08	9.88	13.13	4.96	1.96	2.21	1.88	2.33
Unit 5: Module 1	3.00	2.00	7.85	13.35	4.75	1.50	1.20	1.45	1.20

Table 5.5 (continued): Average Number of Activities Conducted during Each Unit and Module of the Classroom Teacher Academies

	Presenter Facilitates (Whole or Small Group) Discussion	Participants View Video	Presenter Distributes and Uses Handouts	Presenter Explains and/or Reviews TALA Content	Presenter Provides Examples/ Elaborations of TALA Content	Presenter Models TALA Content	Participants Practice TALA Content with Presenter	Participants Practice TALA Content with Each Other	Participants Practice TALA Content Independently
Unit 5: Module 2	2.40	1.85	7.15	12.35	2.70	2.70	2.15	2.55	0.95
Unit 6: Module 1	1.50	3.40	10.53	13.30	3.45	1.95	1.10	1.90	1.10
Unit 7: Module 1	1.50	1.90	4.00	6.20	2.30	1.00	1.05	1.15	0.30
Unit 7: Module 2	1.11	0.94	4.28	5.89	2.28	0.83	0.72	0.72	0.39
Unit 7: Module 3	1.53	2.16	3.53	5.37	1.47	0.74	0.89	0.79	0.42

Source: Classroom Teacher Academy Observations

TALA Duration

TALA developers provided an estimation of time needed to cover content in each of the modules. The following section describes the amount of time actually observed on presenting each module. The information is presented separately for each academy. Figure 5.2 illustrates the average duration of the ELA academy module compared to the estimated time to complete the module as indicated in the TALA training manual. Figure 5.3 illustrates the average duration of the content area academy module duration compared to the estimated time to complete each module.

Figure 5.2: Average TALA Module Duration: ELA Classroom Teacher Academies
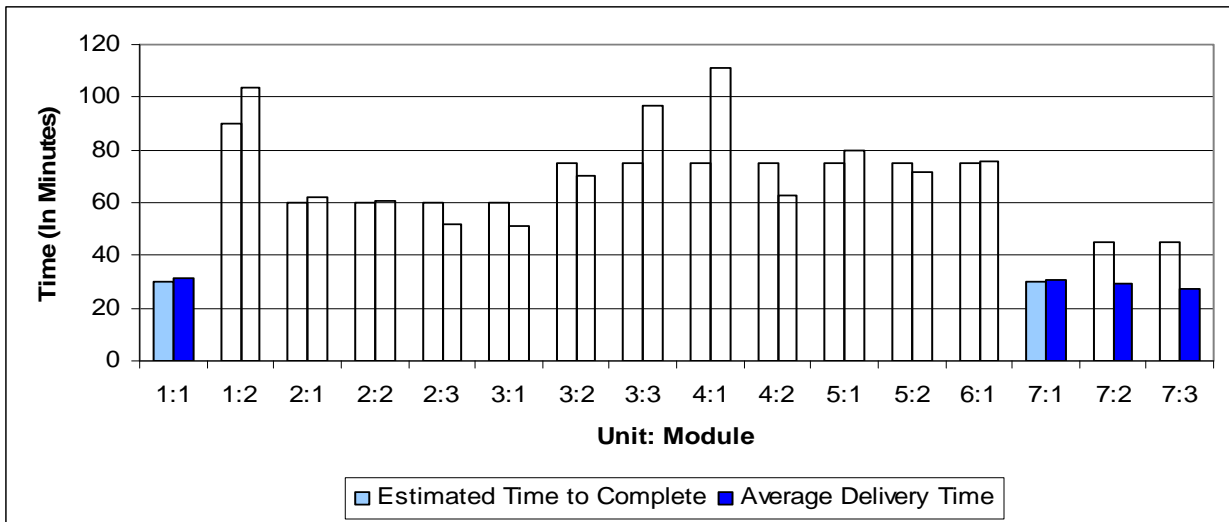
Source: Classroom Teacher Academy Observations

Figure 5.3: Average TALA Module Duration: Content Area Classroom Teacher Academies
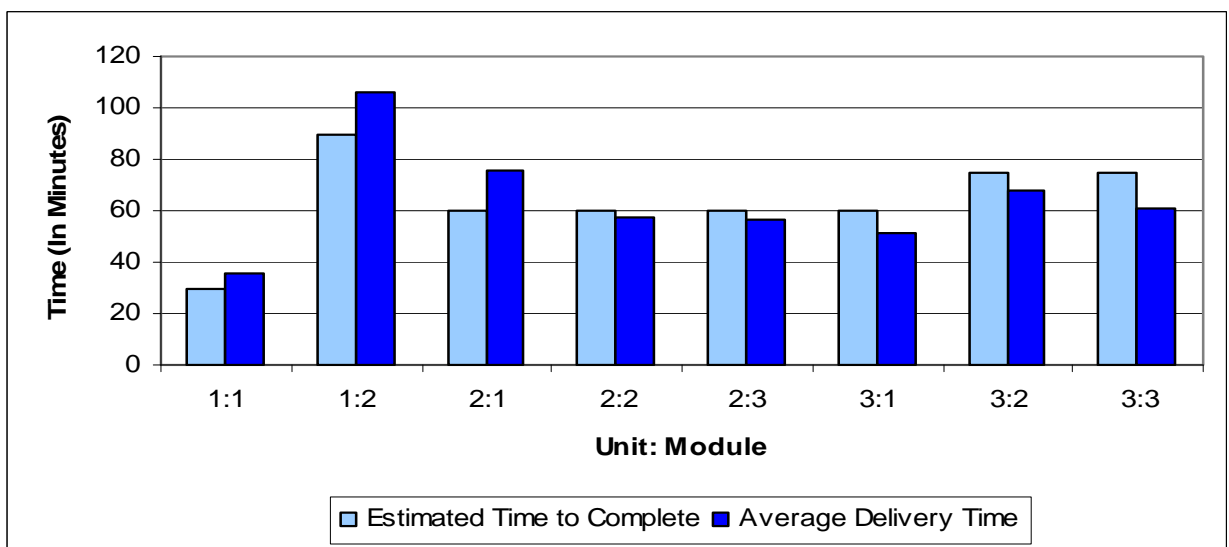
Source: Classroom Teacher Academy Observations

On average, the duration of the ELA and content area academies exceeded the estimated time to completion expressed in the TALA training manual. As depicted in Figures 5.2 and 5.3, unit 1 was longer in duration in the content area academies than the ELA academies. In unit 2, modules 1 and 3 were completed in a shorter amount of time in the content area academies, and modules 2 and 3 in unit 3 were completed in a shorter amount of time in the content area academies than the ELA academies. The time of delivery for unit 3, module 3 was 30 minutes shorter in the content area academies than the ELA academies. This could be due to the trainers' awareness of the time limitations and the need to cover all instructional routines in the last module of the content area academy.

The average duration of the intervention strategy units during the ELA academy exceeded the estimated time to completion for five out of the eight TALA modules. The time to deliver unit 4, module 1 was 10 minutes less than the estimated delivery time, and the time to deliver the last modules in unit 7 (modules 2 and 3) was over 15 minutes less than the estimated time to completion. As with the content area academies, the trainers' awareness of the time limitations and the need to cover all instructional routines in the last two modules may account for the accelerated duration.

Observer Ratings of Classroom Teacher Academy Components

Observers rated two components of TALA teacher trainings (implementation and culture) using a scale of 1 to 4, where 1=no evidence, 2=little evidence, 3=some evidence, and 4=strong evidence. Implementation was assessed by examining the degree to which trainers used questioning strategies, managed the training pace, and used modeling. The training culture was examined by having observers rate the degree to which training participants were actively involved during the training and worked collaboratively. The following sections present average observers' ratings for these two components. Observer comments are included to provide context to findings.

Implementation

Table 5.6 presents the average ratings for each of the key indicators within the implementation construct. The three indicators that were rated the highest for implementation included focusing on TALA instructional routines, using TALA videos in the modules effectively, and conducting formal presentations of TALA routines effectively. The connection of TALA routines to the TAKS and the TEKS was rated lowest by observers. The perceptions of TALA implementation at the Classroom Teacher Academies are similar to those reported for the Regional TOTs.

Table 5.6: Ratings for Perceptions of TALA Implementation at the Classroom Teacher Academies

Key Indicator	Mean*	S.D.
Presenter(s) focused on TALA instructional routines.	3.76	.43
Presenter(s) used TALA videos in the modules effectively.	3.56	.57
Presenter(s) carried out formal presentations of TALA routines effectively.	3.49	.60
Presenter(s) used TALA handouts in the modules effectively.	3.44	.59
Presenter(s) effectively used questioning strategies.	3.33	.67
Presenter(s) reinforced effective instructional activities by modeling them.	3.28	.77
Presenter(s) managed the pace of the training to meet the needs of participants.	3.18	.69
Presenter(s) connected TALA routines to English Language Learners.	2.91	.85
Presenter(s) connected TALA to the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills(TAKS)	2.54	.92
Presenter(s) connected TALA to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	2.51	.88

* 1=no evidence; 2=little evidence; 3=some evidence; 4=strong evidence
Source: Classroom Teacher Academy Observations

In addition to rating key indicators of training implementation, observers also provided an overall rating for the implementation of TALA routines and content using a scale of 1 (The implementation of TALA content [i.e., routines] was not at all reflective of best practice for professional development) to 5 (The implementation of TALA content [i.e., routines] was extremely reflective of best practice for professional development). The average implementation rating was 4.13, indicating that the implementation of TALA routines at the Classroom Teacher Academies was reflective of best practice for professional development. The implementation rating was slightly higher at the ELA academies (M=4.16) than the content area academies (M=4.08). Observers who provided higher ratings often commented that presenters used humor, personal examples, effective modeling, and kept a good pace, which resulted in audiences that were more engaged in the presentations. Observer comments that reflect higher implementation ratings included the following:

- *"Trainers started off the day very lively and were engaging. They used a new ice breaker to get participants talking."*

- *"Trainer 2 provided a lot of advice to teachers (in addition to the TALA content) about how to respond to specific situations in their classrooms. She described how she implemented some of the components of TALA in her classroom."*

- *"Presenters opened the day with an overview of why TALA is important. Also, described the types of materials teachers might use in their classroom to underscore important TALA routines."*

- *"Overall, the implementation of the material was good. The presenters made good use of the videos as an integral part of the training."*

- *"Presenters are organized and start things on time."*

- *"I thought the presenters did very well. They presented the content clearly and effectively. The training proceeded at a pretty good pace - but not all the modules were finished."*

- *"The presenters remained focused on the TALA instructional routines throughout the day and did not skip any substantial material. The presentations were informative and effective, though the pace was more hurried and the presenters consistently stated that they were running behind schedule."*

Several observers also noted that the presenters did not make linkages between TALA and TAKS, TEKS, or ELL classes. In many cases, presenters were unable to link TALA because they were rushed for time.

- *"After mentioning TEKS/TAKS in the 2:1 they were never mentioned again."*

- *"While the presenters made some connections between TALA and the TAKS test, they made few connections to TEKS and referred to English Language Learners infrequently."*

- *"Little emphasis was given to the connection between TAKS and TEKS. Most references in the course material to the TAKS and TEKS were skipped or downplayed."*

- *"The presenters made no connections to English Language Learners and very few connections to TEKS and TAKS on Day 2."*

- *"At times, the presenters did not seem very comfortable with the material. They would say things like, 'I'm not an ELA teacher', 'They say we should say this', and 'This is maybe more for ELA teachers, I don't really have a good understanding of how to do this. But that's okay.'"*

While overall implementation ratings were high, almost every observer noted that there was too much material to cover in a limited amount of time. This led to the following three unintended consequences: (1) presenters skipped materials, (2) presenters cut back on asking and answering questions, and (3) the presenters expressed their frustrations to the audience:

- *"Presenters said that they were stressed about the time today. They felt rushed, and were concerned that there was not enough time for participants to fully practice the routines. They feared that participants left feeling like 'This is hard!' rather than 'This is a challenge, but I can do it.'"*

- *"The greatest challenge faced by the trainers was time."*

- *"One participant pulled me to the side and told me to be sure to note that the pace was WAY too fast - not just for the day but overall. She said it was an information overload."*

- *"The presenters expressed frustration with the pace of the training, they did not feel that they had enough time to present what they needed to present."*

- *"Much of the material was skipped and there was virtually no participant engagement."*

- *"Day three was incredibly rushed. The presenters were very far behind and were trying to catch up by speeding through all of the modules. Due to the quick pace, many of the activities and demonstrations were missed."*

- *"The trainers recognized they were running out of time and quickly began skimming and skipping over slides. This became confusing to participants."*

Most of the presenters received praise for their effective and engaging presentation styles; however, some presenters were flagged for their poor presentation skills and inadequate understanding of TALA.

- *"One presenter did much more reading directly from the script and it did effect how engaged the participants appeared to be… The teachers were really bothered by the amount of reading from the script. Several commented during breaks that they were 'highly insulted' by the presenter reading to them."*

- *"Trainer 2 did not seem well prepared and often made contradictory statements about how to implement the concepts being taught. For the most part, trainer 2 would read verbatim from the TALA trainer's manual unless she was asked a questions at which point, she would express how she didn't understand the concepts well."*

- *"Trainer 2 mentioned she was nervous about presenting in front of people and unsure of the responses to several questions. Participants talked over her at times."*

- *"Overall, there was one highly-effective presenter, one effective presenter, and one ineffective presenter. Therefore, there was variation among the three presenters that affected the ratings above."*

- One presenter *"reads the script exactly. There's not much excitement here. Not very engaging."*

Finally, several observers noted technical difficulties with the PowerPoint presentations and the videos.

- *"The only equipment [problem] was with the video. The audio and video in the clips didn't track synchronously."*

- *"There are problems with the video (can't seem to load) and presenters talk about content and move on."*

- *"Computer isn't working this morning."*

- *"There were some issues getting the first video to work. A techie brought in another laptop and was able to get it loaded and working."*

Culture

Table 5.7 presents the mean ratings for each of the key indicators within the culture construct. The three key indicators that were rated the highest for culture were that presenters were positive in their interactions with participants, respected the contribution of all participants, and participants were positive in their interactions with other participants. All of the other indicators were rated above 3.0, indicating that there was at least some evidence of all of the culture components. The two lowest rated key indicators for culture included engagement in hands-on activities and encouragement of generating questions. The perceptions of the culture at the Classroom Teacher Academies are similar to those reported for the Regional TOTs.

Table 5.7: Ratings for Perceptions of TALA Training Culture at the Classroom Teacher Academies

Key Indicator	Mean*	S.D.
Presenter(s) were positive in their interactions with participants.	3.82	.39
Presenter(s) respected the contribution of all participants.	3.82	.42
Participants were positive in their interactions with other participants.	3.75	.43
Presenter(s) engaged participants equally.	3.67	.53
Presenter(s) encouraged active participation of all participants.	3.56	.55
Interactions reflected collaborative working relationships between presenter(s) and participants.	3.53	.64
Presenter(s) encouraged participants to generate questions.	3.23	.80
There was a climate of respect among participants for what other participants contributed.	3.74	.47
Participants interacted with each other around content issues.	3.50	.58
Participants were on task.	3.45	.57
Participants actively participated in group discussions.	3.44	.59
Participants enthusiastically engaged in hands-on activities.	3.33	.57

* 1=no evidence; 2=little evidence; 3=some evidence; 4=strong evidence
Source: Classroom Teacher Academy Observations

In addition to rating key indicators of training culture, observers also provided an overall rating for the culture of TALA routines and content using a scale of 1 (The culture of the session interfered with engagement of participants in the TALA training) to 5 (The culture of the session facilitated the engagement of participants in the TALA training). The average culture rating was 4.32, indicating an environment conducive to participant engagement. The culture rating was slightly higher at the content area academies (M=4.40) than the ELA academies (M=4.29). Observers who provided higher ratings often commented that presenters did a good job engaging participants, were enthusiastic, and created a positive learning environment. Some observer comments that illustrate these points are listed below:

▪ *"The participants enthusiastically participated in all independent and small group hands-on activities. The participants responded positively to the questions posed to the whole group by the presenters."*

- *"As the day progressed, the participants seemed to become more comfortable speaking in the large group and put forth more comments. The participants seemed to speak up most often following videos. This is when they tended to relate what they have seen to their own teaching experiences and voiced their opinions about the TALA strategies."*

- *"The culture of the TALA training was very good, for the most part. Participants paid attention to the presenters and asked questions when appropriate. They quietly and attentively worked during each of the activities. There were a few participants who were not always paying attention, but overall the culture was good."*

- *"The participants made more comments about their own teaching experiences throughout the day and seemed to feel comfortable speaking up when they had something to share."*

- *"The participants did a great job getting involved and the presenters did a nice job fostering a collaborative and respectful exchange throughout the day."*

- *"This group continued to be very friendly during breaks on Day 3. Most of the participants appeared to enjoy the material and the presenters. The presenters called most of the participants by name which added to the friendly atmosphere of the sessions."*

The participants' enthusiasm about the TALA training was noted by observers, reporting that participants chose to continue their conversations about TALA during breaks and after sessions:

- *"The participants were definitely engaged and interested in the materials. They actively participated in I Do, We Do and You Do sessions and group activities. They also continued to discuss materials during breaks and after sessions."*

- *"There were many conversations during breaks about how strategies could be used in classroom."*

Observers noted that the small group activities were the most successful component of the TALA trainings. During small groups, observers reported that participants appear to be highly engaged, participate in discussions, and even revive low energy levels after hours of training. In cases where group work was excluded from the lessons, participants' levels of interest appeared to wane. Some specific observations are as follows:

- *"Participants are very willing to discuss and make connections between the content of the training with their own classroom practice. The participants work well in their small groups and are willing to share the work completed in the small groups."*

- *"Participants stayed on task for the majority of the modules. At the end, they seemed tired, and there were a few signs of boredom, but the activities seemed to engage them and give them more energy."*

- *"Some were active participants and others were less active. While all participated when in small group discussions, few shared in the whole class activities."*

- *"Presenters are careful listeners and answer the participants' questions respectfully. Participants are teasing each other and making "punny" jokes-indicating a comfort level with each other. The small group got along well with each other and the presenters."*

- *"Group work is glossed over-presenters have been taking short cuts when group work comes up (probably related to time issues) and, as a result, the participants don't have much opportunity to talk with each other. Their time is spent sitting and listening."*

- *"The participants seem to become increasingly distracted after lunch. Although some of this was likely because it was the half day of the three day training, it also seemed to be related to the lecturing nature of the presentation and the lack of hands-on activities to keep their interest."*

However, not all participants were enthusiastic about the training. Observers reported that some teachers were skeptical about how useful and feasible TALA will prove in their classroom and throughout the school. One observer also noted that one set of trainers was not well versed in TALA and were unable to answer questions.

- *"The participants expressed some doubt about the feasibility of implementing the routines in their classrooms and this was largely unaddressed by the presenters."*

- *"Several instances where participants (one in particular) seemed annoyed that there were so many different routines to implement. It seemed other participants agreed that because the training was not school wide (all grades, all teachers, all administrators) that it would be difficult for TALA to be successful."*

- *"The presenters did a great job of staying positive and focusing on the need to model and practice in the face of quite a bit of negativity about the routines."*

- *"When asked a question by participants, the trainers seldom knew how to answer the question. The trainers would ask the coordinator to speak on the topic under discussion instead of answering questions themselves."*

While overall culture ratings were high (above 4), some observers noted that the participants were not always fully engaged by their trainers. At some classroom teacher academies, the participants were reluctant to ask questions and appeared uninterested in the presentations.

- *"There were a couple of tables of participants that were marginally engaged and sometimes weren't. But the room was big and crowded and the presenters were focused on the huge amount of material needing to be presented."*

- *"There is so much material that there really isn't time to encourage a lot of questions. Presenters did have the parking lot up, but no one put up any questions."*

- *"The trainers were rushed in getting through the TALA content. Few questions were asked of participants toward the end of the session."*

- *"However there were probably too many participants in the room. It was easy for participants to start side conversations on the edges of the room."*

- *"Although participants had the opportunity to ask questions, the presenters tended to answer these questions in a very short and clipped manner as the day progressed, immediately moving on after providing answer without checking to see if the participants understood."*

- *"Although they sometimes expressed frustration with the material, they did not ask many questions or make any comments to the presenters. This may have been in response to the rushed nature of the presentations and the presenter's numerous comments about the need to present the material quickly so the participants could leave on time."*

Another sign that audiences were not fully engaged was that observers reported many instances of side conversations. In some cases, trainers appeared to have lost control of their audiences. Observational excerpts from the observer's notes below illustrate these concepts:

- *"The participants exhibited fatigue on this day. Many participants engaged in side conversations throughout the day. The participants were visibility more annoyed with other peer participants who asked numerous questions. One table admitted computing the number of questions a participant asked during the session as a way to 'pass time.'"*

- *"Participants did not seem very engaged in the training, especially during the second part of the day. They frequently engaged in side conversations and lost focus, especially during the afternoon. There was quite a bit of giggling occurring at individual tables while trainers were speaking."*

- *"The culture became almost mutinous at times today. Many of the teachers were clearly bored with the training and left many times during each module to talk on their cell phones or go to the bathroom. One of the back tables spent a lot of time talking to each other and did not seem to pay attention. Some of the teachers that were trying to pay attention expressed annoyance with the other teachers who were not paying attention (were talking, text messaging, etc.)."*

Observer Field Notes

Observers took notes to record their observations of changes that were made to the environment to accommodate the goals of each module, relevant questions that participants asked during each module, ways in which presenters directed the presentation off course from the materials, and participant behaviors including reactions to content or examples.

Changes Made to the Environment

Overall, there were no significant changes made to the environment to accommodate to the goals of any of the ELA/Content Area teacher training modules across all regions and all units. There were several minor changes made to enhance the presentations. For instance, in five regions presenters dimmed or turned off overhead lights during presentations so the audience could see the screen more clearly. Two presenters encouraged their audiences to take breaks and move their seating, in one case, because the attention level of the audience was waning.

Relevant Questions that Participants Asked During Each Module

The main themes of the relevant questions and topics that were discussed by participants throughout the modules in Units 1-3 of the Content Area Classroom Teacher Academies training focused on the following themes: (1) who else receives TALA training (administrators); (2) whether partner reading might be distracting to students; (3) how the Frayer Model works; (4) how students' whose first language is not English adjust to TALA; (5) the time intensiveness of administering TALA in classrooms; and (6) the time frame for moving students from tier to tier in TALA.

The main themes of the relevant questions and topics that were discussed by participants throughout the modules in Units 1-3 of the ELA Area Classroom Teacher Academies focused on the following themes: (1) potential effectiveness of TALA without school-wide participation; (2) other audiences for TALA training (e.g., principals); (3) potential challenges of partner reading; (4) specific information about the Frayer model, including potential success with certain words versus others; and (5) appropriateness of the TALA lessons for students from impoverished backgrounds (i.e., who may have different exposure to some words).

Finally, the main themes of relevant questions and topics that were discussed by participants throughout the modules in Units 4-7 of the ELA Classroom Teacher Academies focused on the

following issues: (1) how does the pronunciation focus of TALA work with children for whom English is not the first language? (2) does the focus on syllables encourage students to pronounce words strangely? (3) can TALA be applied to larger classrooms? (4) how does TALA training relate to the assessment tests? And, finally, (5) are the videos and reading passages from this training available to teachers after the training is over? It should be noted that, in some training sessions, teachers were not allowed to ask questions due to time constraints.

Off-Task Behaviors

For the ELA Classroom Teacher Academies, observers stated that the presenters adhered to the agenda and, for the most part did not stray from course materials when presenting modules. The following discussion illustrates ways in which presenters attempted to adapt TALA lessons to their audiences. During the first lesson, several trainers began with housekeeping issues (signing in, completing forms, and introductions) and icebreakers to get attendees acquainted with one another. The observers noted that three presenters shortened activities and one presenter skipped handouts due to the limited time available. Additionally, two presenters used stories from their own experiences with teaching and one presenter opened the room up to a general discussion of phonics. Two regions had a TALA coordinator come to the presentations to answer questions about TALA and whether it could be used in the seventh grade. Finally, in three regions, presenters created extra breaks for the audience.

For the most part, observers from the Content Area Classroom Teacher Academies stated that the presenters adhered to the agenda and did not go off course when presenting the modules in Units 1-3. Observers noted that the presenters in three regions offered a couple of personal stories to highlight why TALA concepts are important. Observers also noted that presenters skipped materials in five regions, usually in order to end their session on time. Another region had serious technical difficulties, which necessitated long breaks while equipment was being fixed. Finally, in one region, the presenters spent good portions of their presentation calming the audience's fears that TALA techniques would take up too much classroom time.

Participant Behaviors

For the Content Area Classroom Teacher Academies (Units 1-3), the observers noted that participants appeared to be engaged and interested in the presentations, in so far as they took notes, flipped to the correct handouts, and made eye contact. Observers also noticed that training groups varied on answering questions posed to them – several groups were lively and responded to questions, while other groups were described as "shy" and appeared reluctant to answer questions. Generally, group activities were well received and, across the board, participants became more involved in the trainings and seemed to enjoy the time working with their peers.

The observers of the ELA Classroom Teacher Academies noted that during Units 1-3, participants appeared to be actively engaged by the presentations (e.g., taking notes, making eye contact, and asking questions). However, in some of the ELA Classroom Teacher Academies, observers reported participants engaging in side bar conversations, and noted that in four of these trainings, these conversations were distracting to the entire audience.

Generally, participants seemed to have enjoyed their group work and conversations with their peers. Observers also noted that participants were confused by the materials in several cases and in one case, several participants reported being "overwhelmed" by the amount of materials being presented.

During ELA Classroom Teacher Academies (Units 4-7), most of the observers noted that participants were engaged, took notes, and asked relevant questions. The small group work was also reported as being lively, with participants staying focused and sharing ideas. Observers also noted more side bar conversations among participants than in either of the training units 1 to 3. There were reports of tiredness and fatigue among participants.

Summary of the TALA Classroom Teacher Training Observations

Across all of the observed TALA teacher trainings, the activities that occurred most frequently included: (1) presenter explains and reviews TALA content; (2) presenter provides examples/ elaborations of TALA content; (3) presenter facilitates group discussions; and (4) presenter distributes and uses handouts. Conversely, presenters were less able to integrate the following recommended TALA practices into their classrooms: (1) participants viewed videos; and participants practiced TALA content (2) with the presenter, (3) with each other, and (4) independently.

Observers rated two of the training components—training implementation and training culture. Analyses revealed that the training culture was rated more highly than the training implementation. These findings suggest that, in general, observers felt the implementation of TALA content was reflective of best practice for professional development and the culture of the training sessions facilitated the engagement of participants in the TALA training.

Key indicators of training implementation revealed that presenters were effective when they focused on TALA instructional routines, used videos in the modules, and carried out formal presentations of TALA routines. On the other hand, the presenters were given low ratings in their attempts to connect TALA lessons to ELL students, the TAKS, and the TEKS, which is confirmed by the observers' comments which underscored the time constraints. The observer comments reveal that many of the participants and TALA presenters felt rushed by the amount of materials they need to present and the limited time they were allotted. Finally, most TALA presenters were given high marks for their presentation styles; however, the observer comments indicated that several ineffective TALA presenters were impacting negatively on the experiences of their participants.

Key indicators of training culture suggest that presenters were positive in their interactions with participants, respected the contribution of all participants, and were positive in their interactions with participants. Potential areas for improvement within the culture construct include getting participants more actively involved in group discussions and group activities and encouraging participants' questions. The ability of trainers to engage participants in group activities, discussions, and questioning was hindered due to the limited time available to for presentation of the content. Generally, participants were shown to be enthusiastic about TALA and they exhibited enjoyment during interactive work in small groups. However, the observers note several examples of TALA trainers who were poorly prepared for their lessons and who were unable to answer their audience's worries concerning implementing TALA in their classrooms.

The field notes also indicate that TALA presenters attempted to adapt TALA lessons to their audiences, by adding humor, stories from their own experiences, and examples of how TALA can work in classrooms. Several presenters also found it necessary to ignore portions of TALA lessons in order to meet their time restrictions. For the most part, participants appear to have reacted positively to their TALA trainers, and participants appeared engaged by the presentations, particularly the small group activities. Participants in some of the sessions seem to have been fatigued by the length of their training sessions, which was particularly hard for those participants who were also trained in units 4 through 7 of the ELA Academies. Finally,

some participants were also confused by certain TALA concepts and were unable to have this confusion cleared up by the presenters.

Summary of Observations of TALA Training

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

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

Observers rated the TALA Regional TOT as exhibiting high implementation (explicitly following the activities and content as presented in the training materials). This rating is reflected in perceived preparedness of regional trainers to present the activities as outlined in the training. Also, the culture of the Regional TOT was perceived as positive as well as the perception of regional trainers to maintain a positive learning environment. However, there was less implementation of the TEKS and TAKS in the Regional TOT and observers reported lower beliefs that the training built participants' skill in linking their instruction to the TEKS and developed participants' understanding of the TAKS student assessment system.[35]

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

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

6. Trainers' Perceptions of TALA Training

State trainers were interviewed by telephone to assess perceptions of the TALA training that they attended (State TOT) as well as their perceived preparedness for conducting the Regional TOT. Results from the interviews were used to create an online survey for the regional trainers. Results of both data collection activities are presented in this chapter. The interview findings for ELA and content area state trainers are presented separately to illustrate similarities and differences in their perceptions of the State TOT and perceived preparation for the Regional TOT. Direct quotes from state trainers are used to provide clear illustrations of perceptions of training.

This chapter addresses the following questions:

- To what extent were participants engaged in the TALA trainings?
- What types of instructional strategies (e.g., lecture, modeling) do TALA instructors use to facilitate participant learning?

ELA State Trainer Interviews[36]

Six ELA state trainers participated in the four-day State TOT to prepare to conduct the three Regional TOTs held in May 2008. The six ELA state trainers had a variety of backgrounds and experience in terms of their primary professional roles, certification, and teaching experience. Primary professional roles ranged from a Region Librarian to a Region Program Coordinator for Reading. All ELA state trainers possessed at least 10 years of teaching experience. The ELA state trainers were certified in all subject areas and grade levels (pre-Kindergarten – Grade 12). Appendix G provides greater detail about the six ELA state trainers.

Selection of ELA State Trainers

All six ELA state trainers were nominated or selected to become TALA state trainers by senior members of the TALA steering committee. Four of the six ELA state trainers completed an application upon being nominated or selected, while the remaining two stated that they were not selected through a formal application process.

Required Qualifications and Prior Experience

ELA state trainers were asked what they believed were the required qualifications or prior experience needed to be a state trainer. Three ELA state trainers described that they believed TALA program developers and staff wanted ELA state trainers who had experience teaching at the middle school grade level, while two ELA state trainers explained that they thought they were required to have both the experience teaching at the middle school level and to have had experience conducting professional development seminars with teachers. One ELA state trainer described her perception of the requirement as having experience in ELA.

Interviewers asked ELA state trainers four follow-up questions to determine if the state trainers have conducted professional development seminars with teachers, if they have conducted other TOTs, if they have ELA/reading teaching experience, and if they have curriculum development experience. All six ELA state trainers indicated that they do have experience in all four of these areas, except one ELA state trainer who acknowledged that she had never conducted a TOT.

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[36] Of the six ELA state trainers, all six participated in the interviews (100% response rate).

ELA State Trainer Roles and Responsibilities

ELA state trainers indicated that they were required to attend the State TOT. In addition, they stated that they were required to complete reading assignments prior to the State TOT. They indicated that they were given required readings about adolescent literacy reading and practice, academic literacy instruction for adolescents, and literacy instruction in the content areas. The ELA state trainers maintained that these materials were discussed during the four-day training and that they were expected to fully participate, study the material, and follow the instructions as provided to them. They said they were expected to review the material so that they would feel comfortable and knowledgeable about sharing information at the Regional TOTs. In addition, they indicated that they needed to learn the script and relay the information appropriately to their audiences. Some ELA state trainers said that they spent many evenings reviewing the content and the script in order to prepare for the Regional TOT.

> *"It was very important [for us] to not read from the script, but rather learn/synthesize the information so that [we] could teach it to [our] audience, which required practice."*

An additional role mentioned by an ELA state trainer was the need to work with two other trainers (a content trainer and an ELA trainer) in order to prepare for the Regional TOT.

A follow-up question was asked to determine if ELA state trainers believed their roles were clearly defined. Overall, trainers stated that expectations were laid out clearly and were well stated during the training, as well as in the material they received. The Regional TOT was provided by the ELA state trainer and a content area state trainer. One ELA state trainer explained that she worked with a content area state trainer and they discussed and decided who would do each part of the training. Another ELA state trainer described that "the roles and responsibilities were clearly explained, which made it easy for everyone to understand what they needed to do." She said she learned the information beforehand and that she was provided with all of the necessary materials she needed at the State TOT to conduct the Regional TOT.

Articulation of Overall Goals of TALA

All ELA state trainers agreed that the goals and objectives were articulated clearly by the master trainers and also included in the beginning section (first module) of the TALA training. They felt that, throughout the training, information conveyed was connected to the goals of the program:

> *"The facilitators did a good job at explaining the expectations they had of the participants."*

> *"I could not have been better informed."*

As a follow-up question, ELA state trainers were asked who articulated the goals of the training, and all of them stated that the learning goals for the workshop were clearly articulated by the State TOT facilitators.

Another follow-up question was asked of the ELA state trainers to determine if they felt that the goals of this training differed in any meaningful way from the goals of other professional development sessions they either attended or conducted. Most ELA state trainers explained that the goals of this training were not different from those of other professional development sessions. One ELA state trainer acknowledged that she "liked the fact that instructional strategies were based upon research conducted in Texas schools because it made the content feel even more relevant and research-based for the purpose of the TOTs." There was some added pressure to know what their responsibilities were as ELA state trainers, but participants were comfortable with the level of pressure. However, one ELA state trainer felt that the goals

were indeed different from other professional development sessions she attended or presented in that the goals were stressed more than in any other training she had attended.

> *"There was much more focus on the fidelity of the training to ensure that the participants were following the training so that it was consistent across sites."*

Another ELA state trainer explained that the difference between this training and others she had attended was that:

> *"This training was scripted so one would know exactly what to do and say...the goals are harder to present because you have to stick to the script because of timing and consistencies."*

Perceptions of Requisite Knowledge and Skills

All ELA state trainers believed that they have the requisite knowledge and skills needed to fulfill their roles and responsibilities as a TALA ELA state trainer. They all attributed this to the fact that they have backgrounds in education as well as previous experience conducting trainings, professional development and giving presentations. One ELA state trainer expressed that she felt prepared to be a state trainer through her work with students in the same age range and grade levels as TALA. Another ELA state trainer stated,

> "*The [master] trainers chose a good book to provide training and assistance if I needed more knowledge about this topic.*"

The following also exemplifies how the combination of having a solid background in this area and the training manual allowed them to feel prepared:

> *"I feel like the content of the material is so strong that I felt confident presenting all of the information. It was very easy to understand. I had to make sure that I did not stray with my own information or knowledge of things because I had to stick to what the training had to offer. This was a challenge, but the notes and other information were very helpful."*

Overall Impression of the State TOT

Effectiveness of the State TOT

ELA state trainers were asked to rate the effectiveness of the State TOT in preparing them for their role as an ELA State Trainer on a scale of "1" (very ineffective) to "5" (highly effective). Four out of six ELA state trainers rated the training a "5" and two rated it a "4.5" indicating that overall, all of the ELA state trainers found the State TOT to be highly effective in preparing them for their roles and responsibilities as a TALA ELA state trainer. All ELA state trainers described that the lead facilitator demonstrated excellent expertise in this topic and they felt she provided meaningful explanations of the research basis for the training content. Some of the ELA state trainers stated that, because the lead facilitator knew the material well, the training was more interesting and engaging than other trainings attended.

The two ELA state trainers who rated the training slightly lower than the others noted that the presenters were unprepared the first day, the assessment module was missing, and there was too much information to absorb in a short amount of time. In addition, there were a lot of questions brought up at the end of the session that resulted in the training being extended. They felt this was frustrating because issues not relevant to everyone in the audience were being discussed. It would have been helpful to have an additional day for the training, they said,

because it was clear that not everyone was on the same level in terms of being literacy trainers, thus leaving some topics less well covered.

Preparedness to Work with Adult Learners

ELA state trainers were asked whether or not they received training in how to work with adult learners. Most of the ELA state trainers stated that this topic was not covered in the training, but a few mentioned that it was covered and that the topic was embedded in the content of the training. However, whether they did or did not remember the topic being covered, the consensus was that there was no need to discuss it further or more in depth because they all have experience working with adult learners. As one ELA state trainer explained:

> "*We talked a little bit about working with adult learners for the last half of our last day. We talked about trainer tips when working with adult learners. We didn't spend a long time on the subject because most of the people in the room had done professional development with adult learners. It was an adequate amount of time.*"

Overall Quality of the State TOT

ELA state trainers were asked to rate the overall quality of the State TOT on a scale from "1" (very poor) to "5" (excellent). They were then asked four follow-up questions. There were five trainers who rated the ELA State TOT a "5" and one who rated it a "4". Specifically, the ELA state trainers were asked to elaborate on their overall ratings and describe their impressions of the facilitators, the academy content, the academy structure, and the extent to which the environment of the academy was conducive to professional exploration and sharing of ideas.

In terms of the skills of facilitators, most of the ELA state trainers felt that the facilitators did a great job, citing their skills in sharing information and knowledge.

> "*Both facilitators were great. The lead facilitator is brilliant and concise with her explanations and made many areas clear. The other facilitator brought in some things about the English language learner that was important.*"

Most of the ELA state trainers said that they "loved" the academy content and that "the material is fabulous," stating that it is "organized and easy to follow." However, two ELA state trainers felt that there was too much content to be covered in the amount of time that was allotted.

Likewise, five of the six ELA state trainers indicated that there was not enough time provided given the way the academy was structured, even after one unit was eliminated from the academy

> "*I felt rushed because there was so much information to learn, and you had to learn how to turn it around in three days. I felt like we did not have room to discuss and reflect appropriately. This is all important and time did not allow for it. I was mentally exhausted.*"

One ELA state trainer did feel there was enough time to reflect on the content of each module.

> "*We did every one of the activities and had time to reflect and we were encouraged to ask questions.*"

Most of the ELA state trainers also thought that the environment of the State TOT was conducive to learning.

> "*There was informal time after the training to talk with the facilitators and other trainers to discuss various topics/issues/interests.*"

However, one ELA state trainer felt that combining the ELA and Content Area state trainers for the first two days added tension in the room.

Suggested Ways to Improve the State TOT

Participants were asked if there was anything else that needed to be included to make the State TOT helpful. Of the four ELA state trainers who answered this question, two discussed that they were disappointed that material was cut as a result of the time constraints on the training. Two ELA state trainers discussed the need to practice more so that they were not reading from the script. As one ELA state trainer explained:

> "There is a constant struggle with staying true to the content and not reading from the script. I wish I could have had the freedom and insight to address that with the regional trainers. When you read from the script you lose the audience and respect from the audience… The kinds of advice that we are allowed to give our trainers is important to be taught at the training. There needed to be more of an opportunity for practice of the content."

The ELA state trainers were asked if there was any topic related to ELA subject matter expertise that should have been added.

> "I created a flip book of the training pieces because I saw what was happening by the facilitators. I saw that they were flipping pages a lot and appeared lost. I created a spiral bound flip book that made a difference in how I presented to others. This would have been beneficial to all of the trainers."

> "What can we do to communicate to our trainers that we want them to own this and come to the table and be passionate without reading from the script, but know the content well enough to stay consistent?"

ELA state trainers were asked if there were any additional comments about the State TOT they would like to provide. One ELA state trainer offered the following suggestion:

> "If we want to get participation from middle school teachers next year, I feel that the way to do that is to talk with administrators about middle school reform and not just the literacy academy."

Another ELA state trainer commented:

> "Since I have delivered the training and I have seen outcomes, I know that we are moving in the correct direction. This training is everything we need."

Content Area State Trainer Interviews[37]

Six Content Area state trainers participated in the four-day State TOT to prepare to conduct the three Regional TOTs that would be held in May 2008. Content Area state trainers participated in two days of training. Like the ELA state trainers, the six Content Area state trainers came into this role with various backgrounds and experience in terms of their primary professional roles, certification, and teaching experience. The Content Area state trainers were certified to teach a variety of subject areas, including English and reading. Years of teaching experience ranged from eight to 21 years. Primary professional roles ranged from content area specialists (e.g., science specialist) to a science consultant for an ESC. Appendix G provides greater detail about the six content area state trainers.

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[37] Of the six Content Area state trainers, all six participated in the interviews (100% response rate).

Selection of Content Area State Trainers

The six Content Area state trainers were selected in various ways. One was selected because she "was available and had time," but explained that was told she had to be a Content Area state trainer. Four Content Area state trainers explained that they were nominated by a supervisor or a director who asked them to become a Content Area state trainer. One Content Area state trainer stated that she completed a formal application and was contacted by TALA program staff to notify her that she was selected to become a Content Area state trainer. Two of the six Content Area state trainers completed an application while the remaining four did not complete a formal application.

Required Qualifications and Prior Experience

Content Area state trainers were asked what they believed were the required qualifications for a Content Area state trainer. Three Content Area state trainers stated that they did not know what the required qualifications were, while two others explained that having the experience teaching academic subjects in middle school was the requirement to become a Content Area state trainer. One Content Area state trainer said that prior experience conducting trainings and workshops with teachers and administrators was the requirement to become a Content Area state trainer.

Interviewers asked Content Area state trainers four follow-up questions to determine if they have conducted professional development seminars with teachers, if they conducted other TOTs, if they have social studies/science/mathematics/other content areas teaching experience, and if they have been involved with leadership or curriculum development in these content areas. All six Content Area state trainers indicated that they have experience conducting professional development seminars with teachers, and four stated they have conducted other TOTs. All six Content Area state trainers have teaching experience in social studies/science/mathematics/other content areas, although for one, her experience was 9 weeks teaching reading and 18 weeks teaching mathematics. All six Content Area state trainers reported that they have leadership or curriculum development experience in social studies/science/mathematics/other content areas.

Content Area State Trainer Roles and Responsibilities

All Content Area state trainers reported that they attended the State TOT and had reading assignments and homework questions that needed to be completed prior to the State TOT. Upon completion of the training, Content Area state trainers said that they met with their partner and reviewed, studied, and practiced the material in preparation for conducting the regional training. Often, this preparation took place after business hours.

A follow-up question was asked to determine if Content Area state trainers believed their roles were clearly defined. All but one Content Area state trainer stated that their roles and responsibilities were clearly defined and that they were able to meet with their partners to discuss the sections for which they were responsible and practice with them. They knew they needed to "stick to the script." One Content Area state trainer felt that the roles and responsibilities were not clearly defined and that she "needed to use my best judgment to prepare to get what we needed done."

Articulation of Overall Goals of TALA

Four out of six Content Area state trainers expressed that the overall goals of TALA were clearly articulated by the facilitators. Two Content Area state trainers believed that the goals were not well articulated until at least the second day of the training when the master trainers realized that they needed to provide more clarification because there were many questions from the Content Area state trainers.

> *"It was also difficult because half of the audience members were ELA trainers who had been involved with the training for longer than the rest of us."*

However, all Content Area state trainers stated that by the time they conducted their regional trainings, they were clear about the goals and what they were expected to do.

A follow-up question was asked of the Content Area state trainers to determine if they felt that the goals of this training differed in any meaningful way from the goals of other professional development sessions they either attended or conducted. Responses to this question were mixed. For some, they simply felt the goals did not differ; for others, there was a sense that the goal simply was to improve literacy, which is different from other professional development trainings. In order to fulfill this goal, they said that there is a lot of structure built into the program including providing feedback upon completing the regional trainings. One Content Area state trainer, in particular, had concerns with the training, stating that:

> *"Being able to make our participants feel comfortable enough to take this to the classroom and use it seemed to be compromised with the gaps in the training that needed to be articulated more."*

Perceptions of Requisite Knowledge and Skills

Four of the six Content Area state trainers indicated that they felt very well prepared to conduct the Regional TOT. They said they were able to draw upon prior experience in addition to the new tools they received from the State TOT.

> *"I felt qualified to fulfill the responsibilities. The routines presented as part of the TALA training were really just good teaching practices. I had utilized many of them in the classroom, so overall I was comfortable with them."*

Two Content Area state trainers struggled with the ELA piece and not the other components of the training.

> *"It completely threw me off…I did not have enough of the background knowledge to be confident in conveying the impact for students… [and] there was an assumption that the people who were attending had certain experiences with these skills. There was not a realization that the audience did not have this knowledge…we would have gone into the room with a more focused disposition if these assumptions were not made."*

> *"My ELA partner really helped me understand and become confident in the information. I also struggled with being a content teacher and attending a training that was an ELA academy."*

Overall Impression of the State TOT

Effectiveness of the State TOT

Content Area state trainers were asked to rate the effectiveness of the State TOT on a scale of "1" (very ineffective) to "5" (highly effective). One Content Area state trainer rated it a "5," three rated it a "4," one indicated the training was "between 3.5 and 4," and one rated it a "3." These scores reveal the varying degrees of effectiveness that the Content Area state trainers experienced at the State TOT in preparing to become a Content Area state trainer.

The Content Area state trainer, who rated the training a "5", explained:

> "I felt like I went in there and when I left, I had everything I needed to prepare and do the job I needed to do to be a regional trainer."

The three Content Area state trainers who rated the training a "4" explained that they gave the training this rating because:

- Technology issues were not explained (such as how to use PowerPoint), they did not receive the presentation until the week prior to the regional training, and they were not able to access the CD in presentation mode;
- Expectations were not clear initially which caused frustration; and
- More interactive or hands-on activities were needed.

The Content Area state trainer who rated the training between "3.5 to 4" explained that she felt she "came into the middle of the training and that goals and expectations were not clear." She acknowledged that she asked a lot of questions, which was not encouraged, and in the end studying the material on her own time was "necessary and difficult." The Content Area state trainer who rated the training a "3" explained that she felt one of the facilitators was not familiar with the material because she was reading from the binder.

> "You could tell she was reading to catch up during breaks. She was not prepared as a facilitator and needed clarification from the [lead] facilitator multiple times."

Preparedness to Work with Adult Learners

All of the Content Area state trainers stated there was little, if any, information covered about working with adult learners. Four of the six Content Area state trainers believed this was not a problem because they had prior experience with this topic that they could draw from and some of the information was in the training materials. However, two Content Area state trainers said they would have liked this topic to be covered more in-depth. As one explained:

> "I really rely heavily on my prior knowledge and experiences rather than what I had learned at the State TOT. I would have liked to have more training with adult learners. It is important to know how to work with adult learners because it is very different from the training we do have [to work with adolescents]."

Overall Quality of the State TOT

Content Area state trainers were asked to rate the overall quality of the State TOT, on a scale from "1" (very poor) to "5" (excellent). Four Content Area state trainers rated the training a "4," one rated it a "3.5," and one rated it a "3." Overall, comments about the quality of the State TOT referred to the difficulty the Content Area state trainers had joining the ELA state trainers later

on in the training, which caused the Content Area state trainers to feel that they did not know what was going on. They also said that they spent "too much time sitting" and were "not given enough opportunity to ask questions and practice the materials."

Content Area state trainers were asked to elaborate on their ratings about their impressions of the facilitators, the academy content, the academy structure, and the extent to which the environment was conducive to professional exploration and sharing of ideas.

In terms of the skills of facilitators, most of the Content Area state trainers felt that the lead facilitator was knowledgeable and articulate, and they liked the fact that she wrote the academy materials because it demonstrated how much she knew and how she was able to answer questions with ease. As mentioned earlier, one content trainer had some concerns about the second master trainer.

Overall, the content was viewed favorably by the Content Area state trainers, but there were gaps in the social studies, math, and science aspects that needed further clarification. For others, the content was viewed as "excellent, important and right-on."

The Content Area state trainers had wished that the goals and expectations of the training had been explained better and earlier in the training so that time would have been managed better on the first day. They were also frustrated that they had to stay past the designated time in order for questions to be answered. Additional feedback was that one-and-a-half to two days for training was not enough time for them to learn all of the information. Also, material had to be cut from the training due to time constraints, which upset some Content Area state trainers because they would have liked the opportunity to learn the information during the training. For some, the training seemed rushed, so there was no time for reflection on the materials and information or discussing potential issues that would occur when they returned to their regions to conduct the trainings.

Some Content Area state trainers felt that the environment was conducive to collaborating with colleagues. However, one Content Area state trainer viewed the environment as "tense at times" because some Content Area state trainers were overwhelmed with the amount of information they needed to learn in a short period of time. One Content Area state trainer stated:

> *"I loved being paired with an ELA state trainer because we were able to share ideas and gain an understanding from different points of view that were shared."*

Suggested Ways to Improve the State TOT

Content Area state trainers were asked if there were any comments they would like to make related to improving the training. In addition to the need for more time, which was a general theme throughout, one Content Area state trainer indicated that she had questions while preparing for the State TOT, but was able to talk with her partner who was able to help her, and she felt confident in the end. Another Content Area state trainer said:

> *"The module they cut would have been good to keep in because it is important and beneficial to a content trainer to talk about graphic organizers. Graphic organizers are extremely important in helping our students. They are a good way to express ourselves, especially in math and social studies."*

Content Area state trainers were also asked if there were any content area topics that needed to be added to the training.

"In terms of content area, there could have been some more concrete examples. Even if they were not shared in the training it would have been helpful to have a reference to these examples, such as a movie."

Another had the idea to "pair people who live in the same city so that they can review the material and prepare together," and another Content Area state trainer thought that it would have been helpful to receive the CD with the PowerPoint earlier.

Lastly, the Content Area state trainers were asked if there was anything else that could have been covered in the TOT that would have helped with their role as a state trainer. An additional suggestion that one Content Area state trainer offered to improve the State TOT was that she felt they needed more applicable knowledge to share with trainers at the Regional TOT.

Summary of State Trainer Interviews

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

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

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

Regional Trainer Survey

The online survey invitation was sent to 272 Regional trainers. Of the invited participants, 205 trainers completed the survey (75% response rate).

Background and Experience of the Regional Trainers

Like the state trainers, the regional trainers had diverse backgrounds and a variety of professional experiences (see Appendix G for more details). Seventy percent of regional trainers had professional experience as a classroom teacher and 37% were currently employed as a teacher. Almost half of the regional trainers were curriculum specialists. Of those with a teaching background, 50% had more than 10 years of teaching experience. The majority of the regional trainers taught at the secondary level, with more than half of trainers possessing experience at the middle school level. The regional trainers represented a variety of content areas; however, almost half of the trainers taught Language Arts.

Ninety-three percent of the regional trainers had prior experience providing professional development to teachers. Almost 96% of regional trainers had content area leadership or curriculum development experience.

Selection of the Regional Trainers

Participants were asked how they were selected to become a TALA trainer. The majority of regional trainers were nominated by a supervisor. Many regional trainers completed a formal application. Those who responded "other" worked at an ESC and were asked to participate or were asked by a TALA coordinator. Table 6.1 illustrates the various ways that TALA regional trainers were selected.

Table 6.1: How Trainers Were Selected for the Regional Training[38]

	Percentage Selecting Response (n=205)
I was nominated by a supervisor	68%
I was asked to participate based on my middle school teaching experience	30%
I completed a formal application	39%
I do not know	2%
Other	12%

Source: TALA Regional Trainer Survey

Overall Impressions of the Regional TALA Training

Regional trainers were asked to rate the quality, effectiveness, and satisfaction with the Regional TALA Training. Table 6.2 presents trainer perceptions of the effectiveness of the regional TALA training. The majority of regional trainers perceived the training as very effective or extremely effective in meeting their individual learning needs. Over 75% of trainers responding reported that the training was very effective or extremely effective in preparing them for their roles and responsibilities as a TALA trainer.

Table 6.2: Perceptions of the Effectiveness of the Regional TALA Training (n=205)

Survey Item	Not at All Effective	Slightly Effective	Moderately Effective	Very Effective	Extremely Effective
To what extent was the workshop structure effective in meeting your learning needs?	2%	3%	25%	44%	23%
How effective was the training of trainers you attended in preparing you for your roles/responsibilities as a TALA trainer?	-	3%	19%	37%	39%

Source: TALA Regional Trainer Survey

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[38] Where survey respondents were asked to "select all that apply", percentages add to more than 100%.

Table 6.3 presents trainer perceptions of their preparedness for their role as a TALA trainer after the regional training. Almost 90% of regional trainer respondents reported that they had the requisite knowledge and skills needed to fulfill their roles and responsibilities as a TALA trainer. The majority of regional trainers reported that the goals of TALA were clearly articulated and the responsibilities of a trainer were clearly defined.

Table 6.3: Perceptions of Preparedness for Role as a TALA Trainer (n=205)

Survey Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The TALA training of trainers I attended provided me with the requisite knowledge and skills to fulfill my responsibilities as a TALA trainer.	< 1%	3%	3%	34%	56%
The goals of TALA were clearly articulated to me.	2%	< 1%	1%	27%	67%
My responsibilities as a trainer were clearly defined for me.	2%	< 1%	1%	26%	68%

Source: TALA Regional Trainer Survey

Regional trainers also reported that the culture of the TALA training was positive (see Table 6.4). Over 68% of trainers noted that the training environment was very conducive or extremely conducive to professional exploration and encouraged the sharing of ideas among participants.

Table 6.4: Perceptions of the Culture of the TALA Training (n=205)

Survey Item	Not at All Conducive	Slightly Conducive	Moderately Conducive	Very Conducive	Extremely Conducive
To what extent was the environment conducive to your individual professional exploration?	2%	3%	23%	39%	30%
To what extent was the environment conducive to you being able to share ideas with other participants (i.e., future trainers)?	1%	6%	21%	38%	32%

Source: TALA Regional Trainer Survey

Regional trainers were asked to respond to a series of open-ended questions pertaining to the Regional TOT. When asked if there was anything that they would not change about the training, the trainers reported that the trainers/presenters were "very good" and "outstanding." The regional trainers would also keep the content and the materials.

When asked what could improve the training, the regional trainers reported a need for greater interaction among the participants with the material. One trainer commented "I understand the difficulty of presenting so much pertinent information within time allotments; however, I believe that if there were opportunities to experience the strategies and process in an interactive way, the trainers as well as participants would gain more." Another area of improvement for the

trainers was a perception of too much information. One trainer commented "There was just too much information for such a short amount of time."

The responses reported in Table 6.5 suggest that the majority of regional trainers have overall positive perceptions of the TALA Regional Training that they attended. Eighty-eight percent of regional trainers reported that they would attend a similar training in the future (see Table 6.6).

Table 6.5: Overall Perceptions of TALA Training (n=205)

Survey Item	Very Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Excellent
How would you rate the overall quality of the training you received?	-	< 1%	16%	35%	46%
How would you rate the overall effectiveness of the presenters?	-	2%	17%	32%	47%
How would you rate the overall quality of the workshop content?	-	2%	12%	34%	49%

Source: TALA Regional Trainer Survey

Table 6.6: Willingness to Attend the Regional TALA Training in the Future (n=205)

Survey Item	Definitely Not	Probably Not	Not Sure	Probably	Definitely
Would you attend a similar training of trainers in the future?	< 1%	5%	4%	24%	64%

Source: TALA Regional Trainer Survey

Regional Trainer Preparation for the TALA Training

Regional trainers were asked to select all the activities that they engaged in while preparing for their role as a TALA trainer. As illustrated in Table 6.7, preparation activities that occurred most frequently included studying the assigned sections of the training materials, attending the Regional TALA training, and meeting with their co-presenter.

Table 6.7: Trainers' Preparation for Presenting TALA Training Sessions

Activity	Percentage Selecting Response (n=205)
Studied the sections of the training materials that I was assigned to present	93%
Attended the statewide training of trainers for regional trainers	89%
Met with co-presenters	88%
Previewed the training videos	82%
Practiced the demonstrations	75%
Assigned specific responsibilities to each of the presenters with whom I was preparing to present	74%
Studied the sections of the training materials that my co-presenter(s) was/were assigned to present	74%
Worked with co-presenter(s) to ask questions of one another	68%
Prepared activity materials	68%
Set an agenda for the session	42%
Arranged the training space	27%
Contacted participants regarding session logistics	14%
Reserved the training space	11%
None of the above	< 1%

Source: TALA Regional Trainer Survey

When asked about the TALA Classroom Teacher Training that they presented, the majority of regional trainers reported that they were fairly well prepared or very well prepared (see Table 6.8). Sixty-nine percent of regional trainers reported that they were very well prepared to present TALA activities as outlined in the training materials. They also reported being very well prepared to enhance participants' knowledge/skills so they can effectively teach adolescent students to comprehend academic texts and to help participants learn to implement research-based strategies in academic literacy instruction. Regional trainers felt the least prepared to present TALA content in the recommended timeframe, develop participants' understanding of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) student assessment system, and differentiate instruction for various learning styles

Table 6.8: Self-Perceptions of Trainer Preparedness When Presenting TALA Training (n=205)

	Not At All Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Fairly Well Prepared	Very Well Prepared
Present TALA activities as outlined in the training materials.	-	3%	19%	69%
Enhance participants' knowledge/skills so they can effectively teach adolescent students to comprehend academic texts.	-	2%	22%	67%
Help participants learn to implement research-based strategies in academic literacy instruction.	-	2%	22%	67%
Maintain a positive learning environment.	-	3%	21%	67%
Work with adult learners.	< 1%	5%	20%	66%
Enhance participants' knowledge/skills so they can effectively teach adolescent students who struggle with reading.	-	5%	22%	65%
Help participants improve student outcomes in the content areas (social studies, science, math).	-	3%	28%	60%
Help participants improve student outcomes in reading/English language arts.	< 1%	6%	26%	59%
Motivate participants to learn.	< 1%	6%	27%	58%
Build participants' skill in linking their instruction to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).	< 1%	4%	30%	57%
Differentiate instruction for various learning styles.	1%	9%	29%	52%
Develop participants' understanding of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) student assessment system.	2%	8%	33%	49%
Present TALA content in the recommended timeframe.	1%	12%	37%	42%

Source: TALA Regional Trainer Survey

When asked if they would recommend the TALA training to teachers, over 90% of regional trainers reported that they would. As depicted in Table 6.9, the TALA training was highly recommended for both ELA/reading and content area teachers.

Table 6.9: Recommendations of TALA Training to Other Teachers (n=205)

Survey Item	Definitely Not	Probably Not	Not Sure	Probably	Definitely
Would you recommend the TALA training to ELA/reading teachers?	-	< 1%	4%	12%	75%
Would you recommend the TALA training to content area (social studies, science, math) teachers?	-	< 1%	2%	9%	80%

Source: TALA Regional Trainer Survey

Summary of TALA Trainer Perceptions

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

7. TALA Budget Allocations

This chapter presents the allocation of funds for TALA development and implementation. Using archival budget data provided by the TEA, expenditure patterns are described. The chapter addresses the following questions:

- How were funds used to develop TALA content?
- How were funds used by the regional ESCs to disseminate TALA?

Allocation of Funds to Develop TALA

In May 2006, the TEA awarded a $4 million development contract to the Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts (VGC) at The University of Texas at Austin, with the Texas Institute for Measurement, Evaluation, and Statistics (TIMES) at the University of Houston, to create the content for TALA professional development training academies, including the assessment instrument (TMSFA). The award also included the field test of the materials across the seven sites. The evaluation team did not have access to data regarding the allocation of funds for developing TALA.

Allocation of Funds to Disseminate TALA

Over $10 million was allocated for the implementation of TALA across the 20 ESC regions in Texas. The total allocation per ESC was based on estimates of the number of teachers who might attend. This estimate impacts the number of TALA trainings offered in the ESC as well as stipends. The allocation also includes base and session costs. Base costs include salaries and other administrative or business office costs. Session costs include $6,000 per session for room rental, AV and other equipment, printing of session materials, and stipends for trainers.

Table 7.1 lists the total allocation for all TALA Grade 6 ELA and Content Area academies by ESC region. The regions that received the largest allocations were ESC Region 4: Houston (19%), ESC Region 10: Richardson (14%), and ESC Region 11: Fort Worth (10%).

Table 7.1: Total Allocation for Grade 6 ELA and Content Area Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies (TALA) by ESC Region, 2007-08

ESC Region Number	ESC Region	Total Budget	% of Total Budget
1	Edinburg	$769,250	8%
2	Corpus Christi	$273,500	3%
3	Victoria	$196,750	2%
4	Houston	$1,915,250	19%
5	Beaumont	$214,750	2%
6	Huntsville	$379,000	4%
7	Kilgore	$400,750	4%
8	Mt. Pleasant	$197,250	2%
9	Wichita Falls	$189,750	2%
10	Richardson	$1,449,250	14%
11	Fort Worth	$1,012,750	10%
12	Waco	$357,750	4%
13	Austin	$643,750	6%
14	Abilene	$189,000	2%
15	San Angelo	$178,250	2%
16	Amarillo	$251,750	2%
17	Lubbock	$222,750	2%
18	Midland	$185,000	2%
19	El Paso	$434,000	4%
20	San Antonio	$665,750	7%
TOTAL		**$10,126,250**	**100%**

Source: Texas Education Agency

ELA Academy Costs

A base budget was established for each region to cover staff salaries and other administrative or business office costs to run the ELA academies. The number of sessions per region was established based on the estimated number of ELA teachers per region. Based on the estimates of participating teachers, a number of ELA trainers per region were allotted to cover these sessions. ELA academy trainers were also eligible to be Content Area academy trainers, but not vice-versa.[39]

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

Each teacher participating in an ELA academy could potentially receive a $500 stipend. Each teacher participant received $250 after attending all 3 days of the face-to-face session. The additional $250 will be received only after completing and submitting assignments for the online follow-up session between September 1, 2008, and December 1, 2008, which is considered the equivalent of a one-day (6 hours) follow-up. The teacher stipend budget for each ESC region was calculated by multiplying the number of teachers by $500 each and adding this to the product of the percentage of total teachers multiplied by $900,000 of leftover funds.

Overall, TEA allocated approximately $960 per ELA teacher across all ESC regions. Table 7.2 shows the total allocation for all TALA Grade 6 ELA academies by ESC region.

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[39] Thus the number of ELA academy trainers overlaps with the number of Content Area academy trainers.

Table 7.2: Allocation for Grade 6 ELA Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies (TALA) by ESC Region, 2007-08

ESC Region	# of Sessions	# of ELA Teachers*	% of Total ELA Teachers[40]	# of ELA Trainers Allotted	ELA Base Budget**	ELA Session Budget***	ELA Teacher Stipend Budget****	ELA Total Budget
1	12	503	8%	12	$59,000	$72,000	$323,500	$454,500
2	4	123	2%	3	$41,000	$24,000	$79,500	$144,500
3	3	93	1%	2	$38,000	$18,000	$55,500	$111,500
4	32	1296	21%	32	$98,000	$192,000	$837,000	$1,127,000
5	3	105	2%	2	$41,000	$18,000	$70,500	$130,500
6	6	211	3%	5	$44,000	$36,000	$132,500	$212,500
7	6	225	4%	5	$47,000	$36,000	$148,500	$231,500
8	3	79	1%	2	$38,000	$18,000	$48,500	$104,500
9	3	87	1%	2	$38,000	$18,000	$52,500	$108,500
10	26	1055	17%	26	$86,000	$156,000	$680,500	$922,500
11	17	711	11%	18	$68,000	$102,000	$454,500	$624,500
12	5	215	3%	4	$44,000	$30,000	$134,500	$208,500
13	9	349	6%	9	$53,000	$54,000	$228,500	$335,500
14	3	76	1%	2	$38,000	$18,000	$47,000	$103,000
15	3	70	1%	2	$38,000	$18,000	$44,000	$100,000
16	4	116	2%	3	$41,000	$24,000	$76,000	$141,000
17	3	99	2%	2	$41,000	$18,000	$67,500	$126,500
18	3	71	1%	2	$38,000	$18,000	$44,500	$100,500
19	8	331	5%	7	$50,000	$48,000	$210,500	$308,500
20	10	397	6%	10	$53,000	$60,000	$252,500	$365,500
Total	**163**	**6,212**	**98%**	**150**	**$994,000**	**$978,000**	**$3,988,000**	**$5,961,000**

* Based on 2006-2007 PEIMS data

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

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

**** ELA Teacher Stipend Budget = (# of teachers x $500) + (% of total teachers x $900,000 of leftover funds)

Source: Texas Education Agency

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[40] Total does not add to 100% due to rounding.

Content Area Academy Costs

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

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

Each teacher participating in a Content Area academy could potentially receive a $250 stipend. Each teacher participant received $125 after attending all 1.5 days of the face-to-face session. The additional $125 will be received only after completing and submitting assignments for the online follow-up session between September 1, 2008, and December 1, 2008, which is the equivalent of one half-day (3 hours) follow-up. The teacher stipend budget for each ESC region was calculated by multiplying the number of teachers by $250 each and adding this to the product of the percentage of total teachers multiplied by $200,000 of leftover funds.

Overall, the TEA allocated just over $550 per Content Area teacher across all ESC regions. Table 7.3 shows the total allocation for all TALA Grade 6 Content Area academies by ESC region.

Table 7.3: Allocation for Grade 6 Content Area Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies (TALA) by ESC Region, 2007-08

ESC Region	# of Sessions	# of Content Area Teachers*	% of Total Content Area Teachers[41]	# of Content Area Trainers Allotted	Content Area Base Budget**	Content Area Session Budget***	Content Area Teacher Stipend Budget****	Content Area Total Budget
1	14	623	8%	12	$59,000	$84,000	$171,750	$314,750
2	5	196	3%	5	$44,000	$30,000	$55,000	$129,000
3	3	109	1%	2	$38,000	$18,000	$29,250	$85,250
4	38	1,661	22%	33	$101,000	$228,000	$459,250	$788,250
5	3	109	1%	2	$38,000	$18,000	$29,250	$85,250
6	7	286	4%	5	$47,000	$42,000	$79,500	$168,500
7	7	289	4%	5	$47,000	$42,000	$80,250	$169,250
8	3	119	2%	3	$41,000	$18,000	$33,750	$92,750
9	3	93	1%	2	$38,000	$18,000	$25,250	$81,250
10	25	1,067	15%	23	$80,000	$150,000	$296,750	$526,750
11	18	781	10%	15	$65,000	$108,000	$215,250	$388,250
12	6	253	3%	4	$44,000	$36,000	$69,250	$149,250
13	13	541	7%	11	$56,000	$78,000	$149,250	$283,250
14	3	112	1%	2	$38,000	$18,000	$30,000	$86,000
15	3	81	1%	2	$38,000	$18,000	$22,250	$78,250
16	4	167	2%	3	$41,000	$24,000	$45,750	$110,750
17	3	145	2%	3	$41,000	$18,000	$40,250	$99,250
18	3	106	1%	2	$38,000	$18,000	$28,500	$84,500
19	5	182	3%	4	$44,000	$30,000	$51,500	$125,500
20	14	565	8%	12	$59,000	$84,000	$157,250	$300,250
Total	**180**	**7,485**	**99%**	**150**	**$997,000**	**$1,080,000**	**$2,069,250**	**$4,146,250**

* Based on 2006-2007 PEIMS data
** Content Area Base Budget = ($35,000 base) + (% of total teachers x $300,000 remaining funds)
*** Content Area Session Budget = $6,000 per session for room rental, A/V and other equipment, printing of session materials, stipends for trainers ($400 per day for lead trainer, $350 per day for second trainer)
**** Content Area Teacher Stipend Budget = (# of teachers x $250) + (% of total teachers x $200,000 of leftover funds)
Source: Texas Education Agency

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[41] Total does not add to 100% due to rounding.

8. Discussion and Next Steps for TALA

This chapter reviews the findings from Phase One of the TALA evaluation. It synthesizes the information gleaned from numerous data sources (observation, survey, interview, and expert review) to describe the quality of the content, the delivery of the training, and perceptions of training. Using archival data, it presents information on how funds were allocated to develop and implement TALA. It also contains the limitations of the evaluation and includes next steps for TALA.

Discussion of Phase One Evaluation Findings

Several data sources were used to address the evaluation questions for Phase One of the evaluation, including TALA archival planning materials (e.g., steering committee meeting minutes, program rules), TALA training materials, TALA training observations, state trainer interviews, and the regional trainer survey.

For this report on Phase One of the TALA program evaluation, the evaluation team conducted a series of exploratory and descriptive analyses to understand the distributional properties of survey and observation data. This quantitative data were mixed with qualitative findings and content analyses to generate overall statements about the quality of TALA trainings, stakeholder perceptions, and budget allocations.

The following section presents the key findings from Phase One of the TALA evaluation.

Evaluation of the Quality of TALA Content

Best Practices for Literacy Instruction

The Technical Advisory Board (TAB) evaluated TALA content in terms of best practices for literacy instruction. Overall, the instructional strategies were perceived as important and necessary for adolescent readers. The routines require active teaching, high levels of student participation, and "cognitive engagement" by the students. The units (1-3) comprising the *TALA Content Area Instructional Routines to Support Academic Literacy* are representative of best practices in literacy, scientifically-based research practices, and professional opinions of experts in the field. Unit 7 focused on questioning strategies (inferential comprehension) and was also perceived as a best practice in literacy instruction. The following represent specific examples from the instructional routines:

- General instructional practices:
  - Cooperative learning
  - Emphasis on curriculum-embedded instruction
  - Emphasis on student engagement
  - Explicit instruction
  - I Do/We Do/You Do (gradual release/scaffolding)
- Vocabulary instruction:
  - Creating student friendly definitions
  - Generating examples and nonexamples

- How to select vocabulary words
- Use of graphic organizers (the Frayer Model)
- Use of word parts to pronounce vocabulary

- Comprehension instruction:
  - Activation of background knowledge
  - Use of Anticipation-reaction guides
  - Identifying main ideas
  - Using *Getting the Gist* routine
  - Summarization

- Inferential comprehension:
  - Question-Answer-Relationship (QAR)
  - Focus on higher level questions

The routines that concerned the TAB possessed research evidence with elementary school students but lacked support for the use with middle school students. This included the instruction on syllable patterns, the morphemic analysis routines, and fluency instruction.

The TAB recommended the inclusion of other instructional routines to improve student literacy, including text structure, visualization/mental imagery, application to narrative text, more opportunities for discussion of text, incorporation of writing strategies, and the inclusion of strategies to increase student motivation. The TAB recommended using other types of reading measures in addition to the TMSFA to make diagnostic decisions.

Connection to National and State ELA/Reading Standards

TALA instructional routines were identified by the TAB as being clearly and explicitly linked to national standards (IRA/NCTE's *Standards for the English Language Arts*). TALA strategies are supported by IRA/NCTE's Standard 3:

> *Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics) (p.3).*

The routines are also explicitly related to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), including:

- Standard 6.6: Reading/Word Identification
- Standard 6.7: Reading Fluency
- Standard 6.9: Reading/Vocabulary Development
- Standard 6.10: Reading/Comprehension

TALA routines also emphasized some elements of:

- Standard 6.11: Reading/Literary Responses

- Standard 6.13: Reading/Inquiry/Research

- Standard 6.14: Reading/Culture

- Standard 6.20: Writing/Inquiry/Research

Perceptions of TALA Content

TALA State Trainers and Regional Trainers were asked about their impressions of TALA content. State ELA trainers indicated that they "loved" the content, stating that the content was organized and easy to follow. State Content Area trainers also viewed the content favorably. However, they perceived gaps in the math, science, and social studies aspects of the content. Regional trainers also held positive impressions of TALA content. Nearly 83% of regional trainers rated the quality of TALA content as above average or excellent. When asked what they would not change about the TALA training, several regional trainers reported that they would not change the content and materials.

Evaluation of the Quality of the TALA Training

The evaluation of the quality included several elements: (1) the Implementation of the Training, (2) the Culture of the Training, and (3) the Preparedness of the Trainers to Present the TALA Training.

Implementation

The implementation element of the evaluation focused on how TALA routines were presented. This included the activities conducted during the training, the presentation by the facilitators, and the structure of TALA. Information from TALA Regional TOTs and TALA Classroom Teacher Academy observations indicated that the most frequently occurring activities were:

- Presenters explained and reviewed TALA content;

- Presenters provided examples and elaborations; and

- Presenters distributed and used the handouts.

The least frequently occurring activities included:

- Presenters modeled the routines;

- Participants practiced the routines with a partner; and

- Participants practiced the routines independently.

Also, trainers were less likely to use the videos in the classroom teacher academies. Based on observer field notes and comments, a reason for this finding may be due to technical and video difficulties at the training site.

Overall, the Regional TOTs and Content Area Academies were able to effectively implement the components of the TALA training. Regional and Classroom Teacher Academies were rated by observers as being reflective of best practices for professional development.

The TALA State Trainers and Regional Trainers were asked about their impressions of the implementation of the TALA training. The State ELA trainers rated the overall quality of the training they received as excellent, citing the facilitators' skills in sharing information and knowledge as effective. The State Content Area trainers rated the overall quality of the training

as very good, stating that the lead facilitator was knowledgeable and articulate. Regional trainers also had positive impressions of the TALA training. Eighty-one percent rated the overall quality of the training as above average or excellent and 79% rated the overall effectiveness of the presenters as above average or excellent. The Regional trainers reported that the trainers/presenters were "very good" and "outstanding."

One element that emerged across all data sources (observation, survey, interview, and expert review) was the structure of the academy. The issue was the amount of time required to complete the training.

The largest concern that the TAB had with the TALA training was its short duration. This was perceived as a more pressing concern for the content area teachers (1 ½ days of training) than ELA teachers. TAB members were concerned that the teachers will learn less information to adequately present TALA content in a short amount of time. The structure of the training assumes teachers will have prior knowledge regarding reading development, instruction, and assessment, which may not be the case for all teachers (including ELA teachers).

The TAB's concerns were observed in both the Regional TOTs and the Classroom Teacher Academies. The amount of time to complete each unit at the trainings exceeded the estimated time for completion that was provided in the TALA training materials. Some units lasted 30 to 45 longer than estimated. Observers noted that the duration of the last module at the classroom teacher academies was short and appeared "rushed." The last unit in the ELA Academy (Unit 7) was not presented at two observed trainings due to a lack of time. Some observes attributed the fast pace of the trainings as indicative of too much information covered in TALA.

The time issue also emerged in both state and regional trainer perceptions of training. State and regional trainers expressed the need for more time/additional days to learn and present TALA content due to the large amount of material covered in the training. State ELA trainers stated that they felt "rushed" and did not have adequate time to discuss the materials and reflect on the content. State Content Area trainers expressed similar concerns and wished there was more time to discuss potential problems that would arise during the trainings they conducted. Regional trainers echoed the concerns of the state trainers stating that there was too much information to present in a short amount of time.

A concern for the TAB was the ability for classroom teachers to take what they learned in the TALA trainings and implement the instructional routines in their classrooms. In addition to extending the amount of time in the training, the TAB provided several recommendations that they believe would improve the implementation of TALA in the schools:

- Teachers need school support from reading coaches and school administrators
- Teachers need on-going training
- Teachers need classroom follow-up with feedback
- Teachers need to see models in the classroom (during and after training)
- Actual teacher texts should be used in training

Culture

According to observer ratings, the culture of the training sessions facilitated the engagement of participants in the TALA training. In both the Regional TOTs and Classroom Teacher Academies:

- Presenters were positive in their interactions with participants;

- Presenters respected the contribution of all participants; and

- Presenters engaged participants equally.

Potential areas for improvement within the culture construct include using more hands-on activities and encouraging participants to generate questions. According to observer notes, these areas for improvement were related to the limited time available to presenters.

TALA State Trainers and Regional Trainers were asked about their impressions of the culture of the TALA training. Most State ELA trainers perceived the environment as conducive to learning. One State ELA trainer felt that by combining the ELA and Content Area state trainers for the first two days added tension in the room. State Content Area trainers perceived the environment as conducive to collaborating with colleagues and enjoyed being paired with an ELA trainer. However, one Content Area trainer described the room as "tense at times."

Regional trainers also reported that the culture of the TALA training was positive. Over 68% of trainers noted that the training environment was very conducive or extremely conducive to professional exploration and encouraged the sharing of ideas among participants.

Preparedness for Role as a Trainer

Since the goal of the training of trainers is to prepare the state and regional trainers for their role as a TALA trainer, the evaluation assessed preparedness for the role as a trainer. Observations of the Regional TOT indicated that:

- TALA activities were presented as outlined in the training materials;

- The training will ultimately help participants improve student outcomes in reading and ELA; and

- The training maintained a positive learning environment.

The training did not build participants' skill in linking their instruction to the TEKS and develop participants' understanding of the TAKS student assessment system.

Observers rated TALA Regional TOT as exhibiting high implementation, following the activities and content as presented in the training materials. This rating is reflected in perceived preparedness of regional trainers to present the activities as outlined in the training. Also, the culture of the Regional TOT was perceived as positive as well as the perception of regional trainers to maintain a positive learning environment. However, there was less implementation of the TEKS and TAKS in the Regional TOT and observers reported lower beliefs that the training built participants' skill in linking their instruction to the TEKS and developed participants' understanding of the TAKS student assessment system.

Observers were hesitant to report that the Regional TOT prepared participants to present the TALA training. Consequently, they anticipated that participants would have a difficult time switching roles from participant to trainer. Observers felt that participants' questions during the session reflected their lack of understanding of the material.

The findings from the state trainer interviews and regional trainer surveys did not support the observers' impressions of preparedness. Both state and regional trainers had positive perceptions of the TALA training. The overall impressions of the training that they attended to become a TALA trainer were favorable, reporting that the training was effective in helping them prepare for their role as a trainer. The trainers felt adequately prepared for the training that they conducted based on the training that they attended. The trainers reported that they had the requisite knowledge and skills to fulfill their roles and responsibilities as a TALA trainer.

Limitations

One limitation of the evaluation design is external validity. External validity is the extent to which a study's results can be generalized to other people or settings (Campbell & Stanley, 1963). The external validity threat in this evaluation pertained to the generalization of findings. Another limitation of the evaluation is the survey used to assess perceptions of the TALA training by regional trainers.

Generalization to Other TALA Training Sessions

Although each Regional TOT was observed, only one ELA Classroom Teacher Academy was observed per region (n=20). There is great variability in the delivery of content in terms of presentation style and previous professional development experience. Observing more training per region would provide greater information regarding the implementation of training in the classroom teacher academies across the state. Also, the ability to observe the same trainer at different time points over the summer would provide information about growth and change in delivery of the content over time.

Additionally, one content area academy was observed in 10 of the 20 regions. Therefore, the content area academies in half of the regions were not included in the evaluation.[42] This results in a lack of information regarding the implementation of training in the unobserved regions.

Regional Trainer Survey

The Regional Trainer Survey did not ask respondents to indicate the training they attended or the training they conducted (either ELA or Content Area). It would have been informative to conduct group comparisons of ELA and Content Area Academies to identify commonalities and differences in perceptions of training, particularly given different experiences of state trainers.

Next Steps for TALA

The previous section provided an overview of findings from Phase One of the TALA evaluation. The findings provide evidence that TALA content is representative of best practices for literacy instruction and is explicitly aligned to national and state standards in ELA and Reading. Evidence is also presented for the effective implementation of TALA routines at all levels of training (state, regional, and classroom teacher). The TALA training had a positive climate, conducive to learning. The training of trainers prepared the state and regional trainers for their role as a TALA trainer.

Suggestions were made for improvement of TALA content and structure of the TALA training. Adding additional instructional routines including text structure, visualization/mental imagery, more opportunities for discussion of text, incorporation of writing strategies, and the inclusion of strategies to increase student motivation were recommended. Applying TALA instructional routines to narrative text was advised. The use of complex measures in addition to the TMSFA to make diagnostic decisions was also stressed. In terms of academy structure, the addition of more days was suggested.

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[42] The TEA Director of Special Projects for the Division of Programs and Standards and the TALA developer observed a content area academy in the remaining regions. Their observations are not included in this report.

What is currently unknown is whether TALA Classroom Teacher Academies leads to a change in teaching practices for both ELA and content area teachers. It is also unknown if the changes in teaching behaviors influence student achievement. Finally, the cost-effectiveness and sustainability of TALA has yet to be determined. These issues will be assessed in Phase Two of the TALA evaluation, including:

- In what ways are trained teachers implementing TALA content and/or strategies?

    - At what tier(s) are ELA participating teachers implementing the content learned at the ELA?

    - To what extent are content area teachers (e.g., science, social studies) incorporating TALA content into their instruction?

- In what ways are trained ELA teachers using the Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment?

- What do teachers perceive as the barriers and facilitators to implementing TALA content/strategies in the classroom?

- What do administrators perceive as the barriers and facilitators to implementing TALA content/strategies in the classroom?

- How has participation in the TALA training affected classroom literacy practices? How do literacy practices differ from teachers who did not participate in TALA?

- How has TALA training affected TAKS scores in reading and language arts?

- How has TALA training affected TAKS scores in math, science, and social studies?

- How are TALA trained teacher characteristics/behaviors related to student achievement?

    - How is teacher self-efficacy related to student achievement?

    - How is teacher job satisfaction related to student achievement?

    - How is teacher implementation of TALA strategies related to student achievement?

- How has TALA training affected reading progress and overall achievement of at-risk students?

    - Students with special education needs, including reading disabilities (e.g., dyslexia)

    - Students with LEP

    - Students from low SES environments

- To what extent are there cost-savings related to TALA?

- What factors are contributing to the sustainability of the TALA initiative? What factors are prohibiting the sustainability of the TALA initiative?

Phase Two will address the evaluation questions using various techniques. First, the implementation of TALA in the classroom will be assessed using observations of TALA participating teachers' classrooms. The observations will assess the extent to which TALA instructional routines are being implemented in the classroom. Second, the perceptions of TALA training will be gathered from classroom teachers and school administrators using online surveys. The impact of TALA on student achievement will be measured by comparing TAKS scores in the years prior to TALA and following TALA. TAKS scores of TALA participating and non-participating campuses will also be compared. Finally, a cost-benefit analysis will be

conducted which will help predict the sustainability of the TALA program. Cost data, including teacher stipend data, the actual number of trainings conducted and the number of teachers who attended each training, and the breakdown of the base budget and session budget, will be collected from the ESC leaders using online surveys. The total cost per teacher trained and the relationship of actual costs and teachers trained will be calculated by region, as well as overall for the state.

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Appendix A: Expert Review Protocol

Protocol
Please evaluate the presenter materials, including the PowerPoint slides, participant notes, handouts, and videos. In particular, we would like you to review all modules, including the Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment (TMSFA) in Unit 4: Modules 1 and 2. As an expert reviewer, you should provide any feedback that you feel is relevant in your review of the materials. The following protocol has been designed to assist with the expert review of the TALA training content: Please keep in mind the context of TALA as you provide your review.

Best Practices for Literacy Instruction

- Do TALA instructional routines represent the best practices in literacy instruction? Why or why not? Please be explicit in your description of the specific "best practices" citing specific references to support your claims.
- Are the instructional routines appropriate for adolescent readers? Why or why not?
- Are the instructional routines in Units 1-3 appropriate for content area teachers? Why or why not?
- Are the instructional routines (all Units) appropriate for ELA teachers? Why or why not?
- What are your perceptions of the 3-tier reading model?
- What are your perceptions of the Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment (TMSFA)?
- To what extent do TALA instructional routines address the needs of struggling readers (including students with learning disabilities or limited English proficiency)?
- In your expert opinion, what do you perceive as strengths of TALA instructional routines?
- What do you perceive as lacking from the instructional routines?

National Reading and ELA Standards (e.g., International Reading Association and National Council of Teachers of English *Standards for ELA*)

- Do TALA instructional routines represent the national standards in reading/ELA (what students should know and be able to do in a 6th grade classroom)? Why or why not?

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)

- Do TALA instructional routines represent the state standards (TEKS) in reading/ELA for 6th grade students (what students should know and be able to do in a 6th grade classroom)? Why or why not?
- What appropriate state standards (TEKS) do TALA instructional routines emphasize?
- What appropriate state standards (TEKS), if any, are not addressed by the TALA instructional routines?

Best Practices for Teacher Professional Development

- In your expert opinion, what do you perceive as strengths of the overall design and delivery of TALA relative to best practices of professional development?
- What do you perceive as lacking from TALA in terms of professional development?

What are your perceptions of the length of time for each academy (1.5 days for the Content Academy and 3 days for the ELA academy)?

Appendix B: TALA Training Observation Protocols

Regional TALA Training Observation Protocol

Date of Observation: _____   Region: _____

Observer: _____   Location: _____

Start Time: _____   Finish Time: _____

Academy: ☐ **Day 1**
            ☐ **Day 2**
            ☐ **Day 3**
            ☐ **Day 4**

I. Training Contextual Information

1. **What is the total number of participants attending the academy?** _____
    ☐ 1 – 10   ☐ 11 – 20   ☐ 21 – 30   ☐ 31 – 40   ☐ 41 – 50

2. **Please describe the room:**
    - Describe how seating is arranged, including the number of tables or desks
    - If participants are seated at tables, indicate the number of participant chairs per table
    - List/Describe any equipment or materials and where they are located in the room.

      ☐ Projector/Overhead Projector
      ☐ Computer
      ☐ Participant binders
      ☐ Participant notes pages
      ☐ Handouts
      ☐ Curriculum materials (e.g., textbooks)
      ☐ Highlighters
      ☐ Tape
      ☐ Chart paper
      ☐ Post-it Notes (i.e., sticky notes)
      ☐ Index cards
      ☐ Markers
      ☐ Plain paper
      ☐ Other (please list) _____

3. **Site Map – Draw the physical layout of the room, including the following:**
   - Position of furnishings and other elements such as doors and windows
   - Location of audio-visual equipment and projection space
   - Seating arrangement in the room
   - Tables used for materials/handouts and refreshments

II. Observation Matrix

1. **Content[43] and Activities**

   First, please circle each module below that is covered during today's training session. As you observe each training module, indicate how often the following activities are occurring by using tick marks (**|**) to represent each occurrence during the individual modules. You may mark multiple activities for each module as appropriate.

Unit/Module	Activities								
		Participants View Video	Presenter Distributes and Uses Handouts	Presenter Explains and/or Reviews TALA Content	Presenter Provides Examples/ Elaborations of TALA Content	Presenter Models TALA Content (I Do)	Participants Practice TALA Content with **Presenter** (We Do)	Participants Practice TALA Content with **Each Other** (We Do)	Participants Practice TALA Content Independently (You Do)
Unit 1: Overview of School-Wide Intervention									
Module 1 - A School Wide Approach to Reading Intervention									
Module 2 - Effective Instruction Techniques									
Unit 2: Vocabulary Instruction									
Module 1 - Selecting Words									
Module 2 - Pronouncing and Defining Words									
Module 3 - Generating Examples and Non-Examples									
Unit 3: Comprehension Instruction									
Module 1 - Using Anticipation Reaction-Guides to Build Background Knowledge									

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[43] Content throughout refers to instructional routines planned to be covered in each module.

Activities								
Unit/Module		Participants View Video	Presenter Distributes and Uses Handouts	Presenter Explains and/or Reviews TALA Content	Presenter Provides Examples/ Elaborations of TALA Content	Presenter Models TALA Content (I Do)	Participants Practice TALA Content with **Presenter** (We Do)	Participants Practice TALA Content with **Each Other** (We Do)	Participants Practice TALA Content Independently (You Do)
Module 2 - Identifying Main Ideas									
Module 3 - Writing Summaries									
Unit 4: Using Diagnostic and Progress Monitoring Data									
Module 1 - Administering Assessments									
Module 2 - Interpreting and Implementing Assessment Results									
Unit 5: Interpreting and Implementing Assessment Results									
Module 1 - Identifying Syllable Structures									
Module 2 - Analyzing Morphemes									
Unit 6: Building Fluency									
Module 1 - Partner Reading									
Unit 7: Inferential Comprehension Instructional Routines									
Module 1 - Generating Level 1 Questions									
Module 2 - Generating Level 2 Questions									

Unit/Module		Participants View Video	Presenter Distributes and Uses Handouts	Presenter Explains and/or Reviews TALA Content	Presenter Provides Examples/ Elaborations of TALA Content	Presenter Models TALA Content (I Do)	Participants Practice TALA Content with **Presenter** (We Do)	Participants Practice TALA Content with **Each Other** (We Do)	Participants Practice TALA Content Independently (You Do)
					Activities				
Module 3 - Generating Level 3 Questions									

2. Implementation of Training

On average, to what extent was there evidence of the following?	No Evidence	Little Evidence	Some Evidence	Strong Evidence
Presenter(s) focused on the TALA instructional routines.	○	○	○	○
Presenter(s) carried out formal presentations of TALA routines effectively.	○	○	○	○
Presenter(s) effectively used questioning strategies.	○	○	○	○
Presenter(s) connected the TALA routines to English Language Learners.	○	○	○	○
Presenter(s) used the TALA handouts in the modules effectively.	○	○	○	○
Presenter(s) connected TALA to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).	○	○	○	○
Presenter(s) connected TALA to the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS).	○	○	○	○
Presenter(s) managed the pace of the training to meet the needs of participants.	○	○	○	○
Presenter(s) used the TALA videos in the modules effectively.	○	○	○	○
Presenter(s) reinforced effective instructional activities by modeling them.	○	○	○	○

Other general observations of the implementation of TALA routines and content during this training session:

How would you rate the overall implementation of the TALA routines and content in this training session?
Please circle the number that best describes your rating.

1	2	3	4	5
The implementation of TALA content (i.e., routines) was not at all reflective of best practice for professional development.				The implementation of TALA content (i.e., routines) was extremely reflective of best practice for professional development.

Supporting evidence for this overall rating:

3.   Culture of the TALA Training

On average, to what extent was there evidence of the following?	No Evidence	Little Evidence	Some Evidence	Strong Evidence
Presenter(s) encouraged active participation of all participants.	○	○	○	○
Participants interacted with each other around content issues.	○	○	○	○
Participants actively participated in group discussions.	○	○	○	○
Presenter(s) encouraged participants to generate questions.	○	○	○	○
Participants enthusiastically engaged in hands-on activities.	○	○	○	○
There was a climate of respect among participants for what other participants contributed.	○	○	○	○
Participants were on task.	○	○	○	○
Participants were positive in their interactions with other participants.	○	○	○	○
Presenter(s) were positive in their interactions with participants.	○	○	○	○
Presenter(s) respected the contribution of all participants.	○	○	○	○
Presenter(s) engaged participants equally.	○	○	○	○
Interactions reflected collaborative working relationships between presenter(s) and participants.	○	○	○	○

Other general observations of the group culture, interactions, attitudes, or activities during the TALA training session:

How would you rate the overall culture of the TALA training session? Please circle the number that best describes your rating.

1	2	3	4	5
The culture of the session interfered with engagement of participants in the TALA training.				The culture of the session facilitated the engagement of participants in the TALA training.

Supporting evidence for this overall rating:

4.   Perceived Preparedness of Presenters to Present TALA Training [REGIONAL]

On average, how prepared do you think the participants who attended this training will be to shift to the role of TALA presenter by doing the following?	Not At All Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Fairly Well Prepared	Very Well Prepared
Present TALA activities as outlined in the training materials.	○	○	○	○
Enhance participants' knowledge/skills so they can effectively teach adolescent students *to comprehend academic texts*.	○	○	○	○
Enhance participants' knowledge/skills so they can effectively teach adolescent students *who struggle with reading*. (Tier II/III ONLY)	○	○	○	○
Help participants learn to implement research-based strategies in academic literacy instruction.	○	○	○	○
Help participants improve student outcomes in the content areas.	○	○	○	○
Help participants improve student outcomes in reading/English language arts.	○	○	○	○
Work with adult learners.	○	○	○	○
Build participants' skill in linking their instruction to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).	○	○	○	○
Develop participants' understanding of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) student assessment system.	○	○	○	○
Differentiate instruction for various learning styles.	○	○	○	○
Motivate participants to learn.	○	○	○	○
Maintain a positive learning environment.	○	○	○	○

Overall, what did you observe at this TALA training session that led you to make these ratings?

How would you rate the overall preparedness of the TALA presenters based on their participation in this training session? Please circle the number that best describes your rating.

1	2	3	4	5
This session did not adequately prepare presenters to present the TALA training.				This session very much prepared presenters to present the TALA training.

Supporting evidence for this overall rating:

Classroom Teacher Training Protocol

Date of Observation: _____   Region: _____

Observer: _____   Location: _____

Start Time: _____   Finish Time: _____

Academy: **English/Language Arts (ELA)**   **Content Area**
                           ☐ **Day 1**   ☐ **Day 1**
                           ☐ **Day 2**   ☐ **Day 2 (½ day)**
                           ☐ **Day 3**

I. Training Contextual Information

4. **What is the total number of participants attending the academy?** _____
   ☐ 1 – 10   ☐ 11 – 20   ☐ 21 – 30   ☐ 31 – 40   ☐ 41 – 50

5. **Please describe the room:**
   - Describe how seating is arranged, including the number of tables or desks
   - If participants are seated at tables, indicate the number of participant chairs per table
   - List/Describe any equipment or materials and where they are located in the room.

     ☐ Projector/Overhead Projector
     ☐ Computer
     ☐ Participant binders
     ☐ Participant notes pages
     ☐ Handouts
     ☐ Curriculum materials (e.g., textbooks)
     ☐ Highlighters
     ☐ Tape
     ☐ Chart paper
     ☐ Post-it Notes (i.e., sticky notes)
     ☐ Index cards
     ☐ Markers
     ☐ Plain paper
     ☐ Other (please list) _____

6. **Site Map – Draw the physical layout of the room, including the following:**
    - Position of furnishings and other elements such as doors and windows
    - Location of audio-visual equipment and projection space
    - Seating arrangement in the room
    - Tables used for materials/handouts and refreshments

II. Observation Matrix

3. Content[44] and Activities

First, please circle each module below that is covered during today's training session. As you observe each training module, indicate how often the following activities are occurring by using tick marks (**|**) to represent each occurrence during the individual modules. You may mark multiple activities for each module as appropriate.

Unit/Module	Activities								
		Participants View Video	Presenter Distributes and Uses Handouts	Presenter Explains and/or Reviews TALA Content	Presenter Provides Examples/ Elaborations of TALA Content	Presenter Models TALA Content (I Do)	Participants Practice TALA Content with **Presenter** (We Do)	Participants Practice TALA Content with **Each Other** (We Do)	Participants Practice TALA Content Independently (You Do)
Unit 1: Overview of School-Wide Intervention									
Module 1 - A School Wide Approach to Reading Intervention									
Module 2 - Effective Instruction Techniques									
Unit 2: Vocabulary Instruction									
Module 1 - Selecting Words									
Module 2 - Pronouncing and Defining Words									
Module 3 - Generating Examples and Non-Examples									
Unit 3: Comprehension Instruction									
Module 1 - Using Anticipation Reaction-Guides to Build Background Knowledge									

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[44] Content throughout refers to instructional routines planned to be covered in each module.

Unit/Module	Activities								
		Participants View Video	Presenter Distributes and Uses Handouts	Presenter Explains and/or Reviews TALA Content	Presenter Provides Examples/ Elaborations of TALA Content	Presenter Models TALA Content (I Do)	Participants Practice TALA Content with **Presenter** (We Do)	Participants Practice TALA Content with **Each Other** (We Do)	Participants Practice TALA Content Independently (You Do)
Module 2 - Identifying Main Ideas									
Module 3 - Writing Summaries									
Unit 4: Using Diagnostic and Progress Monitoring Data									
Module 1 - Administering Assessments									
Module 2 - Interpreting and Implementing Assessment Results									
Unit 5: Interpreting and Implementing Assessment Results									
Module 1 - Identifying Syllable Structures									
Module 2 - Analyzing Morphemes									
Unit 6: Building Fluency									
Module 1 - Partner Reading									
Unit 7: Inferential Comprehension Instructional Routines									
Module 1 - Generating Level 1 Questions									
Module 2 - Generating Level 2 Questions									

Activities										
Unit/Module		Participants View Video	Presenter Distributes and Uses Handouts	Presenter Explains and/or Reviews TALA Content	Presenter Provides Examples/ Elaborations of TALA Content	Presenter Models TALA Content (I Do)	Participants Practice TALA Content with **Presenter** (We Do)	Participants Practice TALA Content with **Each Other** (We Do)	Participants Practice TALA Content Independently (You Do)	
Module 3 - Generating Level 3 Questions										

4.   Implementation of Training

On average, to what extent was there evidence of the following?	No Evidence	Little Evidence	Some Evidence	Strong Evidence
Presenter(s) focused on the TALA instructional routines.	○	○	○	○
Presenter(s) carried out formal presentations of TALA routines effectively.	○	○	○	○
Presenter(s) effectively used questioning strategies.	○	○	○	○
Presenter(s) connected the TALA routines to English Language Learners.	○	○	○	○
Presenter(s) used the TALA handouts in the modules effectively.	○	○	○	○
Presenter(s) connected TALA to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).	○	○	○	○
Presenter(s) connected TALA to the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS).	○	○	○	○
Presenter(s) managed the pace of the training to meet the needs of participants.	○	○	○	○
Presenter(s) used the TALA videos in the modules effectively.	○	○	○	○
Presenter(s) reinforced effective instructional activities by modeling them.	○	○	○	○

Other general observations of the implementation of TALA routines and content during this training session:

How would you rate the overall implementation of the TALA routines and content in this training session?
Please circle the number that best describes your rating.

1	2	3	4	5
The implementation of TALA content (i.e., routines) was not at all reflective of best practice for professional development.				The implementation of TALA content (i.e., routines) was extremely reflective of best practice for professional development.

**Supporting evidence for this overall rating:**

5.   Culture of the TALA Training

On average, to what extent was there evidence of the following?	No Evidence	Little Evidence	Some Evidence	Strong Evidence
Presenter(s) encouraged active participation of all participants.	○	○	○	○
Participants interacted with each other around content issues.	○	○	○	○
Participants actively participated in group discussions.	○	○	○	○
Presenter(s) encouraged participants to generate questions.	○	○	○	○
Participants enthusiastically engaged in hands-on activities.	○	○	○	○
There was a climate of respect among participants for what other participants contributed.	○	○	○	○
Participants were on task.	○	○	○	○
Participants were positive in their interactions with other participants.	○	○	○	○
Presenter(s) were positive in their interactions with participants.	○	○	○	○
Presenter(s) respected the contribution of all participants.	○	○	○	○
Presenter(s) engaged participants equally.	○	○	○	○
Interactions reflected collaborative working relationships between presenter(s) and participants.	○	○	○	○

Other general observations of the group culture, interactions, attitudes, or activities during the TALA training session:

How would you rate the overall culture of the TALA training session? Please circle the number that best describes your rating.

1	2	3	4	5
The culture of the session interfered with engagement of participants in the TALA training.				The culture of the session facilitated the engagement of participants in the TALA training.

Supporting evidence for this overall rating:

Appendix C: TALA Training Observation Semi-Structured Field Note Template

Regional Field Note Template

DIRECTIONS: Observer(s) should complete this template for each module observed.

Date of Observation: _____   Region: _____

Observer: _____   Location: _____

Academy: ○ **Day 1**
           ○ **Day 2**
           ○ **Day 3**
           ○ **Day 4**

Unit _____: Module _____

Start time _____   End time_____

What changes (e.g., rearranged chairs, moved participants) were made to the environment to accommodate the goals of the module?
- ▪

What relevant questions, if any, did participants ask during this module?
- ▪

In what ways, if any, did presenter(s) direct the presentation off course from the materials?
- ▪

What behaviors, if any, did you observe about the participants, including reactions to content or examples?
- ▪

In what ways, if any, did the presenter(s) provide direction to help the participants make the shift from presenter-in-training to being a presenter of the content themselves?
- ▪

Classroom Teacher Field Note Template

DIRECTIONS: Observer(s) should complete this template for each module observed.

Date of Observation: _____   Region: _____

Observer: _____   Location: _____

Academy: **English/Language Arts (ELA)**   **Content Area**
- ○ **Day 1**   ○ **Day 1**
- ○ **Day 2**   ○ **Day 2 (½ day)**
- ○ **Day 3**

Unit _____: Module _____

Start time _____   End time_____

What changes (e.g., rearranged chairs, moved participants) were made to the environment to accommodate the goals of the module?
- ▪

What relevant questions, if any, did participants ask during this module?
- ▪

In what ways, if any, did presenter(s) direct the presentation off course from the materials?
- ▪

What behaviors, if any, did you observe about the participants, including reactions to content or examples?
- ▪

Appendix D: State Trainer Telephone Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol: State Trainers (ELA Academy)

INTRODUCTION

Hello, my name is _____ from ICF International. We are working with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to evaluate the Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies (TALA). In addition to the other state trainers, we would like to talk with you about your experience with the **TALA regional training of trainers** for which you served as a trainer, as well as the TALA state training of trainers you attended to become a state trainer. Your answers will be kept confidential, as we will only be reporting information in the aggregate with no individual identifying information revealed.

This interview should take no more than 30 minutes. Are you available for the interview now? If not, when is a convenient time for me to call you back to conduct the interview?

Name:

Email:

Phone:

Region(s):

Date:

Time:

A. BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE

First, I'd like to learn a little bit about your background and experience?

1. **What is your current primary professional role?**

2. **What, if any, teaching experience do you have (i.e., number of years, grades/subjects taught)?**

3. **For what grade levels and subjects are you certified, if any?**

4. **How were you selected to be a TALA state trainer?**

Probe:

■ *Did you have to go through a formal application process, or were you selected in some other way?*

5. What were the required qualifications to become a TALA state trainer?

Probes:

- *Do you have prior experience providing professional development to teachers?*
- *Do you have prior experience conducting training of trainers?*
- *Do you have English/Language Arts or Reading teaching experience?*
- *Do you have English/Language Arts or Reading leadership or curriculum development experience?*

B. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Next, I would like to ask you about your roles and responsibilities as a state trainer.

6. What were your specific roles/responsibilities as a trainer in planning for and conducting the regional training of trainers?

Probe:

- *Were these roles/responsibilities clearly defined? Please explain.*

7. To what extent were the overall goals of TALA clearly articulated to you?

Probes:

- *Were clear statements made regarding your learning goals for the workshop as a trainer?*
- *Who articulated the goals?*
- *Do you feel the goals differ in any meaningful way from goals of prior professional development sessions you attended or presented? If so, please describe.*

8. To what extent do you feel you had the requisite knowledge and skills to fulfill your roles/responsibilities as a TALA state trainer?

C. TRAINING TO BECOME A STATE TRAINER

Next, I would like to ask you about the training you attended to become a state trainer.

9. **On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 = very ineffective and 5 = highly effective, how effective was the training of trainers you attended in preparing you for your roles/ responsibilities as a TALA state trainer?**

Follow-up:

■ *Can you please elaborate on your rating?*

10. **To what extent did you receive training/instruction in how to work with adult learners at the training of trainers you attended?**

11. **On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1= very poor and 5 = excellent, how would you rate the overall quality of the training of trainers (TOT) you attended?**

Follow-up:

■ *Can you please elaborate on your rating based on the following:*
    ▪ *Skills of providers/facilitators?*
    ▪ *Workshop content?*
    ▪ *Workshop structure (e.g., time to learn everything; time for reflection)?*
    ▪ *Extent to which environment was conducive to professional exploration and sharing of ideas?*

12. **Looking back now that you have conducted training of regional trainers, is there anything else that could have been covered in the training of trainers (TOT) that you attended that you think could have helped you in your role as a state trainer?**

Probes:

■ *Is there anything you can think of related to ELA subject expertise that you think would have benefited you? If so, can you explain?*
■ *What else, if anything, do you think would have benefited you? (e.g., reading comprehension strategies, organization of text/text structure, strategic reading)*

Thank you very much for your time! Have a nice day!

Interview Protocol: State Trainers (Content Area Academy)

INTRODUCTION

Hello, my name is _____ from ICF International. We are working with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to evaluate the Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies (TALA). In addition to the other state trainers, we would like to talk with you about your experience with the **TALA regional training of trainers** for which you served as a trainer, as well as the TALA state training of trainers you attended to become a state trainer. Your answers will be kept confidential, as we will only be reporting information in the aggregate with no individual identifying information revealed.

This interview should take no more than 30 minutes. Are you available for the interview now? If not, when is a convenient time for me to call you back to conduct the interview?

Name:

Email:

Phone:

Region(s):

Date:

Time:

A. BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE

First, I'd like to learn a little bit about your background and experience?

1. **What is your current primary professional role?**

2. **What, if any, teaching experience do you have (i.e., number of years, grades/subjects taught)?**

3. **For what grade levels and subjects are you certified, if any?**

4. **How were you selected to be a TALA state trainer?**

Probe:

■   *Did you have to go through a formal application process, or were you selected in some other way?*

5. ***What were the required qualifications to become a TALA state trainer?***

Probes:

- *Do you have prior experience providing professional development to teachers?*
- *Do you have prior experience conducting training of trainers?*
- *Do you have Social Studies/Science/Mathematics/Other teaching experience?*
- *Do you have Social Studies/Science/Mathematics/Other leadership or curriculum development experience?*

B. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Next, I would like to ask you about your roles and responsibilities as a state trainer.

6. What were your specific roles/responsibilities as a trainer in planning for and conducting the regional training of trainers?

Probe:

- *Were these roles/responsibilities clearly defined? Please explain.*

7. To what extent were the overall goals of TALA clearly articulated to you?

Probes:

- *Were clear statements made regarding your learning goals for the workshop as a trainer?*
- *Who articulated the goals?*
- *Do you feel the goals differ in any meaningful way from goals of prior professional development sessions you attended or presented? If so, please describe.*

8. To what extent do you feel you had the requisite knowledge and skills to fulfill your roles/responsibilities as a TALA state trainer?

C. TRAINING TO BECOME A STATE TRAINER

Next, I would like to ask you about the training you attended to become a state trainer.

9. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 = very ineffective and 5 = highly effective, how effective was the training of trainers you attended in preparing you for your roles/ responsibilities as a TALA state trainer?

Follow-up:

- *Can you please elaborate on your rating?*

10. To what extent did you receive training/instruction in how to work with adult learners at the training of trainers you attended?

11. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1= very poor and 5 = excellent, how would you rate the overall quality of the training of trainers (TOT) you attended?

Follow-up:

- *Can you please elaborate on your rating based on the following:*
  - *Skills of providers/facilitators?*
  - *Workshop content?*
  - *Workshop structure (e.g., time to learn everything; time for reflection)?*
  - *Extent to which environment was conducive to professional exploration and sharing of ideas?*

12. Looking back now that you have conducted training of regional trainers, is there anything else that could have been covered in the training of trainers (TOT) that you attended that you think could have helped you in your role as a state trainer?

Probes:

- *Is there anything you can think of related to your content area expertise that you think would have benefited you? If so, can you explain?*
- *What else, if anything, do you think would have benefited you? (e.g. vocabulary instruction specific to your content area, organization of text/text structure, reading graphics like tables and charts)*

Thank you very much for your time! Have a nice day!

Appendix E: Regional Trainer Survey

Evaluation of the Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies (TALA)
Regional Trainer Survey

ICF International, in conjunction with the Texas Education Agency, encourages you to participate in the evaluation of the Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies (TALA). You are being asked to respond to a series of survey items related to the following topics:

- Information about your professional background and experience.
- Your perceptions of training in which you participated to become a TALA trainer.
- Information about preparing for your roles and responsibilities as a TALA trainer.
- Your perceptions of the TALA training that you conducted for teachers.

The survey should take about 30 minutes to complete. The purpose of the survey is to obtain information on the implementation of the TALA training in order to provide feedback on the training. By participating in the survey, you are giving permission for ICF International to use your information for evaluation purposes.

All data that you provide will be kept strictly confidential, and only summary data will be reported. Your individual responses will be disassociated with any personal identifying information in any final databases.

If you have questions concerning the evaluation or your rights as a participant, please contact Rosemarie O'Conner, Evaluation Project Manager for ICF, at 703-385-3200.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Consent statement:
I have read the preceding information describing this evaluation and the purpose of this survey. I freely consent to participate. I understand that I am free to exit the survey at any time.

☐   I accept   ☐ I do not accept

Part I: Background and Experience

Please respond to the following questions about your professional background and experiences related to your role as a TALA trainer.

1. Which of these positions do you currently hold **or** have you held in the past? (Select **all** that apply.)
   - ☐ Teacher
   - ☐ Content area consultant (e.g., science consultant)
   - ☐ Content area coordinator (e.g., math coordinator)
   - ☐ Curriculum specialist (e.g., reading and writing specialist)
   - ☐ Librarian
   - ☐ Other (please specify): _____

   *If you did not select "Teacher," skip to question 2.

   1a. Are you currently a teacher?
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

   1b. How many years of experience have you had as a teacher?
   - ☐ Less than 1 year
   - ☐ 1-3 years
   - ☐ 4-10 years
   - ☐ More than 10 years

   1c. Which instructional level(s) do/did you teach? (Select **all** that apply)
   - ☐ Primary (PK-2)
   - ☐ Elementary (3-5)
   - ☐ Middle (6-8)
   - ☐ High school (9-12)

   1d. Which subject area(s) do/did you teach? (Select **all** that apply)
   - ☐ Language arts
   - ☐ Mathematics
   - ☐ Reading
   - ☐ Science
   - ☐ Social studies
   - ☐ Other (please specify): _____

   1e. What is your current teaching certification(s)? (Select **all** that apply)
   - ☐ I am currently certified to teach in Texas
   - ☐ I am currently certified to teach in another State
   - ☐ I am working to obtain Texas teaching certification
   - ☐ I am working to obtain teaching certification in another State
   - ☐ I am not certified and not working to obtain certification
   - ☐ Other (please specify): _____

Part I: Background and Experience (cont.)

2. Do you have prior experience providing professional development to teachers?
    - ☐ Yes
    - ☐ No

3. Do you have content area leadership or curriculum development experience?
    - ☐ Yes
    - ☐ No

4. How were you selected to be a TALA trainer? (Select **all** that apply)
    - ☐ I was nominated by a supervisor
    - ☐ I was asked to participate based on my middle school teaching experience
    - ☐ I completed a formal application
    - ☐ I do not know
    - ☐ Other (please specify): _____

Part II: Training to Become a TALA Trainer

For questions 5-16, think about the quality, effectiveness, and your satisfaction with the TALA Training of Trainers that you attended to become a TALA trainer.

Please answer the following questions using the scale that ranges from "Very Poor" to "Excellent".

Question	Very Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Excellent
5. How would you rate the overall quality of the training you received?	○	○	○	○	○
6. How would you rate the overall effectiveness of the presenters?	○	○	○	○	○
7. How would you rate the overall quality of the workshop content?	○	○	○	○	○

Please answer the following questions using the scale that ranges from "Not at All Effective" to "Extremely Effective".

Question	Not at All Effective	Slightly Effective	Moderately Effective	Very Effective	Extremely Effective
8. To what extent was the workshop structure effective in meeting your learning needs?	○	○	○	○	○
9. How effective was the training of trainers you attended in preparing you for your roles/responsibilities as a TALA trainer?	○	○	○	○	○

Please answer the following questions using the scale that ranges from "Not at All Conducive" to "Extremely Conducive".

Question	Not at All Conducive	Slightly Conducive	Moderately Conducive	Very Conducive	Extremely Conducive
10. To what extent was the environment conducive to your individual professional exploration?	○	○	○	○	○
11. To what extent was the environment conducive to you being able to share ideas with other participants (i.e., future trainers)?	○	○	○	○	○

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statement using the scale that ranges from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree".

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
12. The TALA training of trainers I attended provided me with the requisite knowledge and skills to fulfill my responsibilities as a TALA trainer.	○	○	○	○	○

Part II: Training to Become a TALA Trainer (cont.)

Please answer the following question using the scale that ranges from "Definitely Not" to "Definitely".

Question	Definitely Not	Probably Not	Not Sure	Probably	Definitely
13. Would you attend a similar training of trainers in the future?	○	○	○	○	○

14. What would you definitely not want to change, if anything, about the training you attended?

15. What aspects of the training you attended, if any, could have been improved? Any suggestions for ways to make these improvements?

16. Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience in becoming a TALA trainer?

Part III: Preparing for Your Roles and Responsibilities as a TALA Trainer

Whether through the training of trainers you attended, or through other means, think about preparing for your roles and responsibilities as a TALA trainer when answering questions 17-19.

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements using the scale that ranges from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree".

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
17. The goals of TALA were clearly articulated to me.	○	○	○	○	○
18. My responsibilities as a trainer were clearly defined for me.	○	○	○	○	○

19. Which of the following activities did you do in preparation for presenting the TALA training sessions to which you were assigned (Select **all** that apply)?
- ☐ Attended the statewide training of trainers for regional trainers
- ☐ Reserved the training space
- ☐ Arranged the training space
- ☐ Contacted participants regarding session logistics
- ☐ Set an agenda for the session
- ☐ Met with co-presenters
- ☐ Assigned specific responsibilities to each of the presenters with whom I was preparing to present
- ☐ Studied the sections of the training materials that I was assigned to present
- ☐ Studied the sections of the training materials that my co-presenter(s) was/were assigned to present
- ☐ Worked with co-presenter(s) to ask questions of one another
- ☐ Practiced the demonstrations
- ☐ Previewed the training videos
- ☐ Prepared activity materials
- ☐ None of the above

Part IV: Presenting the TALA Training to Teachers

Please respond to the following questions about the TALA training that you and your co-presenters provided to teachers.

In retrospect, how prepared do you think you were to do the following when presenting TALA?	Not At All Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Fairly Well Prepared	Very Well Prepared
20. Present TALA activities as outlined in the training materials.	○	○	○	○
21. Present TALA content in the recommended timeframe.	○	○	○	○
22. Enhance participants' knowledge/skills so they can effectively teach adolescent students *to comprehend academic texts*.	○	○	○	○
23. Enhance participants' knowledge/skills so they can effectively teach adolescent students *who struggle with reading*.	○	○	○	○
24. Help participants learn to implement research-based strategies in academic literacy instruction.	○	○	○	○
25. Help participants improve student outcomes in the content areas (social studies, science, math).	○	○	○	○
26. Help participants improve student outcomes in reading/English language arts.	○	○	○	○
27. Work with adult learners.	○	○	○	○
28. Build participants' skill in linking their instruction to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).	○	○	○	○
29. Develop participants' understanding of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) student assessment system.	○	○	○	○
30. Differentiate instruction for various learning styles.	○	○	○	○
31. Motivate participants to learn.	○	○	○	○
32. Maintain a positive learning environment.	○	○	○	○

Please answer the following questions using the scale that ranges from "Definitely Not" to "Definitely".

Question	Definitely Not	Probably Not	Not Sure	Probably	Definitely
33. Would you recommend the TALA training to ELA/reading teachers?	○	○	○	○	○
34. Would you recommend the TALA training to content area (social studies, science, math) teachers?	○	○	○	○	○

Part IV: Presenting the TALA Training to Teachers (cont.)

35. What aspects of the training you presented, if any, would you definitely not want to change?

36. What aspects of the training you presented, if any, might you have done differently? Any suggestions for ways to make these changes?

37. Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience in presenting TALA as a TALA trainer?

Thank you for your time!

Appendix F: Technical Advisory Board Biographies

William Brozo, George Mason University

William G. Brozo is a Professor of Literacy in the Graduate School of Education at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. He earned his bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina and his master's and doctorate from the University of South Carolina. He has taught reading and language arts in junior and senior high school in the Carolinas. He is the author of numerous articles on literacy development for children and young adults. His books include *To Be a Boy, To Be a Reader: Engaging Teen and Preteen Boys in Active Literacy* (International Reading Association); *Readers, Teachers, Learners: Expanding Literacy Across the Content Areas* (Merrill/Prentice Hall); *Content Literacy for Today's Adolescents: Honoring Diversity and Building Competence*(Merrill/Prentice Hall); *Principled Practices for Adolescent Literacy: A Framework for Instruction and Policy* (Erlbaum); *50 Content Area Strategies for Adolescent Literacy* (Merrill/Prentice Hall); and *Setting the Pace: A Speed, Comprehension and Study Skills Program* (Merrill). His newest books, *Supporting Content Area Literacy with Technology: Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners*, and *The Adolescent Literacy Inventory,* are forthcoming by Allyn and Bacon. Dr. Brozo is also an author/consultant for *Jamestown Reading Navigator*, a program for struggling adolescent readers. He serves on the editorial review boards of the *Reading Research Quarterly*, *Reading Research and Instruction* and the *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*. He co-edits/writes "Content Literacy," a column for *The Reading Teacher* and also writes a column for Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking's *Thinking Classroom* entitled "Strategic Moves." Dr. Brozo is a past member of the International Reading Association's (IRA) Commission on Adolescent Literacy and current member of the Adolescent Literacy Committee and Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) /Progress in International Literacy Study (PIRLS) Task Force. As an International Development Division-IRA consultant, Dr. Brozo has traveled regularly to Macedonia, where he provides technical support to secondary teachers. He was a co-investigator on a Carnegie Grant team that compiled an important report on best practice in adolescent literacy. He regularly speaks at professional meetings around the country and consults with teachers and administrators to discuss ways of enriching the literate culture of middle and secondary schools, enhancing the literate lives of boys, and making teaching more responsive to the needs all students.

Danielle Dennis, University of South Florida

Danielle Dennis completed her doctorate in literacy education at the University of Tennessee. Through her dissertation research, Dr. Dennis developed cognitive profiles of struggling adolescent readers, as a lens to view the abilities these students bring to the classroom, in order to inform policy and instruction. Additionally, Dr. Dennis has recently had articles accepted in the *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy* and the *Reading Teacher*, both relating to developmentally appropriate instruction of adolescent readers across the curriculum. She is the co-author of two book chapters relating to assessment in secondary literacy and thoughtful literacy at the middle and high school level. Her research interests include struggling adolescent readers, literacy assessment, and educational policy. In addition, Dr. Dennis is interested in the role of teacher talk as it pertains to both facilitating children's learning and as used to demonstrate change in teacher expertise of literacy instruction.

Janice Dole, University of Utah

Dr. Dole's university experience includes positions held at the University of Denver, the Center for the Study of Reading at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and Michigan State University. She has published widely in the areas of comprehension instruction and conceptual change learning and more recently in professional development and school reform. Her publications include articles in journals such as *Reading Research Quarterly, Review of Educational Research, The Elementary School Journal* and *Reading and Writing Quarterly*. She is also coauthor of the recently published book, *Adolescent Literacy: Research to practice*. From 1992-2002, Dr. Dole served as a member of the reading development panel for the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP). She also was a panel member of the RAND Reading Study Group on reading comprehension. In addition, Dr. Dole is currently a National Reading First consultant on comprehension instruction. She also has served on national review panels for the Institute of Educational Services (IES) and the National Institute of Child and Human Development. Finally, Dr. Dole is currently serving on the *Committee on the Study of Teacher Preparation Programs* for the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences.

In 1996, Dr. Dole began to conduct research on school reform in reading and professional development in high poverty schools. She co-authored Utah's Reading Excellence Act (REA) and Utah's Reading First for the Utah State Office of Education (OSOE) and was project co-coordinator as well as state technical assistant for the REA grant from 1999 - 2001. Thereafter, along with two colleagues in special education at the University of Utah, Dr. Dole became co-principal investigator on the evaluation of Utah's Reading First grant. Additionally, Dr. Dole is an investigator with Mathematica on a four-year IES national study of the effectiveness of comprehension interventions in fifth-grade high-poverty classrooms throughout the U.S. Finally, Dr. Dole is co-principal investigator on an IES research grant to develop a teacher knowledge assessment of reading and writing.

Russell Gersten, Instructional Research Group

Dr. Russell Gersten is executive director of Instructional Research Group, a nonprofit educational research institute, as well as professor emeritus in the College of Education at the University of Oregon. Main areas of expertise include instructional research on English Language Learners (ELLs), reading comprehension research and evaluation methodology. In 2002, Dr. Gersten received the Distinguished Special Education Researcher Award from the American Educational Research Association' s Special Education Research Division. He currently serves as Principal Investigator for the *What Works Clearinghouse* on the topic of instructional research on ELLs, and was recently appointed to the National Mathematics Advisory Panel, a Presidential committee created to develop research-based policy in mathematics for American schools.

Dr. Gersten has over 150 publications in scientific journals such as *Review of Educational Research, American Educational Research Journal, Reading Research Quarterly, Educational Leadership* and *Exceptional Children.* He is the senior author of a forthcoming Best Practice Guide for Teaching ELLS, and is currently the principle investigator of three large Institute of Education Sciences (IES) projects involving randomized trials in the areas of Reading First professional development, reading comprehension research, and early mathematics curricula.

Tamara Jetton, Central Michigan University

Dr. Tamara Jetton is the Marie Berrell Endowed Professor in Developmental Literacy at Central Michigan University (CMU). She previously was an associate professor in the Department of Reading at James Madison University in Virginia, and a faculty member at the University of Utah. She received her Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction with a specialization in reading and writing from Texas A&M University. At CMU, Dr. Jetton teaches undergraduate and graduate literacy courses in teacher education and is actively involved in community outreach through the department's Reading Clinic. Her research addresses reading in the content areas, reading strategies, and discourse processes.

Dr. Jetton has numerous publications in scholarly journals such as *Adolescent Literacy Research and Practice, Reading Research Quarterly,* and *Review of Educational Research*. She has also co-authored book chapters in the *Handbook of Discourse Processes* and the *Handbook of Reading Research* and is the co-author of the recently published book, *Adolescent Literacy: Research to Practice.*

Appendix G: Descriptive Information about the Evaluation Participants

State Trainer Interview - Trainer Background Information

Table G1: ELA State Trainers' Background and Experience

ELA State Trainer	Primary Professional Role	Certifications Grade and/or Subjects	Teaching Experience
ELA State Trainer 1	Secondary literacy specialist, dyslexia contact, coordinator of master reading teaching program, recently became English reading arts coordinator	Elementary education (to grade 8) in any subject. Also, reading specialist to grade 12	12 years in classroom (9 years in Junior HS, mainly grade 7—reading and ELA teacher; 3 years in elementary school as reading specialist)
ELA State Trainer 2	Reading specialist for pre-K to 8th, dyslexia contact, instructor and director of master reading teacher certification program	Pre-K through 6th all content; SPED certified; principalship certified, master reading teacher certified	2nd grade = 1 yr Kindergarten = 4 yrs 6th grade = 2 yrs Taught all subjects K-5th, 6th grade taught science, social studies, ELA, and reading
ELA State Trainer 3	Region program coordinator for reading, library services, TALA, language arts, dyslexia services	Grades 1-8, all subjects, with specialization in speech communications and gifted and talented	1st grade = 3 yrs, 2nd grade = 2 yrs, 4th grade = 1 yr, 5th grade = 7 yrs, 6th grade = 1 yr, Elementary school = all subjects, 5th/6th grades & middle school = language arts
ELA State Trainer 4	Region librarian, reading and ELA consultant, steering committee member for TALA	Pre-K to 12 SPED; Pre-K to 12 Librarian	Librarian = 8 yrs, Secondary Ed and research = 4 yrs, SPED = 8 yrs
ELA State Trainer 5	Education specialist—reading and writing for 3-8th grades	K-8 all subjects; Science; Earth Science	Substitute teacher in elementary and middle schools; 5th grade = 3 yrs, 2nd grade = 2 yrs, 4th grade = 2 yrs, 5th ELA = 8 yrs
ELA State Trainer 6	Secondary language arts specialist, adolescent literacy teacher	6-12th secondary accreditation	Total 18 yrs; mostly 7th & 8th as reading specialist, and also English

Table G2: Content Area State Trainers' Background and Experience

Content Area	Primary Professional Role	Certifications: Grade and/or Subjects	Teaching Experience
Content Area State Trainer 1	K-12 social studies specialist	1st-6th English and history	12 yrs total; 5th grade = 1 yr, 8th grade = 11 yrs (American history)
Content Area State Trainer 2	3-12 grade science specialist	6-12th composite science	Middle school, 7th & 9th grade science = 8 yrs
Content Area State Trainer 3	Math/science coordinator, professional development trainer	1-8th reading, 1-12th mathematics, 8-12th master in mathematics teaching	15 yrs total (3rd, 5th, 6th, and 8th grades and high school) math teacher
Content Area State Trainer 4	Science consultant for ESC	6-12th Secondary biology, chemistry, & secondary life/earth science	ESC = 3 yrs, 7th & 8th = 21 yrs
Content Area State Trainer 5	K-6 math specialist	K-8 all content areas, area of concentration = reading a physical education	13 yrs total; K, 2-6 math, K-5 all content, 6th grade math, K-12 math and science
Content Area State Trainer 6	Social studies lead curriculum specialist	6-12th grade, Social studies composite	21 yrs; middle & high school; everything except U.S. history

Regional Trainer Survey - Trainer Background Information

Table G3: Current and Past Positions Held[45]

Position	Percentage Selecting Response
Teacher	69%
Content area consultant (e.g., science consultant)	21%
Content area coordinator (e.g., math coordinator)	9%
Curriculum specialist (e.g., reading and writing specialist)	46%
Librarian	1%
Other	28%

n=205

Table G4: Currently Teaching[46]

	Percentage Selecting Response
Yes	37%
No	32%

n=205

Table G5: Years of Teaching Experience

Years	Percentage Selecting Response
1-3 years	< 1%
4-10 years	18%
More than 10 years	50%

n=205

Table G6: Levels Taught

Level	Percentage Selecting Response
Primary (PK-2)	16%
Elementary School (3-5)	29%
Middle School (6-8)	59%
High School (9-12)	22%

n=205

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[45] Where survey respondents were asked to "check all that apply", percentages add to more than 100%.
[46] In some cases, missing data results in percentages that add to less than 100%.

Table G7: Subjects Taught

Subject	Percentage Selecting Response
Language Arts	49%
Mathematics	31%
Reading	40%
Science	26%
Social Studies	32%
Other	11%

n=205

Table G8: Current Teaching Certification

Certification	Percentage Selecting Response
Currently certified to teach in Texas	69%
Other	3%

n=205

Table G9: Prior Experience

	Yes	No
Do you have prior experience providing professional development to teachers?	93%	6%
Do you have content area leadership or curriculum development experience?	95%	4%

n=205