

Exploring the impact of a PD training on history teachers' reading strategy instruction



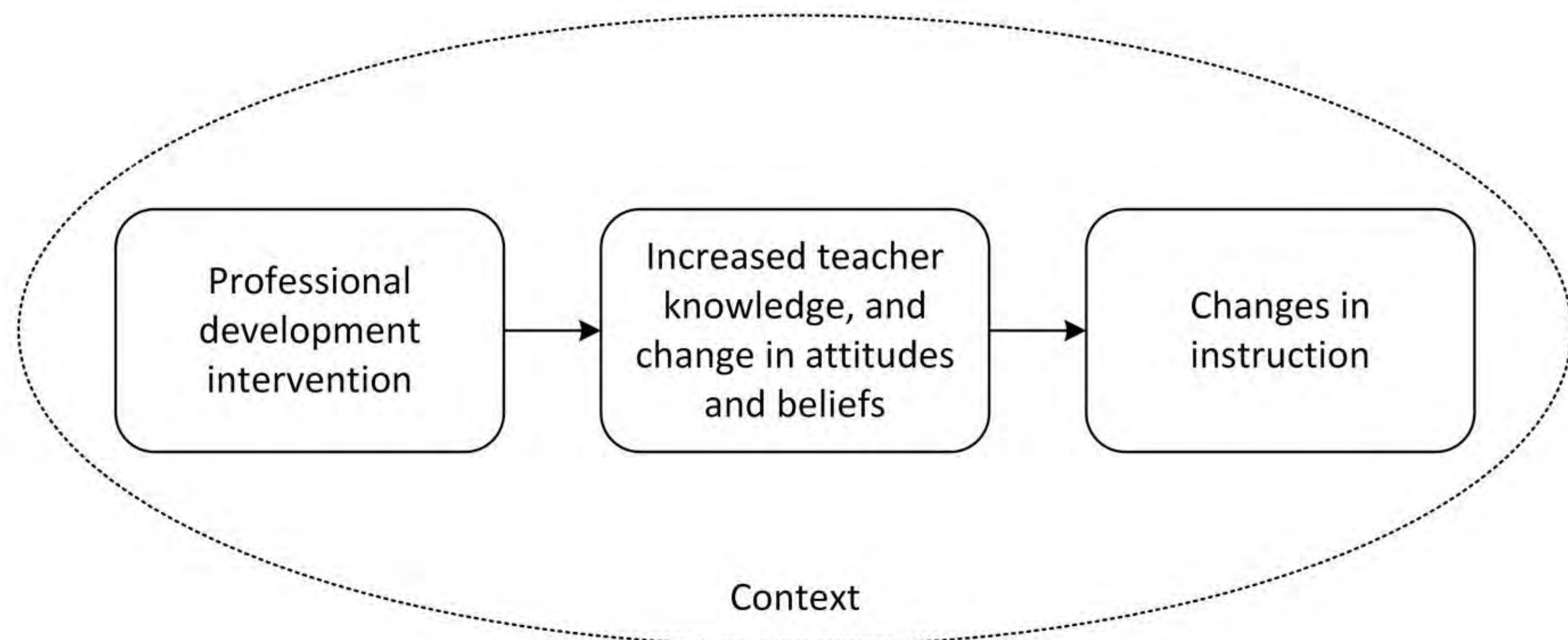
M. ter Beek, M.-C. Opdenakker, M. I. Deunk, & J. W. Strijbos
Groningen Institute for Educational Research (GION), The Netherlands

Contact:
m.ter.beek@rug.nl
@Marlies_terBeek

Theoretical background

Comprehending expository texts is an essential skill for students in secondary education, especially for the subject of history. Students are required to infer difficult word meanings, identify main ideas, or explain causal relationships. Therefore, it is essential to know how and when to apply generic and subject-specific reading strategies.¹

Many history teachers find it difficult to provide adequate reading strategy instruction; only about 10% of instructional time is dedicated to it.² Based on the professional development (PD) framework by Desimone³, this study explores the effects of a PD training on teachers' instructional behaviour in the context of reading strategy instruction in history classrooms.⁴



Research questions

1. In what ways does a PD training in reading strategy instruction and data use affect teachers' instructional methods?
2. How do teachers experience this type of PD training, and which contextual factors promote or impede a successful implementation?

Method

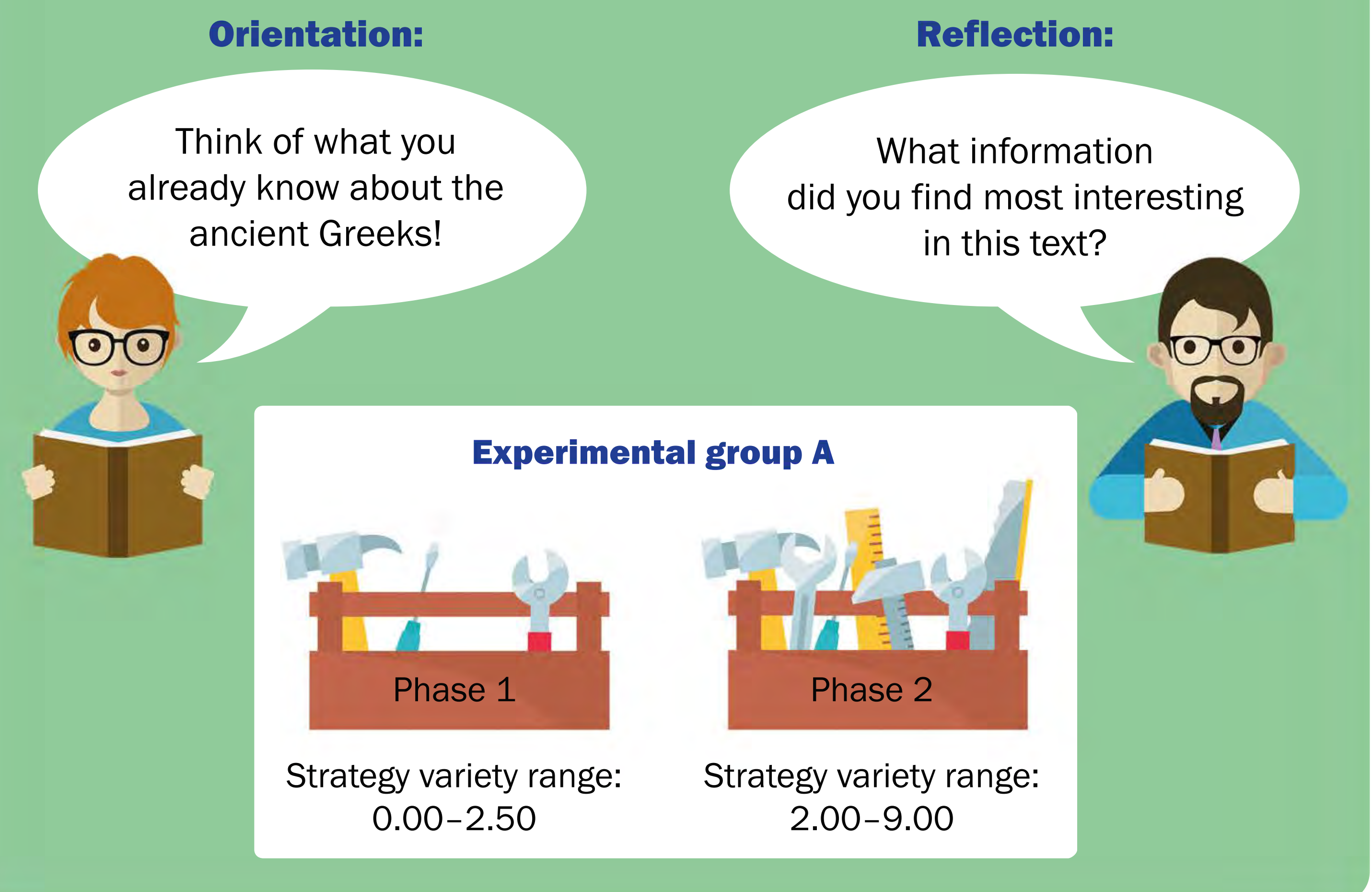
Nine history teachers from four different secondary schools in the Netherlands participated ($M_{age} = 45.3$, $SD = 9.84$). On average, the teachers had 15.1 years' teaching experience ($SD = 6.85$, range 10–32).

Teachers from Experimental groups A and B were provided with extended data based on students' comprehension performance in a digital learning environment (DLE). Halfway through the study, Experimental group A received a PD training on how to translate these data into strategy instruction.

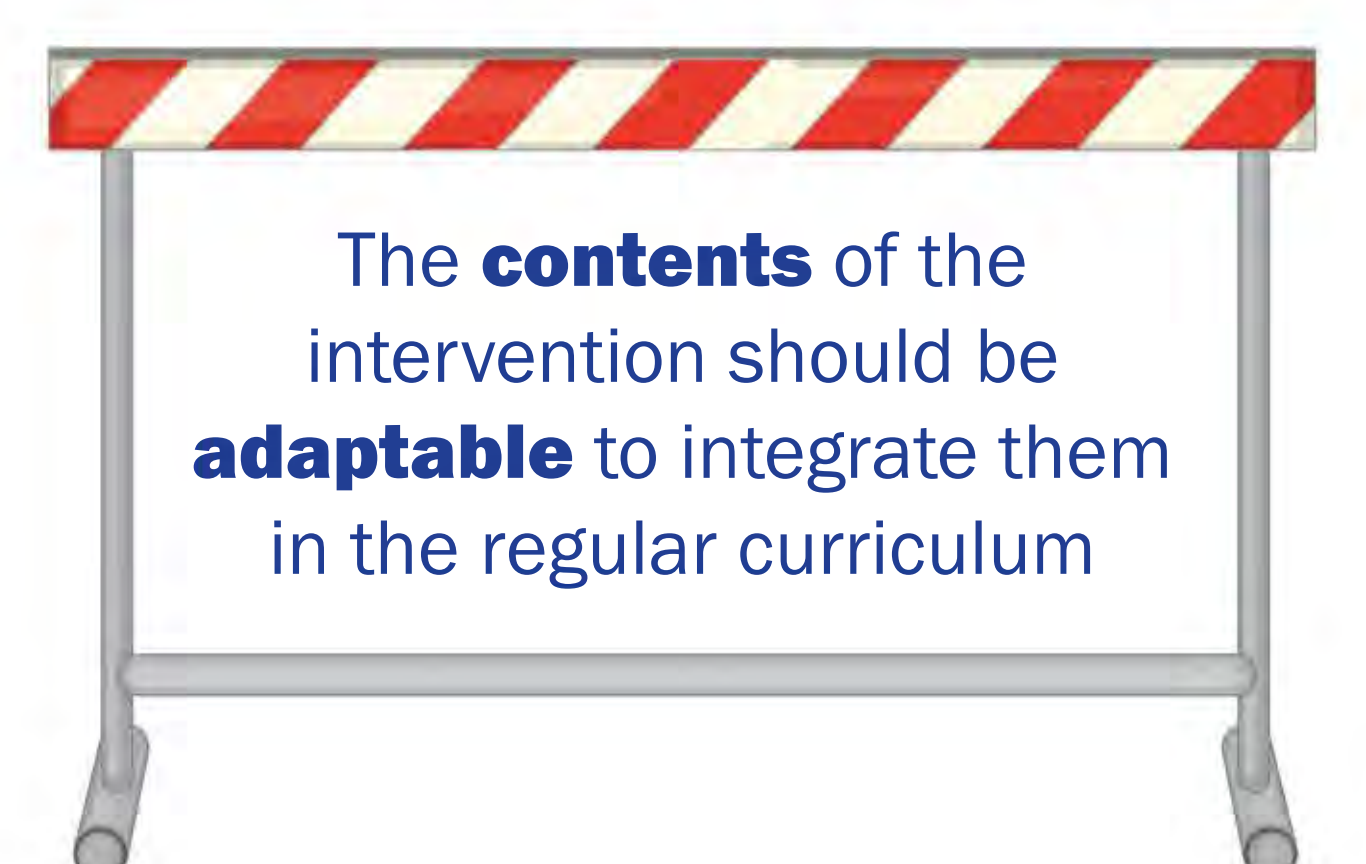
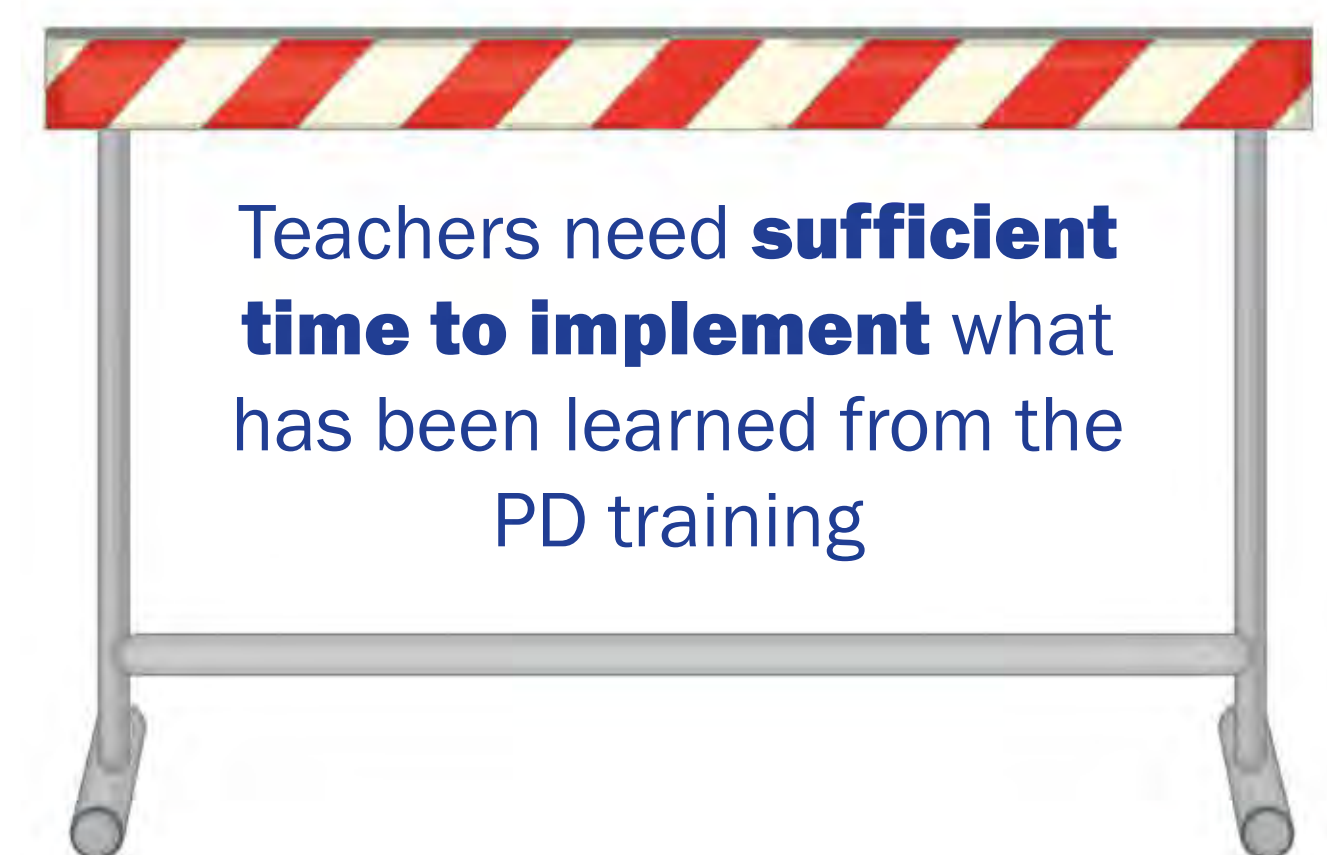


Results

The variety in experimental teachers' strategy instruction (i.e., their instructional 'toolbox') increased after the PD training. Next to orienting and adjustment strategies, teachers now also focused on motivation and reflection.



Contextual hurdles that emerged from the interviews, which possibly limited the effects of the current study:



Conclusions & recommendations

Our results show that teachers in the experimental condition improved the variation of their instruction after a PD training in data use and teaching reading strategies. However, we also identified multiple contextual implementation barriers.

The results from the present study illustrate the value of using micro-level analysis and including teachers' personal experiences in effectiveness research, which contributes to the development of future, large-scale PD design interventions.

References

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