Fall 8-17-2020

Exploring Relationships of Positive Reading Attitudes in Secondary English Classrooms

Lorin Blackburn Thierfelder
Lindenwood University

Exploring Relationships of Positive Reading Attitudes in Secondary English Classrooms across Missouri

by

Lorin Blackburn Thierfelder

August 17, 2020

A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

School of Education

Exploring Relationships of Positive Reading Attitudes

in Secondary English Classrooms

across Missouri

by

Lorin Blackburn Thierfelder

This Dissertation has been approved as partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

Lindenwood University, School of Education

Dr. Sherry DeVoge, Dissertation Chair — Date 8/17/2020

Dr. Shawn Poyser, Committee Member — Date 8/17/2020

Dr. Randy Caffey, Committee Member — Date 08/17/2020

Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree.

Full Legal Name: Lorin Blackburn Thierfelder

Signature: Lorin Thierfelder Date: 8/17/20

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the members of my dissertation committee for support and guidance throughout this research project. I would like to extend extra gratitude to Dr. Sherry DeVore for her guidance and patience throughout this process. My thanks extend to all of the superintendents and teachers who completed and contributed to my study.

I would also like to extend gratitude to Susan Dean, my proofreader and confidante, and to Ashley Klein and Cara Barth-Fagan for constant support and help. I could not have completed this process without each of your words and wisdom. Finally, I would like to thank my family. I have to extend thanks to my parents with a special thanks to my mom, my biggest cheerleader, for listening to me as I figured this process out and never letting me lose faith I would get done. I also have to thank my husband, Craig, and daughter, Vivian, for their patience as I worked to follow my dreams.

Abstract

The purpose of this quantitative research study was to explore teacher perceptions of secondary student reading attitudes across Missouri. The study was conducted to examine the variables of student engagement, Young Adult Literature, and reading attitude. A conceptual framework was established based upon the work of Layne (2009) and Schoenbach (2012). Secondary English teachers face the daunting task of teaching students not only reading comprehension but also reading engagement (Gallagher, 2009; Layne, 2009). Demographic information and survey responses were collected to determine teachers' perspectives on student engagement, Young Adult Literature, and reading attitudes in high school English classrooms. Some of the survey items were adapted and modified from Schoenbach's (2012) *Reading Interest Survey*. The data elicited consisted of percentages, means, and standard deviations of teacher survey responses. Overall, an analysis of the data indicated school districts should set clear expectations and plans for reading support. Based on the findings from this study, secondary students are not always engaged in reading, whether in or out of class. By specifically adding complex Young Adult novels to the curriculum, either as assigned reading or paired with classics, teachers may improve the reading attitudes of students. The findings from the study indicated teachers should utilize Young Adult Literature as a way to increase and improve student engagement and reading attitudes.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter One: Introduction

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) (2012) created standards to demonstrate the importance of reading; the standards included specific information on students' knowledge, skills, strategies, and attitudes to help teachers, parents, and students plan instruction more thoughtfully. By preparing students each year for state-mandated tests, high schools produce seniors who have the ability to pass a test but do not have sufficient reading skills to become productive citizens (Gallagher, 2015). To explore this phenomenon, student engagement and Young Adult Literature were investigated in this study, as well as the effect of those variables on the reading attitudes of secondary students.

Background of the Study

Students are less engaged in any academic subject, especially reading, when the work is consistently too difficult (Kittle, 2013). Students may wish to participate in the lesson and gain insight, but traditional materials do not often contribute to the students' image of the world (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010; Rosenblatt, 1995; Rosenzweig, Wigfield, Gaspard, & Guthrie, 2018). Strong, Silver, and Robinson (1995) found most students only consider school work to be engaging if it sparks originality, curiosity, and success.

Similarly, Geraci, Palmerini, Cirillo, and McDougald (2017) revealed 42% of students who dropped out of high school did not see any value in assigned coursework (p. 49). According to Blau (2003), the only way to fully engage all students is to teach them at every level of instruction. Students tend to work at a higher level if they are engaged in the lesson (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010; Rosenblatt, 1995; Rosenzweig et al., 2018).

Expanding on a student's natural curiosity is helpful when encouraging reading for pleasure and sparking reading interest (Small & Arnone, 2011). Skilled readers constantly make connections about the transaction between the reader and the text to draw conclusions and comprehend the material. Rosenblatt (1995) and Rosenzweig et al. (2018) focused on how student-to-text connections build engagement, motivation, and interest. Gallagher (2015) suggested Young Adult Literature and choice reading increase student interest in reading because themes directly relate to students. Young Adult Literature has become a reliable tool to gain student interest in reading as it addresses problems, issues, and life circumstances that pertain to young readers (Gallagher, 2015). Overall, Young Adult Literature can be used as a way for educators to spark reading interest and expand on student interests (Gallagher, 2015).

Cambria and Guthrie (2010) asserted by the end of 12th grade students should be able to read confidently and comprehend texts on a critical level. Students are expected by 12th grade to read and understand classic works such as Mary Shelley's (1998) *Frankenstein* or Charlotte Brontë's (1999) *Jane Eyre*, but most students are not able to perform at this level of comprehension (Kamil, 2008). Deck and Barnette (1976) found students who lack reading confidence have a poor reading attitude and thus become disengaged readers. Disengaged readers are reluctant or lack the motivation to read or use books (Deck & Barnette, 1976; Harmon et al., 2016).

Disengaged readers do not lack the skill to read; they do not want to read the material assigned to them (Layne, 2009). Many students are disengaged with reading, and a positive attitude is essential when learning to read (Harmon et al., 2016). Not only is a positive reading attitude helpful academically, but some students want to be engaged in

what they study (Harmon et al., 2016). Strong et al. (1995) found students want and need materials that reflect a sense of themselves as successful individuals in society. Engaging students becomes increasingly harder as students age (Geraci et al., 2017). If students are provided with engaging materials and are engaged in reading, they are more likely to become successful academically and prosper as informed citizens (Geraci et al., 2017).

Student engagement. The seminal literacy theorist, Rosenblatt (1995), discussed how teachers play an essential role in the education of students in terms of what students learn, read, and do. Rosenblatt (1995) stated readers need to connect with literature by "living through it," not just having basic knowledge (p. 38). Hong-Nam, Leavell, and Maher (2014) found high school students are not prepared to read the advanced texts schools are presenting to raise the instructional rigor to meet state expectations. Low reading levels lead to increased dropout rates and underprepared college students, due largely to students lacking engagement in their reading (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010).

The theory of reading as exploration began with research on engagement in reading (Rosenblatt, 1995). The theory of engaged reading by Rosenblatt (1995) is still referenced today. When reading with engagement, students are able to increase their knowledge of not just literature but also of the world (Rosenblatt, 1995; Ortileb, 2015). Rosenblatt (1995) stated ninth through 12th-grade students should participate in literature to be fully engaged. Increased engagement with reading equals increased academic achievement in life (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010). Researchers have shown how reading engagement helps students academically, but have not shown specifically how to get students involved (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010; Ortileb, 2015).

Young Adult Literature. Interesting and engaging texts are essential for classroom engagement (Ivey & Johnston, 2013). Deck and Barnette (1976) found students will not learn, either at a young or old age, if they are not interested in what is being taught. Young Adult Literature helps motivate students through engaging texts and high-interest topics (Cart, 2007; Gallagher, 2010; Henderson & Buskist, 2011). In past years, researchers debated the rigor and complexity of Young Adult Literature in the classroom (Henderson & Buskist, 2011).

Researchers have proven the complexity of Young Adult Literature by comparing the language of classics to the complex issues presented in Young Adult Literature texts (Flink, 2017; Rybakova & Roccanti, 2016). Ivey and Johnston (2013) asserted Young Adult Literature challenges readers on an emotional and cultural level known to engage students. Additionally, Henderson and Buskist (2011) disclosed Young Adult Literature not only engages students but also provides students with skills for understanding and comprehending text because the themes are relatable to student readers.

Reading attitude. Student reading attitude is a key factor of substantial reading success (Mckenna & Kear, 1990; Ortileb, 2015). Deck and Barnette (1976) found attitude directly relates and contributes to reading comprehension. The ability to comprehend texts is the foundation of learning, according to Harmon et al. (2016). Every time a student reads a book, he or she brings to the text a variety of life experiences, background information, cultural influences, and context (Reeves, 2010). Smith (1990) established attitude affects reading from childhood to adulthood, and a more positive reading attitude leads to success in reading. A positive reading attitude is due largely to the efforts of schools, teachers, and students to develop good reading habits each year (Partin &

Hendricks, 2002). Positive reading attitudes in high school can lead students to become lifelong readers (Lesesne, 2003, 2014).

Rationale of the Study

This study was conducted to investigate student attitudes toward reading in connection with Young Adult Literature. Previously, researchers tried to measure reading attitude (Alexander & Filler, 1976; Mckenna & Kear, 1990; Smith, 1990; Tullock-Rhody & Alexander, 1980), but minimal current research exists about reading attitudes at the secondary level. Cuevas, Irving, and Russell (2014) stated research on reading attitudes is outdated and focused on students up to the eighth grade. Previous research does not consider what contributes specifically to student attitudes toward reading at the secondary level.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2007, 2019) found reading scores for 12th-grade students dropped steadily since 1992 across the country, while fourth and eighth-grade reading scores rose. The NCES (2019) also reported 28% of 12th-grade students read at or below basic reading level (p. 3). The NCES (2019) described secondary students as reading significantly under expectations. Based upon the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the NCES (2019) only tracks fourth and eighth-grade reading scores each year but compares select 12th-grade reading scores at least once a decade. Based on this information, Gallagher (2015) concurred students lack basic reading comprehension skills at the secondary level. Gallagher (2015) pointed out a positive reading attitude is essential for gaining basic reading comprehension skills.

Conceptual Framework

This study was viewed through the lens of the complete reader described by Layne (2009), which served as the conceptual framework. A complete reader is someone who completes the circle of reading (Layne, 2009). The left side of the complete reader circle is phonics, fluency, comprehension, semantics, and syntax, while the right side is interest, attitude, motivation, and engagement (Layne, 2009). This study was focused on the right side of the complete reader circle. Layne (2009) described the importance of the right side of the circle. The right side of the circle is what motivates the reader, versus the left side, which includes the reading skills learned (Layne, 2009).

Using Layne's (2009) concept of the complete reader comprised of four variables (interest, attitude, motivation, and engagement), this study was developed based upon three of the variables: student engagement, Young Adult Literature (interest), and reading attitude. Motivation and engagement were combined for this study in terms of student reactions to coursework. Layne (2009) found students do not value the experience of reading if they are unmotivated or unengaged in reading due to the lack of value of reading from an abstract perspective. Layne (2009) commented, "Attitude, motivation and other such intangibles don't lend themselves to finely tuned, measurable, empirical studies and concrete theoretical models, so they tend to be avoided lest they solicit volumes of skeptical remarks from the learned" (p. 12). The final variable in the study was attitude, specifically the reading attitudes of secondary Missouri students.

Schmoker (2007), similar to Layne (2009), imagined a future in which dropout rates and the achievement gap shrink, the number of students entering college increases, and professors are impressed at the intellect of incoming freshman classes. Improving

reading attitude has been a goal for most schools in America for a long time (Schmoker, 2007). In first grade, students are likely to start excited and motivated about the prospect of learning to read (Schmoker, 2007). In grades six through nine, students begin to associate reading with being a good student (Schmoker, 2007). In high school, reading expands to attempting to understand texts as deeply as possible (Schmoker, 2007). If students are not engaged in reading, they will not reach this level of understanding and struggle to achieve reading success (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010; Layne, 2009).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study was to investigate student engagement and Young Adult Literature while considering students' attitudes toward reading. Through evaluating current reading practices, the potential changes needed to ensure successful reading skills after high school were addressed. Cuevas et al. (2014) stated public education is in dire need of innovative methods of teaching literacy and reading comprehension at the secondary level. This need is brought about as reading comprehension and skills decrease, based upon the NAEP results (NCES, 2019).

School districts focus on reading in fourth grade and eighth grade since those are the grades states assess for reading (NCES, 2019). Connections between current reading practices and student attitudes were examined by conducting a quantitative study to investigate the disconnect between eighth grade, when students were last tested on reading, to 12th-grade graduation (Gallagher, 2015). Using quantitative methods, demographic data and reports of current ninth through 12th-grade classroom reading instructional methods were gathered. The specific variables explored in this study included student engagement, Young Adult Literature, and reading attitude.

Research questions. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are English teachers' perceptions of the relationships among student engagement, Young Adult Literature, and reading attitude in Missouri schools in grades 9-12?
2. What are English teachers' perceptions of student engagement as a predictor of a student's positive reading attitude in Missouri schools in grades 9-12?
3. What are English teachers' perceptions of the use of Young Adult Literature to increase a student's positive reading attitude in Missouri schools in grades 9-12?

Limitations and Assumptions

The following limitations and assumptions were identified in this study:

Limitations. Limitations of the study included the number of superintendents who forwarded the survey to their teachers and the number of teachers who were willing to complete the survey. Since teachers self-reported, this was considered a limitation. The study was also limited to the experience of the participating teachers in terms of teaching reading and knowledge of Young Adult Literature. For example, if a teacher identified as an English teacher, but had limited experience with Young Adult Literature, the survey items might not be applicable. Finally, the study was limited due to the daily lives of the teachers, which may have affected the learning environment of not only the teachers but the students in the class. These day-to-day stressors can include but are not limited to illness, anxieties, or other factors.

Assumptions. The participants who responded to the survey were high school English teachers. The participants answered the survey honestly and without bias.

Definition of Key Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms were defined:

Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The CCSS are consistent standards that define the knowledge and skills to be taught at each grade level for college and career readiness (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [MODESE], 2018). The CCSS are based on best-practice standards and assessment tools already in existence, the experience of teachers, and feedback from United States citizens (MODESE, 2018).

Missouri Learning Standards. The Missouri Learning Standards, created by the MODESE (2018), define the knowledge and skills students must master in grades PreK-12 for success in college. The standards were enacted in 2018 to replace the federal CCSS (MODESE, 2018). Full implementation of the standards is projected to be completed by 2020 as additions are still being made to science and social studies (MODESE, 2018).

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The NAEP provides the country's sole report outlining student progress of skills in specific content areas and grade levels (NCES, 2019). Reading is assessed at grades four, eight, and 12, but districts in Missouri primarily focus on state assessments administered during fourth and eighth grade (NCES, 2019). The NAEP is sent to a random sample of students across the country; paired results are based on students with similarities such as gender and race

(NCES, 2019). Testing is conducted every four years; the previous testing administered for 12th-grade reading was in 2015 with the next projected testing in 2019 (NCES, 2019).

Reading attitude. Reading attitude is defined as an individual's feelings about reading (Alexander & Filler, 1976; Partin & Hendricks, 2002).

Read-i-cide. Read-i-cide is the systematic killing of the love of reading caused by repetitive practices found in secondary schools (Gallagher, 2010).

Student engagement. Student engagement is thought of as meaningful student involvement throughout the learning environment developed by fostering success, curiosity, originality, and relationships (Strong et al., 1995). Strong et al. (1995) came to call this method "knowing the score" to help students relate to the educational environment (p. 10).

Sustained silent reading (SSR). Sustained silent reading is an allotted time period during the school day for students to read independently (Garan & DeVoogd, 2008).

Young Adult Literature. Young Adult Literature is realistic fiction set in the contemporary world and addresses problems, issues, and life circumstances of interest to young readers (Cart, 2007).

Summary

The key to successful literacy instruction is in the engagement of students when the reader connects to the text (Galda, 2010). If students are supported in their personal reading needs, they are more likely to develop independent, self-directed reading skills (Votypka, 2018). The goal of this study was to determine what motivates student reading attitudes in Missouri English classes for grades 9-12.

In this chapter, the background and the rationale of the study were presented. The conceptual framework was described, as was the purpose of the study. Research questions, limitations, and assumptions were detailed. The definition of key terms was given.

In Chapter Two, the literature review of this study is discussed. The conceptual framework is presented followed by a breakdown of literature on each variable. The literature review is divided into the headings of student engagement in reading, Young Adult Literature, and reading attitudes. The student engagement section is divided into subheadings of higher-order thinking and struggling readers.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

The objective of this study was to examine the perceptions of secondary English teachers surrounding engagement and Young Adult Literature in connection with reading attitude. A framework was established for each variable based upon Layne's (2009) concept of the complete reader. Literature was compiled from research studies conducted on student engagement and Young Adult Literature including relevant information from noted authors.

Conceptual Framework

Improving reading skills has been a goal for schools in America for several decades (Cuevas et al., 2014). To examine English teachers' perceptions of secondary students' reading skills, Layne's (2009) concept of the complete reader was selected as the framework for this study. A complete reader learns phonics, fluency, comprehension, semantics, and syntax with personal engagement, motivation, interest, and attitude (Layne, 2009). Pertinent to this study are selected variables from Layne's (2009) body of work, specifically student engagement and attitude. Student attitude, motivation, interest, and engagement toward reading drives what the student will retain and comprehend from the reading (Layne, 2009).

Reading is the most essential form of learning, and poor literacy levels can contribute to decreased social and economic success rates (Blau, 2003). Problems with literacy arise for educators when attempting to entice students to follow through with the reading (Cuevas et al., 2014). Strong et al. (1995) stated, "Students want and need work that stimulates their curiosity and awakens their desire for deep understanding" (p. 10). Engagement allows students to reach higher levels of academic success (Cambria &

Guthrie, 2010). Students are more likely to excel when they are engaged in the learning process (Strong et al., 1995). More specifically, students need to be engaged in reading (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010). Reading engagement is the values, beliefs, and behaviors surrounding reading and the individual (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Wigfield, 1996).

Afflerbach, Cho, and Kim (2015) asserted students should be able to regulate and access their reading ability at a higher level. Galda (2010) discussed how literature allows students to explore and understand the world around them. Galda, Cullinan, and Sipe (2010) stated, "It (literature) enriches their (students) lives and widens their horizons… increases knowledge, explore feelings, shape their own values, and imagine lives beyond the ones they live" (as cited in Galda, 2010, p. 5). Through reading, students are engaged in literature and the world around them (Galda, 2010).

Some teenagers are reluctant to read because they cannot decode or comprehend the material (Galda, 2010). Interesting and engaging texts help readers develop these skills (Lesesne, 2003, 2014). Harmon et al. (2016) termed students who do not fully interact with the text *disengaged readers*.

If students do not have reading engagement and confidence, they may not reach a level of higher-order thinking and will struggle with reading (Galda, 2010). Cambria and Guthrie (2010) noted when students begin to doubt their reading confidence, they retreat from reading and are at-risk of becoming struggling readers. Self-concept and the value students place on reading are critical to their academic success (Gambrell et al., 1996).

To engage students, schools can create school-wide reading programs (Williams, 2014). Williams (2014) asserted schools must implement strategies across the district for

school reading programs to increase reading success. Student engagement in reading can increase higher-order thinking and aid struggling readers, but engagement works best as part of school-wide initiatives (Williams, 2014).

Young Adult Literature is engaging reading material that relates to current issues of the young adult with high-interest topics (Cart, 2007). While scholars have argued about the complexity of Young Adult Literature, several agreed Young Adult Literature is just as complex as classic texts and also captures the interest of secondary students (Glaus, 2014; Thompson et al., 2015). Classics still have a place in the English Language Arts curriculum and should be blended with Young Adult Literature to engage all readers (Flaherty & Chisholm, 2015; Ruggieri, 2007; Schmitz, 2007). Young Adult Literature is considered to be a bridge that connects students to what they are reading while being as complex as the classic curriculum already in the classroom (Avoli-Miller, 2013; Flaherty & Chisholm, 2015; Hunt, 2007; Ruggieri, 2007).

The complex issues covered in Young Adult Literature span a variety of reading levels and can allow even struggling students and English Language Learners to achieve academic success (Alkhawaldeh, 2012; Lesesne, 2002). Most teachers do not want students to become one of the 25% of college freshmen who have to take remedial classes each year (NCES, 2019). Young Adult Literature can assist students in becoming more socially responsible while also teaching important reading skills (Kolencik & Bernadowski, 2008).

Books with complex issues can help students face harsh realities and tough topics, such as abuse, rape, and sexuality (Bodart, 2006). Students who read high-interest texts such as Young Adult Literature are more likely to become lifelong readers (Lesesne,

2003). Young Adult Literature, as a high-interest reading genre, can create a lifelong love of reading while helping students learn academic skills and analyze complex topics (Cart, 2007; Gallagher, 2015; Lesesne, 2003).

Alexander and Filler (1976) defined reading attitude as the positive or negative emotions students relate to reading. Reading attitude is an individual's feelings about reading (Partin & Hendricks, 2002). The theory of reading attitude developed as educators tried to measure students' attitudes toward reading (Alexander & Filler, 1976; Smith, 1990; Tullock-Rhody & Alexander, 1980). Smith (1990) added his take on reading attitude and studied the possible effects of reading attitude. Researchers have had a difficult time measuring what engages reading attitude (Alexander & Filler, 1976; Smith, 1990; Tullock-Rhody & Alexander, 1980).

Student attitude has been found to contribute to the drive to learn to read (Lewis & Teale, 1980). Partin and Hendricks (2002) found a positive reading attitude is one of the best motivators for reading achievement. To accomplish a positive reading attitude, students must:

- believe that reading is important;
- enjoy reading;
- have a high self-concept as a reader; and
- have a verbally stimulating home environment where verbal interaction takes place regularly. (Partin & Hendricks, 2002, p. 63)

Each of these qualities helps students perform better academically (Partin & Hendricks, 2002).

Students' positive attitudes and a sense of self-efficacy have been known to aid in reading achievement (Bandura, 1986; Cambria & Guthrie, 2010; Hooley, Tysseling, & Ray, 2013). Lewis and Teale (1980) analyzed the role of teachers and school districts in fostering a positive reading attitude. From the results of their study, they concluded schools should make positive reading attitude a goal (Lewis & Teale, 1980). Similarly, Smith (1990) noted a goal in reading instruction needs to be improving reading attitude.

When students have difficulty learning to read, it frequently leads them to take a negative attitude toward reading into adulthood (Smith, 1990). Gallagher (2010) reported for students to develop a positive reading attitude, schools still have to nurture reading skills. These reading skills are fundamental to becoming productive citizens and include skills such as creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving (Gallagher, 2010). In this aspect, schools have become the main contributors to the decline of pleasure reading and student reading attitudes (Gallagher, 2010).

Student Engagement in Reading

Harmon et al. (2016) believed literacy is the foundation for learning and explained, "The ability to read, write, speak, listen, view and visually represent ideas permeates every facet of learning regardless of age or content and therefore has a strategic place in school classrooms" (p. 962). The NCES reported in 2019 that less than 50% of students read at a proficient level, which was a significant decrease from 1992, and the number of proficient readers was predicted to decrease even more before the next report (p. 1). Gill (2008) determined while reading comprehension is tested, it is rarely taught.

Cambria and Guthrie (2010) found from first through fifth grades, students are excited to read, and in sixth through ninth grades, students began to associate reading with being good students. By high school, students were expected to read and interpret texts fully, but many students lack reading engagement, and in turn, have poor reading confidence. Galda (2010) called for engagement in reading to increase comprehension, develop critical thinking, and help struggling readers.

A discussion of student engagement as related to higher-order thinking skills is presented in the next section. Subsequently, the issues surrounding struggling readers are described. Literature concerning how school-wide programs aid in promoting student engagement in reading is offered.

Higher-order thinking. Engaged readers apply reading strategies and skills to help them comprehend complex texts (Hong-Nam et al., 2014). Student engagement in reading can be directly linked to academic success (Guthrie & Pavis, 2003). In the 21st century, higher-order thinking and student engagement can go hand in hand (Guthrie & Pavis, 2003). Guthrie and Pavis (2003) defined higher-order thinking as the ability to think beyond the basic concepts of a text to help students achieve an advanced level of critical thinking skills.

Higher-order thinking is goal-directed and takes place at each interval of reading: pre-reading, during reading, and post-reading (Guthrie & Pavis, 2003). Afflerbach et al. (2015) claimed secondary students often struggle with higher-order thinking, especially when it relates to reading. The researchers found a large gap between collegiate reading levels and secondary preparation (Afflerbach et al., 2015). Some secondary students struggled with classroom learning goals and reading standards (Afflerbach et al., 2015).

Once students began to regulate their reading, they started to meet classroom learning goals (Afflerbach et al., 2015).

Higher-order thinking in reading helps readers to become engaged as they analyze, evaluate, and interpret texts (Afflerbach et al., 2015). Fitzhugh (2011) observed college professors are concerned with the reading abilities of incoming freshmen. Fitzhugh (2011) stated for state standards such as the CCSS to be effective, reading and writing should be emphasized. Students who read independently at least once a week in high school will have a higher academic success rate (Fitzhugh, 2011). Fitzhugh (2011) found an increase in preparation for reading and writing could potentially aid students in college training.

Afflerbach et al. (2015) discovered, however, that students are not up to the task of thinking at a higher level, and they quickly become disengaged with reading before getting to the stage of higher-level thinking. Miller (2017) mentioned even the most successful students who call themselves readers, work hard, and meet all classroom expectations, can still become disengaged by assigned reading. Disengaged students are more likely to surf the web, use online study aids, or watch the movie instead of completing the assigned reading (Miller, 2017).

Students who are disengaged with learning are less likely to come to class prepared (Miller, 2017). In a study by Dowling (2017) about matching high school reading curriculum to collegiate expectations, students often came into class unprepared without studying or completing the reading assignments. Gallagher (2015) remarked students will be more prepared for collegiate work if they are engaged in the reading by responding to reading with written summaries. These summaries not only allow the

teacher to check the reading but allow students to think deeper about the reading (Gallagher, 2015). Like summaries, reading checks can be used to track reading (Dowling, 2017). In Dowling's (2017) study, teachers began to give quizzes when students arrived to class to determine how prepared they were for instruction. Dowling (2017) discussed matching the high school reading curriculum to collegiate level studies and remarked teachers should hold students accountable through reading checks and quizzes.

Furthermore, from the results of Dowling's (2017) study, 22 of 98 students passed the reading check, which showed students need help with preparing for class and the motivation to do the assigned reading (p. 2). Dowling (2017) predicted students would lie about their reading preparedness, but found most of them were truthful about not reading the required materials. Overall, the study revealed the value of using periodic reading checks to ensure students are prepared and engaged in instruction (Dowling, 2017). If students become more aware, involved in their schooling, and overall more responsible for their learning, then understanding reading and the learning process is possible (Dowling, 2017; Gallagher, 2015).

Reading is a way to encourage students to think critically (Blau, 2003). Afflerbach et al. (2015) emphasized higher-order thinking must be assessed through performance-based assessments. Assessing critical thinking in reading is already part of most state-required tests and standards, such as end-of-course (EOC) exams and common core requirements (MODESE, 2018). According to Afflerbach et al. (2015), students should be able to:

- apply basic reading strategies and skills, to construct [an] accurate understanding of each text;
- summarize each text, and note relevant details within each text;
- make evaluative judgments to determine what information from each text is suitable for use in a written or spoken presentation;
- synthesize information within and across texts, noting unique and shared aspects of this information;
- develop a spoken or written presentation; and
- use metacognitive strategies to manage the entire enterprise. (p. 211)

The bulleted points previously presented link directly to the wording of the CCSS, and more specifically to the Missouri Learning Standards (MODESE, 2019a).

For example, Missouri Learning Standard RL.1.a (Reading Literacy Text: Comprehend and Interpret Texts) states students should be able to "draw conclusions, infer, and analyze by citing relevant and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including where the text leaves matters uncertain" by the end of 12th grade (MODESE, 2019a, p. 2). Without engagement, students are not always prepared to meet the critical thinking standards set by the state (MODESE, 2018). Teaching higher-order thinking allows students to process information not only to conquer reading comprehension but also to compete in a complex world with high educational requirements and expectations (Afflerbach et al., 2015). Critical thinking skills can help students to engage and complete the standards set by the state (Afflerbach et al., 2015; MODESE, 2018).

Critical analysis skills are crucial to engage students, as supported by the CCSS (MODESE, 2018). These standards are centered on text analysis and interpretation (MODESE, 2018). Sacks (2014) stated in *Whole Novels for the Whole Class* that the key to meeting state and federal standards is to teach higher-level thinking by reading the entire text and then rereading for analysis. Sacks (2014) presented the concept of how a student interacts with a text, which is shown in Figure 1.

Once an author writes a novel, readers experience and respond to the work; however, readers may respond differently (Sacks, 2014). After reading, readers share, analyze, and comment on their reading experience, and any questions a reader has are then investigated and analyzed to determine the way the reader responded to the text (Sacks, 2014). Finally, readers examine the author's purpose in creating the work and determine if that purpose was achieved or not (Sacks, 2014). With the experience, students are able to create responses to invoke reading and analysis (Sacks, 2014). Sacks' (2014) concept is a way for teachers to understand how students may be able to achieve the Missouri Learning Standards. As students read, respond, share, and investigate, the reader will be able to draw conclusions, infer, and analyze (MODESE, 2018).

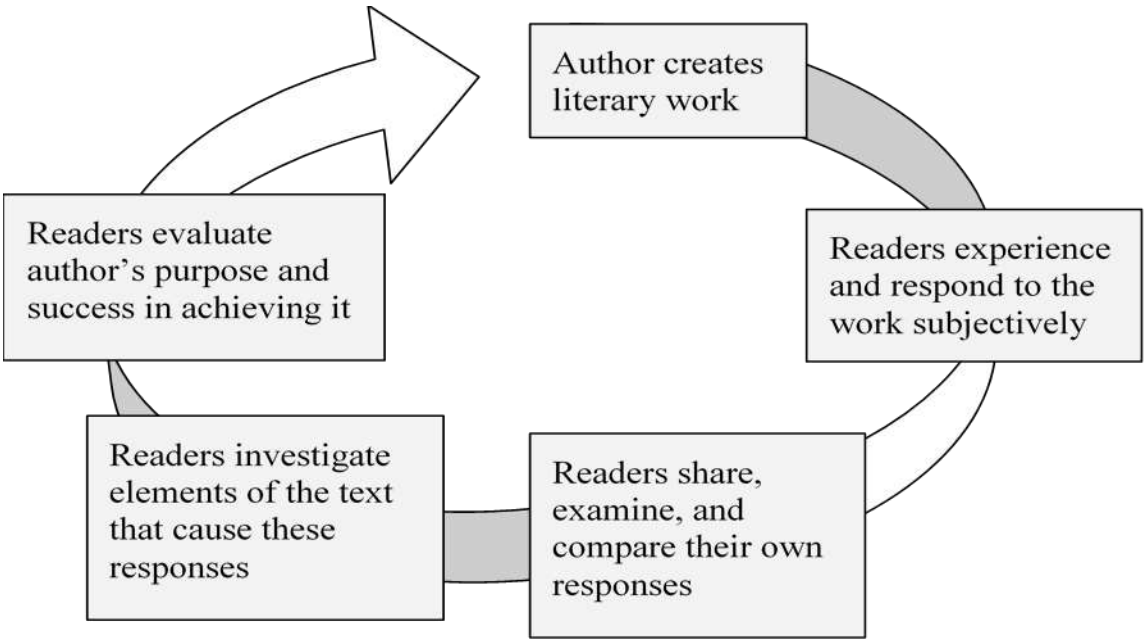


Figure 1. Visual concept of student interaction with the text. Adapted from *Whole Novels for the Whole Class* by A. Sacks, 2014. Copyright 2014 by Jossey-Bass.

In studies conducted by Sacks (2014), he noted when the students read the assigned novel first, they not only analyzed the text themselves but also opened new discussion points and concepts the teacher had never thought of, thereby creating a richer, more engaged classroom discussion. However, Sacks (2014) found some teachers have stressed the difficulty in getting students to actually read the book. Students who do not engage or read the book never fully interact with the text (Sacks, 2014).

Harmon et al. (2016) found when students are challenged by academic texts they are unlikely to complete the assigned reading. Gallagher (2015) proposed student engagement in reading whole texts can be remedied by looking at the reading passages like a writer. Gallagher (2015) stated, "We (teachers) are not just teaching them (students) reading skills… We are deepening their understanding of the world, which in

turn, makes them better readers" (p. 47). Students may need teachers to include activities and strategies to get them to engage with the whole text (Gallagher, 2015; Lesesne, 2014; Sacks, 2014).

Struggling learners. Secondary education challenges students who are on grade level and especially those who are not working on their grade level (Harmon et al., 2016). There is a lack of reading accountability at the secondary level, according to Layne (2009). Students have shown they do not want to read, and state and federal standards do not support reading accountability (Galda, 2010; Hong-Nam, 2014; Hong-Nam et al., 2014). Student engagement in reading changes over time, and it is likely struggling readers will read less as they proceed through high school (Merga, 2019). Lack of reading comprehension at the secondary level creates struggling readers who are ill-prepared for college texts (Manzo, 2006; Williams, 2014).

Reading struggles leave students unprepared for critical thinking, high-stakes testing, and academic success (Williams, 2014). Miller (2009) defined struggling readers as those with low test scores, failing grades, difficulty understanding materials, and inability to see themselves as capable of becoming active readers. In a sense, "they (and their parents) are beginning to despair, perhaps thinking that reading competence will remain forever out of their reach" (Miller, 2009, p. 24). Struggles in reading can have long-term consequences on academic success (Miller, 2009). Gordon (2018) implied students are ill-prepared for college reading expectations, and the ability to read well is essential in helping students prepare for college.

Miller (2009) commented that even students in reading programs do not read much, if at all, which creates weaker readers year after year. Miller (2009) recommended

rigorous, engaged reading instruction to help struggling students spend more time reading. Hong-Nam et al. (2014) discussed the aspects of how literary skills equal success. The researchers stated low reading adds to dropout rates, unprepared college students, and the need to take remedial classes in college (Hong-Nam et al., 2014). Layne (2009) discussed how reading is a choice; therefore, teachers have the opportunity to teach reading engagement and encourage students to read. Reading is a skill, and if left unpracticed, struggling readers may not meet college expectations (Layne, 2009).

Disengaged readers. Students who show up to class without having completed the reading assignments are known as disengaged readers, and disengaged readers cannot relate to the text because they do not understand it (Harmon et al., 2016). A study was conducted by Harmon et al. (2016) to determine how student self-awareness contributes to reading success. Harmon et al. (2016) asked teachers and students about their perspectives on reading. Students expressed they had issues with reading depending on family situations, classroom environment, and specific teachers (Harmon et al., 2016). According to Flink (2017), teachers have found reading programs help disengaged readers, but students need school-wide support for success.

Layne (2009) conducted a study and found that lawmakers, education representatives, and school boards often forget the disengaged students, as shown by the lack of reading accountability at the secondary level in curriculum objectives. Layne (2009) called this the reading continuum (see Figure 2). Reading at the secondary level is not tested or a part of federal legislation, which leaves reading engagement up to schools (Layne, 2009). Flink (2017) reported increasing school-wide support for teaching practices is beneficial for young readers.

The insatiable reader is the polar opposite of the disengaged reader (Layne, 2009). According to Layne (2009), teachers often assume because students can read, they will understand, but reading depends on the students' level of engagement. Disengaged readers most commonly become struggling readers (Harmon et al., 2016; Layne, 2009; Lesesne, 2002).

Reader Continuum

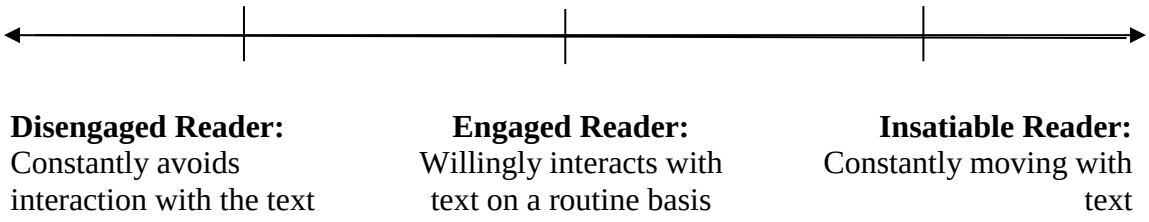


Figure 2. Layne, 2009, p. 63.

Students can learn to read, but researchers have found students do not want to read (Hong-Nam et al., 2014). Galda (2010) asserted students who are frequent readers have the self-awareness they need for academic success. Some struggling students lack the reading strategies they need for success due to a lack of reading practice (Galda, 2010). Weaker readers tend to look to the text or teacher for meaning instead of finding it themselves (Hong-Nam et al., 2014).

Reading confidence. Hong-Nam et al. (2014) discovered when students are less confident in reading, they are unable to interact with the text in thoughtful ways to construct meaning. Students become too focused on what they are doing wrong because they do not have the reading confidence to come up with new, sophisticated ways of

thinking through problems (Hong-Nam et al., 2014). Manzo (2006) found a lack in student reading complexity after the 10th grade is often due to a decrease in reading confidence.

Galda (2010) discussed the more students read, the more likely they are to build reading confidence:

> As students immerse themselves in the many excellent narrative, poetic, and informational texts available, they enjoy themselves, go on to read more, and the more they read the better they get at reading, writing, and understanding the author's craft. (p. 4)

Galda (2010) suggested once a student has reading confidence and self-awareness, he or she will be able to think through the text to determine meaning. Similarly, Hong-Nam et al. (2014) conducted research that showed students in 12th grade realized a greater awareness when they were exposed to yearlong reading instruction. The researchers called for teachers to engage students in reading self-awareness (Hong-Nam et al., 2014). Overall, students with reading confidence are more likely to demonstrate sufficient reading comprehension (Galda, 2010; Hong-Nam et al., 2014).

Students are logged-on, or occupied, with entertainment other than books (Layne, 2009). Most students are not in love with books, and therefore have a harder time engaging in reading (Layne, 2009). Dowling (2017) reported that for students to meet learning standards, they must actively participate in their own education.

Participation involves active reading. Hooley et al. (2013) sought to determine why fewer 17-year-olds were scoring proficient in reading and found the students had a negative perception of reading. Schools have increased the pressure on teachers regarding

the importance of testing and testing skills, but scores still continue to drop (Gordon, 2018; Hooley et al., 2013). Students often begin secondary school with a negative perception of reading (Gordon, 2018; Hooley et al., 2013). Students need a positive attitude toward reading (Gordon, 2018; Hooley et al., 2013).

Teachers can start by setting clear reading expectations (Dowling, 2017). Hooley et al. (2013) found teachers have tried to tell students how and what to read instead of letting the students invest in reading. Merga (2019) suggested silent reading during school hours might be the only time a high school student is reading, if he or she even takes advantage of that time.

In a study conducted by Hooley et al. (2013), students took a pre- and post-survey with a reading lesson. Hooley et al. (2013) reported while students felt like 20 minutes of reading in class was too long, they could then complete college reading requirements. Hooley et al. (2013) also found over half of the students did not like to read. Hooley et al. (2013) stated, "High school seniors reported they do not do much of the academic or recreational reading" (p. 326). Seniors reported they did not believe the teachers expected them to complete the assigned reading (Hooley et al., 2013). To be successful, students have to want to read, and teachers have to expect them to complete the reading (Dowling, 2017).

In the book, *Book Love: Developing Depth, Stamina, and Passion in Adolescent Readers*, the author presented a different opinion on students' willingness to read (Kittle, 2013). The key philosophy of the book is that teenagers actually want to read but adults do not let them (Kittle, 2013). College professors recommend students in high school read 200 to 600 pages outside of class a week (Cuevas et al., 2014). Kittle (2013)

suggested to push toward the 200-page goal, teachers have to help students build reading stamina.

Cuevas et al. (2014) believed high school students are not prepared to read newly advanced texts at the collegiate level, but they are expected to read and comprehend without aid. Kittle (2013) recommended teachers have students start by reading 10 pages a week and keep challenging themselves, so by senior year, the majority of students are reading at least 200 pages per week. Some students will rise above the set expectations and read more (Kittle, 2013).

School-wide reading methods. More and more students are entering college lacking the reading skills and abilities needed to succeed (Flink, 2017; Manzo, 2006). To adapt to the needs of these students, community colleges are offering instructional programs to develop reading skills in adult learners (Flink, 2017). Secondary schools can create a system that allows teachers to organize methods and instruction around reading, which is an effective method to prepare students for college (Gill, 2008). A system to support district reading growth is to implement a school-wide reading program (Gill, 2008). Flink (2017) described school-wide reading programs as self-selected reading practices in a controlled school setting.

School-wide reading programs can help students with reading engagement and comprehension skills (Dowling, 2017; Flink, 2017; Krashen, 2006). Galda (2010), a professor at the University of Maryland, shared that during her time as a teacher, most of the students could read and learn to read; however, most of them did not want to. Galda (2010), like many teachers, began to supplement instruction to ensure students were

reading. She stated, “I began to gradually diminish the time we spend with them (reading materials) and to increase the amount of time spent reading aloud” (Galda, 2010, p. 3).

Several researchers have found similar results. In an earlier study, Galda and Cullinan (2003) emphasized a large number of teachers were losing time analyzing reading materials instead of reading aloud. Merga (2019) recommended teachers read aloud to students, especially in high school, to spark reading interest. Teachers should strive to make sure students read the material instead of focusing on analysis of the text (Galda, 2010).

Students who hate to read tend not to read well (Warner, Crolla, Goodwyn, Hyder, & Richards, 2016). Warner et al. (2016) concluded this after conducting a study to examine the importance and effectiveness of reading aloud and how reading aloud enhances student comprehension. Warner et al. (2016) reported that across America, teachers actively read aloud to students to confirm that not only do students complete the reading, but the students also retain the information better than when expected to read silently.

Researchers found while teachers read aloud, students miss out on time to reread the text and use their inner voice to help with basic recall and comprehension (Warner et al., 2016). Layne (2009) disputed reading aloud allows students to broaden their reading interests. According to Layne (2009), if teachers have been introduced to the methods of reading aloud before implementation in the classroom, only then does reading aloud increase comprehension, listening skills, and vocabulary.

Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) is a time for students and teachers to read a book they self-select, and students are to read silently for an allotted time period throughout the

school day (Williams, 2014). Garan and DeVoogd (2008) stated schools need SSR so students can develop better reading fluency and reading aptitude. Students begin to practice reading silently at school during SSR, but then they become captivated with a book that interests them (Garan & DeVoogd, 2008). Williams (2014) found the more opportunities students have to read trade books, the more proficient they will become with different reading skills and strategies. Overall, Williams (2014) explained for reading achievement to increase, teachers must implement effective SSR, engage students, and provide differentiated instruction for reading.

The SSR method has been proven to help struggling students find the time to read (Gallagher, 2015; Williams, 2014). Vaughn et al. (2019) found struggling readers responded best with interventions that lasted at least one year. The SSR time for students is not only for reading but for teachers to implement reading interventions, even at the secondary level (Vaughn et al., 2019).

Researchers and teachers support SSR, and students find SSR appealing because it allows them the time they need to read independent novels and not just those assigned in class (Garan & DeVoogd, 2008). Teachers and librarians might discover a good book, but students might be reluctant to read it at first (Garan & DeVoogd, 2008). Williams (2014) discussed how SSR is most effective when educators take advantage of this time to model good reading habits. When students see their teacher enjoy a book, they may be encouraged to read it (Garan & DeVoogd, 2008; Williams, 2014). Teachers who encourage silent reading make SSR successful (Garan & DeVoogd, 2008; Williams, 2014).

Whole novel reading is when a teacher expects students to read the entire novel as part of the class curriculum (Sacks, 2014). Sacks (2014) noted that when teachers take time to teach text as a whole, students are motivated to reread books and sections to comprehend the novels better. Gallagher (2015) commented students should be allowed to have some choice when reading whole novel texts. If students connect to the book through choice, they are more likely to reread and interpret texts (Gallagher, 2015). Rereading texts can lead to deeper understanding and alternative interpretations (Sacks, 2014). Sacks (2014) stated:

> Whole novel discussion allows students to prepare for college-level reading. Unfortunately, by the end of the 12th grade, many students have never had the experience of reading a whole novel themselves and then participating in a sustained discussion about it. (p. 27)

To be successful, Sacks (2014) recommended teachers give students time to read in class, set firm deadlines, expect students to read at home, and provide feedback in real time.

A focus on reading engagement allows students to make connections with texts (Miller, 2009). In the novel *The Book Whisperer*, Miller (2009) encouraged all students to become readers. Miller (2009) stated:

> Reading changes your life. Reading unlocks worlds unknown or forgotten, taking travelers around the world and through time. Reading helps you escape the confines of school and pursue your own education. Through characters – the saints and sinners, real or imagined – reading shows you how to be a better human being. (p. 18)

Students want to escape from their realities, and reading provides this escape while connecting with the texts (Miller, 2009).

Williams (2014) explored the importance of the method with which students select books to fit their interests and also their reading levels. Once students have the appropriate books, the goal is for them to become more motivated to read (Williams, 2014). One way to help students gain this engagement is to introduce Young Adult Literature into secondary English classrooms (Lesesne, 2003; Williams, 2014). Appleman (2015) stated that as crucial as classic texts are, several teachers have explained classic texts compromise the core curriculum of the secondary English classroom. Most teachers admit these classics most often do not hold the interest of the students (Appleman, 2015).

Beumer (2011) confirmed Young Adult Literature to be an engaging and useful tool to promote reading engagement for middle and high school students. Greathouse, Eisenbach, and Kaywell (2017) shared, "From engaging the otherwise disengaged reader to promoting the social-emotional development of adolescents," teachers should choose books that spark controversy and interest (p. 19). Beumer (2011) recommended librarians and classroom teachers add Young Adult Literature to the curriculum, because several factors influence a student's reading habits.

Hayn, Kaplan, and Nolen (2011) pointed out the popularity of books such as *Twilight* (Meyer, 2005), *Harry Potter* (Rowling, 1999), and *Gossip Girl* (Von Ziegesar, 2007) prove teenagers are reading. Teenagers are transfixed by the drama and stories presented in Young Adult Literature (Hayn 2011). Due to this captivation, Hayn et al.

(2011) recommended teachers incorporate more Young Adult Literature in the classroom to help engage students.

Interest in Young Adult Literature

The following sections contain information about how teaching Young Adult Literature in secondary schools can promote the overall literacy levels of secondary students and prepare them for college. Young Adult Literature is defined as having a protagonist who is a teenager (Cart, 2008). The plot of Young Adult Literature rarely ends in a "storybook" happy ending, and the content is typically a coming-of-age story (Rybakova & Roccanti, 2016). Not only does Young Adult Literature fit into Common Core State Standards (CCSS), but it also offers a vast range of Lexile scores, while not taking away from the complexity of the texts (Ostenson & Wadham, 2012). As teenagers read complex Young Adult Literature, they can build academic skills necessary for achievement in the classroom (Glaus, 2014).

Complexity of Young Adult Literature. Scholars argue that while Young Adult Literature may help engage readers, it may not have the complexity compared to classic literature, no matter how compelling the book may be to students (Glaus, 2014). Teachers and schools often have to defend the choice to place Young Adult literature in the curriculum (Greathouse et al., 2017). Glaus (2014) conducted a study to determine if Young Adult Literature was as complex as classic texts already in most English curriculums and concluded Young Adult Literature could be compared critically to most classics.

Thompson et al. (2015) completed a similar study by researching the possibilities of reading Young Adult Literature critically in secondary and college classrooms. The

answer, they recorded, was simple; students will comply if a standard of learning to analyze and comprehend is expected (Thompson et al., 2015). According to the study findings, if students are more engaged in what they are reading, they will turn in more critical work, and Young Adult Literature has just as much to offer politically and socially as classics in the classroom (Thompson et al., 2015). Ostenson and Wadham (2012) contended Young Adult Literature is becoming more and more critical despite diverse Lexile scores. Lexile scores compare text complexity to the age-appropriate level (Lexlie Framework for Reading, 2019). The complexity of the novels is due to content: "The breadth and depth of young adult literature are equal to any other genre today, and the recurring life themes of love, death, loss, racism, and friendship contained in the classics are also present in young adult literature" (Ostenson &Wadham, 2012, p. 8).

Flaherty and Chisholm (2015) worked with the same idea by conducting a study on the graphic novel *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi (2007). This novel, based in Iran and Austria, is centered around a girl trying to find her place in a world of confusion, fear, and war (Satrapi, 2007). Quantitatively, the Lexile number of the novel is 3.3, which is low considering the content of the novel; qualitatively, the graphic novel is complex in areas of meaning, organization, life experiences, and cultural knowledge (Flaherty & Chisholm, 2015). Flaherty and Chisholm (2015) indicated the novel presents ideas that are complex for readers, making the qualitative level outweigh the quantitative level; therefore, the novel is as critical as the classic novels already in the curriculum.

The Missouri Learning Standards stress the importance of text complexity, but the wording allows for complexity to mean more than just Lexile scores (Alsup, 2003; Smith, Hazlett, & Lennon, 2018). On examining the curriculum for high school English, the

qualities of Young Adult Literature meet the requirements of the CCSS standards and state standards while providing for student interest in literature, which is needed for learning success (Ostenson & Wadham, 2012). Smith et al. (2018) found one of the main reasons teachers do not include Young Adult Literature in the curriculum is due to needing books with higher Lexile scores to compare to Advanced Placement classes.

Classics offer practice with reading skills, but students need more than just skill (Sacks, 2014). Students can use their imagination to fill in blanks an author leaves to comprehend a story (Sacks, 2014). Flink (2017) suggested teachers show students not only how to access books but specifically how to access books of high interest. Instructors must also provide reading time for students to spend time with books (Flink, 2017).

Young Adult Literature and struggling readers. Young Adult Literature offers varied structures that sometimes include smaller amounts of reading to help struggling readers (Flink, 2017). Flink (2017) stated, “Those who read poorly, often do not read enough. Therefore, there is a need to increase the reading time for all readers, especially those who struggle as readers” (p. 89). Students who utilize reading time will grow in all areas of learning (Alsup, 2003; Flink, 2017; Hunt, 2007).

Young Adult Literature can help scaffold classroom learning (Flink, 2017; Rybakova & Roccanti, 2016). Rybakova and Roccanti (2016) described how Young Adult Literature can be paired with canonical texts by scaffolding reading practice. Scaffolding Young Adult Literature can aid understanding of classical texts in the secondary classroom (Rybakova & Roccanti, 2016).

While the literary canon is defined as a collection of classic literary texts distinguished by their literary quality over a span of time, Young Adult Literature has not had the time to establish literary merit among generations of scholars and critics (Rybakova & Roccanti, 2016). The lack of literary merit in Young Adult Literature does not mean it has any less complexity than classic texts (Alsup, 2003; Harmon et al., 2016; Ostenson & Wadham, 2012; Rybakova & Roccanti, 2016). Some researchers have called for English teachers to focus less on class literature and more on Young Adult Literature (Dyer, 2014; Flaherty & Chisholm, 2015; Ruggieri, 2007). Students are more engaged and active in class discussion about Young Adult Literature texts, according to Dyer (2014). An option for English teachers is to alter classics with modern preferences by adding Young Adult Literature to the curriculum (Schmitz, 2007).

Students are more adept at reading classic novels as books marketed for Young Adult readers. Schmitz (2007) described how several classics have been adapted to capture the interests of young readers. For example, novels like *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte (1999) and many of Shakespeare's plays have been altered to meet the interests of Young Adult Literature readers through different graphic and modern-day adaptations (Schmitz, 2007). Many teachers, although they love the classics, agree classic novels do not always engage readers (Appleman, 2015).

Gordon (2018) recommended starting with a guiding text (classic), and then, after teaching that text, turning it over to students to relate to a Young Adult Literature text. Teaching Young Adult Literature promotes students' future success and allows teachers to build connections with students through books (Gordon, 2018). If classroom teachers

and school librarians display books to target young adults, students might gain a greater interest in reading (Schmitz, 2007).

Young Adult Literature helps engage students who are reluctant readers (Avoli-Miller, 2013; Gallagher, 2015; Glaus, 2014; Lesesne, 2014). Students get engaged with Young Adult Literature because they can relate to contemporary themes such as sexuality, abuse, relationships, and dysfunctional families (Avoli-Miller, 2013; Gallagher, 2015; Glaus, 2014; Lesesne, 2014). Topics such as these help students relate to the plot, and Young Adult Literature has the "capacity for telling its readers the truth, however disagreeable that may be, for in this way it equips readers for dealing with the realities of impending adulthood and for assuming the rights and responsibilities of citizenship" (Cart, 2007, p. 7). Students need to be presented with these seemingly "adult" topics because they have questions about these issues, and Young Adult Literature gives students the opportunity to find answers to them (Avoli-Miller, 2013).

Young Adult Literature is continuously changing to adapt to what teenagers are interested in and need to read (Koss, 2009). Students are pulled toward the often harsh reality of adolescent life as "happy" reads are replaced with more realistic and even angry novels students can relate to (Hayn et al., 2011). Students want books that interest them and for teachers to give them engaging options and recommendations (Koss, 2009; Lesesne, 2003, 2014).

Unfortunately, teachers often look at Young Adult Literature as "too easy" or "too short" (Lesesne, 2003). These teacher opinions hurt students, especially struggling readers (Lesesne, 2003). Struggling students may like a book but need extra time (Lesesne, 2003, 2014).

Young Adult Literature also helps students with English language comprehension (Alkhawaldeh, 2012; Koss, 2009). English Language Learners include students with varying degrees of language proficiency in their native languages and English (Vaughn et al., 2019). Alkhawaldeh (2012) discussed how English Language Learners need time to read to help with learning English. By reading independently at the secondary level, these students are able to practice skills they need to comprehend the English language better (Alsup, 2003; Alkhwaldeh, 2012).

Reading at the secondary level can develop skills with vocabulary, complications, memorization, and overall comprehension (Koss, 2009). Koss (2009) agreed independent reading helps students learn different literary elements, such as multiple perspectives. Literature is a powerful way to help students cope and deal with day-to-day issues (Bodart, 2006; Koss, 2009).

Young Adult Literature and social awareness. Young Adult Literature can lead students to develop a sense of social responsibility (Dede, 2010; Ruggieri, 2007). Dede (2010) asserted, “Several significant, emerging content areas are critical to success in communities and workplaces. These content areas typically are not emphasized in schools today, global awareness, financial, economic, business, and entrepreneurial literacy; civic literacy; and health and wellness awareness” (p. 57).

The focus of Young Adult Literature has the option to shift to intellectual and practical skills, including an awareness of personal and social responsibility (Dede, 2010). Students are more likely to finish a novel they can connect to (Avoli-Miller, 2013). Through Young Adult Literature, students experience situations they may face in

real life, and therefore, see connections between their lives and the characters in the books (Ruggieri, 2007).

Ruggieri (2007) interviewed Chris Crutcher, Young Adult Literature author, about the placement of Young Adult Literature in education. Crutcher explained Young Adult Literature grants teenagers the opportunity to open their minds to the concept that writing, as a reflection of culture and topics often seen as "untouchable" in the English classroom, can be analyzed by students and compared to the world around them (Ruggieri, 2007). Time and language have changed since the classic novels were written, and students do not feel the connection with classic literature necessary to ensure a lifetime love of reading (Ruggieri, 2007). Smith et al. (2018) found there was an increase of Young Adult Literature in the curriculum in the last five years because teachers wanted books that interested students.

Teachers can help students understand social responsibilities and politics through Young Adult Literature (Glasgow, 2001; Stover & Bach, 2012). Wolk (2009) suggested taking social issues and relating them to particular novels and providing a teaching guide for the classroom to help struggling readers. Students are curious about social problems in the world, and these social problems might be related to justice, immigration, or the government (Wolk, 2009).

Several of the novels Wolk (2009) listed are crossover novels; they appeal to a young adult and an adult audience, such as Susan Collins' (2008) *The Hunger Games.* The novel relates to both audiences due to the political aspects it presents in a dystopian society (Wolk, 2009). Students can gain a social understanding of politics and the

different aspects of government control (Glasgow, 2001; Stover & Bach, 2012; Wolk, 2009).

Alsup (2003) suggested that by reading Young Adult Literature, the minds of teenagers can be opened to the political world around them. An example of this type of literature is Laurie Halse Anderson's (2011) *Speak*. This novel is about Melinda, a high school senior who was raped (Anderson, 2011). Melinda starts school with no friends and no way to overcome this traumatic experience (Anderson, 2011). This realistic experience leads readers to a positive ending and allows teenagers to relate to the text through the shared emotions and experiences of the teenage narrator (Alsup, 2003). This particular novel can help educate readers on a variety of topics, such as dating violence, isolation, and cliques (Alsup, 2003). Becoming socially aware, learning different perspectives, and gaining reading comprehension can all prepare students for college (Alkhawaldeh, 2012).

Young Adult Literature explores controversial issues and real-world problems that help students understand the world around them (Sokoll, 2013; Wolk, 2009). Koss (2009) believed the different perspectives presented in Young Adult Literature will lead to a new view for the reader and allow for a different perspective from any story. Teenagers face several unfortunate realities each day, such as bullying, death, disabilities, and cultural differences (Kolencik & Bernadowski, 2008; Sokoll, 2013).

Young Adult Literature can help young readers open up about things adults are not discussing and help them deal with the realities they see each day: "Books – hard, dark, difficult books, can help. Books can heal" (Bodart, 2006, p. 34). Students need to embrace reading to cope with changing technology and the world (Morni & Sahari,

2013). Coping skills can be found in these "books that heal" to help students deal with the teenage pressures they face each day (Bodart, 2006, p. 34).

Young Adult Literature can allow readers to discover they are not alone while helping them on a search for identity (Greathouse et al., 2017; Sokoll, 2013). Hunt (2007) implied it is more than just the plot and characters that are appealing; the unique structure also pulls teenagers into particular works. To actively engage students, teachers can try to relate the literature directly to students' lives (Galda, 2010; Gallagher, 2015; Rosenblatt, 1995; Strong et al., 1995).

A lifetime love of reading. Introducing Young Adult Literature into the English curriculum can lead to a lifetime love of reading; this will help students in the adult world (Gallagher, 2015; Lesesne, 2003; Sacks, 2014). Lesesne (2003) expanded on the idea of lifelong readers who have a sense of losing oneself in books. Rosenblatt (1995) discussed how students need to engage in thought by connecting to texts to develop a lifelong love of literature. To fully engage in reading, students must be allowed to read books that interest them (Rosenblatt, 1995).

Santoli and Wagner (2004) believed Young Adult Literature is an effective way of initiating the growth of literary understanding and engaging high school students in analytical reading, even creating lifelong readers out of reluctant students. Young Adult Literature can be the bridge allowing teachers to teach the same standards and concepts found in classics while actively engaging adolescent students and stimulating discussion (Gallagher, 2015; Flink, 2017; Santoli & Wagner, 2004).

In an interview with Sharon M. Draper (1994), author of *Tears of a Tiger* and its series, Lesesne (2002) discussed how Draper's books made their way into classroom

instruction because of their interesting appeal to young adults. *Tears of a Tiger* is about the character, Andy, who is overcome with the grief of his best friend's death (Draper, 1994). He feels the guilt of the car accident that took his friend's life because he was driving the car (Draper, 1994). This guilt eventually leads Andy to commit suicide (Draper, 1994).

Draper started writing when she was a teacher, and she knew a book with a topic as controversial as this would spark interest (Lesesne, 2002). She wanted to write stories students could relate to, and that shows she understood the difficulties of growing up (Lesesne, 2002). These topics interest students, and that is how educators can get them to read. Lesesne (2002) stated:

> In order to make reading palatable as well as profitable for students today, educators must make reading as fashionable as the latest designer shoes, as desirable as the most popular fast food, and as valuable as the most high-tech video game. (p. 48)

Students will talk about and read about the topics that interest them (Gallagher, 2015), and they need to be able to see themselves in the book (Lesesne, 2003).

To implement the reading of Young Adult Literature, in the hope of successful outcomes, Lesesne (2002) suggested teachers look at how they will engage students through altering the classics and providing examples of books that relate to the teenagers. Secondary students can become engaged in reading once they are presented with books that interest them (Lesesne, 2002). A way to ease into teaching literature is to mix Young Adult Literature with the current literary canon (Santoli & Wagner, 2004). Young Adult Literature deals with universal themes and questions, such as "Who am I?" and "Where

do I fit in?" (Santoli & Wagner, 2004, p. 66). Because Young Adult Literature is about teenagers and marketed for teenagers, this genre puts students in the center of the learning experience, reading about issues that relate to them (Santoli & Wagner, 2004).

Reading Attitude

Teachers indirectly engage students with multiple methods using texts (Gallagher, 2009; Hooley et al., 2013; Schoenbach, 2012; Wolk, 2009). Student engagement and reading attitude can also come through different teaching methods (Gallagher, 2009; Hooley et al., 2013; Schoenbach, 2012; Wolk, 2009). Teachers, librarians, and school districts have to work together to change students' reading attitudes (Merga, 2019).

Teachers. Hooley et al. (2013) noted that reading attitude begins with the attitude of teachers. In one study, teachers responded to a survey that they did not want to give students time to read in class due to lack of attention and lack of class time (Hooley et al., 2013). Teachers sometimes felt students wasted reading time by not paying attention to the reading or not taking the reading seriously (Hooley et al., 2013).

Wolk (2009) stated teachers have a civic responsibility to educate students, especially in reading. According to Wolk (2009), "The time is urgent for all schools and teachers to awaken their students' consciousness to the world and help them develop the knowledge and inspiration to make a better world" (p. 665). Wolk (2009) suggested teachers have the responsibility to find different methods to engage students in what they are reading. While reading attitude is essential for academic success, not many teachers actually teach reading or see the need to promote a positive reading attitude despite their civic responsibility to do so (Hooley et al., 2013; Wolk, 2009).

Begeny, Eckert, Montarello, and Storie (2008) acknowledged teachers often overestimate students' reading ability. Additionally, the researchers stated teachers do not have sufficient professional development in reading assessment methods and skills (Begeny et al., 2008). Schoenbach (2012) argued students sometimes hit a wall when they cannot move through the lesson because of difficulty reading and understanding texts. Schoenbach (2012) found the key to helping students overcome reading struggles is to teach the development of active, engaged, and independent reading skills.

Teachers can find ways to engage students with the common understanding students have to develop their own thoughts and ideas about the text (Schoenbach, 2012). Teachers have the job to not only provide students with the tools to encourage reading and reading interest but also to teach reading confidence (Lesesne, 2014). Santoli and Wagner (2004) insisted that when teachers force students to read what is best for them, students often become frustrated and disengaged. Instead, teachers can help students embrace confusion and questions to figure out a solution together (Santoli & Wagner, 2004). Students learn best with one-on-one intervention that lasts at least one full year (Vaughn et al., 2019).

School curriculum. *Read-i-cide* (2009) interprets teachers' negative responses to reading (Gallagher, 2009). Read-i-cide is defined as practices of the school that kill the love of reading (Gallagher, 2009). Gallagher (2009) discovered many reading instructional strategies, such as unregulated reading time, hurt students by taking away the love of reading. The NCES (2007) and Bussert-Webb and Zhang (2016) reported a reading gap between not only racial/ethnic/economic groups but also between the reading input levels of ninth and 12th graders. Gallagher (2009) reported students without a

positive reading attitude leave high school lacking the literacy skills to become self-aware citizens. Additionally, the NCES (2019) noted the percentage of 17-year-olds who do not read for pleasure has doubled in the last two decades, even though the amount of required reading at school or work has stayed the same.

Appleman (2015) cited the CCSS has pushed for over 70% of the curriculum to be nonfiction texts, which puts pressure on English teachers to include less fiction (p. xi). Gallagher (2015) stated nonfiction and fiction texts could be scaffolded to meet state and federal standards while keeping students engaged. Appleman (2015) reported students need texts that interest them to be fully engaged with reading, despite a state and federal push for nonfiction texts.

Reading success is also supported by school-wide reading efforts. Cantrell, Almasi, Carter, and Rintamaa (2013) found schools with the most academic success in reading had created an atmosphere for reading all school year long. Throughout the year, teachers were able to select from a repertoire of learning strategies, as they best met the needs of students (Cantrell et al., 2013). Merga (2019) stated struggling readers have limited experience with reading for pleasure.

The freedom should exist for teachers to select practices that help their classrooms, under the shared assumption of the district to use the same curriculum model (Cantrell et al., 2013). Proper professional development in reading takes the pressure off of teachers because it is not used to evaluate or assess teaching, but instead, the training is a tool to help teachers not only build strong classroom curriculum but also collaborate on ways to improve reading curriculum and strategies (Warner et al., 2016).

School districts as a whole can contribute to reading attitudes (Fletcher, Grimley, Greenwood, & Parkhill, 2011; Williams, 2014). Teachers and librarians talking about books can help motivate students to read (Merga, 2019; Williams, 2014). Schools across the nation have referred to *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom Intervention Practice* by Kamil (2008) for aid in preparing district-wide literacy plans. Students from fourth grade and up often have difficulty acquiring the advanced literacy skills needed to read in the content areas, as specified by state standards (Fletcher et al., 2011).

The MODESE (2018) provided materials for reading improvement plans to be in accordance with Missouri Senate Bill 319. The improvement guide, distributed from the Institute of Education Sciences, focused on the areas of vocabulary, comprehension, extended discussion, individualized interventions, and student engagement (Kamil, 2008). The guide mentioned several district-level concerns when it came to reading, including student engagement, boring textbooks, and English Language Arts reading expectations (Kamil, 2008).

Fletcher et al. (2011) discussed the importance of a school-wide reading atmosphere. The authors noted that for reading improvement plans to be successful, the school needs the following:

- Literacy leader;
- Principal support;
- Well-directed and reasoned ongoing literacy Professional Development;
- School-wide standard assessment of reading;
- Goal setting;

- Informed parents;
- Explicit teaching of reading skills;
- External and grant funding; and
- Targeted behavior problems. (Fletcher et al., 2011, p. 152).

For the school reading improvement plan to be effective, each of these nine factors has to be consistently carried out (Fletcher et al., 2011). Minimally, school districts should have systematic assessment procedures in grade three to determine the reading levels of students (Fletcher et al., 2011). Manzo (2006) reported secondary students are losing momentum to read and increase reading skills. The MODESE (2019a) also recommended to succeed, students need common practices year after year.

Parents. Educational institutions cannot change reading attitudes without the help of parents. Morni and Sahari (2013) suggested parents have a responsibility to help children enjoy reading. The best way for parents to help is to read to their children (Miller & Kelley, 2014; Morni & Sahari, 2013). Parents who read are more likely to have children who read and enjoy reading (Miller & Kelley, 2014; Morni & Sahari, 2013).

A study was conducted of 98 students in different bachelor degree programs who stated they loved reading because their parents loved reading (see Table 2) (Morni & Sahari, 2013, p. 432). An average of 57% agreed if their parents liked to read, they were more likely to read (Morni & Sahari, 2013, p. 420). Miller and Kelley (2014) noted that while teachers and librarians may understand the need for reading, some parents do not.

Table 1

Reading Environment

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly Agree		Total	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
1. Do not have parents' exposure of reading materials	25	25.5	42	42.9	12	12.2	14	14.3	5	5.1	98	100
2. Parents' encouragement to read	3	3	12	12.2	27	27.6	42	42.9	14	14.3	98	100
3. Family and I have leisure reading	6	6.1	15	15.3	27	27.6	39	39.8	11	11.2	98	100
4. Time spent on reading depends on the reading environment	1	1	15	15.3	21	21.4	46	47	15	15.3	98	100
5. Enjoy reading with people around reading	0	0	10	10.2	15	15.3	48	49	25	25.5	98	100

A dissertation found that only 47% of parents read with students at least once a week (Mayhall-Andrews, 2018). Also 21% said that they never read with their children (Mayhall-Andrews, 2018). As Gallagher (2015) simply found, reading more leads to reading better. Brown, Schell, Denton, and Knode, (2019) found reading accuracy, which is essential to reading achievement, actually emerges from reading fluency, which is, in turn, the result of frequent reading. Parental support can help student find this reading fluency (Brown et al., 2019).

Brown et al. (2019) found educators agree home literacy is important, but that parents were not always prepared to offer reading support. Mayhall-Andrews (2018) concluded parents that did not read to their children was due to the parents being struggling or poor readers themselves. Brown et al. (2019) stated, "We must do more

than simply tell the parents that they need to work with their children at home because the home environment can be highly complex" (p. 18).

Educators cannot place the blame on parents if a reading atmosphere is not cultivated at school (Miller & Kelley, 2014). Daily reading practice increases students' reading confidence and develops more capable readers (Gallagher, 2015; Miller & Kelley, 2014). Gordon (2018) discussed that not only college-bound students need to love reading and have reading confidence, but students headed directly to the workforce after high school graduation also need these qualities. Teachers want students to cultivate reading confidence to become self-assured readers, writers, and thinkers (Gordon, 2018; Sacks, 2014).

Students. Students sometimes go to great lengths to avoid reading the book, turning to commercial plot summaries, simplified versions of the original, and online sources to get a grade (Santoli & Wagner, 2004). Cantrell et al. (2013) suggested reading academic success starts with bringing teachers together to create a learning culture that is repeated throughout the school year. Teachers can assist students during and after reading to build reading competence (Medina & Nagamine, 2019).

Students are encouraged to read by teachers and librarians who read (Merga, 2019). Through collaboration, book discussions, book lists, and promotion, educators can bring Young Adult Literature to the classroom in an effort to promote a positive reading attitude (Howe & Allen, 1999; Merga, 2019). Classroom teachers and school librarians can prepare students to "pursue personal and aesthetic growth" (American Association of School Librarians [AASL], 2017, p. 1).

The AASL (2017) reported once students are invested in reading, they will grow not only in their educational purposes but also throughout life. Bernier, Males, and Rickman (2014) found nearly 25% of public library users are adolescents primarily interested in Young Adult Literature (p. 166). Public librarians across the United States were surveyed, and the researchers found the libraries with a "young adult space" were the most-used by teenagers (Bernier et al., 2014, p. 168).

Bussert-Webb and Zhang (2016) analyzed reading attitudes in Texas and discovered girls had better attitudes toward reading than boys. In private schools, students showed more interest in reading than students at public schools (Bussert-Webb & Zhang, 2016). Book readers tended to be "upper middle class, rural females with high reading achievement" (Bussert-Webb & Zhang, 2016, p. 435).

Not all students realize the value of reading (Miller & Kelley, 2014). Flink (2017) reported, "There is a need to help students understand the value of reading, and that needs to happen in order to aid students in becoming successful students" (p. 91). Flink (2017) found that once students understand the value of reading despite academic backgrounds, they tend to read more.

Books powerful enough to entice readers and easy enough to read independently provide the best avenue for students to learn (Lesesne, 2003). Students become disengaged with reading assigned over the summer, since it takes away from reading choice books for pleasure (Miller, 2019). Gallagher (2009) cited read-i-cide as the cause of a gap in reading achievement, due to reading culture being traded for testing culture in schools.

Read-i-cide (2009) noted instructional school-wide reading programs, such as SSR, are traded for test-centered school-wide initiatives (Gallagher, 2009). As educators push students, year after year, toward practice for state-mandated reading exams, high school seniors graduate with high test scores but without literacy skills needed to be productive, informed citizens (Gallagher, 2009). Ness (2007) agreed with Gallagher (2009) and stated students are taught reading in terms of standardized tests, yet reading instruction has all but diminished in the classroom. According to Ness (2007), schools can help students reach comprehension by providing professional development opportunities on the instruction and the importance of literacy, create an inquiry-based school culture focused on reading, and utilize literary and curriculum coaches. These professionals should be the key in sharing literacy skills down through the grade levels (Ness, 2007).

Teachers can help students develop reading stamina and interest by allowing more reading independence so students are better prepared for college and the outside world (Gordon, 2018). Students want teachers to accept their interests (Gordon, 2018; Miller, 2019). Pleasure reading makes academic reading easier (Gordon, 2018; Miller, 2019).

In this decade, with the increase in technology, students should be able to learn by themselves and understand what they read (Medina & Nagamine, 2019). Reading for pleasure helps create a desire to read while helping students build reading skills for academic success (Gordon, 2018; Lesesne, 2014; Miller, 2019). Literacy is empowerment, and most teachers want all students to develop a lifelong love of reading (Gordon, 2018).

Summary

Chapter Two contained a conceptual framework outlining the variables of student engagement, Young Adult Literature, and reading attitude. Student engagement in reading leads to higher-order thinking, especially for students who struggle in reading (Dowling, 2017; Harmon et al., 2016; Hong-Nam, 2014). School-wide reading efforts seem to promote reading engagement (Flink, 2017; Sacks, 2014). Young Adult Literature shows promise in impacting students' reading attitude and engagement (Gallagher, 2015). Young Adult Literature is as complex as current classic novels in the regular high school curriculum; it also aids the struggling reader and promotes social awareness (Gallagher, 2015; Glaus, 2014; Ruggieri, 2007; Rybakova & Roccanti, 2016; Thompson et al., 2015). Young Adult Literature also helps students develop a lifetime love of reading (Gallagher, 2009, 2015; Lesesne, 2002, 2003).

There are no current stipulations or any state-mandated standards specifically about reading attitude. Missouri does not require students to be assessed on reading comprehension past the eighth grade (MODESE, 2018). While the Missouri Learning Standards assess reading comprehension, there is no standard as to the engagement of reading (MODESE, 2018). Students engage in reading in different ways (Lesesne, 2002). Teachers use a variety of instructional strategies to connect students to reading (Fletcher et al., 2011). Young Adult Literature has been known to help engage students in reading as an instructional strategy in the classroom (Gallagher, 2015; Miller, 2019; Ness, 2007).

Chapter Three includes a description of the methodology for this study. Provided in the chapter is information on the research design, purpose, and research questions. Additionally, discussions of the population, sample, and survey instrument can be found

in the next chapter. Overall, a summary of the data collection and analysis are presented with a consideration of ethics.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Examined in this study were the effects of student engagement and Young Adult Literature on reading attitude. A survey tool was used to collect quantitative data to determine which classroom practices are used to encourage student engagement. Quantitative data were also gathered on the use of Young Adult Literature in the classroom. Data were then analyzed to determine the interaction of student engagement, Young Adult Literature, and reading attitude in the secondary classroom.

In this chapter, the problem and purpose are reiterated. The research questions and research design are presented. Described in the chapter are the population and sample, instrumentation, and data collection procedures. Finally, the process for analyzing the data is detailed and ethical considerations are shared.

Problem and Purpose Overview

According to Sacks (2014), the English classroom has shifted due to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), and while teachers have moved to a reading workshop format, it is important to examine each type of reading instruction to best fit the needs of students. It is also important to look at reading practices within the classroom and how actively students are engaged in reading (Sacks, 2014). Students need to be motivated to re-read, engage in the reading, and use background knowledge to think through a comprehension issue or lack of understanding in the reading (Dowling, 2017; Harmon et al., 2016; Hong-Nam, 2014).

Schoenbach (2012) and Gallagher (2015) discussed how Young Adult Literature has been proven to help students with comprehension on many different levels. Young Adult Literature helps students relate to the texts and pull real-world experiences from

novels to think at a deeper level (Schoenbach, 2012). Through Young Adult Literature and engagement in reading, students may become complete readers (Layne, 2009).

Reading is a process wherein each student deciphers each word to comprehend the overall meaning of the text, but students do not automatically comprehend the meanings of these words (Layne, 2009; Schoenbach, 2012). Schoenbach (2012) stated:

> When students feel they are not good readers, frustration, embarrassment, or fear of failure can prevent them from engaging in reading. Without confidence in themselves as readers, students often disengage from any serious attempts to improve their reading. (p. 30)

Negative attitudes and a lack of self-efficacy can impact student reading outcomes (Schoenbach, 2012). Young Adult Literature can help students build the confidence they need to engage in reading (Lesesne, 2003). State expectations do not outline a reading experience or reading attitude but only focus on comprehension (MODESE, 2018). Students who not only comprehend the text but engage and relate to the text are more likely to achieve academic success (Schoenbach, 2012).

Schoenbach (2012) stated teachers not only have to teach students to read but also to actually think through the text and create a metacognitive conversation between the student and the text. It is unclear as to the amount of Young Adult Literature present in Missouri English curricula. More research was needed related to teacher perceptions of Young Adult Literature and its effectiveness in improving reading attitudes in ninth through twelfth grade classrooms.

Research questions. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are English teachers' perceptions of the relationships among student engagement, Young Adult Literature, and reading attitude in Missouri schools in grades 9-12?
2. What are English teachers' perceptions of student engagement as a predictor of a student's positive reading attitude in Missouri schools in grades 9-12?
3. What are English teachers' perceptions of the use of Young Adult Literature to increase a student's positive reading attitude in Missouri schools in grades 9-12?

Research Design

Quantitative data, in the form of a survey, were collected from Missouri English teachers. The purpose of the survey was to gain quantitative data about the variables of student engagement, Young Adult Literature, and reading attitude. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), "A survey design provides a quantitative design of trends, attitudes, and opinions of a population, or tests for associations among variables of a population by studying a sample of that population" (p. 147).

The survey was administered through Qualtrics (2019) and distributed via email to all superintendents in Missouri. If approval was granted, the superintendents sent the survey on to secondary English teachers. Specific details about the survey instrument are provided in the instrumentation section.

Population and Sample

The population of this study included 62 Missouri high school English teachers. To select the sample, superintendents whose names were obtained from the Missouri Association of School Administrators (MASA) listserv were contacted by email.

Missouri English teachers of grades nine through 12 served as the unit of analysis for this study.

The sample design for this study was cluster sampling. Cluster sampling is "ideal when it is impossible or impractical to compile a list of elements composing the population" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 150). The sample for this study was considered random, because each member school district of MASA had an equal probability of being selected. Of the 520-member school districts of MASA, nine were K-8 districts. Out of the 511 school districts remaining, 90 superintendents (5%) allowed the survey to be conducted.

Instrumentation

Schoenbach (2012) created an Interests and Reading Survey (see Appendix A) for teachers to use as they build relationships and study student interests at the beginning of the school year. Schoenbach (2012) suggested using the survey as a way for students to answer the question: Why do we read? This question was the guiding factor to Schoenbach's (2012) *Reading Apprenticeship Framework for Both the Social and Personal Dimension*.

The social dimension promotes "community building in the classroom, including recognizing the resources brought by each member and developing a safe environment for students to be open about their reading difficulties," and the personal dimension helps to "develop students' identity and self-awareness as readers, as well as their purposes for reading and goals for reading improvement" (Schoenbach, 2012, p. 24). Each of these dimensions depends on each student's reading abilities and interests, as outlined in the Interests and Reading Survey.

Schoenbach (2012) created the Reading Interest Survey and ran a field test to ensure validity and reliability before releasing the survey as an educational open resource through Wiley Publishing. Validity is defined as eliminating potential threats to the trustworthiness of the study (Glesne, 2006). Reliability refers to the consistency of items on an instrument (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Permissions were gained to modify the survey in both email and online form from Wiley Publishing (see Appendix B).

The researcher modified the items from the Interests and Reading Survey to be geared to the English teacher's perspective. For example, the survey by Schoenbach (2012) asked students: What is the best way for you to read? This question was modified by directing the question to the teacher and changing the answer choices. For example, a survey question was: In your opinion, what is the best way for students to read? While the entire survey is included in the Appendix, items were only modified from "Part 2: Getting to know each other as readers." The researcher did not copy any items or answer choices exactly from Schoenbach's (2012) survey.

Research from other studies was examined to form the other items in the survey. The survey was separated into two parts: demographic data and reading attitude survey. The demographic data served as data for grouping responses. The second section was compiled from modified questions from Schoenbach (2012) and a collection of other research examined in Chapter Two. Each item not from Schoenbach (2012) was reviewed by the dissertation committee for content validity and reliability.

Data Collection

A recruitment letter (see Appendix C) was emailed to each of the superintendents in Missouri using the MASA listserv. If the superintendent agreed to participate in the study, he or she was asked to forward the letter of participation (see Appendix D), consent form (see Appendix E), and survey to English teachers at the secondary level. Three superintendents chose to forward the email to building principals, who then sent the information to teachers.

The letter of participation included information about the purpose of the study, period of recruitment, and the dates for data collection. A consent form was included which contained an explanation of each of the procedures approved by the Institutional Review Board. Provided were the parameters of the survey; the types of questions participants would be asked; the possible risks, nature, and purpose of the survey; and the amount of time it would take to complete the survey.

The survey was available through the web-based program Qualtrics (2019). After a two-week period following survey distribution, the survey link closed. The response rate was 68.9%, which was higher than the original minimum number of expected responses.

Data Analysis

Creswell and Creswell (2018) determined data analysis to be any technique used to describe and collect data. The survey response data were imported from Qualtrics (2019) and analyzed using averages and percentages based on the frequency of the responses. The quantitative data were grouped into three sections based on the research questions.

The data were analyzed via descriptive statistics. Descriptive research is the process of "describing relations without speculating about the cause" (Hoy & Adams, 2016, p. 57). Utilizing the demographic information provided by the participants, responses were disaggregated by years of teaching experience. Descriptive statistics reported include averages, means, and standard deviation. This quantitative study uses descriptive research to collect quantifiable information to be used for statistical analysis of teacher perceptions of student engagement, Young Adult Literature, and reading attitude.

Demographic data were also collected to determine the experience level of the participants and their qualifications for completing the survey. This study included responses from English teachers who encounter student reading habits frequently. Participants were not required to respond to all statements, but each teacher fully completed the survey.

Ethical Considerations

An application to the Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board was submitted to gain permission to conduct the study, and permission was granted (see Appendix F). The confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were assured, as stated in the research consent form. The privacy of the respondents was protected by not collecting or using the names of any participants or participating school districts when reporting results. Electronic data were password-protected.

Summary

Chapter Three contained an overview of the problem and purpose of the research study, and the research questions were restated. The research design, population and

sample, and instrumentation were explained in detail. The process of data collection was clarified, and the method of data analysis was described. The ethical considerations regarding the study were also addressed.

The next chapter, Chapter Four, includes an overview of the purpose and an analysis of the data. The data are organized by research question and related survey items. In addition, tables and figures are presented to aid the reader in understanding the data.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Data

Overview of Purpose

This study was conducted to examine the practices of secondary English teachers with regard to student engagement, Young Adult Literature, and reading attitude. The purpose was to gain insight into how student engagement and the addition of Young Adult Literature in the secondary classroom impact student reading attitude. The study was developed through the conceptual lens of Layne's (2009) complete reader to analyze teacher perspectives of the aforementioned variables in the classroom.

Layne (2009) discussed how sometimes disengaged readers are forgotten because "fostering a love of reading in kids is not a curricular objective," and reading attitude is not tested by the state or a component of any federal legislation (p. 16). Survey data were examined to determine (a) the perceptions of Missouri secondary English teachers on current classroom reading practices, (b) the addition of Young Adult Literature in the secondary English curriculum, and (c) the impact of student engagement and Young Adult Literature on reading attitude.

The findings from this study add to previous research on reading attitude by Alexander and Filler (1976), Mckenna and Kear (1990), Smith (1990), and Tullock-Rhody and Alexander (1980). The chapter is divided into four main parts. The demographic information gained from the survey is contained in the first section. The second section is centered on current student engagement practices in reading. Next, the teachers' responses about Young Adult Literature are presented. The last section is devoted to reading attitude.

Data Analysis

The data collection process took place over the course of a two-week period in November 2019. The participants completed a 30-item survey. The items were designed to elicit responses from secondary English teachers in the areas of classroom instruction, resources, student engagement, Young Adult Literature, and reading attitude. Of the 90 school superintendents who agreed to participate in the study and forwarded the survey to their teachers, 62 teachers responded, resulting in a return rate of 68.9%. A participant's responses on the survey were considered valid if 90% or more of the survey was completed.

Demographics. The population for this study consisted of Missouri English teachers of grades 9-12. Age, gender, and ethnicity of participants were not collected in this study, but level of teaching experience was taken into consideration. In the survey, the participants were asked to share demographic information including years of teaching experience, the number of English teachers in the department, and how many students in the school qualified for free and reduced-price meals.

From the sample of 62 participants, 14 (22.3%) responded they had taught English for 0-5 years, 15 (24%) responded they had taught 6-10 years, nine (15%) had taught 11 to 15 years, and 24 (39%) had taught for more than 16 years. Of the 62 teachers, a majority were "tenured" and were therefore considered qualified to answer the survey. Of the 62 teachers, 18% taught ninth grade, 24% taught 10th grade, 29% taught 11th grade, and 29% taught 12th grade. Teachers were also able to select multiple grades taught.

The percentage of students who qualified for free and reduced-price meals in the participating districts is shown in Table 2. Of the 62 participants, 42 responded they did not know the free and reduced-price meal rate. Six teachers reported they were from a district where 0-25% of the students received free and reduced-price meals, 10 teachers reported a free and reduced-price meal percentage of 26-50%, 20 reported 51-75%, and six teachers reported a 76-100% free and reduced-price meal percentage. The majority of the participating schools had a free and reduced-price meal percentage of 51-75%.

Table 2

District Free and Reduced-Price Meal Rates

District Free and Reduced-Price Meal Rate	*n*	Percentage
0-25%	6	14.29%
26-50%	10	23.81%
51-75%	20	47.62%
76-100%	6	14.29%

At the time of this study, a majority (80%) of the participants taught 76-100+ students, while only 14% taught 51-75 students and 3.2% taught 26-50 or 0-25 students. Therefore, a majority of the teachers taught 76-100+ students of which 51-75% met eligibility for free or reduced-price meals. As of October 2018, the MODESE (2019b) reported the average free and reduced-price meal rate was 48%.

Additionally, 43.5% of the teachers reported they had two to three English teachers in their department. Five teachers (12%) reported to be the only teacher in their department. Nine teachers (14.5%) reported they had four to five teachers in their

department, and 21 (33.9%) teachers reported they had six or more teachers in their English department.

Research Question One

What are English teachers' perceptions of the relationships among student engagement, Young Adult Literature, and reading attitude in Missouri schools in grades 9-12? The survey items were grouped into three themes: a) district expectations, b) library use, and c) teacher reading and assigned readings.

District expectations. Teachers reported their district or school expectations as well as the use of a district literacy plan. Survey items 11 and 16 were grouped into this section (see Tables 3 and 4). Of the 62 participant, 74.19% (n = 46) reported their districts did not require in-class reading, 11.3% (n = 7) reported their districts had daily in-class reading expectations, and 14.5% (n = 9) reported weekly expectations of in-class reading. None of the participants responded their districts required weekly or monthly reading expectations. There was a mean of 5.89 with a standard deviation of 2.03.

Table 3

Item 11: What Are the District or School Expectations for Time Allotted to Students?

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	At Least Once a Semester	District Does Not Require In-Class Reading
Percentage	11.3%	14.5%	0%	0%	74.19%
n	7	9	0	0	46

Note. n = 62.

Of the 62 participants, 27.4% (*n* = 17) reported their school districts had a literacy plan, while 25.8% (*n* = 16) reported their schools did not have a literacy plan in place. Of the respondents, 45.2% (*n* = 28) reported they were unsure if their schools had a literacy plan, and 1.6% (*n* = 1) reported their districts had a district literacy plan, but the plan was not implemented. There was a mean of 3.66, with a standard deviation of 1.69.

Table 4

Item 16: Does Your School Have a Literacy Plan?

	Yes	No	I'm Not Sure	Yes, But We Don't Use It
Percentage	27.4%	25.8%	45.2%	1.6%
n	17	16	28	1

Note. *n* = 62.

Data from items 11 and 16 were disaggregated and compared. The teachers who responded they did not have a literacy plan also came from a district that did not require in-class reading.

Library use. Teachers reported how often they took students to the library to check out books, as well as how often they used the library media specialist as a resource for research or other technology needs. Survey items 14 and 15 were grouped into this section (see Tables 5 and 6). Of the 62 participants, 3.2% (*n* = 2) reported they took students to the library to check out books at least once a week, 19.3% (*n* = 12) bi-weekly, 16.1% (*n* = 10) at least once a month, 35.5% (*n* = 22) at least once a semester, and 25.8% (*n* = 16) reported they did not take students to the library.

Table 5

Item 14: How Often Do You Take Students to the Library for the Purpose of Checking Out Books?

	At Least Once a Week	Bi-Weekly	At Least Once a Month	At Least Once a Semester	I Do Not Take My Students to the Library
Percentage	3.2%	19.3%	16.1%	35.5%	25.8%
n	2	12	10	22	16

Note. $n = 62$.

Of the 62 participants, 10.2% ($n = 6$) reported they utilized the school library media specialist for research and other technological needs at least once a week, 27.1% ($n = 16$) at least once a month, and 49.1% ($n = 29$) at least once a semester. Of those responding, 11.9% ($n = 6$) of the teachers reported they did not have a library media specialist at their school, and 1.7% ($n = 1$) reported their school did not have a library. There was a mean of 4.47, with a standard deviation of 1.34.

Table 6

Item 15: How Often Do You Utilize the Library Media Specialist as a Resource for Research and Other Technology Needs?

	At Least Once a Week	At Least Once a Month	At Least Once a Semester	We Do Not Have a Library Media Specialist	We Do Not Have a Library
Percentage	10.2%	27.1%	49.1%	11.9%	1.7%
n	6	16	29	6	1

Note. $n = 62$.

Data from items 14 and 15 were disaggregated and compared to determine if teachers who took students to the library also utilized the library media specialist. Teachers who took their students to the library at least once a month (43.8%) also utilized the library media specialist at least once a month. Teachers who did not take students to the library (25.6%, *n* = 16) still used the library media specialist at least once a semester (27.6%).

Teacher reading and assigned reading. Teachers responded to the types of reading assigned in their English classes. Of the 62 participants, 24.29% taught non-fiction in an average school year, 24.7% prose (fiction), 18.6% poetry, 8.6% drama, and 13.7% media (see Figure 3).

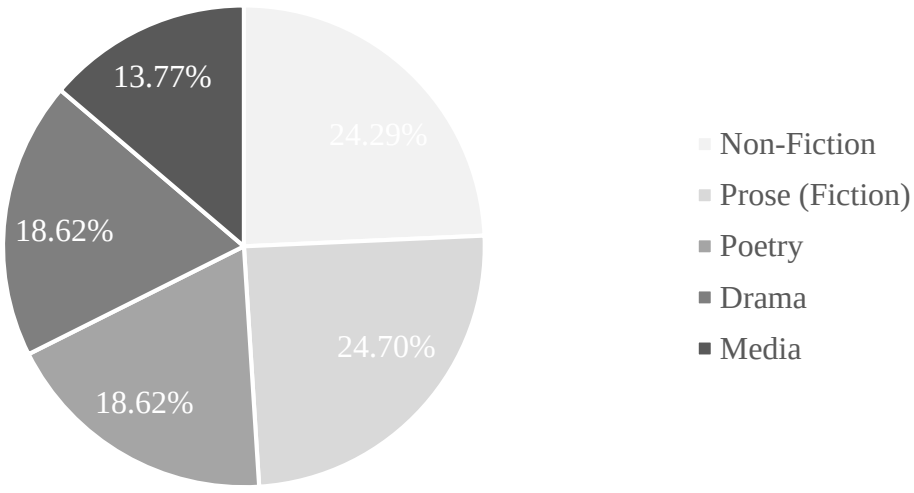


Figure 3. Types of reading assigned to students.

Data were collected to compare student engagement with reading assigned in English class and years of teaching experience. A majority of respondents remarked that sometimes students were engaged at each level of experience. Of the 62 respondents, teachers with 16-20+ years of experience (75%) stated the assigned reading was sometimes engaging to students. Despite experience, a majority of respondents agreed students were sometimes engaged (see Figure 4).

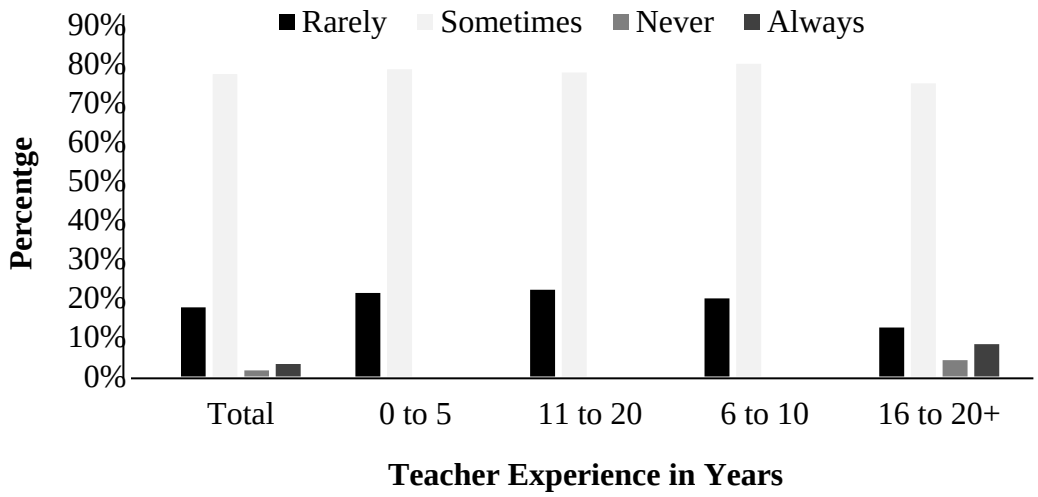


Figure 4. Reading assigned in English class based on amount of teaching experience.

Of the 62 participants, 64.5% (n = 40) reported they were avid readers, while 35.5% (n = 22) reported they were sometimes avid readers. None of the respondents reported they were rarely or never avid readers. There was a mean of 2.06 with a standard deviation of 1.44.

Table 8

Item 17: Do You Consider Yourself an Avid Reader?

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Percentage	64.5%	35.5%	0%	0%
n	40	22	0	0

Note. $n = 62$.

Participants generally responded there was a lack of direction concerning reading from the school districts since the majority of schools did not set forth reading expectations or literacy plans. The responses were mixed on the use of library space; however, the majority of teachers who reported having a school library media specialist utilized that resource. Teachers also generally agreed the assigned reading was sometimes engaging, despite their years of teaching experience and personal reading habits.

Research Question Two

What are English teachers' perceptions of student engagement as a predictor of a student's positive reading attitude in Missouri schools in grades 9-12? For research question two, survey results were analyzed to determine the state of current reading practices in secondary Missouri English classrooms. The items were grouped into the following: a) student reading experiences, b) student classroom experiences, c) and teacher motivation.

Student reading experience. Teachers reported how students typically read in and out of class. Teachers were also asked what outside pressures students were experiencing that interfere with reading. Of the 62 participants, 75% ($n = 47$) felt students read better in class, 16.1% ($n = 10$) at home, 1.6% ($n = 1$) in a seminar, and 6.5% ($n = 4$)

reported students tend not to read (see Table 8). There was a mean of 1.87 with a standard deviation of 1.60.

Table 8

Item 7: In Your Opinion, What Is the Best Way for Students to Read?

	In Class	At Home	In a Seminar	Students Tend Not to Read
Percentage	75.8%	16.1%	1.6%	6.5%
n	47	10	1	4

Note. $n = 62$.

To test inter-item reliability, items 7 and 10 were included on the survey. Of the 62 responses to item 10, 75.4% ($n = 46$) of teachers felt students read better in class, 16.4% ($n = 10$) at home, 4.9% ($n = 3$) in a seminar, and 3.3% ($n = 2$) reported students tend not to read. One respondent left this question blank (see Table 9). There was a mean of 2.59 with a standard deviation of 2.81.

Table 9

Item 10: In Your Opinion, What Is the Best Way for Students to Read Assigned Readings?

	In Class	At Home	In a Seminar	Students Tend Not to Read
Percentage	75.4%	16.4%	4.9%	3.3%
n	46	10	3	2

Note. $n = 62$.

Of the 62 participants, 8.1% (*n* = 5) reported that to the best of their knowledge, the average time students per week spend on school-related extracurricular activities or work-related experiences was 1-5 hours, 29% (*n* = 18) reported 6-10 hours, 45.2% (*n* = 28) 11-15 hours, and 17.7% (*n* = 11) 16-20+ hours (see Table 10).

Table 10

Item 18: To the Best of Your Knowledge, What Is the Average Amount of Time Your Students Spend on School-Related Extracurricular Activities or Work-Related Experiences?

	1-5 Hours	6-10 Hours	11-15 Hours	16-20+ Hours
Percentage	8.1%	29.0%	45.2%	17.7%
n	5	18	28	11

Note. $n = 62$.

Participants remarked that 75% (*n* = 47) of students read better in class; however, only 14.5% (*n* = 9) assigned in-class reading. Participants also reported whether the reading was assigned or for pleasure, students tended to read best in class. The majority of respondents selected students read best in class despite years of teacher experience.

Student classroom experience. Teachers were asked how students typically read in class, how much reading was expected outside of class, and how many students actually complete the readings. Teachers were also asked how much time on average they allotted to in-class reading.

Of the 62 participants, 12.9% felt students read better with headphones, 40.3% felt students should read silently, 43.5% read better together as a class, and 1.6% reported students read better in groups or that students tend not to read (see Table 11). There was a mean of 4.5 with a standard deviation of 1.66.

Table 11

Item 6: Choose How Your Students Typically Read in Class

	With Headphones	Silently	In Groups	Together as a Class	Students Tend Not to Read
Percentage	12.9%	40.3%	1.6%	43.5%	1.6%
n	8	25	1	27	1

Note. $n = 62$.

Of the 62 participants, 21% ($n = 13$) assigned more than one hour of reading per week. Less than one hour per week was assigned by 51.6% ($n = 32$) of participants. An additional 14.5% ($n = 9$) and 12.9% ($n = 8$) assigned either in-class reading only or chose not to assign reading outside of class (see Table 12). There was a mean of 3.77 with a standard deviation of 1.58.

Table 12

Item 8: In a Typical Week, How Much Outside Reading Do You Assign Students?

	More Than One Hour of Reading Per Week	Less Than One Hour of Reading Per Week	In-Class Only	I Don't Assign Reading Outside of Class
Percentage	21%	51.6%	14.5%	12.9%
n	13	32	9	8

Note. $n = 62$.

Of the 62 participants, 14.5% ($n = 9$) reported they thought 0-25% or 76-100% of the students actually completed the readings. Of the respondents, 27.4% ($n = 17$) reported 26-50% of students actually competed the assigned readings, and 43.5% ($n = 27$) reported

that 51-75% (*n* = 9) of students completed the readings (see Table 13). There was a mean of 4.29 with a standard deviation of 1.50.

Table 13

Item 9: In Your Opinion, What Percentage of Students Actually Complete Assigned Readings?

	0-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
Percentage	14.5%	27.4%	43.5%	14.5%
n	9	17	27	9

Note. *n* = 62.

Of the 62 participants, 27.4% (*n* = 17) reported in a typical week they allowed one day a week to read in class. Less than one day a week was allotted by 11.3% (*n* = 7), while 54.8% (*n* = 34) gave time to read each day in class. Of the respondents, 7.8% (*n* = 3) reported they allowed students to read in class not every week but at least once a month. One teacher (1.6% *n* = 1) reported he/she did not allow class time to read (see Table 14).

Table 14

Item 12: In a Typical Week, How Much Time Are Students Given to Read in Your Class?

	One Day a Week	Less Than One Day a Week	Every Day	Not Every Week But at Least Once a Month	Students Are Not Given Time to Read in Class
Percentage	27.4%	11.3%	54.8%	7.8%	1.6%
n	17	7	34	3	1

Note. *n* = 62.

Of the 62 participants, 3.2% (*n* = 2) reported in their opinion the assigned reading in grades 9-12 engages students always, 77.4% (*n* = 48) sometimes, 17.1% (*n* = 11) rarely, and 1.6% (*n* = 1) never (see Table 15). There was a mean of 4.11 with a standard deviation of 0.72.

Table 15

Item 19: In Your Opinion, Does Assigned Reading in Grades 9-12 Engage Secondary Students?

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Percentage	3.2%	77.4%	17.7%	1.6%
n	2	48	11	1

Note. $n = 62$.

During class, participants responded students typically read silently or together as a class. The majority of respondents remarked they generally assigned less than one hour of reading a week, and most teachers believed on average, only 51-75% of students actually completed the assigned readings.

Student motivation. Teachers were asked what motivates students to read and how frustrating it is to motivate students to read. For item 20 on the survey, teachers were asked: *As an educator, what have you seen that motivates students to read? Select all that apply*. The majority of respondents reported several aspects of school motivated students to read (see Figure 5). Teachers, librarians, or peers were reported by 25.79% (*n* = 41) of participants to have an effect on motivating students to read. Parental support was reported by 23.9% (*n* = 38) of respondents, and grades were noted by 22.01% (*n* = 35) of respondents. Pleasure reading helped motivate students to read according to 28.3% (*n* = 45) of participants.

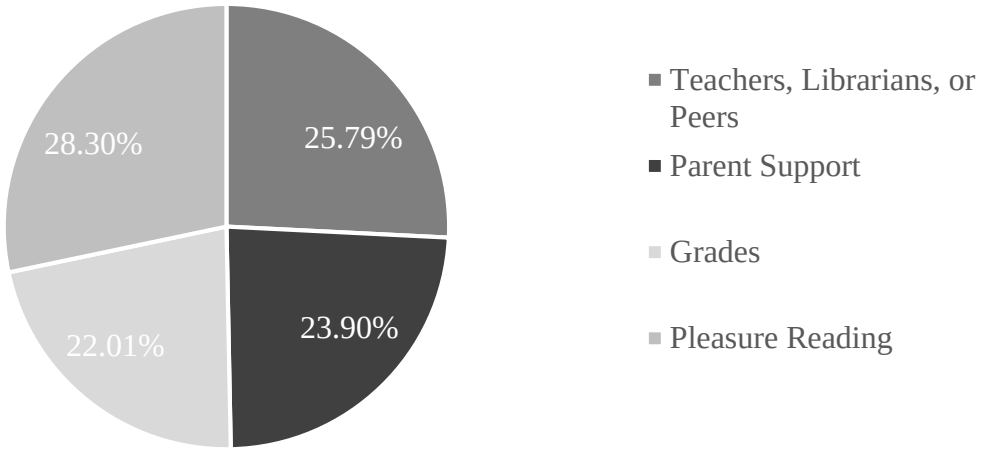


Figure 5. Motivators of student reading.

Of the 62 participants, 24.6% (*n* = 15) reported in their opinion it was always frustrating to motivate students to read, 65.6% (*n* = 40) answered sometimes, 9.8% (*n* = 6) responded rarely, and 0% (*n* = 0) reported never (see Table 16). There was a mean of 3.36 with a standard deviation of 1.38.

Table 16

Item 21: In Your Opinion, Is It Frustrating Motivating Students to Read?

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Percentage	24.6%	65.6%	9.8%	0%
n	15	40	6	0

Note. $n = 62$.

While participants were able to report several aspects that help motivate students to read, several still reported it was sometimes frustrating to help students develop motivation to read. Pleasure reading resulted in the majority of responses since participants could *select all that apply*. More information is needed to determine how often teachers assign pleasure reading or allow pleasure reading in class.

Research Question Three

What are English teachers' perceptions of the use of Young Adult Literature to increase students' positive reading attitude in Missouri schools in grades 9-12? The items were grouped into three sections: a) the purpose of Young Adult Literature, b) classroom use of Young Adult Literature, c) and teacher opinion of Young Adult Literature.

The purpose of Young Adult Literature. Teachers were asked whether or not Young Adult Literature texts could be considered critical texts and if Young Adult Literature texts could be paired with classics in the curriculum. Of the 62 participants, 25.8% (n =19) reported Young Adult Literature can always be used in the classroom as critical texts, 71% (n = 44) responded sometimes, 3.2% (n = 2) answered rarely, and 0% (n = 0) reported never (see Table 17). There was a mean of 3.26 with a standard deviation of 1.34.

Table 17

Item 22: Do You Think Young Adult Literature Can Be Used in the Classroom as a Critical Text?

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Percentage	25.8%	71%	3.2%	0%
n	19	44	2	0

Note. $n = 62$.

Of the 62 participants, 35.5% ($n = 22$) reported they thought Young Adult Literature could be paired with classic texts in the English curriculum, while 64.5% ($n = 40$) reported sometimes Young Adult Literature and classic texts could be paired. None of the respondents reported Young Adult Literature and classic texts could rarely or never be paired in the curriculum (see Table 18). There was a mean of 2.94 with a standard deviation of 1.44.

Table 18

Item 23: Do You Think Young Adult Literature Can Be Paired with Classic Texts?

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Percentage	35.5%	64.5%	0%	0%
n	22	40	0	0

Note. $n = 62$.

Of the 62 participants, 22.6% ($n =14$) reported they thought Young Adult Literature could always help a student through a social or personal crisis, 69.3% ($n = 43$) reported sometimes, and 8.1% ($n = 5$) reported rarely. None of the respondents selected never as an option (see Table 19). There was a mean of .40 with a standard deviation of 1.33.

Table 19

Item 24: From Your Experience, Can Young Adult Literature Help a Student Through a Social or Personal Crisis?

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Percentage	22.6%	69.3%	8.1%	0%
n	14	43	5	0

Note. $n = 62$.

Classroom use of Young Adult Literature. Teachers were asked how many Young Adult Literature books they had in their classrooms. Teachers were also asked if they promote or teach Young Adult Literature and their plans on exploring Young Adult Literature in the future.

Of the 62 participants, 33.9% ($n = 2$) reported they had 0-25 Young Adult Literature books in their classrooms, 24.2% ($n = 15$) reported they had 26-50 books, 14.5% ($n = 9$) reported having 51-75 books, 9.7% ($n = 6$) reported having 76-100 books, 4.8% ($n = 3$) reported having 101-125 books, and 12.9% ($n = 8$) reported having 126-150+ books (see Table 20). There was a mean of 3.98 with a standard deviation of 2.47.

Table 20

Item 25: How Many Young Adult Literature Books Would You Estimate Are in Your Classroom?

	0-25	26-50	51-75	76-100	101-125	126-150+
Percentage	33.9%	24.2%	14.5%	9.7%	4.8%	12.9%
n	21	15	9	6	3	8

Note. $n = 62$.

Of the 62 participants, 40.3% (*n* = 25) reported they always promoted, taught, or discussed Young Adult Literature; 48.4% (*n* = 30) reported sometimes they promoted, taught, or discussed Young Adult Literature; and 11.3% (*n* = 7) reported they rarely taught, promoted, or discussed Young Adult Literature. None of the respondents reported they never promoted, taught, or discussed Young Adult Literature (see Table 21).

Table 21

Item 26: Do You Promote, Teach, or Discuss Young Adult Literature?

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Percentage	40.32%	48.39%	11.29%	0%
n	25	30	7	0

Note. *n* = 62.

Of the 62 participants, 50% (*n* = 31) reported they were currently teaching Young Adult Literature, 12.9% (*n* = 8) responded they plan to teach or explore Young Adult Literature in their classrooms, 32.3% (*n* = 20) reported they might consider teaching Young Adult Literature, and 4.8% (*n* = 3) were not interested (see Table 22).

Table 22

Question 30: Do You Plan to, or Are You Currently Exploring Options to Teach Young Adult Literature in Your Classroom?

	Currently	Plan To	Might Consider	Not Interested
Percentage	50%	12.9%	32.3%	4.8%
n	31	8	20	3

Note. *n* = 62.

Teacher opinions of Young Adult Literature. Teachers were asked, if in their opinion, students would rather read a Young Adult or classic novel. Teacher perspectives were also gained on if students were more motivated to read Young Adult than classic novels. Teachers input was also elicited about the ability of Young Adult Literature to improve basic reading skills.

Of the 62 participants, 86.9% (n = 53) reported in their opinion, students would rather read a Young Adult Literature novel than a classic novel, and 1.6% (n = 1) remarked students would rather read a classic novel. Another 9.8% (n = 6) of participants reported students only read the assigned readings, and 1.6% (n = 1) responded students typically did not complete the assigned readings (see Table 23). There was a mean of 1.54 with a standard deviation of 1.56.

Table 23

Item 27: In Your Opinion, Would Your Students Rather Read a Young Adult Literature Novel or a Classic Novel?

	YAL Novel	Classic Novel	Only Assigned Readings	Typically Do Not Complete the Readings
Percentage	86.9%	1.6%	9.8%	1.6%
n	53	1	6	1

Note. n = 62.

Of the 62 participants, 29% (n =18) reported, in their opinion, reading Young Adult Literature tends to get students more interested in reading always, and 67.7% (n = 42) selected Young Adult Literature sometimes gets students more interested in reading. Teachers reported Young Adult Literature 3.2% (n = 2) rarely made students more

interested in reading, and 0% reported Young Adult Literature never interested students in reading (see Table 24).

Table 24

Item 28: In Your Opinion, Does Reading Young Adult Literature Tend to Get Students More Interested in Reading?

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Percentage	29%	67.7%	3.2%	0%
n	18	42	2	0

Note. $n = 62$.

Of the 62 participants, 40.3% ($n = 25$) reported, in their opinion, Young Adult Literature can always help students improve the basic reading skills needed for future success at the collegiate level. Additionally, 58.8% ($n = 34$) selected sometimes, 4.8% ($n = 3$) reported rarely, and 0% ($n = 0$) stated never (see Table 25). There was a mean of 1.65 with a standard deviation of 0.57.

Table 25

Question 29: In Your Opinion, Can Young Adult Literature Help Students Improve the Basic Reading Skills Needed for Future Success at the Collegiate Level?

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Percentage	40.3%	58.8%	4.8%	0%
n	25	34	3	0

Note. $n = 62$.

Summary

The analysis of data is described in Chapter Four. The second section of the survey required participants to use a Likert-type scale to rate their level of agreement

with general statements about student engagement, Young Adult Literature, and reading attitude. Research question one was split into three subgroups: a) district expectations, b) library use, and c) teacher reading and assigned readings. Research question two was broken up into three subgroups: a) student reading experiences, b) student classroom experiences, c) and teacher motivation. Research question three was split into three subgroups: a) the purpose of Young Adult Literature, b) classroom use of Young Adult Literature, c) and teacher opinion of Young Adult Literature. The data in Chapter Four were presented in percentage form.

Provided in Chapter Five is a restatement of the purpose of the study. The data from the study are summarized and evaluated in narrative form to provide an examination of Missouri secondary English teachers' perceptions of reading in and out of the classroom. The summaries and conclusions of the study are stated in accordance to each research question. Implications for practice are provided based on the outcomes of this study. Finally, recommendations for future research on the topic of reading attitude are proposed.

Chapter Five: Summary and Conclusions

The analysis of student engagement, Young Adult Literature, and reading attitude in secondary Missouri classrooms was the purpose of this study. A random sample of secondary English teachers was selected to participate in the study. The study was based on their perceptions of reading in the secondary English classroom. A conceptual lens for this study was drawn from Layne's (2009) concept of a complete reader and what motivates reading in and out of the classroom.

Data were collected using a web-based survey adapted by the researcher from Schoenbach's (2012) questions of reading interest. The data were analyzed using percentages. Some responses were disaggregated to further analyze the responses based on teacher experience. An association of previous literature and the results of the study are established in this chapter.

Findings

Relationships among student engagement, Young Adult Literature, and reading attitude. An analysis of the data from the variables was used to answer Research Question 1: *What are English teachers' perceptions of the relationships among student engagement, Young Adult Literature, and reading attitude in Missouri schools in grades 9-12?*

Participants answered this question by responding to items based on district expectations of reading, library usage, and each teacher's individual reading attitude. By asking items particular to district expectations on reading, it was found that 46 of the 62 respondents (74.19%) did not require any kind of in-class reading. Sixteen teachers (25.8%) responded their school districts did not have a literacy plan, and 28 teachers

(45.2%) reported they were unsure. Overall, based on the responses of the participants, there was a lack of district guidance and expectations for reading.

Library usage was also taken into account. Of the 62 respondents, 35.5% took students to the library at least once a semester, but 25.8% reported they did not take students to the library at all. However, 49 utilized the library media specialist at least once a semester for research, books, or technology needs. Further research is needed to determine the specific responsibilities of library media specialists. It is unclear if the library media specialist had a direct role in curriculum or teaching students.

Data were grouped by teachers self-reporting their personal reading attitudes and how much reading they assigned to students. It was found despite teacher experience, teachers responded students were sometimes engaged in assigned reading. Of the 62 respondents, 40 of the teachers considered themselves avid readers.

While the majority of secondary English teachers considered themselves avid readers, they felt the assigned reading only sometimes engaged secondary students. Teachers reported a lack of guidance on reading from district leaders. Most of the teachers utilized a library media specialist if the district had one.

Student engagement impact on reading attitude. An analysis of the variables of student engagement and reading attitude was used to answer Research Question Two: *What are English teachers' perceptions of student engagement as a predictor of a student's positive reading attitude in Missouri schools in grades 9-12?*

To answer question two, teachers were asked a series of items about student reading experiences, student classroom experiences, and student reading motivation. The analysis showed 75% of teachers reported that students read better in class despite how

much in-class reading teachers assigned. This percentage remained the same regardless of what type of reading was assigned. The different types of reading listed in the survey included non-fiction, prose, poetry, drama, and media. It was assumed each teacher had a comprehensive understanding of each type of reading.

The results revealed 75.4% of teachers believed students completed the assigned reading. The majority of teachers reported students spent at least one to 15 hours a week on extracurricular or work-related experiences, which can impact the students' reading experience. More data are needed as to the amount of time students can realistically dedicate to out-of-class reading each week. Overall, students need class time to read based on the data in this study.

By analyzing the teachers' responses about student classroom experiences, it was determined that during class, students typically read silently (40.3%) or together as a class (43.5%). On average, the respondents assigned less than one hour of reading a week, and most teachers believed 51-75% of the students always completed the assigned readings. Of the respondents, 55.4% reported students spent 16 to 25 hours on outside-of-school experiences per week; therefore, the teachers assigned less than an hour of assigned reading a week. Surprisingly, 12.9% (n = 8) of the teachers did not assign any out-of-class reading. Only 14.5% of teachers believed students completed 75-100% of the reading.

Student and teacher motivation was also analyzed with regard to student engagement. While participants were able to select different aspects that helped motivate students to read, several still reported it was sometimes frustrating to help students become motivated to read. The teachers were able to select all that applied when

questioned on what motivates students to read. The majority of teachers selected pleasure reading.

Young Adult Literature impact on reading attitude. Data were collected from items on the survey to answer *Research Question Three: What are English teachers' perceptions of the use of Young Adult Literature to increase a student's positive reading attitude in Missouri schools in grades 9-12*? An analysis of the variables of Young Adult Literature and reading attitude was used to answer this research question. Question three was answered by gathering teachers' perspectives on the purpose of Young Adult Literature, classroom use of Young Adult Literature, and their opinions of Young Adult Literature.

Three items from the survey were in reference to the purpose of Young Adult Literature. Of the respondents, 71% reported Young Adult Literature could sometimes be considered critical texts. Similarly, the majority of teachers also perceived classic novels could sometimes be paired with Young Adult Literature texts for instructional use. The majority of respondents (69.3%) also reported that Young Adult Literature could sometimes help students through social or personal crises. It was assumed the teachers had a complete understanding of the differences between classic and Young Adult novels.

The majority of respondents reported they only had 0-25 Young Adult Literature texts in their classroom, but there was not an item on the survey asking if the teachers had a classroom library at all. Of the respondents, 40.3% reported they always promoted, taught, or discussed Young Adult Literature, and 48.4% reported they sometimes promoted, taught, or discussed Young Adult Literature. The majority of respondents

reported they taught, prompted, or discussed Young Adult Literature at some point throughout the school year.

However, only 50% of participants reported they were currently exploring options to teach Young Adult Literature in the classroom. The answer selections for the item *Do you plan to, or are you currently exploring options to teach Young Adult Literature in your classroom* were *currently, plan to, might consider,* and *not interested*. There was not a selection for teachers who had already implemented Young Adult Literature into the classroom curriculum.

Of the respondents, the majority (86.9%) reported, in their opinion, students would rather read a Young Adult novel than a classic novel. Similarly, the majority found Young Adult Literature tended to get students more interested in reading. The majority also reported Young Adult Literature can sometimes help improve basic reading skills needed at the collegiate level.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to examine the current perceptions of secondary English teachers on student engagement, Young Adult Literature, and reading attitude. The framework for this study was developed using Layne's (2009) complete reader concept through the aspects of motivation, engagement, interest, and attitude. All participants worked in Missouri districts as secondary English teachers. Based on the findings which emerged from the data, several conclusions were drawn that relate to the research questions.

District supporting student engagement. To answer research question one, the perceptions of high school Missouri English teachers regarding factors that influence student engagement and district support were analyzed and detailed. Williams (2014) asserted schools must implement strategies across the district for effective school reading programs to increase reading success, and engagement works best with school-wide initiatives. School-wide reading programs and clear district reading expectations can most help students with reading engagement and comprehension skills (Dowling, 2017; Flink, 2017; Krashen, 2006). This was reflected in the majority of teachers (74.1%) who reported they did not assign in-class reading; the majority were also unsure of district expectations with regard to reading.

One way districts can support reading is through the library and library media specialist. Merga (2019) found librarians and teachers can encourage students to read through collaboration, book discussions, book lists, and promotion. Of participating teachers, 74.2% took students to the library at least once a semester for the purpose of checking out books. The data revealed most teachers who had access to a library media specialist used this service at least once a semester.

Student classroom reading needs. Data analysis revealed teachers believe students read best in class but are only sometimes engaged by the assigned reading. A total of 47 participants (75%) reported students read better in class. Teachers remarked students most likely read in class silently or as a class. Previous researchers found teachers need to find time for students to read in class and use alternative methods to engage students in reading while promoting a positive reading attitude (Hooley et al., 2013; Wolk, 2009).

According to the teachers who participated in this study, students were sometimes engaged in the assigned reading. Layne (2009) found that if students are disengaged in reading, they tend not to read the assigned reading. This was supported by the results of the survey, as participating teachers felt that only 51% to 75% of students completed assigned readings. Teachers also reported they thought students worked 16 to 25 hours outside of school each week. Flink (2017) found once students understood the value of reading, despite extracurricular and work requirements, they tended to read more. Therefore, students must find value in reading to become engaged despite outside factors.

Young Adult Literature in the classroom. To answer research question two, perceptions of secondary English teachers regarding the use of Young Adult Literature in the classroom were analyzed. Young Adult Literature has been found to work as critical texts at the secondary level regardless of Lexile scores due to the complex content of the texts (Flaherty & Chisholm, 2015; Ostenson & Wadham, 2012; Thompson et al., 2015). Of the participants, 71% (n = 44) reported Young Adult Literature could sometimes be considered critical texts.

The majority of respondents also reported classic novels could sometimes be paired with Young Adult Literature texts for instructional use. Young Adult Literature can be paired with classic texts to help improve and differentiate secondary curriculum (Flink, 2017; Sacks, 2014). Young Adult Literature can be used critically in the classroom either by analyzing the complex content and themes or pairing with a classic text (Flink, 2017; Sacks, 2014).

Data have shown Young Adult Literature can help students socially and emotionally, not just academically (Bodart, 2006; Dede, 2010; Ruggieri, 2007).

Researchers have found Young Adult Literature enables students to deal with trauma or learn social responsibility while providing reading skills needed in high school (Dede, 2010; Ruggieri, 2007). Bodart (2006) discussed the difficulty many adult readers encounter when trying to relate to Young Adult Literature. Young Adult Literature "…frequently makes adults uncomfortable because so many of them want to protect teens from the darkest sides of this world" (Bodart, 2006, p. 32). Similarly, Koss, (2008) determined reading Young Adult Literature helps students heal in three different ways: first, teenagers are not alone; second, students can identify with the characters in the novels; and third, students can learn more about themselves by reflecting on the book they read.

While teenagers want books that help them relate to their reality, adults might not be able to relate to that level of reality (Bodart, 2006). A full 86.9% of participating teachers reported students would rather read a Young Adult Literature novel than a classic novel. Overall, the majority of teachers responded positively to the use of Young Adult Literature in the future regardless of the level of their current use of it in the classroom.

Reading attitude. The third research question addressed the perceptions of English teachers on the reading attitudes of secondary students. Three-fourths of the teachers reported students read better in class. Similarly, 74.4% of teachers reported students complete assigned reading better in class.

Sacks (2014) recommended teachers find time for students to read in class to promote a positive reading experience and attitude. Greathouse et al. (2017) found Young Adult Literature was the best method to promote a better reading attitude in an otherwise

disengaged reader. This was confirmed by 29% of the teachers in this study who reported *always* and 67.7% who responded Young Adult Literature *sometimes* allowed for students to get more interested in reading.

Implications for Practice

Implications for Missouri school districts. The results of this study may assist districts and teachers in adding Young Adult Literature to the secondary English curriculum to encourage positive reading attitudes in students. Districts must provide teacher support, professional development in reading, and clear reading expectations. Analysis of the data revealed 27% of the respondents had a district literacy plan. The MODESE (2018) recommends a district literacy plan and provides information for how to put those plans in place.

Not only do districts need a specific literary plan, but they should also build support and professional development for teaching reading engagement. Ness (2007) found some teachers felt they were not qualified to teach reading comprehension skills. With clear district support and expectations, students are more likely to gain reading confidence and a positive reading attitude.

School districts and teachers should also use the library as a resource for reading engagement. The AASL (2017) found once students are invested in reading, they will grow academically. Teachers who use the library allow students to access a magnitude of resources outside of classroom instruction.

In this study, only 25% of teachers reported they did not take students to the library. Districts should explore ways of utilizing library media specialists for help implementing Young Adult Literature and increasing student engagement. Bernier et al.

(2014) found 25% of public library users were specifically interested in Young Adult Literature (p. 166).

Implications for secondary English teachers. Secondary English teachers should ideally consider themselves avid readers. Teachers should actively read novels while in and out of the classroom. While the majority of participants considered themselves avid readers, only 25% of teachers felt students were always engaged in the assigned reading.

While it is not likely that one novel will engage an entire class of diverse students, there is supported research for blending lessons in which a teacher instructs based on one theme with several different novel options (Flaherty & Chisholm, 2015). For example, the teacher could provide the choice between James Dashner's (2011) *Maze Runner* and William Golding's (1954) *Lord of the Flies* and assign the theme Coming of Age as a point of connection between the Young Adult Literature and the classic text. The pairing of Young Adult Literature and classic novels is supported by previous researchers (Avoli-Miller, 2013; Flaherty & Chisholm, 2015; Hunt, 2007; Ruggieri, 2007) and the data from this study.

Specifically, the results of this study revealed the majority of teachers believe their students need to read in class to be engaged. Votypka (2018) stated if students are supported in their personal reading needs, they are more likely to develop independent, self-directed reading skills. The results of the study showed teachers perceive students not only read better in class, but participants also agreed parental support, teachers, librarians, peers, grades, and pleasure reading influence student reading attitudes.

Therefore, teachers need to capitalize on all of these sources as a way to encourage reading.

Researchers have shown students tend to perform better when reading together as a class, even at the secondary level (Warner et al., 2016). Across America, teachers actively read aloud to students to assure students complete the reading (Warner et al., 2016). Teachers have also reported reading aloud in class improves student reading skills (Warner et al., 2016). While this study indicated the majority of teachers required students to either read silently or read together as a class, researchers have shown students tend to be more engaged when they read together (Merga, 2019).

Secondary teachers also need to be able and willing to help students engage in reading to improve reading attitude (Merga, 2019; Schoenbach, 2012). One way to achieve a positive reading attitude is through the introduction and instruction of Young Adult Literature (Schoenbach, 2012). Teachers should look into methods of introducing Young Adult Literature into the secondary curriculum.

In this study, teachers felt students read best while in class; therefore, teachers and districts should evaluate a specific amount of time for students to read in class. Outside reading should be determined by the amount of time students read in class and how much time they have to dedicate to reading outside of class (Merga, 2019). This can be accomplished by providing clear reading expectations, an established timeline, and a positive reading atmosphere.

Implications for Young Adult Literature. Young Adult Literature should be perceived as critical texts that can be paired with classics and used in the classroom to promote student engagement and attitude in reading (Glaus, 2014; Greathouse et al.,

2017). Young Adult Literature should not only be used in the classroom but also as a way to help students through social or personal crises (Dede, 2010; Ruggieri, 2007).

Teachers should also have access to Young Adult novels for students either through a classroom library or by utilizing the school library. Teachers reported Young Adult Literature seemed to engage students more than classic novels. Since the majority of teachers reported students would rather read a Young Adult novel than a classic novel, teachers should try to incorporate Young Adult Literature into the secondary English curriculum.

Recommendations for Future Research

Though the present study was conducted to identity aspects of student reading attitude in secondary classrooms across Missouri, there is a great deal more research that can be done to identify what specifically creates a positive reading attitude. Further research can expand on what engages and influences student reading at the secondary level. All participants in this study contributed based on their personal experiences as secondary English teachers.

The present study was limited to a small selection of secondary English teachers in Missouri. More research could be conducted to compare teacher perceptions with the perceptions of secondary students enrolled in English classes. A broader sample could be selected to identify the collective experience of the population; this study focused on the individual perspectives of the research participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

There were several gaps within the study. While the survey had items addressing district expectations, library use, and teacher reading habits, these identifiers were not specific enough to narrow down the research. Research question one (*What are English*

teachers' perceptions of the relationships among student engagement, Young Adult Literature, and reading attitude in Missouri schools in grades 9-12?) was too broad, and while it was answered overall by looking at the impact of student engagement and Young Adult Literature on reading attitude, the study could have been expanded to include specific resources provided to students such as district expectations, library use, and teacher reading habits.

Specific research on types of district reading support could identify how to engage students in reading to promote positive reading attitudes. Secondary schools can create a system that allows teachers to organize methods and instruction around strategies such as Sustained Silent Reading (SSR), Read Aloud (RA), or whole novel reading (Dowling, 2017; Flink, 2017; Gallagher, 2015; Krashen, 2006, Sacks, 2014). Furthermore, research could be conducted on what steps school districts can take to support pleasure reading at the secondary level. Students are reading for pleasure less and less each year (Gallagher, 2015; NCES, 2019).

Future research can be conducted on outside factors that may contribute to a negative reading attitude. A reading gap exists among racial, ethnic, and economic groups (Bussert-Webb & Zhang, 2016). This research can also determine how much time students feel they have to read outside of class, whether that reading is assigned reading or for pleasure. These data can be disaggregated with the amount of time students spend on extracurricular or work-related experiences.

Future research could focus on how a teacher's personal reading habits and motivation influence student engagement and reading attitude. Researchers have found when students see their teachers enjoy books, students may be more engaged in reading

(Garan & DeVoogd, 2008; Williams, 2014). Previous researchers noted teachers may have preconceived notions about a student's reading ability and attitude (Hooley et al., 2013; Wolk, 2009). Future research can be conducted to examine teacher perceptions versus student perceptions of Young Adult Literature and its uses in and out of the classroom.

Finally, future research can also be conducted solely on what contributes to reading engagement and a positive reading attitude for struggling readers. More specifically, research can be conducted as to the effect Young Adult Literature has on struggling readers. Researchers have found students can become more engaged in Young Adult Literature due to the complex themes versus text complexity (Alsup, 2003; Flink, 2017; Hunt, 2007). Student and teacher perceptions of Young Adult Literature and the struggling reader could contribute to the development of positive reading attitudes.

Summary

This study was focused on the impact of student engagement and Young Adult Literature on reading attitude by eliciting the perspectives of secondary English teachers across Missouri. The research was conducted using an online survey to garner teachers' perceptions of student engagement, Young Adult Literature, and reading attitude in the classroom. The data were analyzed to answer the research questions.

A thorough review of literature was conducted related to current research on student engagement and Young Adult Literature. In Chapter Two, the conceptual framework of the three variables of the study was explored in-depth. Each variable was then analyzed individually to provide a clear understanding of the current research on that

variable. Student engagement was examined through the concepts of higher-order thinking, struggling readers, and school-wide reading programs.

Interest in Young Adult Literature was viewed in terms of the following: a) Young Adult Literature as critical texts, b) Young Adult Literature and the struggling reader, c) Young Adult Literature and social awareness, and d) a lifetime love of reading. A review of current research on reading attitude was also presented based upon the subgroups teachers, school curriculum, parents, and students. Several common themes were found in the literature specific to reading in the secondary classroom.

Chapter Three included a detailed examination of the methodology utilized for this study. The purpose of the study was to examine the current practices of student engagement and Young Adult Literature on the impact of a positive student reading attitude. A survey by Schoenbach (2012) was modified along with questions created by the researcher to create a 30-item survey based on current research. The survey was sent to approximately 500 Missouri school districts. A total of 104 school district superintendents responded and approved, and 62 secondary English teachers completed the survey.

Data were analyzed and discussed in Chapter Four. Teachers noted a lack of student engagement and district support. The results from this study also indicated student engagement and Young Adult Literature sometimes impact reading attitude. The majority of teachers responded favorably to Young Adult Literature as a way to improve student reading attitude.

In Chapter Five, the findings, conclusions, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research were presented. Overall, an analysis of the data

suggested school districts should set clear expectations and plans for reading support for secondary English teachers in Missouri. The findings from the study indicated teachers should utilize Young Adult Literature as a way to increase and improve student engagement and student reading attitude. Based on the findings from this study, secondary students are not always engaged in reading either in or out of class. By specifically adding complex Young Adult novels to the curriculum, either as assigned reading or paired with classics, teachers may improve students' reading attitudes.

References

Afflerbach, P., Cho, B. Y., & Kim, J. Y. (2015). Conceptualizing and assessing higher-order thinking in reading. *Theory into Practice, 54*(3), 203-212. doi:10.1080/00405841.2015.1044367

Alexander, J. E., & Filler, R. C. (1976). *Attitudes and reading.* Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Alkhawaldeh, A. (2012). High school students' challenges in English reading comprehension in Amman second directorate of education. *Journal of Instructional Psychology, 39*(3/4), 214-228.

Alsup, J. (2003). Politicizing young adult literature: Reading Anderson's *Speak* as a critical text. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 47*(2), 158-166.

American Association of School Librarians. (2017). Standards framework. Retrieved from https://standards.aasl.org/framework/

Anderson, L. H. (2011). *Speak*. New York, NY: Square Fish.

Appleman, D. (2015). *Critical encounters in secondary English: Teaching literary theory to adolescents.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Avoli-Miller, K. (2013). Young adult literature in the 21st century classroom. *Library Media Connection, 32*(3), 16-18.

Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Begeny, J. C., Eckert, T. L., Montarello, S. A., & Storie, M. S. (2008). Teachers' perceptions of students' reading abilities: An examination of the relationship between teachers' judgments and students' performance across a continuum of

rating methods. *School Psychology Quarterly, 23*(1), 43-55. doi:10.1037/1045-3830.23.1.43

Bernier, A., Males, M., & Rickman, C. (2014). It is silly to hide your most active patrons: Exploring user participation of library space designs for young adults in the United States. *Library Quarterly, 84*(2), 165-182.

Beumer, J. A. (2011). Multiple selves and multiple sites of influence: Perceptions of young adult literature in the classroom. *Theory into Practice, 50*(3), 215-222. doi:10.1080/00405841.2011.584032

Blau, S. (2003). *The literature workshop: Teaching texts and their readers.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Bodart, J. (2006). Books that help, books that heal: Dealing with controversy in YA literature. *Young Adult Library Services, 5*(1), 31-34.

Brontë, C. (1999). *Jane Eyre*. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press.

Brown, C. L., Schell, R., Denton, R., & Knode, E. (2019). Family literacy coaching: Partnering with parents for reading success. *School Community Journal, 29*(1), 63-86.

Bussert-Webb, K., & Zhang, Z. (2016). Reading attitudes of Texas high school students. *Reading Psychology, 37*(3), 424-448. doi:10.1080/02702711.2015.1059396

Cambria, J., & Guthrie, J. (2010). Motivating and engaging students in reading. *The NERA Journal, 46*(1), 1-6.

Cantrell, S. C., Almasi, J. F., Carter, J. C., & Rintamaa, M. (2013). Reading intervention in middle and high schools: Implementation fidelity, teacher efficacy, and student

achievement. *Reading Psychology*, *34*(1), 26-58. doi:10.1080/02702711.2011.577695

Cart, M. (2007). Young adult literature: The state of a restless art (pp. 1-12). In M. Cart (Ed.), *Passions and pleasures: Essays and speeches about literature and libraries.* Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press.

Cart, M. (2008). *The value of young adult literature* (White paper). Chicago, IL: American Library Association. Retrieved from http://www.ala.org/yalsa/guidelines/whitepapers/yalit

Collins, S. (2008). *The hunger games*. New York, NY: Scholastic Press.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches. Fifth edition. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Cuevas, J. A., Irving, M. A., & Russell, L. R. (2014). Applied cognition: Testing the effects of independent silent reading on secondary students' achievement and attribution. *Reading Psychology*, *35*(2), 127-159. doi.10.1080/02702711.2012.675419

Dashner, J. (2011). *The maze runner.* New York, NY: Ember.

Deck, D., & Barnette, J. J. (1976). *Measuring attitudes toward reading in large scale assessment.* State College, PA: Pennsylvania State University. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED128407

Dede, C. (2010). Comparing frameworks for 21st century skills. In J. Bellance & R. Brandt (Eds.), *21st century skills: Rethinking how students learn* (pp. 51-76). Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

Dowling, C. B. (2017). Effects of quizzing methodology on student outcomes: Reading compliance, retention, and perceptions. *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning, 11*(2), 1-5. doi:10.2429/ijsotl.2017.110203

Draper, S. M. (1994). *Tears of a tiger*. New York, NY: Atheneum Books for Young Readers.

Dyer, S. (2014). Read this, not that: Why and how I'll use young adult literature in my classroom. *Virginia English Journal, 64*(1), 33-43.

Fitzhugh, W. (2011). High school flight from reading and writing. *Academic Questions, 24*(4), 412-418. doi./10.1007/s12129-011-9251-x

Flaherty, S. E., & Chisholm, J. S. (2015). An analysis of text complexity in young adult literature. *Kentucky English Bulletin, 64*(2), 5-13.

Fletcher, J., Grimley, M., Greenwood, J., & Parkhill, F. (2011). Raising reading achievement in an 'at risk', low socioeconomic, multicultural intermediate school. *Journal of Research in Reading Banner, 36*(2), 149-171. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9817.2011.01497.x

Flink, P. J. (2017). Adapting self-selected reading practices for college-level developmental reading courses. *Reading Improvement, 54*(3), 87-92.

Galda, L. (2010). First things first: Why good books and time to respond to them matter. *The NERA Journal, 46*(1), 1-6.

Galda, L., & Cullinan, B. E. (2003). Literature for literacy: What research says about the benefits of using trade books in the classroom. In J. Flood, D. Lapp, J. R. Squire, & J. M. Jensen (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teaching the English language arts* (2nd ed.) (pp. 640-648). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Gallagher, K. (2009). *Readicide: How schools are killing reading and what you can do about it*. Portsmouth, NH: Stenhouse Publishers.

Gallagher, K. (2010). Reversing readicide. *Educational Leadership, 67*(6), 36-41.

Gallagher, K. (2015). *In the best interest of students: Staying true to what works in the ELA classroom.* Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.

Gambrell, L., Palmer, B., Codling, R., & Mazzoni. S. (1996). Assessing motivation to read. *The Reading Teacher, 49*(7), 518-533.

Garan, E. M., & DeVoogd, G. (2008). The benefits of sustained silent reading: Scientific research and common sense converge. *Reading Teacher, 62*(4), 336-344.

Geraci, J., Palmerini, M., Cirillo, P., & McDougald, V. (2017). *What teens want from their schools: A national survey of high school student engagement.* Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Institute. Retrieved from http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=ED596217&site=ehost-live

Gill, S. R. (2008). The comprehension matrix: A tool for designing comprehension instruction. *Reading Teacher, 62*(2), 106-113.

Glasgow, J. (2001). Teaching social justice through young adult literature. *English Journal, 90*(6), 54-61.

Glaus, M. (2014). Text complexity and young adult literature. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 57*(5), 407-416.

Glesne, C. (2006). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction.* Boston, MA: Pearson/Allyn & Bacon.

Golding, W. (1954). *Lord of the flies: A novel.* New York, NY: Perigee.

Gordon, B. (2018). *No more fake reading: Merging the classics with independent reading to create joyful, lifelong readers.* Sacramento, CA: Corwin.

Greathouse, P., Eisenbach, B., & Kaywell, J. (2017). Supporting students' right to read in the secondary classroom: Authors of young adult literature share advice for pre-service teachers. *SRATE Journal, 26*(2), 17-24. Retrieved from http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ1152455&site=ehost-live

Guthrie, J. T., & Pavis, M. H. (2003). Motivating struggling readers in middle school through an engagement model of classroom practice. *Reading and Writing Quarterly, 19*(1), 59-85. doi:10.1080/10573560308203

Guthrie, J., & Wigfield, A. (2000). Engagement and motivation in reading. In M. Kamil, P. Mosenthal, D. Pearson, & R. Barr (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (pp. 518-533). Mahwah, NJ: Earlbaum.

Harmon, J., Wood, K., Smith, K., Zakaria, N., Ramadan, K., & Sykes, M. (2016). Teaching and learning in high school reading classes: Perspectives of teachers and students. *Reading Psychology, 37*(7), 962-994. doi:10.1080/02702711.2016.1157536

Hayn, J. A., Kaplan, J. S., & Nolen, A. (2011). Young adult literature research in the 21st century. *Theory into Practice, 50*(3), 176-181.

Henderson, S. C., & Buskist, C. (2011). Promoting the comprehension of teachers and students using young adult literature. *Theory into Practice, 50*(3), 231-238. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2011.584034

Hong-Nam, K. (2014). ELL high school students' metacognitive awareness of reading strategy use and reading proficiency. *TESL-EJ, 18*(1). Retrieved from http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ1045201&site=ehost-live

Hong-Nam, K., Leavell, A. G., & Maher, S. (2014). The relationships among reported strategy use, metacognitive awareness, and reading achievement of high school students. *Reading Psychology, 35*(8), 762-790. doi:10.1080/02702711.2013.807900

Hooley, D. S., & Thorpe, J. (2017). The effects of formative reading assessments closely linked to classroom texts on high school reading comprehension. *Education Tech Research Development, 65*(5), 1215-1238. doi:10.1007/s11423-017-9514-5

Hooley, D. S., Tysseling, L. A., & Ray, B. (2013). Trapped in a cycle of low expectations: An exploration of high school seniors' perspectives about academic reading. *High School Journal, 96*(4), 321-338.

Hong-Nam, K. (2014). ELL high school students' metacognitive awareness of reading strategy use and reading proficiency. *TESL-EJ, 18*(1). Retrieved from http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ1045201&site=ehost-live.

Howe, D., & Allen, S. (1999). A novel approach: A teacher-librarian collaboration brings young adult literature into the classroom. *Voice of Youth Advocates*, *22*(5), 314-17.

Hoy, W. K., & Adams, C (2016). *Quantitative research in education: A primer* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Hunt, J. (2007). Redefining the young adult novel. *Horn Book Magazine, 83*(2), 141-147.

Ivey, G., & Johnston, P. H. (2013). Engagement with young adult literature: Outcomes and processes. *Reading Research Quarterly, 48*(3), 255-275.

Kamil, M. L. (2008). *Improving adolescent literacy: Effective classroom and intervention practices*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences.

Kittle, P. (2013). *Book love: Developing depth, stamina, and passion in adolescent readers.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Kolencik, P., & Bernadowski, C. (2008). Teaching with books that heal. *Library Media Connection, 26*(4), 28-30.

Koss, M. D. (2009). Young adult novels with multiple narrative perspectives: The changing nature of YA literature. *Alan Review, 36*(3), 73-80.

Krashen, S. (2006). Free reading. *School Library Journal, 52*(9), 42-45.

Kittle, P. (2013). Book love: Developing depth, stamina, and passion in adolescent readers. New Hampshire: Heinemann.

Kolencik, P., & Bernadowski, C. (2008). Teaching with books that heal. *Library Media Connection,* 26(4), 28–30.

Layne, S. L. (2009). *Igniting a passion for reading: Successful strategies for building lifetime readers.* Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers. Retrieved from https://lccn.loc.gov/2009029333

Lee, H. (1960). *To kill a mockingbird.* New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers.

Lesesne, T. S. (2002). To instruct, to inspire, to entertain: The world of Sharon Draper. *Teacher Librarian, 30*(1), 47.

Lesesne, T. S. (2003). *Making the match: The right book for the right reader at the right time, grades 4-12.* Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

Lesesne, T. S. (2014). The tip of the iceberg. *ALAN Review, 42*(1), 77-81.

Lewis, R., & Teale, W. H. (1980). Another look at secondary school students' attitudes toward reading. *Journal of Reading Behavior, 12*(3), 187-201. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1080/10862968009547370

Lexile Framework for Reading. (2019). About Lexile codes. Retrieved from https://lexile.com/parents-students/find-books-at-the-right-level/about-lexile-text-codes/

Linkon, D. (2018, September 24). Missouri learning standards. The Missouri Department of Education. Retrieved from https://dese.mo.gov/college-career-readiness/curriculum/missouri-learning-standard.

Manzo, K. K. (2006). Graduates can't master college text. *Education Week, 25*(25), 1. Retrieved from http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=f5h&AN=19986273&site=Ehost-live

Mayhall-Andrews, F. A. (2018). The relationship of parental involvement and reading achievement of ninth-grade students. Retrieved from https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations/5222

Mckenna, M., & Kear, D. J. (1990). Measuring attitude toward reading: A new tool for teachers. *The Reading Teacher, 43*(8), 626-639. doi:10.1598/RT.43.8.3

Medina C. D., & Nagamine, M. M. (2019). Autonomous learning strategies in the reading comprehension of high school students. *Journal of Educational Psychology - Propositos y Representaciones, 7*(2), 147-159. Retrieved from http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ1220534&site=ehost-live

Merga, M. K. (2019). "Fallen through the cracks": Teachers' perceptions of barriers faced by struggling literacy learners in secondary school. *English in Education*. doi:10.1080/04250494.2019.1672502

Merga, M. K., & Moon, B. (2016). The impact of social influences on high school students' recreational reading. *High School Journal, 99*(2), 122-140.

Lexile (2019). About Lexile codes. MetaMetrics. Retrieved from https://lexile.com/parents-students/find-books-at-the-right-level/about-lexile-text-codes/.

Miller, A. V. (2017). *Pairing young adult and classic literature in the high school English curriculum* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Orono, ME: University of Maine.

Miller, D. (2009). *The book whisperer.* Sacramento, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Miller, D. (2019). If kids can't read what they want in the summer, when can they? *School Library Journal*. Retrieved from https://www.slj.com/?detailStory=if-kids-cant-read-what-they-want-in-the-Summer-when-can-they

Miller, D., & Kelley S. (2014). *Reading in the wild*. Sacramento, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2018). Missouri learning standards. Retrieved from https://dese.mo.gov/college-career-readiness/curriculum/missouri-learning-standards

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2019a). English language arts. Retrieved from https://dese.mo.gov/college-career-readiness/curriculum/english-language-arts#mini-panel-ela5

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2019b). Statistics. Retrieved from https://dese.mo.gov/financial-admin-services/food-nutrition-services/statistics

Meyer, S. (2006). *Twilight*. New York, NY: Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.

Morni, A., & Sahari, S. (2013). The impact of living environment on reading attitudes. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 101*, 415-425. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.07.215

National Center for Education Statistics. (2007). *The nation's report card for reading.* Washington DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2019). *National Assessment of Educational Progress: An overview of NAEP*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences.

National Council for Teachers of English (2012). Standards. Retrieved from https://ncte.org/resources/standards/.

National Endowment of the Arts. (2004). *To read or not to read: A question of national consequence* (Research division report 47). Washington DC: Author. Retrieved from http://www.nea.gov/research/ToRead.pdf

Ness, M. (2007). Reading comprehension strategies in secondary content-area classrooms. Phi Delta Kappan. 229-231. Retrieved from: Academic Search Complete.

Ortileb, E. (2015). Deconstructing and developing the attitudes of primary school readers. *Support for Learning*, *30*(2), 161-169. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9604.12085

Ostenson, J., & Wadham, R. (2012). Young adult literature and the common core: A surprisingly good fit. *American Secondary Education, 41*(1), 4-13.

Partin, K., & Hendricks, C. G. (2002). The relationship between positive adolescent attitudes toward reading and home literacy environments. *Reading Horizons, 43*(1), 8.

Qualtrics. (2019). High school reading interest survey. Retrieved from https://lindenwood.az1.qualtrics.com/Q/EditSection/Blocks?ContextSurveyID=SV_23mUR8m08tDFKzr.

Reeves, D. (2010). A framework for assessing 21st century skills. In J. Bellanca & R. Brandt (Eds.), *21st century skills: Rethinking how students learn* (pp. 305-326). Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

Rosenblatt, L. M. (1995). *Literature as exploration.* New York, NY: D. Appleton-Century Company.

Rosenzweig, E. Q., Wigfield, A., Gaspard, H., & Guthrie, J. T. (2018). How do perceptions of importance support from a reading intervention affect students' motivation, engagement, and comprehension? *Journal of Research in Reading, 41*(4), 625-641. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9817.12243

Rowling, J. K. (1999). *Harry Potter and the sorcerer's stone*. New York, NY: Scholastic.

Ruggieri, C. A. (2007) Meeting the deadline and making a difference: An interview with Chris Crutcher. *Ohio Journal of English Language Arts, 47*(2), 9-13.

Rybakova, K., & Roccanti. R. (2016). Connecting the canon to current young adult literature. *American Secondary Education, 44*(2), 31-45.

Sacks, A. (2014). *Whole novels for the whole class.* Sacramento, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Santoli, S. P., & Wagner, M. E. (2004). Promoting young adult literature: The other "real" literature. *American Secondary Education, 33*(3), 65-75.

Satrapi, M. (2007). *The complete Persepolis*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

Schmitz, T. (2007). Can we change it? Yes we can! *Horn Book Magazine, 83*(2), 159-169.

Schmoker, M. J. (2007). *Results now: How we can achieve unprecedented improvements in teaching and learning.* Heatherton, Victoria: Hawker Brownlow Education.

Schoenbach, R. (2012). *Reading for understanding: How reading apprenticeship improves disciplinary learning in secondary and college classrooms.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Shelley, M. W. (1998). *Frankenstein, or the modern Prometheus: The 1818 text.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Small, R. V., & Arnone, M. P. (2011). Creative reading. *Knowledge Quest, 39*(4), 12.

Smith, M. (1990). A longitudinal investigation of reading attitude development from childhood to adulthood. *The Journal of Educational Research, 83*(4), 215-219. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/27540386

Smith, A., Hazlett, L., & Lennon, S. (2018). Young adult literature in the English language arts classroom: A survey of middle and secondary teachers' beliefs about YAL. *Study and Scrutiny: Research on Young Adult Literature, 3*(1), 1-24.

Sokoll, T. (2013). Representations of trans youth in young adult literature: A report and a suggestion. *Young Adult Library Services, 11*(4), 23-26.

Stover, L., & Bach, J. (2012). Young adult literature a call to social activism. In J. Hayn & J. Kaplan (Eds.), *Teaching young adult literature today* (pp. 203-222). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Strong, R., Silver, H. F., & Robinson, A. (1995). Strengthening student engagement: What do students want (and what really motivates them)? *Educational Leadership, 53*(1), 8-12.

Thompson, E. H., Gordon, A., Lustig, V., Robinson, A., Tate, C., & Wharton, J. W. (2015). Critical conversations about young adult literature: Maybe not as hard to generate as we might have thought. *Virginia English Journal, 65*(1), 25-36.

Tullock-Rhody, R., & Alexander, J. (1980). A scale for assessing attitudes toward reading in secondary schools. *Journal of Reading, 23*(7), 609-614. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/40017004

Vaughn, S., Martinez, L. R., Williams, K. J., Miciak, J., Fall, A. M., & Roberts, G. (2019). Efficacy of a high school extensive reading intervention for English learners with reading difficulties. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 111*(3), 373-386. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000289

Von Ziegesar, C. (2007). *Gossip girl* (1st media tie-in ed.). New York, NY: Little, Brown and Co.

Votypka, J. (2018). PREP: Primary reading engagement program. *Reading Improvement, 55*(2), 47-53.

Warner, L., Crolla, C., Goodwyn, A., Hyder, E., & Richards, B. (2016). Reading aloud in high schools: Students and teachers across the curriculum. *Educational Review, 68*(2), 222-238. doi:10.1080/00131911.2015.1067881

Williams, E. (2014). Breaking the barriers to reading success in middle and high schools. *Reading Improvement, 51*(2), 233-236.

Wigfeild, A (1996). Reading motivation: A domain-specific approach to motivation. Educational Psychologist. 32 (2). doi.org10.1207/s15326985ep3202_1.

Wolk, S. (2009). Reading for a better world: Teaching for social responsibility with young adult literature. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 52*(8), 664-673. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1598/JAAL.52.8.2

Appendix A

Interests and Reading Survey

Part 1: Getting to Know Each Other

1. What is your favorite subject in school? _____
2. What is your favorite pastime or hobby? _____
3. What obligations do you have besides school?
   - ☐ Work If so, how many hours per week? Where _____
   - ☐ Sports If so, what sports? _____
   - ☐ Music If so, what? _____
   - ☐ Family (taking care of siblings, chores, etc.) If so, what? _____
   - ☐ Community/School Activities If so, please list:
4. What are your talents? Sports? Music? Drawing? Interacting with others? Making friends? Studying? Reading? Other (describe)? Please list:

   _____
5. What is a possible career or occupation you are considering pursuing after completing your education?
6. What kind of writing do you do besides school writing? Letters? Poetry? Notes to people? Journal writing? Email? Other (describe)? What is your favorite kind of writing? Please list:

   _____
7. What is your favorite movie? _____
8. What type of music do you like best? _____
9. Name one of your favorite musicians/musical groups: _____
10. Do you have a favorite poet? ☐ Yes ☐ No

    If yes, please tell me who: _____

Part 2: Getting to Know Each Other as Readers

11. How many books are there in your home?

    ☐ 0–10 ☐ More than 10 ☐ More than 25 ☐ More than 50
    ☐ More than 100
12. How many books do you own?

    ☐ 0–10 ☐ More than 10 ☐ More than 25 ☐ More than 50
    ☐ More than 100

13. Does your family get a newspaper regularly? _____

    If yes, what is the name of the newspaper? _____

14. Does your family get any magazines regularly? _____

    If yes, which magazines? _____

15. Is there a computer in your home? ☐ Yes ☐ No

    If yes, who uses the computer most often? _____

    For what? (Check *all* the ones that are true)

    ☐ Internet browsing ☐ email ☐ business ☐ school work

    ☐ games ☐ other (explain) _____

16. Does your family read in a language other than English? ☐ Yes ☐ No

    If so, which language(s)? _____

17. Who reads a lot in your home? _____

    What do they read? _____

18. What are some different reasons people read? _____

19. What does someone have to do to be a good reader? (Check only the three most important ones.)

    ☐ read aloud well
    ☐ understand what they read
    ☐ read a lot
    ☐ pronounce all the words correctly
    ☐ know when they are having trouble understanding
    ☐ read different kinds of books
    ☐ read fast
    ☐ enjoy reading
    ☐ read with expression
    ☐ concentrate on the reading
    ☐ read harder books
    ☐ know the meaning of most of the words
    ☐ use strategies to improve their understanding
    ☐ other _____

20. Do you think you are a good reader? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ It depends

    Explain why:

21. Do you think reading will be important to your future? ☐ Yes ☐ No

    Explain why:

22. From what you can remember, learning to read was

    ☐ very easy for you ☐ easy for you ☐ hard for you

    ☐ very hard for you

23. Do you read in a language other than English?

If yes, which language(s)? _____

In which language do you read best? _____

24. What do you usually do when you read? (Check *all* that describe what you do.)

- ☐ I read silently.
- ☐ I look over what I'm going to read first to get an idea of what it is about.
- ☐ I try to pronounce all the words correctly.
- ☐ I get distracted a lot while I'm reading.
- ☐ I ask myself questions about what I'm reading.
- ☐ I have trouble remembering what I read.
- ☐ I try to get the reading over with as fast as I can.
- ☐ I read a section again if I don't understand it at first.
- ☐ I try to concentrate on the reading.
- ☐ I try to figure out the meaning of words I don't know.
- ☐ I read aloud to myself in a quiet voice.
- ☐ I look up words I don't know in the dictionary.
- ☐ I picture what is happening in the reading.
- ☐ I try to read with expression.
- ☐ I put what I'm reading into my own words.
- ☐ I try to understand what I read.
- ☐ I try to read smoothly.
- ☐ I think about things I know that connect to the reading.

25. What is the best way for you to read?

- ☐ read silently to myself
- ☐ read aloud by myself or with a partner
- ☐ listen to the teacher read in class
- ☐ listen to other students read in class

26. Do you ever read at home, *other* than for your school assignments?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what kinds of things do you read? (Check *all* the ones you like to read.)

- ☐ newspapers
- ☐ novels
- ☐ letters or email
- ☐ magazines
- ☐ information books
- ☐ poetry
- ☐ comic books
- ☐ song lyrics
- ☐ cookbooks
- ☐ website pages
- ☐ computer manuals
- ☐ how-to books
- ☐ video game
- ☐ strategy books or magazines

☐ other _____

27. How often do you read, *other* than for your school assignments?

☐ every day ☐ frequently ☐ once in a while, not often ☐ never

28. How often do you read at home for school assignments?

☐ every day ☐ frequently ☐ once in a while, not often ☐ never

29. How long do you usually read at a time?

☐ 1–10 minutes ☐ 11–30 minutes ☐ 31–60 minutes
☐ more than an hour

30. During the past 12 months, how many books have you read? _____

How many of these were *not* for school? _____

31. What kinds of books do you like to read? (Check *all* the ones you like to read.)

☐ science fiction	☐ thrillers	☐ picture books
☐ adventure/action	☐ true-life drama	☐ comic books
☐ horror	☐ poetry	☐ romance
☐ mysteries	☐ short stories	☐ fantasy/myth
☐ how-to books	☐ history	☐ information books
☐ sports	☐ science/nature	☐ teen problems
☐ (auto)biography	☐ humor	☐ none

☐ other (describe) _____

32. Which are your three *favorite* kinds of books? (Circle three of the ones you checked in question 31.)

33. Who are your favorite authors? (List as many as you'd like.)

_____

_____

_____

34. How do you choose a book to read? (Check *all* the ones that describe what you do.)

☐ look at the book cover	☐ see how long the book is
☐ ask a teacher or librarian	☐ look for an interesting title
☐ pick a book that looks easy	☐ ask a family member
☐ look at the pictures in the book	☐ look for a particular author
☐ ask a friend or classmate	☐ look to see if it has gotten an award
☐ look for books on a particular subject	☐ look in special displays at the library or bookstore
☐ read the book cover or jacket	☐ pick from a best-sellers list

- ☐ look for books that have been made into movies
- ☐ look for particular kinds of books (drama, horror, etc.)
- ☐ look for books I've heard about
- ☐ read a few pages
- ☐ look for books about my culture
- ☐ I have no method of choosing a book
- ☐ other (describe) _____

35. Do you ever talk with a friend or someone you live with about something you have read?

- ☐ almost every day
- ☐ once or twice a week
- ☐ once or twice a month
- ☐ never or hardly ever

36. Do you borrow books from friends, family members, or teachers?

- ☐ almost every day
- ☐ once or twice a week
- ☐ once or twice a month
- ☐ never or hardly ever

37. Do you borrow books from the school or public library?

- ☐ almost every day
- ☐ once or twice a week
- ☐ once or twice a month
- ☐ never or hardly ever

38. In general, how do you feel about reading?

Part 3: Final Reflections

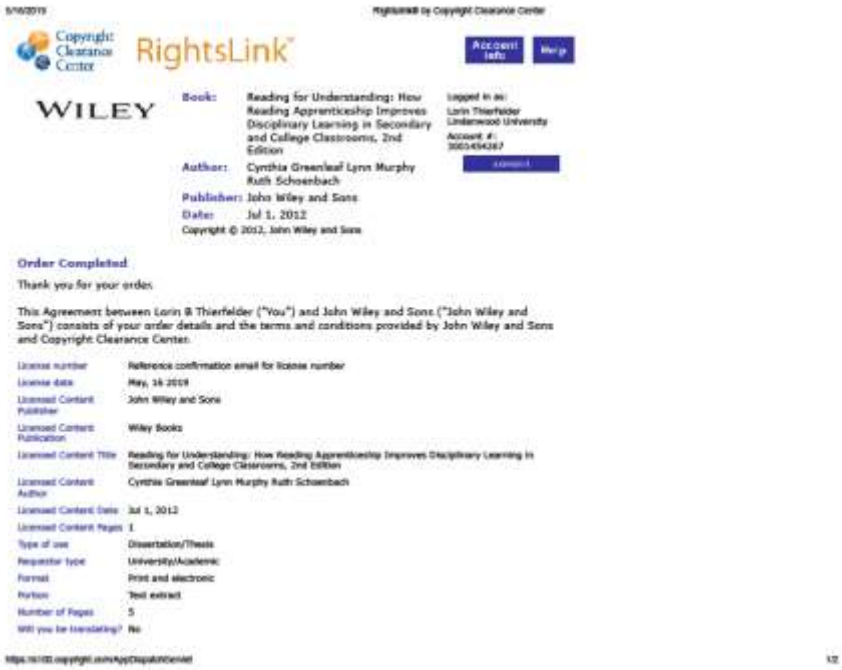
39. Write any comments or concerns you have about this class.

40. What do you hope to achieve in this class?

Thank you for completing this survey. I will use your answers to help guide my teaching.

Appendix B

Wiley Publishing Permissions



5/16/2019 RightsLink® by Copyright Clearance Center

Copyright Clearance Center RightsLink

WILEY

Book: Reading for Understanding: How Reading Apprenticeship Improves Disciplinary Learning in Secondary and College Classrooms, 2nd Edition

Author: Cynthia Greenleaf Lynn Murphy Ruth Schoenbach

Publisher: John Wiley and Sons

Date: Jul 1, 2012

Copyright © 2012, John Wiley and Sons

Logged in as: Lorin Thierfelder Lindenwood University

Account #: 3000454367

Order Completed

Thank you for your order.

This Agreement between Lorin B Thierfelder ("You") and John Wiley and Sons ("John Wiley and Sons") consists of your order details and the terms and conditions provided by John Wiley and Sons and Copyright Clearance Center.

License number	Reference confirmation email for license number
License date	May, 16 2019
Licensed Content Publisher	John Wiley and Sons
Licensed Content Publication	Wiley Books
Licensed Content Title	Reading for Understanding: How Reading Apprenticeship Improves Disciplinary Learning in Secondary and College Classrooms, 2nd Edition
Licensed Content Author	Cynthia Greenleaf Lynn Murphy Ruth Schoenbach
Licensed Content Date	Jul 1, 2012
Licensed Content Pages	1
Type of use	Dissertation/Thesis
Requestor type	University/Academic
Format	Print and electronic
Portion	Text extract
Number of Pages	5
Will you be translating?	No

https://s100.copyright.com/AppDispatchServlet 1/2

5/16/2019 RightsLink® by Copyright Clearance Center

Title of your thesis / dissertation	Exploring Relationships of Positive Reading Attitudes in Secondary English Classrooms across Missouri.
Expected completion date	Dec 2019
Expected size (number of pages)	150
Requestor Location	Lindenwood University 1106 clifton ct OTTERVILLE, MO 65348 United States Attn: Lindenwood University
Publisher Tax ID	EU826007151
Billing Type	Invoice
Billing address	Lindenwood University 1106 clifton ct OTTERVILLE, MO 65348 United States Attn: Lindenwood University
Total	0.00 USD

CLOSE WINDOW

Appendix C

Recruitment Letter

Date:

Central Office Administration
Superintendent
Missouri School District

Dear Superintendent:

I am writing to request permission to survey your district's English teachers, grades 9-12, for my doctoral dissertation research project at Lindenwood University. I believe the information gathered through this study will positively contribute to the body of knowledge regarding secondary student engagement, Young Adult Literature, and reading attitudes.

Alexander and Filler (1976), Gallagher (2009), Smith (1990), and Tullock-Rhody and Alexander (1980) supported the belief that student engagement and Young Adult Literature affect reading attitude. The purpose of the survey is to gain quantitative data about the variables of student engagement, Young Adult Literature, and reading attitude. In total, I hope to have 400 English teachers participate across the state to contribute to a robust study, and your district's participation would greatly help in this endeavor.

Attached to this document is the survey link to be distributed, as well as the teacher letter and Lindenwood University's release form. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time. Confidentiality is assured as the survey will be administered through Qualtrics; specific data related to school districts will be coded and kept locked up at all times. Teachers' consent to participate in this study is given by either completing the survey or with a non-response.

If you agree to participate in the survey, please respond with approval and forward this email with attachments to your district's English teachers. If you have any questions, you may contact me at [redacted] or my dissertation chair, Dr. Nicole Vaux, at [redacted]. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lorin Blackburn Thierfelder
Doctoral Candidate
Lindenwood University

Appendix D

Letter to Teachers

Date:

Participating Teachers:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study related to student engagement, Young Adult Literature, and reading attitude. The survey includes background information about the teacher and questions regarding teaching practices surrounding reading.

Please complete surveys within two weeks of receiving this message.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any question that you do not want to answer. You will NOT be penalized in any way for non-completion of this survey. As part of this effort, the identity of the teacher and school district will not be placed in any publication or presentation that may result from this study, and the information collected will remain in the possession of the investigator in a password-protected environment. All specific data related to the teacher will be coded to help maintain confidentiality.

Please complete the 30-question multiple choice survey to the best of your ability. Surveys may be accessed through the Qualtrics link

If you have any questions, you may contact me at [redacted] or my faculty advisor, Dr. Nicole Vaux, at [redacted].

Thank you for your time, effort, and participation.

Sincerely,

Lorin Blackburn Thierfelder
Doctoral Student
Lindenwood University.

Appendix E

Lindenwood Informed Consent

LINDENWOOD

Survey Research Information Sheet

You are being asked to participate in a survey conducted by Lorin Blackburn Thierfelder at Lindenwood University. We are conducting this study to investigate the relationship between engagement and Young Adult Literature while noting their effects on students' attitudes toward reading. We are asking participants to fill out a 30-question multiple choice survey. Completion of the survey should take no more than 5-7 minutes.

Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or to withdraw at any time by simply not completing the survey or by closing the browser window.

There are no risks from participating in this project. We will not collect any information that may identify you. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study.

WHO CAN I CONTACT WITH QUESTIONS?

If you have concerns or complaints about this project, please use the following contact information:

Lorin Blackburn Thierfelder [redacted]

Faculty Supervisor Dr. Nicole Vaux [redacted]

If you have questions about your rights as a participant or concerns about the project and wish to talk to someone outside the research team, you can contact Michael Leary (Director - Institutional Review Board) at 636-949-4730 or mleary@lindenwood.edu.

By clicking the link below, I confirm that I have read this form and decided that I will participate in the project described above. I understand the purpose of the study, what I will be required to do, and the risks involved. I understand that I can discontinue participation at any time by closing the survey browser. My consent also indicates that I am at least 18 years of age.

<link>

You can withdraw from this study at any time by simply closing the browser window. Please feel free to print a copy of this information sheet.

Appendix F

Institutional Review Board Approval

RE:
IRB-20-1: Modification - Exploring Relationships of Positive Reading Attitudes in Secondary English Classrooms across Missouri

Dear Lorin Thierfelder,

The study, Exploring Relationships of Positive Reading Attitudes in Secondary English Classrooms across Missouri, has been approved as Exempt.

Category: Category 1. Research, conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, that specifically involves normal educational practices that are not likely to adversely impact students' opportunity to learn required educational content or the assessment of educators who provide instruction. This includes most research on regular and special education instructional strategies, and research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

The submission was approved on November 14, 2019.

Here are the findings: **Regulatory Determinations**

- This modification entails the addition of site permissions and a change of the Faculty Mentor. This modification does not affect any determinations made in the prior review and does not constitute any increased risk to participants.

Vita

Lorin Hope Blackburn Thierfelder was born and raised in mid-Missouri. After high school, she attended Missouri Valley College and obtained a Bachelor of Science Degree in English with certification in secondary education. In the fall of 2014, she began her teaching career at Smith-Cotton High School in Sedalia, Missouri, teaching 11th and 12th-grade English.

In 2016, she married Craig Thierfelder and completed her Master's Degree in Library Science and Information Services from the University of Central Missouri. In the fall of 2019, she was promoted to Library Media Specialist at Smith-Cotton High School. Mrs. Blackburn Thierfelder teaches Advanced Placement classes while in her position as Librarian, as well as advising the National Honor Society. Mrs. Blackburn Thierfelder has had poetry published twice, once in 2017 and again in 2019.

Recently, Mrs. Blackburn Thierfelder was awarded the University of Chicago Outstanding Educator's Award. She was also selected to serve on the Missouri State National Honor Societies Executive Board. Mrs. Blackburn Thierfelder strives to do her best for her family and students. In her free time, she enjoys reading and spending time at the creek with her husband and daughters.