



An Examination of *Beginning Teacher
Instruction* in Special Education:
Instructional Reading Practices that Result
in *Student Engagement*

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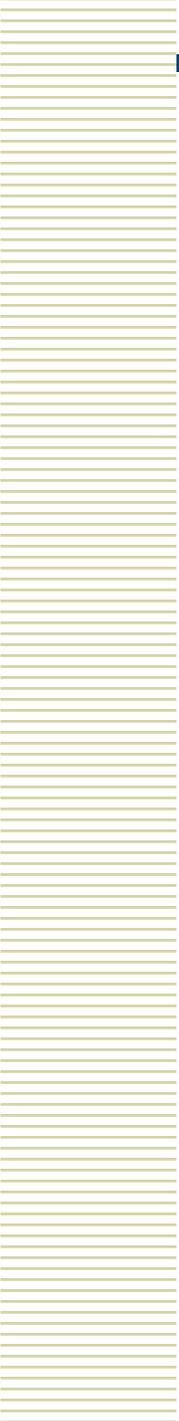
Introduction

- ◆ Why is it important to understand how special education teachers, particularly beginners, engage high incidence students with disabilities in the reading process?



Introduction

- ◆ Active engagement in the learning process is correlated with higher achievement scores in general and special education.
- ◆ Students with high incidence disabilities are more likely than their peers to be disengaged from the learning process.
- ◆ Understanding how to better engage such students is essential to their progress in school.



What do we know about engaging teachers?

- ◆ In literacy, teachers who successfully engage students in learning are likely to employ more sophisticated pedagogy and cohesive, meaningful instruction than their less engaging peers.
- ◆ In inclusive classrooms, teachers who engage students with disabilities are more likely than their less engaging peers to employ direct, active instruction with a strong metacognitive component.

Why should we be concerned about beginning teachers?

- ◆ Beginning teachers often experience difficulties engaging students in instruction. Such teachers are often. . .
 - Too focused on learning curriculum and the mechanics of teaching and have difficulty adjusting to individual student needs
 - Struggling with classroom management routines



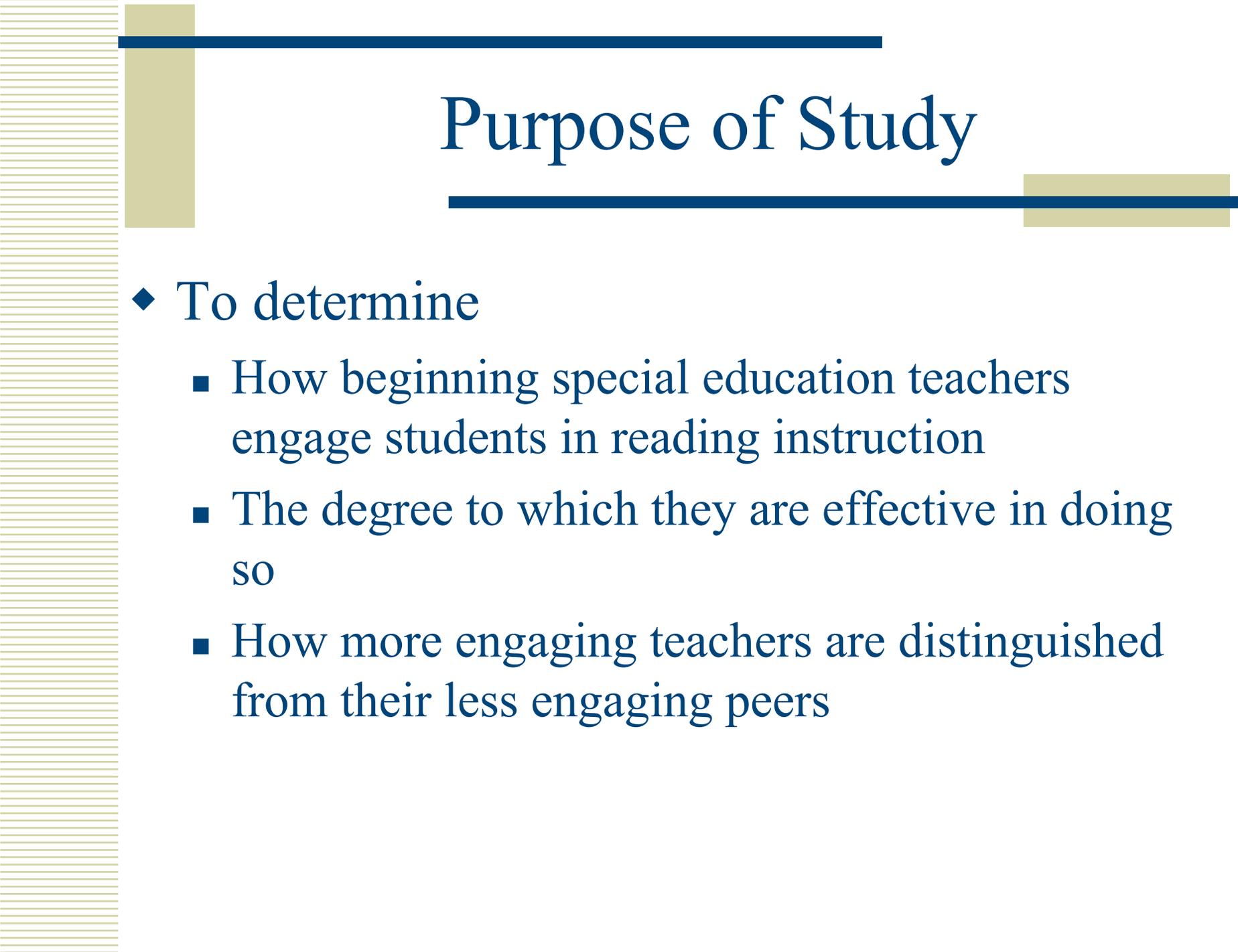
Introduction

- ◆ Moreover beginning special education teachers, despite having stronger classroom management and individualization skills than their general education counterparts, are more likely to struggle with creating a cohesive curriculum and extending student thinking.



However. . .

- ◆ Are some beginning special education teachers better positioned than others to engage students with disabilities in literacy instruction?
- ◆ If yes, what is it that these teachers do to better engage students with disabilities in literacy learning?
- ◆ And, how can we learn from their practice?



Purpose of Study

- ◆ To determine
 - How beginning special education teachers engage students in reading instruction
 - The degree to which they are effective in doing so
 - How more engaging teachers are distinguished from their less engaging peers

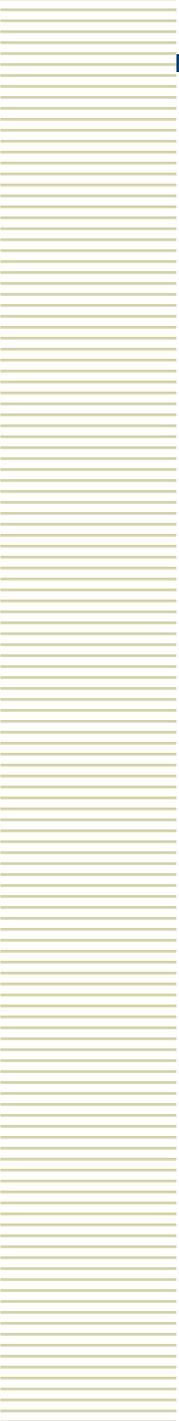
The slide features a decorative header with a dark blue horizontal line and a light green vertical bar on the left. The word "Method" is centered in a dark blue serif font. Below the title, a second dark blue horizontal line is present, with a light green rectangular block on the right side.

Method

- ◆ Participant Information
- ◆ Data Collection
- ◆ Teacher Selection
- ◆ Data Analysis

Participant Information

- ◆ 14 Beginning teachers from North Central FL schools
 - 13 Caucasian females; 1 African American male
 - Worked in urban/ rural schools with moderate-high FRL percentage (40-92%)
 - Taught reading in resource rooms or inclusive settings (50-95 minutes a day)
 - Served 6-25 students with disabilities (mostly LD)
 - Used a variety of reading curricula (e.g., Reading Mastery, Hartcourt Trophies)
 - Held Master's or Bachelor's degree in Education (7 each)
 - 13 teachers held regular teacher certification in special education



Data Collection

- ◆ 43 reading lessons observed by 5 trained observers
- ◆ Extensive field notes and observation instrument used
- ◆ Interrater reliability (33% of observations): average 82% of agreement (59-96%)

Teacher Selection

- ◆ Using COPSSE Classroom Observation Instrument
- ◆ Considering the rates of the following items specifically related to SE (Coefficient $\alpha=.91$)
 - Organization of the lesson
 - Extent of student engagement
 - Fostering student motivation and engagement
 - Continuous and intensive instruction
- ◆ Cutoffs for the degree of engaging teachers (ratings of 1-4)
 - Above 3.5 : *Most* engaging
 - 3.5-3.0 : *Highly* engaging
 - 3.0-2.0 : *Moderately* engaging
 - Below 2.0 : *Low* engaging

Engaging Teachers

	Number of Teachers	Years of Teaching	Number of Students	Reading Curriculum	Support System (e.g., coaching, supporting staff)
<i>Most engaging</i>	2	2-3	9	Structured - Eclectic (RM, Trophies, Guided Reading)	Formal/informal coaching Co-teaching Paraprofessional
<i>Highly engaging</i>	2	2	8-15	Structured (RM; Trophies+ Guided Reading)	Co-teaching (1)
<i>Moderately engaging</i>	7	1-3	6-22	Structured (RM, Trophies, etc)	Formal coaching (1) Co-teaching (1) Paraprofessional (2)
<i>Low engaging</i>	3	1	6-25	Structured	Co-teaching (1) Paraprofessional (1)



Data Analysis

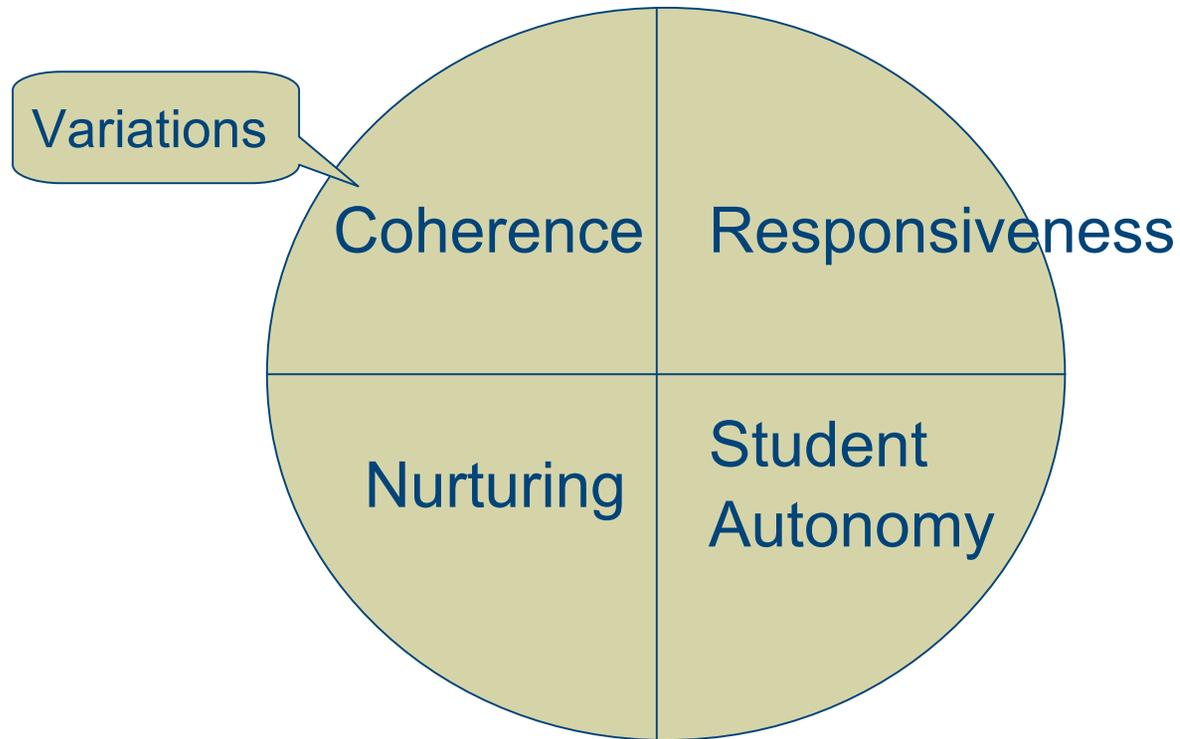
- ◆ Constant Comparison Method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998)
 - : Undergoes continuous refinement through the data collection and data analysis process, continuously feeding back into the process of category coding
- ◆ Trustworthiness
 - Triangulation: multiple observations and observers
 - Peer debriefing
 - Prolonged engagement



Most Engaging Teachers

<Insert a video clip of Kari's instruction>

Most Engaging Teachers



- ◆ Student engagement: above 3.5 (4-highest)
- ◆ Well-coordinated reading instruction along with consistently strong student involvement
- ◆ Positive, respectful, friendly, and supportive environments





Highly Engaging Teachers

Insert a video clip of Julie's instruction

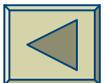
Highly Engaging Teachers

- ◆ Student engagement : rate of 3.5-3
- ◆ Demonstrated all 4 elements of most engaging teachers
- ◆ Implemented motivation-related materials and practices (e.g., interesting stories, voting, student choices)
- ◆ Often struggled with developing cohesion in their practices (e.g., Guided Reading)
- ◆ Misused or insufficiently used effective strategies (e.g., scaffolding, student monitoring)
- ◆ Demonstrated less sophistication within instruction (vs. teachers' strong areas of teaching reading)

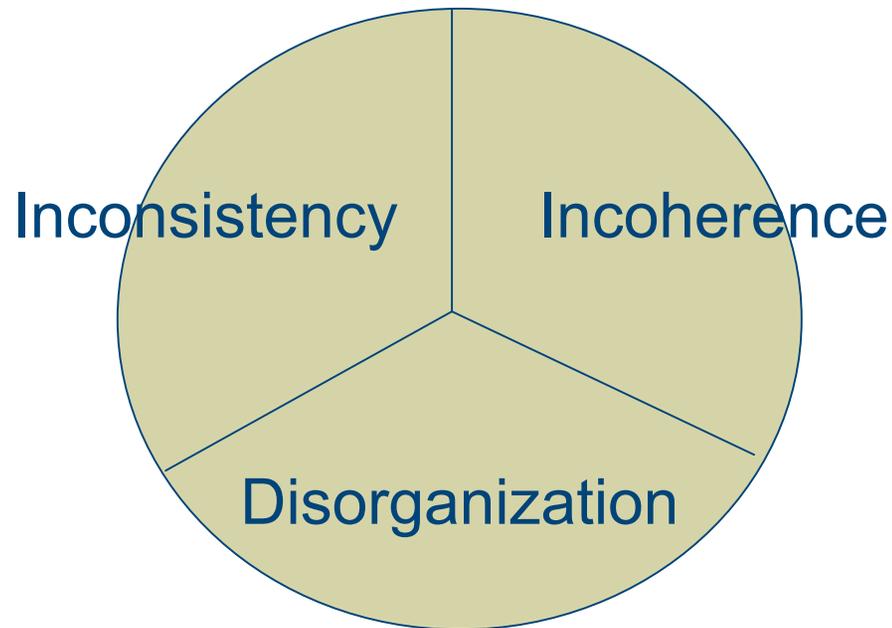


Moderately Engaging Teachers

- ◆ Student engagement: rate of 3-2
- ◆ Accurately described typical BTs in special education
- ◆ Exhibited both strengths and weaknesses in motivating students to engage (limited knowledge about effective practices)
- ◆ Focused on delivering curriculum rather than coordinating instruction
- ◆ Struggled to respond to students' academic and behavioral needs simultaneously
- ◆ Less sensitive to student autonomy
- ◆ Teachers with community capital: personally related to students



Low Engaging Teachers



- ◆ Student engagement : rate of below 2
- ◆ Infrequent use of effective practices in both academic learning and behavior management
- ◆ Lack of monitoring of student engagement and understanding→ little or no individual assistance given to students



Discussion

- ◆ Student engagement can differ depending on how teachers provide reading instruction
- ◆ Beginning special educators are located on the continuum of ability to engage students
 - Many beginners provide glimpses of expertise, despite concerns (“Lost at Sea”; “ Broken Promises”)
- ◆ There are some factors mediating teacher practices
 - Curricula (e.g., structured or non-structured; Guided Reading)
 - The number of students
 - Focus in teacher preparation (e.g., General vs. Special Education)
 - Work environments

Discussion(con't)

- ◆ Four essential components for student engagement
 - Cohesion within reading instruction: teachers' sense of mission along with knowledge about effective reading instruction that leads to student involvement and participation
 - Simultaneous responsiveness to both academic and behavioral needs
 - Nurturing and supportive relationships between teacher and students
 - Autonomy support for student voluntary involvement
- ➔ Requires the cohesive integration of all components
- ➔ Similar to effective practices in reading instruction (e.g., Pressley et al., 1998)

Implications

- ◆ How do we best support beginning special education teachers to provide engaging reading instruction?
 - Help teachers understand when students are not engaged and what instructional or management issues might be contributing to the disengagement
 - Provide coaching and induction to help beginners, especially *moderately* engaging teachers, build capacity for engaging practices
 - Provide intensive formal and informal support for teachers at the *low* end of student engagement
 - Guide *most and highly* engaging teachers to elaborate on instruction based on their needs (not sure what this means)

Implications (cont')

- ◆ What do we do to best prepare student teachers to provide engaging reading lessons? (How can this question be recasted to connect back to coaching comments on previous slide?)
 - Provide concrete and practical information about what makes engaging instruction for students with disabilities
 - Help student teachers experience the potential of teacher practices that make a difference in student engagement and ultimately achievement
 - Discuss teachers' role and practices in enhancing student engagement