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Action Research in a Juvenile Detention School: New Processes, Paradigms, and Possibilities

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the roles, perspectives, and actions of teachers and students for first-time-detained juvenile delinquents by examining a reading intervention for a student. Using an action research methodology, the reading intervention was explored within the broader context of the history and operations of the juvenile detention center in the United States of America. There is a description of education in a short-term, small juvenile detention center, which has not been clearly defined in previous research. Test scores, observations, and review of a student's assignments were analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the reading intervention. The situation was further broken down by roles assumed for each participant. The conclusion was action research improved a student's results and aided in examining educational practices. Four recommendations were offered to improve practices: iterative processes, heuristic challenge, positionality, and pragmatic rationality. A truncated methodology gives practitioners a plan to implement action research.

Keywords: Action Research, Juvenile Delinquency, Interventions, Instruction

1. Introduction

Once a student was involved in the juvenile justice system, the chances of dropping out of school and experiencing long-term economic failure increased substantially (Lea & Abrams, 2017; Robison, Jagers, Rhodes, Blackmon, & Church, 2017). After release from secure detention, there were few programs or supports to assist a juvenile reenter school (Kubek, Tindall-Biggins, Reed, K., Carr, & Fenning, 2020). Each juvenile, according to one estimate, costs society \$4.9 million in economic loss for continued juvenile delinquency (Ellison, Owings, & Kaplan, 2017). Improving educational outcomes of juvenile delinquents in school has the potential to reduce crime, increase academic attainment, and lower recidivism.

The purpose of this action research study was to explore the roles, perspectives, and actions of teachers and students for first-time-detained juvenile delinquents by examining a reading intervention for a student. Few research articles were identified for first-time-detained juvenile delinquents. After presenting a literature review, the methodology was described, and results and interpretations were presented.

2. Literature Review

Learning and teaching in a juvenile detention center were explored by offering a rationale for the study, aspects of juvenile delinquency, and the structure of juvenile detention centers. The rationale showed the need and gap in the literature. All parts described the meaning and experience of juvenile delinquents in secure detention. Understanding the roles and experiences of juvenile delinquents has the potential to improve instructional practices in juvenile detention centers and special education programs.

2.1 Rationale

As a group, juvenile delinquents have poor social skills, weak social relationships, and lack of persistence on academic tasks which cause problems for many juveniles continuing throughout adulthood (Donges, 2015; Drury, DeLisi, & Elbert, 2020). Students with adverse childhood experiences and maladaptive personality traits had more severe crimes and at a higher rate, often into adulthood (Levenson et al., 2017; Perez, Jennings, & Baglivio, 2018). Juvenile delinquents have been found to have lower self-efficacy than nondelinquents, and increased self-efficacy correlated to lower levels of violence and delinquency (Farrell, Henry, Schoeny, Bettencourt, & Tolan, 2010; Tangney, Boone, & Baumeister, 2018). The inability to form and maintain positive, mature social relationships were common in students detained in juvenile detention centers.

Students who drop out have higher rates of aggravated assaults and robberies, and students with disabilities have disparate outcomes in juvenile justice involvement, length of sentences, and worse outcomes than students without disabilities (Gerlinger & Hipp, 2020; Kincaid & Sullivan, 2019). There was a gap in the literature concerning the experiences of first-time detained juvenile delinquents. The following study described the schooling experiences of juvenile delinquents, and the results could be used to improve the understanding and practices of educational programs in juvenile detention.

2.2 Juvenile Delinquency

Nationally, juvenile delinquents were 85% male, 51% between 16 and 17 years of age, twice as likely to be retained in school, 76% were enrolled in school, and the majority stayed 60 days or less (Sedlak & Bruce, 2016). In juvenile detention, juvenile delinquents arrived with a lengthy history of problem behavior before incarceration, and the prevalence of mental illness and aggressive behavior was much higher (Barrett & Katsiyannis, 2017). Unlike traditional school, classrooms in juvenile detention centers had students where lack of prior academic success and a myriad of problems were the norm.

Disabilities and psychiatric illnesses, especially personality disorders, were found at a much higher rate in juvenile delinquents (Krezmien, Mulcahy, & Leone, 2008; Vaughn, Salas-Wright, DeLisi, Maynard, & Boutwell, 2015). Problematizing school for juvenile delinquents was a higher prevalence of dyslexia and reading difficulties, impulsivity, and lack of improvement unless intensive, long-term interventions were implemented (Baker & Ireland, 2007; Crosby, Algood, Sayles, & Cabbage, 2017; O'Brien, Langhinrichsen-Rohling, & Shelley-Tremblay, 2007; Wheldall & Watkins, 2004). Schools were difficult places for juvenile delinquents to navigate, as most juvenile delinquents lack competency in basic school skills and were not compliant with rules and expectations.

Findings of the Pathways to Desistance Project suggested positive experiences in schools in juvenile detention centers, especially relationships, outweigh grades in predicting future school achievement and employment (Jäggi & Kliewer, 2020). Coker (2020) found prosociality and social self-esteem predicted academic achievement for first-time-detained juvenile delinquents over other noncognitive factors. Social attachment matters, and how teachers and students developed roles and formed relationships in juvenile detention center schools are poorly understood.

2.3 Juvenile Detention Center

Schools in juvenile detention centers vary widely, with a curriculum from elementary to postsecondary offered, and computer-assisted instruction and individual tutoring being the most common instructional techniques (Steele, Bozick, & Davis, 2016). Most students will reenter society, and educational attainment can empower students and improve independent living skills (Tannis, 2014). Education in juvenile detention centers often focus on security concerns, preventing students from receiving regular, consistent interaction with school staff.

The inconsistent results of juvenile detention centers manifest in a variety of ways. Students incarcerated in juvenile detention centers benefit from vocational training, but most detention centers do not provide career and technical education (Newton et al., 2018). In theory, students with disabilities are guaranteed all services required by law, but many juvenile detention centers fail to provide services or appropriate staff (Leone & Wruble, 2015). Training for staff members in juvenile detention centers was often haphazard or nonexistent, and staff members were found in one study to choose to be teachers in juvenile detention centers for personal gain over personal fulfillment (Houchins, Shippen, Schwab, & Ansely, 2017; Mathur, Clark, LaCroix, & Short, 2018).

3. Data Analysis Plan

Action research is the application of systematic processes to investigate and solve problems, and a goal is to instill and improve democratic participation (Adelman, 1993). Whereas traditional research investigates and describes a problem, action research dictates the researcher changes variables and outcomes during the research to refine and improve outcomes (Sagor, 2000). An example of the conundrum was a research study at a university I attended: Some researchers wanted to continue in a traditional manner when a major problem was encountered, as intervening would change the variables and the outputs. Another researcher broke away and intervened; though the person did not state she was conducting action research, she transformed traditional research. The present study interacted with the variables and made changes as data were analyzed.

3.1 Methodology

Several methods to conduct action research have been proposed. Sagor (2000) proposed selecting a focus, clarifying theories, identifying research questions, collecting data, analyzing data, reporting results, and taking informed action. Another method utilized came from Norton (2018), who stated action research is a spiral, and the steps are the following: identify a problem, think of ways to tackle the problem, do the proposed solution, evaluate results, and modify future practices. In the following study, Norton's methods will be used, but Sagor's idea of theory will be included as a way to tackle the problem. Three other divergences were used as well.

Three ways to operationalize Norton's action research include compositing, positionality identification, and utilization of grounded theory throughout. Compositing refers to the idea of considering multiple situations within the research problem identified. Instead of only observing a situation, multiple students, teachers, perspectives, and practices will be subsumed and overlaid with the observation to give a historical perspective, ability to reconcile past actions, and identify hidden reasons. Positionality seeks to overtly examine the roles actors take within the research at different times and for what reasons. Finally, the constant comparison method was used to ground the results within the data (Glaser, 1965)

The steps for the action research were the following:

1. *Identify the problem.* Students in my juvenile detention center frequently had poor reading skills, as identified by standardized tests and qualitative reviews of leveled reading assignments. Exacerbating the problem was the lack of compliance and ability to work independently. Many students arrived at the detention center with no intent of doing anything other than bossing the teachers around. Most students immediately raised their hands and asked the teacher to read directions, explain what to do, and tell answers. Students acted like they could not read directions, find answers, or often do academic skills already demonstrated. The action research focused on a single subject with reading difficulties who was failing in his work.

2. *Think of ways to solve the problem.* There were three main areas to consider in solving the problem. First, social learning theory posited students learned by observing and defining a phenomenon, deciding to act, and internalizing the new behavior if the behavior is deemed worthwhile and profitable (Crain, 2015). Secondly, as observations and notes were made about practices, composing looked at the dyad of what was once done, why something was chosen, and how abandoned practices inform and shape current practices. Finally, research was read and identified to tackle the problem. For the reading skills, skimming and scanning were used to improve reading comprehension (Marliasari, 2017; Zabucky & Commander, 1993). There were similar prior practices which were incorporated in the plan. To operationalize the reading intervention, there was the determination the student struggled with reading comprehension as well as little effort. Relationship building was central to implementing the intervention. Reading interventions happened spontaneously and through reflection with other staff members and by reading research and best practices.
3. *Do the interventions.* For two weeks, the reading strategies were modeled, practiced, discussed, and refined. Since the facility was a short-term juvenile detention center, the student left at the end of two weeks, precluding the research from being longer. The facility used a thinking routine, RAD, which stands for read-answer-discuss. RAD gave a framework to the implementation of the intervention.
4. *Evaluate results.* Results were evaluated by the student answering vocabulary and test questions on an online program. Composing meant past results and practices were considered within the context of the current problem. Meta-messages, where motives and aims were assigned to student and teacher practices, were important in understanding results, as what people say versus what they mean can be at odds. In the spirit of grounded theory, dyads were actively constructed and explored.
5. *Modify future practices.* The results were used immediately to generalize to other students, and the theoretical and pragmatic concerns either supported past practices or generated further avenues of research.

Action research can be limited in value, as there might not be many reflections which lead to transformation. Most action research is written from a first-person perspective, as the researcher relates attitudes, emotions, and feelings to observations and actions (Somekh, 2005). The end result should produce a theory which fits the data, explains what happened, and can be useful to generalize to other situations (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1965). By systematically researching one phenomenon, the researcher can describe the present as it is rooted in the past and what future direction will be needed.

3.2 Subject and Setting

The setting was a short-term juvenile detention center in a small Midwestern town in Illinois. The school was open 257-days per year, and all subjects were taught on a tutorial model, with a computer program for electives and response-to-intervention (RtI) activities. The average class size was seven students to one teacher, though the number can be as high as 10:1. There were eight teachers at the facility; the head of the school, the author of the study, was also a teacher. All teachers were certified, and there were three teachers scheduled per day. Four teachers have in excess of forty years of experience and one had 25-years of experience, and the five teachers worked as long-term substitutes. The other teacher was full time and had worked for 35 years as a teacher, another one started her career here, and finally, there was the author, at 21 years of experience. The average stay for juveniles at the facility was 25 school days, though the range might be one day to two years. Most students were male, and there was an almost even split on White and Black students. Students come from rural and urban areas.

One student was the focus of the action research. The student, Thomas¹, was a 14-year White male from a small Midwest town. He had a lengthy history of nonviolent crimes, including thefts and burglaries of houses and cars. He had dropped out of school instead of entering the 9th grade, and though an individualized education plan was

¹ All names were changed to protect anonymity and confidentiality. Teachers were called by their first name at the juvenile detention center, so the pseudonym was a first name instead of Mr. or Mrs.

not produced by his former school, both the student and school district stated Thomas had a learning disability for reading. Thomas immediately offered up “I’m in special education” and “I can’t read.”

A full case study was conducted on all students entering the facility. Initially, students completed two different assignments which were written at the 5th grade level. Thomas struggled and was unable to complete both assignments. The Test of Silent Contextual Reading Fluency-2 (TOSCRF), Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), and Reading-Level Indicator (RLI) were given, and the results are reported in Table 1.

Table 1: *Case Study*

Instrument	Results	Description
TOSCRF	Raw score 51, Age equivalency 7.9, Grade equivalency 2.2, Percentile 2%, Standardized score 70	Student was a 9 th grader who reads below 3 rd grade, with a low fluency rate.
SDQ	Emotional, Conduct, Prosocial = Abnormal, Hyperactivity = Normal, Peer = Borderline	Student did not get along with others and acts out without concern for others.
RLI	Instructional = 2.8; Independent = 2.2	Student should be placed around a 3 rd grade range for instruction.

Note. TOSCRF = Test of Silent Contextual Reading Fluency-2. SDQ = Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire. RLI = Reading-Level Indicator.

Thomas was a very slow reader, with difficulty sounding out words. The TOSCRF-2 and RLI measure reading fluency and comprehension, and both were nationally normalized tests with adequate validity and reliability (Dumont, Willis, Veizel, & Zibulsky, 2013; Williams, 2000). The SDQ is a screener which measures mental health, and the assessment has adequate validity and reliability (Goodman, 2001). Qualitatively, there were also signs. Thomas wanted to please, so he would often guess after reading the first letter of a word, such as saying “landed” for “leader.” He was not good at breaking down words and identifying small words or rhymes. There was a low tolerance level, and he would give up quickly. Phonemic awareness and fluency were not like similarly situated peers. Though he tested around the 3rd grade level in reading, being 14, he had more vocabulary and background than the typical 3rd grade student. Other assessments were given, but due to poor reading ability, there were concerns about reliability and validity.

4. Results

Somekh (2005) pointed out a goal of action research is to develop an intense engagement with the subject matter, and the results can be startling to teachers as assumptions, beliefs, and values are either cast aside or reformulated. There were some results which produced an awakening and were transformative, but a good study brings forth more questions than it answers. The results were broken down by analyzing the data, discussing roles, interpreting results, and limitations.

4.1 Data

The data were collected by observations, interviews, and review of assignments. Without a contextualized analysis, the current research cannot be properly understood. Compositing, where prior situations and rationales, were interweaved within the research. The goal of compositing was to consciously identify and name all the components directing the phenomenon. The rationale for compositing was there were kernels of knowledge which existed and informed practices of all teachers, and by considering all experiences, action research can have a 360-degree view. Even practices discarded were as important as the positive and add to understanding, as the negative, discarded practice was the reason for the directionality of new endeavors.

Ghosting was the intentional use and mixing of past students, teacher, and self in the observation; by ghosting, past people and experiences, even if vicarious, can be identified and included in the analysis. Teachers, like most

professions, operated off either direct or indirect experiences and adopted practices after defining and becoming motivated. When teachers and students interacted, they see either themselves or prior people in the situation, and teachers and students were guided by what others have done and adopt other people as models. Both compositing and ghosting result in teachers confronting their values, beliefs, and attitudes.

Unlike bracketing, the research follows the idea of unbracketing, or confronting the views and biases of the researcher and participants as meaningful and inseparable from the study and future practices. One way to accomplish unbracketing was through the extensive use of *meta-messages*. Meta-messages were where the researcher assigned motives, values, and understanding to events. The origins of meta-messages were clear for special education teachers who conducted a functional behavioral analysis and assigned reasons to behavior. A caveat was meta-messages were the words of the researcher and might miss the mark for what other people think and mean. Still, the importance was meta-messages, either explicitly or implicitly, guided the actions of the researcher and needed identified.

Traditional research would abhor the overt use of reflexivity as a goal to use instead of recognition to control, but the goal of action research was to bring one's *weltanschauung* front and center. Dyads helped inform the research, as explicit statements of the binary and a means to consider the opposite develop an outside perspective. Practices were as much about the process as the values, beliefs, and attitudes of all participants. Action research was not a strict, chronological narrative of past events. Some past events might not even be true or grounded in fact, but what matters was the practitioner believed an event was factual and used the knowledge to guide actions. To understand the reading intervention, one must understand and appreciate the history underlying the norms and expectations of the school.

In 2008, I took over as the head of the juvenile detention center school. I noticed a problem. Teachers were doing more work than the students. Students would enter the classroom, immediately raise their hands, and state they did not know anything. When directed to attempt the work and then ask for help, students like Jerry would say, "Why won't you help me?" Another student, Brittany, called me over, and I asked her to attempt a math problem in Geometry I. She looked at the problem "Convert $3/4$ into a decimal," and I reassured her once again to give it a try so I could figure out her level of understanding. Coolly, Brittany looked left and right at her peers, and the 17-year old student called me out with a grin: "He thinks you can divide a smaller number by a bigger number." Calling me out for my stupidity, she waved me off, never to be summoned about the matter again.

There were numerous other examples. New teachers in juvenile detention had no comparable example to base decisions. Most students were of high school age, yet most students acted like they could neither read directions nor do anything unless the teacher read and assisted on every question. Students wanted personal assistants. Being with middle school trained teachers, I told everyone it was not normal to read directions for high school students. The situation had to change, as students had a routine where they asked for help and waited while looking around the room, sharpened their pencils, got a dictionary, threw away a sheet of paper, blew their nose, and repeated. At the end of the period, most student handed in no work, yet they stated they worked and were engaged the entire time. The situation had to change, so I went back to the drawing board. Three books and one article changed the way the tutorial model at the juvenile detention center operated.

Ta'Jon was quite a challenge. As a 15-year old repeat offender, I dreaded coming to work with him at his desk. He was either rude or defiant all the time. Eventually, we came to an understanding: He would pretend to not need help and I would be thankful to not be savaged by him in front of his peers. We all got something, but I was the teacher, and just getting by was not enough. Though Ta'Jon was an 8th grader, and the one untimed test stated he read at a 7th grade level, I wondered back to my earliest days in special education, allegedly stated by Lee Canter in classroom management training: Nothing works if the student can't do the work. Armed with nothing to lose, as Ta'Jon had all F's, I moved him from 8th grade work to 3rd grade work, theorizing he covered for his poor reading ability by acting out. Teachers, like myself, had frequently heard the maxim: A person would rather look bad than stupid.

Where did you go, Ta'Jon? The new Ta'Jon worked, was funny, and we slowly progressed through reading. Eventually, after coming back repeatedly over the next two years, he completed high school textbooks with ease. New testing revealed he was on grade level by the end. Two issues changed the way schooling was done, and both developments impacted eventually moving to RAD. First, a case study approach, with at least three assessments in reading and three in math, was implemented. Along with the case study approach, the first two assignments were used as qualitative assessments of basic math and reading. Secondly, an article was read which suggested assignments needed to be at a student's functional level (Houchins, Jolivet, Krezmien, & Baltodano, 2008), and our school discarded the meaning of grade levels and worked where everything was individualized. Some local schools were upset to hear students were not doing grade-level work, but how can a student at the 3rd grade level complete *The Odyssey* or work on Geometry when the student cannot add two-digit numbers?

I stumbled on and read *The Learning Leader: How to Focus School Improvement for Better Results* by Reeves (2006), which presented a major force to improve school: Students must first describe what they have read. At the detention center, for students and staff members alike, Reeves was a revolutionary act. Once students first had to read and have an answer down, the "product rule," students and staff members went berserk.

I had taught special education and juvenile detention education for years, so I lived by the rule all students need to have high expectations, and the teachers cannot and should not work harder than the students. Having also taught regular education, I knew students in regular classes did not expect the teachers read and do all work for all students. The problem was the regular education teachers did not adjust their expectations. The regular education teachers thought a student question must be answered. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The problem for all teachers, including me initially, was more than just the regular education experiences. The self was a driver of practices. Teachers Gina, Michelle, Amanda, and Michael discussed their experiences with me. All teachers as students did very well in K-12 and college. All teachers as students stated they rarely asked for help; Teacher Michael said, "I never asked for help." Teacher Gina said, "I would have been embarrassed." Before, in a previous conversation, Teachers Stephen and Kenny liked everyone to know how smart they were and never had any problems in school or college. Regardless of teacher training and professional development, one's personal history often controls the paradigm under which one operates. The way each teacher wanted to teach was devoid of books and training and dealt with the experiential learning which propelled them to success. The teachers projected their experiences onto others and tried to recreate it.

Assumptions about our own lives often have negative effects on students. Another example bears this out. The 8th grade student Charles asked Teacher Janet for help, and he read the dilemma to her concerning a reading assignment in Language Arts: "This says to draw a conclusion. Ms. Janet, you know I don't know how to draw." Other students have made similar statements. Many students in juvenile detention centers have lengthy histories of failure, and their expectations were often why try.

When I told a colleague to wait and let a student who just entered get to work, as we do not read directions for students, there was push back. Lines I repeat over and over: "We do not read directions for students" and "We will go through the work with you. There is no way you can go wrong. We are here to support you." Teacher Michelle stated, "It is hard because I want to help students." Teacher Michael once sat and assisted a student for one hour. Not only did the student not get the work, the other students had no teacher. I reminded her of the need for students to first describe what they have read and gradual release. Teachers struggled not being at the students' beckon call, literally reducing the cognitive load to just copying answers. Slowly, most students first worked, then asked for help. There were and seem to always be new students who challenge the revolutionary idea that the student can actually work and follow directions.

Reading first made great inroads, and many students showed enthusiasm for being able to work on their own for the first time in a long time (we conjectured, maybe some students had never worked and followed directions). Math was a different problem, as teachers still helped students before discussing. What we found was teachers helped literally every problem, and it would not be uncommon in three class periods for students to complete three to five problems. There was never gradual release, independence, and demonstration of competency.

What was being done did not work, and the book *The Teaching Gap: Best Ideas from the World's Teachers for Improving Education in the Classroom* gave ideas to transform math practices. Following the ideas of Stigler and Hiebert (2009), calculators were removed, testing for math skills for placement was implemented, students had to copy down a problem and show work, and all students must first answer a problem before asking for help. The idea was sold about needing something to talk about, and the attempted problem gave the teacher the chance to diagnose what was wrong (was the issue directions, computational, and, or an unwritten rule, etc.). Many students were not happy, and a common refrain was, "How can I do something I've never done?" The boilerplate became, "How can you do anything you've never done unless you try? Don't be worried about making a mistake, for that is how we learn. By trying it, you will be close, and we can build off what you know." Slowly, students knew the expectations, and many students enjoyed being able to demonstrate mastery. One student, Sheila, had an earth-shattering experience. She was a high school student in Geometry, and she complained about doing basic math. She cried when she realized she did not have the elementary skills needed to do high school math without a calculator.

All these practices led to the crescendo delivered after reading in a graduate class the book *Curriculum 21: Essential Education for a Changing World*. Jacobs (2010) presented the idea of thinking routines, and building on the ideas already established, R-A-D was born. Read, answer, discuss became the oft-repeated refrain. Every period of every day started out with the same direction, and teachers were bullied to force students to work independently. Read and have an answer down meant teachers could have a shared discussion with common vocabulary and ideas. Slowly but surely, students began to work independently. There were problems.

Read-Answer-Discuss was a lot more work than giving answers. Teacher Gina was aghast, as she liked to read directions, point out answers, and plop down as soon as possible. Giving answers and being Teacher-as-Enabler was much easier than helping students work independently, diagnosing the knowledge and skill gap, and teaching the concepts. An example of her resistance showed the havoc one teacher could wreak.

Addie, a 13-year old student with a learning disability, received her first assignment from me. She immediately stated she did not know what to do and asked me to read directions. I went through the RAD spiel, along with the support we would work together, and left. For the first several questions, Addie did that. Then I turned my back and Teacher Gina came and read the directions, gave answers and replaced Teacher-as-Facilitator, me, with Teacher-as-Enabler. As seems to always happen, Addie needed "help" on the next question, that was, the teacher to continue doing her work, but she got me instead of Teacher Gina. Teacher Gina intentionally sabotaged the situation for her own gain, as reading and giving answers was quick, painless, and ensured the student was content. She immediately asked for Teacher Gina, and when I refused, she was mad, became disruptive, and left the classroom. The student refused to work the next three weeks. Whereas she worked for me, once she got a taste of power and control, which was all too common, she could not handle the idea the teachers really would not do her work.

The thinking routine RAD has a lot of ideas supporting it, but the ultimate goal was students must work independently and produce work to learn. Teachers can guide and help, but students must think, discuss, fail, and try in order to learn. The mantra was, "Nothing works if the students don't." Answering first was the student's chance to demonstrate what was known, and students were reassured mistakes were expected and the building blocks to learning. Also, teachers were careful to "honor the answer," where teachers worked off what students know instead of pointing out mistakes first. Honor the answer was about respecting the effort. Building routines and working on developing feedback models made the interactivity and engagement liked by most students, where school was the highlight of most students' day at the detention center. Against this history, there was the dilemma of Thomas.

During the implementation of the RAD protocol, the results of my dissertation (Coker, 2020) directly impacted the operations of the school. To translate the results, two substantive values drove the change: helpability and coachability. Students were told they needed to be helpable, which was operationalized as being mindful and empathetic of others (don't mumble to yourself, do not drum or make noises, and think of others) and assist in

making group rules work (students were together, so students needed to raise their hands, refrain from arguing, and listen to each other). Coachable meant first RAD, and if a student asks for assistance and feedback, the student will accept what the teacher says and do what was asked (do not ask for help only to argue and tell the teacher how to do everything). The teacher's response could be feedback, new assignments, or direct teaching, depending on the need of the students. Along with helpability and coachability, a strong routine helped to reduce angst and uncertainty.

Thomas stated, "I am good at math, but I am not a good reader." His definition of good at math conflicted with society's definition, as Thomas could not add or subtract multiple digits proficiently. Still, he was affable, looked at the teacher, listened, and was polite. He was told to attempt an assignment called the check packet. The reading level was at the 5th grade level, and there were simple addition and subtraction problems. He accepted RAD and completed the first page. The work was mostly all incorrect, but his work was honored and worked on collaboratively. At the same time, Samuel was instructed in RAD, stated, "I CAN'T READ," clinched his fist, and stared me down. After 15 minutes of the shenanigans, he started to complete his work and did the work perfectly like he had on all the previous pages. Samuel was capable, with reading test scores at a 5th grade level. He expected the juvenile detention center to operate like his alternative school, where he was disruptive, unruly, and the teachers worked for him.

Students like to belittle themselves as a means to attempt to get teachers to feel sorry and default to the student's desired role: teacher-as-enabler. Clark stated, "I am mentally retarded. I can't read." He was not mentally retarded, but he was not a good reader. There were many Clarks who come through the door and infantilize themselves as being incapable of doing anything. The remarks of being a poor reader, in special education, and needing an assistant were regular demands. No student ever stated they could do what was expected, they can work, and they can try assigned work. No student ever yelled, "You are the reason I'm so successful. It is your fault why I got an A." Failing, though, was externalized, and then the students bargained and complained.

The rationale for choosing keywords flowed from reviewing the notes Thomas took. Every student was required to take a minimum of 15 notes for computer work; notes must be at least 6-8 words long and have a complete idea. Notes were all or nothing; if a student did not complete the minimum, then the student could not be on the computer. No bargaining there. The teachers quickly noted Thomas would get 15 notes and of the required length, but he often wrote about what he felt or already knew. Even vocabulary notes were poorly done and disconnected from the reading.

Thomas did not complain. He was not doing well, so discussions were held with other teachers to form a plan. Keywords were selected as the first goal. Notetaking by looking at keywords, reading the sentence before and after, and reviewing the work were the initial plan. There was modeling, guided practice, more modeling, release, and monitoring. Thomas was amenable to all practices. The notes greatly improved and demonstrated many key points from the reading. Discussions tried to connect what Thomas knew to what he read.

Eventually, the goals of the intervention morphed into a systematic approach. The reading intervention included the following steps: 1.) Search for keywords and ideas (generally any word five or more letters, the "big word" strategy, but try to get a complete idea); 2.) Read the sentence before and after the sentence with the keywords; 3.) Expansion continued with one idea per paragraph; 4.) Search for words in bold, look at pictures, and read titles and subtitles; 5.) Notetaking by using keywords gave more practice; 6.) Use the journalism questions to tell the story. All skills started with keywords and branched out to the next steps. There was an emphasis everyone needed to be consistent in their approach and teaching.

As shown in Table 2, Thomas completed answers and then had poor work reassigned. The following results suggested Thomas put down an answer, and then he rapidly guessed when redoing his work. Because he only was reassigned incorrect answers, the possibility of guessing a few correct was great. Using Microsoft Excel, different reading passages were analyzed. According to the Flesch-Kincaid score, the reading difficulty varied from 5.0 to 7.2 grade level.

Table 2: *Thomas's Pre-intervention Results*

Assignment	First Score	Second Score	Minutes
Purpose of Work	40%	60%	6
Personal Benefits of Work	33%	50%	2
Wages and Employment Benefits	44%	56%	1

Note. Times and scores were from a computer program.

Besides the computer program, there were attempts to generalize the reading strategies to the entire school day. The student was instructed in reading strategies and reminded to ask for assistance after doing three questions, then a complete page, and eventually three assignments. He was told to write notes, and the teachers told him they would support him. There was no fear in failure, as the teacher and student would work together. Slowly, he started to work independently. Many other students refused to do this; these students wanted to direct the teachers to become personal assistants.

Thomas took notes and answered vocabulary questions. If he could not find an answer in the reading, he used the strategies to focus his reading. The teachers would read with him and assist, but he first followed the RAD protocol. He would often smile and appear happy he improved his scores on assignments. Soon after, he was working on another computer program for RtI, and he got 0 out of 10 questions correctly. *Sua sponte*, he took out some paper, took notes on his own from a reading passage, and got 10 out of 10. His scores on assignments after the intervention were the following: 74.8% (27 minutes), 74.8% (27 minutes), and 100% (22 minutes). Figure 1 shows the results of the pre-intervention versus the post-intervention.

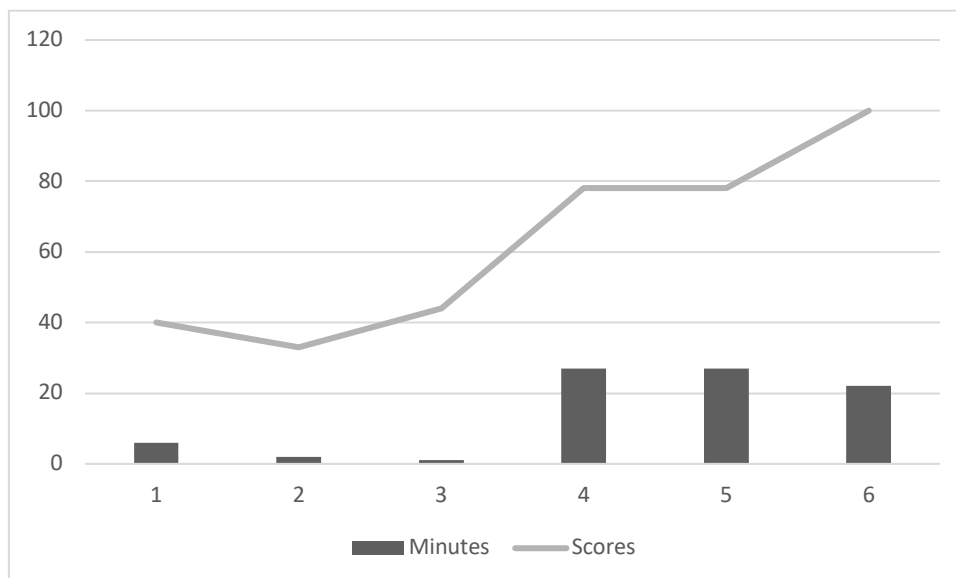


Figure 1: Pre-intervention scores (1-3) and post-intervention scores (4-6).

Thomas greatly improved his scores on reading assignments. Besides RtI, he sometimes took notes in books assigned. He enjoyed reading with teachers, and the prosociality mattered more than his reading ability. There were many students who refuse to cooperate and were enraged they were not in control during the school day. Though the results were promising, two caveats existed: Thomas might find answers, but there were questions about his comprehension of much of what he read, and he was only enrolled for a brief time, questioning the long-term impact.

4.2. Roles

Action research was more than the success or failure of an intervention. Goodnough (2010) stated how teacher identify and conceptualize the self inform practices. Being a teacher and participating in action research aids

teachers to clarify their beliefs and values, and the impact can improve the learning and lives of students (Beijaard, 2019; Trent, 2010). Within the study, the student and teacher roles were key to understanding any intervention.

Role duality defined students. Students might state they were special education and unable, but students separated such protestations from later claims. Students can, at the same time, be competent/smart and incompetent/dumb. A guiding principle of interaction with teachers and fellow students was protagonist/antagonist. Either others do what they were told or they were an enemy, to be challenged, fought, and conquered. The range of independence was from infantilized to adult, but most students tested roles and fished for the teacher's role they wanted. When teachers would not comply and play the game set out by the students, the students often worked for role destruction, role assassination, and role accommodation.

Role destruction often started out as the first step. Samuel argued and complained he needed a different kind of teacher. Marcus once left a note, telling the teachers to teach. Paul wrote his probation officer, stating "Teachers will not help the students." When that did not work, students next worked on role assassination. Calling teachers names, clinching fists, and refusing to go to school until "You all get real teachers," like Clay stated and several others, was a concerted action to move the focus from the student working to the teacher complying. If teachers held steady and maintained consistency, most students moved to role accommodation. Some students could not accept the fact, for the first time in a long time, the teacher and student shared power, and so some students never wanted to attend school.

One way to understand the roles teachers and students took on and discarded was through satisficing research. Hadar (2011) stated satisficing in school has as much to do with compliance as learning; students who were minimally agreeable and went through the motions of work and interaction were successful. Most roles picked by students were probably two reasons which have little to do with school: Students did not want to be locked up and students had a long history of rarely complying in school. The continuum goes from being the tyrant on one end to the learner on the other end. Some students refused to ever budge; like the little kid who realized long temper tantrums work, some students will wait the teacher out. Most students moved along the continuum in a predictable manner:

- Tyrant. Disruptive, defiant, and ordering the teacher around.
- Withdrawn: If a student cannot beat them, forget it. Many students who ask for help and find the teacher will not do the work never want to talk to the teacher again. The student punished the teacher by not talking.
- Director: A softer approach, where there were negotiations to still have most control.
- Manager: The student might bargain some, but there might be room for co-creators of students and teachers.
- Learner: The student controlled his or her own learning, and the student used the teacher to confirm what he or she knows, generate questions, and have teachers either directly teach or facilitate learning.

The continuum was not a linear process, necessarily, but most students follow a predictable path. The continuum really answers the question: Who was responsible for learning? The tyrant believed learning takes place "out there," and the student had no role except to actively boss students and teachers around. At the opposite direction of the continuum, the learner directed his or her own learning and owned failures as much as success. Pathway observations suggested students moved from trying to get all the answers right to learning, discussing, and relating. A main driver of the pathway was not the material or assignments, but the student must like the teachers, feel supported, and view themselves successful within the teacher marshalled regime. An example shows the path.

Using an example, one can see the continuum at work. Sloan, a 16-year-old student in special education for a learning disability, went through the stages. First, after hearing about RAD, he immediately raised his hand before even attempting his work and asked for help. He was told everyone can read directions, to put forth effort and try the first three, and there will be no risk because the teacher will discuss and do what was needed. As soon as I walked away, Sloan thought I was gone and asked Teacher Michelle for assistance. Sloan heard the same spiel.

For the next two months, Sloan tried the same actions every period. When rebuffed, he just did not ask questions. He was never at the tyrant stage, but he was stuck at the withdrawn stage, and teachers, even with support, assistance, and conferences, thought he would never change. There was a contrast here with Chase, who stated he could not subtract. He immediately talked over the teacher and told the teacher what to do. When the teacher redirected him to follow RAD, he refused. The teacher left, and he completed the page, correctly without assistance (he was pretending to not be able to do simple subtraction, even though as a 15-year-old student in regular education, he had already demonstrated it), and then quit. He was very argumentative and insulting, and he refused to ever work and do what was asked for the remaining 10 days he was present. Chase, unlike Sloan, was stuck at the tyrant stage, and through learned behavior, figured the teacher would have to give in like most all teachers he experienced before.

Sloan, though, decided to get unstuck. Little by little, he opened up if he could follow RAD initially and direct the teacher for extra help. Teachers had to be warned to “not get sucked in” to being Sloan’s personal assistant. There would still be relapses, but Sloan was so well mannered and polite, he would bounce from withdrawn to managing. One day, he decided to self-direct his own learning, and the smile on his face as he moved from pretending to not be able to read one sentence to discussing, pointing out passages, and owning his learning, was startling compared to the first Sloan we saw. Roles are ephemeral, and students, like teachers, move up and down the continuum.

Satisficing was both a positive and a negative. Some, like Brittany in trigonometry who cannot divide and does not want to graduate high school, was happy getting F’s as long as everyone left her alone. Other students, such as Erin and Shawn, were much more difficult. Erin missed 90 of 114 days and passed three classes in her home school. Shawn had an experience like many students, where retention and discipline were deemed so bad everyone passed regardless of attendance or effort. The disassociation of effort and behavior from results at a student’s home school compared to the juvenile detention center with firm standards can be difficult to understand. Both students were tyrants, but they acted in a passive aggressive manner. Erin did a little work and failed. Shawn stated the lowest grade a student at his school could get was 70%, and after doing little work at the juvenile detention center, he failed. There was a paradox for these students: The students, by doing anything, did more than their home schools required, yet the students still failed. Many students also mistook being polite and quiet, rare behaviors in their home schools, as passing. The students believed being better behaved than the students ever would at regular school must result in passing. Students completed a check-in check-out sheet each period, and many students would write they completed no work, but they believed they would get an A or a B and pass. How could this situation make sense?

Students with strong academic skills played the satisficing game the other way. Above-average students like Sharon and Vincent found what the minimum was and stuck to it. They never once went above, and unlike records from their high school, both students were able to bite their tongues, listen and persevere. The students with better social understanding moved quickly from tyrant to learner. When many of these same students found they were being released, they shed their maturity and became disruptive and disrespectful. Once the game was over, students moved on to their next role.

Coker (2020) found many noncognitive factors, such as grit, self-esteem, and academic self-concept, did not impact grades as much as prosociality and social self-esteem. More surprising was the sample of first-time-detained juvenile delinquents had self-esteem, grit, and academic self-concept comparable to nondetained peers. The difference was the students in juvenile detention had long histories of failure, were far behind academically, and did not reflect their beliefs in their actions.

Teacher started out with role confusion as well. A problem was teachers and students often have no comparable (e.g., successful students work independently, do not act like they cannot read, and cooperate, etc.). Consequently, teachers made themselves the comparable, yet the teacher was most likely compliant, cooperative, independent, and hard working. A false sense of empathy ensued.

Most teachers started out as teacher-as-enabler. Teacher Gina was doing Addie's work, but several other teachers wanted to do students' work as well. Teacher Kenny felt bad Henry was failing at math and refused to follow directions, so she broke the routine of RAD because she wanted to ensure his success. Teachers-as-enabler felt a noblesse oblige for students and took away a student's responsibility for learning. Over a week's time, Teacher Kenny did every part of every assignment with the student, and the student received all A's. The following week, Teacher Kenny was gone for vacation, and Henry asked for assistance. He did not even want to start out the problem. I told him he needed to memorize step one, and since Teacher Kenny did all the work for him, he needs to go back and actually do the work.

Shockingly, Henry agreed and put in the work. Most students stayed at the tyrant stage, like Addie and a long list of other students. Dyads, though, were important to understand the situation. Teacher Kenny was not wrong as long as she supported all students in the same way and then honored the product rule of having students eventually create work on their own. There was a strong possibility Henry picked up the work assigned by me quickly because of all the scaffolding and assistance by Teacher Kenny. Unfortunately, the Addies greatly outnumbered the Henrys, and enabling was like an opioid, with students suffering through withdrawals.

If a teacher was supporting a student, the teacher started out as teacher-as-instructor. The teacher would tell the student what and how to do assigned work. There would not be bargaining and negotiation; negotiating was an attempt by students to circumvent the rules and be able to do what they wanted. Students had great answers why the students were the exception to all the rules. Thomas stated he was not good at reading. Logan stated he was not like the other students. Michael said at his school he had an aide to help him on every problem. The end result was always, "Let me do what I want because [you fill in the reason]."

Next, as students followed RAD, there was positive support and assistance. The teacher moved to teacher-as-facilitator. The students were sold on RAD, and learning required students working, discussing, and refining. Often, jokingly, students were asked the difference between asking for help and wanting answers. Most students admitted they really wanted the answer initially, and students were told the teachers had already done the work, and school was about putting forth effort, making mistakes, and learning.

The last role a teacher could assume, if the student takes the bait and moves through the process, was teacher-and-collaborator. Teachers would collaborate and help students understand what the student was doing. This method was very different from the teacher reducing the cognitive load by letting a student do nothing and watch the teacher talk, point out answers, or even do the work.

A goal of action research was to be democratic. Teaching was more republican than democratic. The students outnumbered the teachers, and there were state and national policies, so there were constraints on democracy. Furthermore, there were reasons children were called children and adults were called adults. Where possible, within the authoritarian framework, an authoritative governance can emerge. Students can pick assignments, skip sections, and order their day. Patience and calmness were preached every day, and a central aim of the tenet of helpability was no one argues, and if someone wanted to get mad, the students could get mad in their own way as long as they were neither disruptive nor taking it out on others.

Teaching is messy and ill defined, and experienced teachers practice satisficing by finding what works, often at a *de minimus* level (Le Maistre & Paré, 2010; Schwartz et al., 2002). Actors and roles are not the same, though they can be. Actors are generally static, but roles are dynamic and responsive. Teachers often unwittingly enable because first, when they were students, asking for help was for help. The teachers did not know the different motives, as evidenced by student reaction when the student did not get his way, and then the teachers found it was easier to give in. Giving in also meant the teacher assigned the role of student-as-impostor, with the teacher now getting along but keeping the student not only ignorant, but in their role forever. Role taking was about navigating, and sometimes people were trailing, being followed, obstacles, or side by side.

Why do teachers act like enablers, with little concern for student learning? There were several possible explanations. First, action research wants democracy and transformation, but many teachers are in the profession

for themselves with little concern for students. Teacher Stephen gave everyone A's, assigned extremely easy work, and never spoke with students. He made his day easy. Secondly, the status quo is rewarded. Another staff member, Teacher Kenny, also assigned easy work because students who passed and asked no questions did not complain. Paradoxically, administrators like teachers like Kenny and Stephen because their students get good grades and pass, resulting in parents being happy. Mediocrity and refusing to stretch oneself was easier and often rewarded.

4.3. Interpretation

Research in juvenile delinquency often failed to translate, with family-based and school-based interventions showing little effectiveness in reducing recidivism (Baetz et al., 2019; Baldwin, Christian, Berkeljon, & Shadish, 2012). All actions test if something will work. Yet, action research was an iterative process of implementing, adapting, and merging multiple practices (both within the specific process and connected to other actions, with a ripple effect). The directionality of the objective was what matters (goal or personal survival). No one was found to read research in my school or in sessions with other teachers in my district, which appears to be common (Joram, Gabriele, & Walton, 2020). Anecdotal was not necessarily less true or less impactful. Pragmatics trumped articles and research for most teachers, but people were ultimately theory driven. The theory might not be about the action, as teacher management might overpower student learning.

Adelman (1993) stated a goal of action research was reconstruction of practices and productive work as researchers consider, reflect, and change through their research. The interpretation disaggregated the dimensions of the process and described the meaning ascribed to Thomas and the facility. Four dimensions were considered: the iterative process, heuristic challenge, positionality, and pragmatic rationality.

Iterative process. The research looked at a reader who was a dropout and had a severe reading disability. Questions and hypotheses were generated, and steps were taken to improve Thomas's reading ability. If Thomas had stayed, work on phonemic awareness and fluency would have been added. Generating questions, especially considering the opposite, was useful within a professional learning community. Schools need to be more action oriented by recasting teachers as teacher-as-researcher. There was the problem of time, but a collaborative process can include all stakeholders.

Heuristic challenge. Instead of "What did the student learn?" teachers asked "What was easiest for the both of us, so I can leave on time and the student doesn't cause a problem?" I heard all the time "We didn't have any problems," but rarely do teachers state "The students learned a lot and ... who is growing, who is floundering, and what needs done." At one time, the answer about Thomas would have been he followed directions and was polite. Another problem was answering a difference question than the one asked. For example, "What did the student learn?" could be ignored by, "The student was well behaved today." Many teachers were not committed to educating as much as they were stuck in a job they did not want.

The heuristic challenge also precluded attempts at being democratic, as many teachers look at what they wanted versus what students needed. Heuristics need identified and challenged, and educators should make sure they were not substituting logistics for what was right. Perhaps one question can avoid the problem of heuristics: Not what did the student complete or grade received, but what did the student learn, objective by objective?

Positionality. Roles were but one way to discuss positionality. Positionality was the location of a role over time and space. Nidus was a central idea in exploring positionality of juvenile delinquents. Most juvenile delinquents in a correctional facility were incarcerated for a short period, and juveniles being around fellow delinquents meant many students needed to save face and look strong. For teachers, many teachers were not working for the children as much as they were for themselves. Doing just enough to get by, regardless of learning, often became the goal. To enable Thomas and erase expectations would make everyone's job much easier, especially as he was present for a short time. Teachers need to identify positionality from multiple perspectives and situations.

Pragmatic rationality. Satisficing was easier than maximizing. Every action has an opportunity cost, and teachers can implement first-order change easier than second-order change. The difficulty in challenging pragmatic

rationality was often there was no outside feedback, so teachers lacked a comparable model to assess and evaluate a situation. In the absence of outside feedback, teachers and students defaulted back to what they had always done. Sweeping change produced anxiety, shook one sense of competence, and might lead to failure. On the road between failure and success, satisficing was in the middle, the sweet spot where one can survive with minimal expenditure of energy and resources.

I have seen other students like Thomas where teachers have rationalized why they would not intervene. He was not present long enough. He will never amount to anything. He was just stupid. He was lazy. On and on, teachers withdraw and become teacher-as-secretary, where the teacher liked to grade papers, do paperwork, and enter grades. What worked personally often substituted for what was best for the student, and students often navigated their day by what would get acceptable grades with the least expenditure of energy.

How can teachers challenge pragmatic rationality? There will probably need to be a process to initiate and facilitate action research, as otherwise teachers only seek help when they have slipped from survival to failure. There does not have to be a report or a presentation, but teachers do not normally collaborate and work on examining processes. Trust would have to be at the center, as action research means deconstructing one's practice, and teachers often feel the deconstruction is a personal attack on one's competence, self-worth, and very definition of self. Incentives and time must be given, and teachers need to feel comfortable the action research is not as much about jettisoning the past as honoring what came before and reforming it. Teachers need to know the action and processes are all dynamic and evolving in real time, based on results.

If teachers cannot identify the kernels of knowledge which drive them, they cannot reform their practices. Storytelling helps, but storytelling can suffer from oversimplification, hero worship (people only remember the positive), and ideology. Constant conjectures, meta-messages, and considering-the-opposite (CtO) can work only if a teacher challenges what works and what does not by taking on multiple perspectives. Phenomena are not born in isolation, so teachers must look at practices not as a single cell but a multicellular action connected to goals, practices, and roles. Building a framework and experimenting can move teachers out of their comfort zones.

For Thomas and the many others placed like him, relationships were the key to learning. Juvenile delinquents have, as a group, language and literacy issues which complicate formation of positive social interaction (Snow, 2019). Gearhart and Tucker (2020) found improving individual factors over other noncognitive factors, such as collective efficacy, resulted in greater improvement. Many schools around the nation, including the juvenile detention center in the present study, have professional learning communities. A goal could be to either operationalize action research methods or adopt another truncated method which can be easily learned and implemented. Without outside sources to add to the perspective, though, teachers will be limited by believing they know all one needs to know.

4.5. Problem Solving Teams

Most education studies have been found to suffer from lack of replication and might be more examples of novelty and excitement than applicability, which was a concern in other fields (Blanco-Perez, C., & Brodeur, 2020; Makel & Plucker, 2014). Effect sizes, as typically presented, can be overstated and might suffer from methodological flaws which render findings and use questionable (Bergeron & Rivard, 2017; Kraft, 2020). Teacher experience and education as vehicles for improvement were found questionable and might even be negative, with teachers lacking the skills to translate research into meaningful practices (Bhai & Horoi, 2019; Booher, Nadelson, & Nadelson, 2020; Ladd, 2008). Education research does not always deliver on promises presented, as teachers struggle having a method and understanding to transform studies into meaningful practices.

Professional learning communities (PLCs) are standing meetings for teachers to meet and evaluate teaching and student learning, and many schools across the United States implemented such practices. When properly developed, PLCs can increase academic achievement and improve teachers' ability to collaborate and research practices (Brodie, 2019; Doğan & Adams, 2018). Teachers have not been found to make use of research, but PLCs focus on improving practices. Bridging the gap could be developing a framework for implementing action research

on a regular basis, as shown in Figure 2. A checklist provides a way to systematically investigate problems in a manner which is easily enacted using a truncated method of I-R-A.

Problem Solving Teams				
Pre-intervention: Second order change? Mission and goals are established.				
Inquiry “examining the situation”	Identify <i>What is the problem?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Context	<input type="checkbox"/> Individualized proposed solutions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Data plan
		<input type="checkbox"/> Dimensions: Ecological or TET	<input type="checkbox"/> Time frame	<input type="checkbox"/> Costs
	Think <i>What can be done to improve the problem?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Research	<input type="checkbox"/> Collaboration	<input type="checkbox"/> Iterative process
		<input type="checkbox"/> Strategy	<input type="checkbox"/> Collaboration	<input type="checkbox"/> Plan with indicators
Response “creating a better practice”	Do <i>What are we doing differently?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Action plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Fidelity checklist	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff training
		<input type="checkbox"/> Roles	<input type="checkbox"/> Outcomes	
Analysis “measuring change” & “shifting gears”	Evaluate <i>How do we know we made a difference?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> A/B test	<input type="checkbox"/> Observation	<input type="checkbox"/> Heuristics challenge
		<input type="checkbox"/> Interviews	<input type="checkbox"/> Compositing	<input type="checkbox"/> Positionality
	Modify <i>Where do we go from here to improve our plan?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Eliminate / Add	<input type="checkbox"/> Pragmatic rationality	<input type="checkbox"/> New plan
Feedback loop: The process is an iterative process, grounded in data. Once the plan starts, there should be concurrent evaluation and modification. The checklist does not have to be sequential.				

Figure 2: Problem solving teams’ checklist.

To make the checklist in Figure 2 work, three actions are required: recognize first-order versus second-order change, develop dimensions and a framework, and measure value and key performance indicators. First-order change is an intervention or improvement which does not cause a major change in practices or the organization. Second-order change would require the research, development, and adoption of a new policy or procedure which disconnects from past practices. Dimensions give a framework, and two possibilities are using teacher-effectiveness training or an ecological perspective. Teacher-effectiveness-training would mean examining problems from the problems or concerns of three entities: the teacher, the student, and the classroom (Gordon & Burch, 2003). An ecological model would focus on the environment: the actors, classroom management, instructional practices, and the curriculum, etc. Finally, plans must focus on value versus activity. A way to avoid the activity trap is to develop robust, measurable key performance indicators which impact student behavior and academic achievement. Within the checklist, one can examine issues and concerns common in action research, such as an iterative process, heuristics challenge, positionality, and pragmatic rationality.

4.6. Limitations

Qualitative triangulation involves considering multiple sources of data to confirm conclusions and themes drawn from the data (Flick, 2018; Sagor, 2000). Concerning Thomas, the data included observations, interviews, and

scores on different assignments. All the data pointed to the conclusion the reading interventions improved Thomas's work ethic and scores on assignments. Since this was an intervention of one student, there might be problems generalizing the results to other students.

Somekh (2005) stated action research needs to look beyond whether every detail was accurate, as the traditional methods of understanding research might not be applicable. All the observations and past history can be warped by time, discussions, and subsequent changes. Yet, the knowledge and practices were perceived as real and were in action regardless of any unintentional omissions.

5. Conclusion

Juvenile delinquents have a higher prevalence of significant emotional and learning problems, and graduating high school can improve relationships in juvenile detention and beyond (Engstrom & Scott, 2020; Mallett, 2014). The action research adds a perspective to educating first-time-detained juvenile delinquents which has been little explored. Developing research-based methods, such as RAD and other techniques, have the potential to offer a structure to develop and sustain relationships for juvenile delinquents and teachers.

Winter (2000) found overt learning often stops once professionals feel competent, resulting in professionals no longer progressing. The methods used in the action research, including novel ideas of compositing, ghosting, and meta-messages, offer a way for teachers to examine their practices and move from proficient to accomplished. Several barriers, such as trust and pragmatic rationality, will have to be overcome. Future research can look at incorporating action research within the school day for improved students achievement and classroom management.

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