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AN INTERVENTION SPECIALIST'S JOURNEY THROUGH THE ZONE OF
PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT (269 pp.)

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This self-study focused on an intervention specialist's decision-making process in designing instruction for students with special needs and those at risk in learning. Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) provided the lens through which this research was conceptualized and viewed. The purpose of this research study was to utilize a reflective thinking practice in examining my part of the teaching/learning cycle discerning what information led to decisions in creating scaffolds for students' zone of proximal development. The findings included: (a) the practitioner ignited an invitation to learn and be motivated, designed scaffolds, and created environments to encourage student empowerment; (b) personal attention was directed to those tensions that required change by igniting a problem solving sequence that offered possible strategies and solutions; and (c) outside factors including institutional influences, limitations, and interruptions distracted the practitioner from the primary purpose of teaching. The findings of this study offered the following implications for intervention specialists. First, a reflective thinking practice enables an intervention specialist to discern thoughts that transpire from school/societal deliberations

and those that result from his/her own viewpoint. In grappling with the contradictory messages of these two forces a practitioner develops his/her voice and the self-knowledge needed to define his/her position within a given tension. Second, incorporating the element of play into daily lessons encourages children to acquire greater attention to task, thus, increasing cognitive development. Third, the development of individualized scaffolds employs a deconstructive / reconstructive nature to achieve independence in skill execution.