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# A Program Evaluation of a Literacy Intervention for Reluctant Middle School Readers

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*Lindenwood University*

A Program Evaluation of a Literacy Intervention

for Reluctant Middle School Readers

by

James Allison

A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

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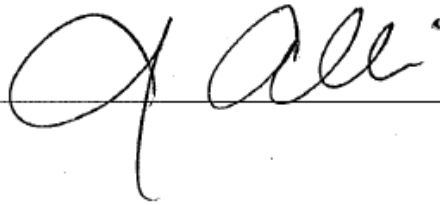                                                                                      Date
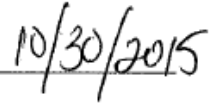
Declaration of Originality

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

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to determine if the literacy intervention program for reluctant readers in one middle school was effective as measured by an increase in student reading scores measured by the Student Reading Inventory Assessment. I investigated perceptions of 100 students and 28 teachers regarding the literacy intervention program through the use of district-administered surveys. I also interviewed eight teachers regarding their delivery of the literacy interventions in the classroom setting.

The literacy intervention program targeted the population of students identified as reluctant readers who were not already receiving any reading intervention, but were reading below grade level. The study investigated whether or not the intervention contributed to an increase in student reading abilities with 44 students who read 0 to 6 months below grade level, as measured by the Student Reading Inventory Assessment. The study also investigated eight teachers' opinions of professional development that was implemented in 2014-2015 that focused on literacy instruction across all content areas, other than English Language Arts.

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**Chapter One: Introduction**

I am a reader. My parents are readers. My wife is a reader, and my children are readers. I grew up with parents who showed me how reading could unlock other worlds. I was shown that reading, and therefore literacy, was the key to success in school and consequently life. I remember, as a small child, my parents and grandparents would read to me nearly every night. I loved listening to the stories they read. They were so detailed and intricate that I would often ask them to read me the same stories over and over again, until they grew tired of the books and bestowed upon me another adventure from another story that they had to read to me in perpetuity. As I learned to read for myself, my parents encouraged a passion for reading, allowing me to read books that far exceeded my grade level, even offering me popular science fiction novels my father had recently completed reading. This exposure to new worlds and adventures only deepened my love of reading. My ability to read and comprehend the things I read enabled me to be successful in school and beyond.

This study examined the importance of reading as a key to student success, and the need for schools to develop programs that will increase student reading ability. As an eighth grade social studies teacher, I exposed my students to many opportunities to read, not only textual assignments, but non-fiction articles and historical fiction assignments that were designed to give students the opportunities for success and skill growth in my class. In this chapter, I will explain the background of the problem and the need for an intervention program that will reach students that read 0 to 6 months below grade level.

**Background of the Problem**

Success in life, not just in school is rooted in a person's ability to read. Student academic success is rooted in how well a student comprehends what they read. In order for students to be successful readers, they must read more and must have more opportunities to read. While in elementary school, students generally have ample opportunities to read. They often even have sustained reading time. When these same students move on to middle school, the opportunity for reading diminishes, as do the capabilities of those students that were just keeping up in elementary school (Alligton, 2006).

Federal and state governments, as well as local school districts across the United States expect primary and secondary schools to prepare students for college and careers (Cantrell, Burns, & Callaway, 2009). The expectation is that when students leave school they will be able to read the content necessary to be successful academically and professionally. Statistics and research claim that the majority of students in the United States can "read" by the third grade, with reading being defined as being able to have a basic understanding of "word-reading" without a deeper understanding of context (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011; Reardon, Valentino, & Shores, 2012). By the time students reach secondary school, the numbers diminish, as the expectations for student literacy is far more stringent (Dennis, Parker, Kiefer, & Ellerbrock, 2011). Somewhere between 50 and 70% of students entering high school read below grade level (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011; Reardon et al., 2012).

Nearly half of all students leave eighth grade reading several years below grade level expectations and nearly one-third of students that graduate high school are not ready

to read at the college level (Cantrell et al., 2009; Nichols, Young, & Rickelman, 2007). The data illustrated a huge chasm in the education system that was being ignored due to the emphasis on high stakes standardized tests that focused on content rather than literacy (Cantrell et al., 2009). The need for teachers to find opportunities for literacy instruction in the middle school years is as important, if not more, than the content taught in the classroom (Nichols et al., 2007).

**Purpose of the Dissertation**

The district of the study offered interventions to students who read more than six months below grade level, but offered no interventions for those that struggled, but were between 0 and 6 months below grade level. Midwest Middle School, a pseudeonym, developed a program to investigate if these students' reading scores would increase if given some additional support and literacy instruction. The literacy intervention program targeted the population of students identified as reluctant readers that were not already receiving any reading intervention, but were reading below grade level. School administrators accomplished identification of possible participants through the examination of student reading scores.

The administrators labeled the students "reluctant readers" based on their reading scores. A reluctant reader is traditionally anyone that does not show an interest in reading (Charles & Charles, 2014). The administrators expanded the term to include struggling readers, because they are reading below grade level, that were not getting any kind of intervention this study further defined it as those students that are not in a structured intervention (Alvarez, Armstrong, Elish-Piper, Matthews, & Risko, 2009). The school's administrators asked all school staff to provide individualized student reading

interventions, like group discussions, read-a-louds, and cooperative learning strategies, as well as individual encouragement, in the hopes of increasing the reading scores of the reluctant readers. The school district then provided all non-English Language Arts teachers a yearlong professional development that focused on increasing student literacy opportunities across all content areas.

The purpose of this study was to determine if the literacy intervention program for reluctant readers in one suburban Midwestern middle school was effective as indicated by an increase in student reading scores measured by the Student Reading Inventory Assessment. The reluctant reader group took the assessment at the beginning of the school year and again at the end of the school year to measure their growth. I also investigated perceptions of students and teachers regarding the literacy intervention program through the use of district-administered surveys to evaluate the efficacy of the reading intervention. The study also evaluated whether the professional development that the district implemented during the 2013-2014 school year prepared classroom teachers to incorporate literacy instruction within the classroom. I interviewed teachers regarding their delivery of the literacy interventions in the classroom setting. I also investigated perceptions of students and teachers through the analysis of district-administered surveys. Finally, I investigated whether the professional development and the reluctant reader program contributed to an increase in student reading abilities with students that read 0 to 6 months below grade level, as measured by the Student Reading Inventory Assessment and the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test. Specific academic interventions such as Special Education Services, English Language Learners (ELL), Read 180, and System 44 excluded students from the program but their data was included in the population data.

**Research Questions and Hypotheses**

I investigated the following research questions:

Research Question 1: How do literacy interventions for reluctant Middle School readers affect Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test scores and Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) scores?

Research Question 2: How do the survey responses compare between the general population and reluctant readers after completing the program?

Research Question 3: What are the perceptions of teachers about the emphasis on reading interventions in the school?

Research Question 4: What are the perceptions of teachers about the literacy intervention professional development?

The hypotheses for this mixed methods study are as follows:

**Hypotheses**

$H_a$: Reluctant readers taught by teachers that implement reading strategies in their classrooms will significantly increase in student reading scores, as measured by scores on the Scholastic Reading Inventory Test.

*Null hypotheses*

Ho: Reluctant readers taught by teachers that implement reading strategies in their classrooms will not measure an increase in student reading scores, as measured by the Scholastic Reading Inventory Test.

$Ho_1$: Reluctant readers taught by teachers that implement reading strategies in their classrooms will not increase in reading level as measured by scores on the Scholastic Reading Inventory Test.

$Ho_2$:  Sixth grade Reluctant Readers taught by teachers that implement reading strategies in their classrooms will not measure an increase in student reading scores, as measured by the Scholastic Reading Inventory Test.

$Ho_3$:  Seventh grade Reluctant Readers taught by teachers that implement reading strategies in their classrooms will not measure an increase in student reading scores, as measured by the Scholastic Reading Inventory Test.

$Ho_4$:  Eighth grade Reluctant Readers taught by teachers that implement reading strategies in their classrooms will not measure an increase in student reading scores, as measured by the Scholastic Reading Inventory Test.

$Ho_5$:  There will be no difference in growth in reading scores between the building population and program participants taught by teachers who implement reading strategies in their classrooms, as measured by student scores on the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test.

$Ho_6$:  Middle school students will not perceive the emphasis on student literacy instruction as being effective, as measured by a Likert-scale perception survey.

$Ho_7$:  Teachers in the middle school will not perceive the emphasis on student literacy instruction as being effective, as measured by a Likert-scale perception survey.

$Ho_8$:  Teachers in the middle school will not perceive the emphasis on student literacy instruction as being effective, as measured by interviews conducted with eight teachers.

**Definition of Terms**

California State University Long Beach defined the **American College Testing (ACT)** as a national college admissions examination that consists of tests in: English, Mathematics, Reading and Science (California State University Long Beach, 2013). Pearson defined **adequate yearly progress (AYP)** as the requirement under the No Child Left Behind legislation for schools and districts to show annual improvement towards Federal goals in a number of areas (Pearson, 2013).

In their *Best Practice: Today's Standards for Teaching and Learning in America's Schools*, Zemelman, Daniels and Hyde (2005) defined **Best Practices** as the strategies used in schools that are more student-centered, active, experiential, authentic, democratic, collaborative, rigorous and challenging.

In their Frequently Asked Questions, Common Core State Standards Initiative defined **Common Core State Standards** as a state-led effort that established a single set of clear educational standards for kindergarten through 12th grade in English language arts and mathematics that states voluntarily adopt (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2012).

In a report from Reading Horizons, **decoding** was defined as the process of translating print into speech by rapidly matching a letter or combination of letters to their sounds and recognizing the patterns that make syllables and words (Reading Horizons, 2013).

Spafford and Grosser defined **fluency** as reading text with speed, accuracy, and proper expression in their article "Fluency Defined" (Spafford & Grosser, 2010).

The United States Department of Agriculture defined **Free or Reduced Lunch Recipient** as the students that have all or a portion of their breakfast and or lunch paid for

by the federal government by law established in 1946  (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2013).

In her article, "Explanation of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test," Lee (2013) defined the **Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test (Gates Test)** as a group administered paper-pencil reading survey test, designed to assess student achievement in reading.  The Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test provides several scales to help determine student-reading level. In this research, I used the grade level equivalency to determine if a student was reading at or below grade level.

In their article "What is an IEP," the NCLD Editorial Team defined **Individual Education Plan (IEP)** as a plan mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Act that provided for a free and appropriate educational opportunity for students with disabilities. This plan ensures that the student with an IEP receives specialized instruction and related services (NCLD Editorial Team, 2013).

In his academic article, "What constitutes an intervention?,"  Ken Howell defined **intervention** as a planned set of procedures that are aimed at teaching a specific set of academic or social skills to a student or students (Howell, 2009).

On their website, The Lexile Framework for Reading, MetaMetrics, Inc. (2013) defined **Lexile Measure** as the measurement used when determining the difficulty of text and the reading level of readers.

In her article, "How Important is Teaching Literacy in All Content Areas?" Alber (2010) defined **Literacy Instruction** as the methods used to build a student's comprehension, writing skills, and overall skills in communication by all content teachers.

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education defined the

**Missouri Assessment Program (MAP)** as the State-wide high-stakes common

assessment given statewide in the state of Missouri to all students, grades three to eight,

to measure student and school achievement as well as Adequate Yearly Progress

(Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2011).

The United States Department of Education defined the **No Child Left Behind**

**Act (NCLB)** as a law enacted by the United States Congress in 2001 to close the

achievement gap in math and communication arts, including literacy by 2014 (U.S.

Department of Education, 2013).

In the *Nation's Report Card*, Lee, Grigg and Donahue (2007) defined **Proficient**

as when students have an overall understanding of the text, including inferential as well

as literal information.

To paraphrase Howell (2009), a **reading intervention** would be a planned set of

procedures that are aimed at teaching reading skills.

Lee et al. (2007), also defined **Reading strategies** as the strategies used to guide

how well students comprehend as they attempt to read and write.

Charles and Charles (2014), of K12Reader.com, defined **reluctant reader** as

anyone that does not show an interest in reading, but this study further defined it as those

students that are not in a structured intervention, but are still identified as a **struggling**

**reader**, because they are reading below grade level (Alvarez et al., 2009).

In this research the definition for **Self-selected reading interventions** would be

the various reading interventions that the participants chose, based on a designated set of

options (Hiebert, 2006).

According to the American Psychological Association, **Socioeconomic Status (SES)** is often measured as a combination of education, income and occupation (American Pyscological Association, 2014).

Scholastic, Inc. defined the **Student Reading Inventory (SRI)** as a computer based reading assessment program which provides immediate, actionable data on students' reading levels and growth over time as measured by Lexile scores (Scholastic, Inc., 2013). In this study, I used Lexile scores to determine the participants reading level.

**Limitations**

There were several limitations to this research. First, the district selected students involved in the study based on their reading scores on several reading assessments. On any given day, student engagement in assessments can fluctuate giving me less than accurate information. To minimize this limitation, the district tested the students numerous times and their SRI data was compared to other reading evaluation tools the district utilized.

Second, during the 2013-2014 school year, the school where these students attended had an influx of new students from a neighboring district, due the academic failure of that district. This influx of students made the intervention opportunities less frequent than desired. These new students had to be tested to determine where they should be placed in the regular academic setting and then they were incorporated into this study, if appropriate. None of the students that came from the neighboring district qualified for this study, due to either reading at or above grade level, or the indication that they read far below grade level.

The third limitation of the study was the involvement of other teachers in the building. The staff understood the need for the testing and intervention for the students that were reading below grade level, but at times they did not remember to send the students for their intervention. These students were pulled out of regular classes at random times, to alleviate the strain of students missing valuable class time in the same class, and there were times that the teachers did not inform the students of the scheduled intervention opportunity. Despite the procedures the district used to notify teachers and students, there were times that the classroom teachers did not follow the procedures and inform their students of the intervention time.

Additionally, the district tested students throughout the year using SRI to measure student reading ability as indicated by their Lexile scores. While Lexile scores are relatively simple to measure, change over time was not always easy to evaluate. Some of the students taking the SRI assessments would speed through the assessment in an effort to get back to regular class as quickly as possible, indicating that they did not take it seriously. While others took the necessary time to get the best possible score. The district gave the same instructions every time the participants took the assessment, but still noticed a decline in some of the student scores, based on a perceived attitude of the student.

Finally, both the student survey and the teacher survey have the potential to have biased opinions that do not accurately generalize the experience for all participants. With any surveys, there is a chance of response bias. The district surveyed all of the students in the intervention and then offered the same survey to random students to gauge a comparison. The district also sent out a survey to the teachers of the building where the

intervention took place to measure their feeling on the efficacy of the district professional development in literacy instruction.

One advantage that I thought these experiences would give me was an understanding of the need for students to feel that they have a say in what they are reading. I thought that students wanted to "discover" new places or adventures and reading can provide that. In my experience as a classroom teacher, many middle school students balk at any required reading. I remembered how much I disliked reading something that did not interest them when I was in school. The goal that emerged from these experiences was that I wanted to design or study some kind of intervention for reluctant readers that could spur this love of reading and help students become more successful in school without turning them off because of a perception of reading being forced upon them.

The district designed professional development for the 2013-2014 school year that focused on increasing literacy instruction across all content areas, other than communication arts and mathematics. The school where the intervention was implemented hoped that the literacy instruction effectively engaged reluctant readers and increased their reading score, as measured by the SRI and Gates assessments. The students that were identified as reluctant readers were students that read 0 to 6 months below grade level. Students that read 0-6 months below grade level need to have an opportunity to get back on track, before they fail so far behind that they no longer have a chance to get back on track.

**Summary**

A student's ability to effectively read and comprehend what they read is imperative to their success in both school and in their future careers. This chapter introduced a literacy intervention program. The main purpose of this intervention was to increase student reading scores, as well as their love of reading, so they would be more successful in school and in life. The literature review in Chapter Two outlines the history of reading education in the United States as well as a history of the literature on various reading interventions and the research focused on professional development for student literacy instruction.

**Chapter Two: The Literature Review**

The previous chapter introduced the problem and explained my background and interest in student literacy.  Student literacy is a major focus in the American school system, but literacy can no longer simply be defined as the ability to read words on a page.  Federal programs, like the *Family Literacy Act*, have helped guide state school boards as they develop curriculum expectations to help catch students that are falling too far behind their grade level (National Institute for Literacy, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 1998). The *No Child Left Behind Act* clearly stated that all children, regardless of race, ethnicity or income will be at grade level in reading by 2014 (U.S. Department of Education, 2002), but does this legislation address the needs of students and the community?

The community is driving the future job market, requesting students that are both literate and skilled (Faggella-Luby & Deshler, 2008).  The market could no longer sustain an illiterate, under-educated workforce, when those jobs could be automated or outsourced for far less cost than training people that cannot read.  As recent as 2009, the number of middle and high school students reading below grade was about six million students and approximately 40% of high school graduates lack the literacy skills employers are looking for (Brozo, 2009; Faggella-Luby & Deshler, 2008; Wise, 2009).

This chapter is organized into a brief history of reading and literacy instruction in the United States. I have included a brief history of national legislation geared towards reading and literacy instruction in this section. I also included a section covering the development of middle school in the United States. The next section explains literacy interventions. The next section of chapter two explains the professional development of

teachers that do not teach literacy. This includes an explanation of pre-service training. The chapter concludes with a look at the literature that covers the culture of teachers, the barriers to teaching reading, as well as the need to collaborate.

**A Brief History of Literacy/Reading Instruction in the United States**

Prior to the revolutionary war, most states had very little organized education, other than in the north eastern American Colonies, where the interest in education was based on the need of the population understanding the Bible. The colony of Massachusetts did print and utilize a specific school book *The New England Primer*, but there was very limited interest on the pedagogy of reading instruction (Monaghan & Barry, 1999; Vogt & Shearer, 2010). It was not until the middle of the 19th century that professional educators began to advocate for intentional literacy instruction. Educators, like Noah Webster and Horace Mann, began to advocate changes in reading and writing instruction (Monaghan & Barry, 1999). Noah Webster spent the later part of the 18th and early 19th trying to teach American students to spell in addition to reading (Monaghan & Barry, 1999). Horace Mann observed that students were bored with school and needed engaging topics to capture their attention so that the students could learn how to read (Adams, 1990). The results of the industrialization of the United States, combined with the Gold Rush, Westward Expansion and the Civil War led to a better educated population.

By the middle of the 19th century, the ability to read was no longer something expected for only the rich or religious (Peck, 2012). One series of popular schoolbooks in the middle of the 19th century was *The McGuffey Reader* (Monaghan & Barry, 1999; Vogt & Shearer, 2010). By the beginning of the American Civil War, the word methods

of the spellers and readers was being reformed and augmented with phonic based

approaches to reading (Monaghan & Barry, 1999).

The remainder of the 19th century saw various education reformers implement

updated practices like the ABC method, which stressed the sounds of the letters, as well

as systematic method, which stressed a disconnected emphasis on phonics-based symbols

and sounds (Peck, 2012). The results of the industrialization of the United States,

combined with the California Gold Rush, Westward Expansion and the Civil War led for

a public desire of a better-educated population. By the end of the 19th century, educators

like George Farham deemphasized phonics, instead focusing on student repetition of

teacher-read portions of classic literature (Peck, 2012; Vogt & Shearer, 2010). Eliot, the

president of Harvard from 1869 to 1909, believed that students arrived at school with an

innate ability to decipher words and said that educators should focus more on the

teaching the classics (Eliot, 1869; Smith, 2002).

By the early 20th century, the pedagogy of education and of teaching reading was

again focused on a "competing sets of readers all firmly based on the phonics approach"

(Flesch, 1955, p. 49). These readers remained popular through the First World War.

Between the two world wars, the McGuffey style "basal" readers grew in popularity

(Hoffman, Sailors, & Patterson, 2002). These "Dick and Jane" style grade level readers,

made popular by Scott Foresman, failed to capture the students' attention with their

controlled vocabulary and syntax structure (Hoffman et al., 2002; Peck, 2012). In 1955,

Rudolph Flesch published his seminal work "*Why Johnny Can't Read and What You Can

Do About It*" promoted the need for teaching phonics (Flesch, 1955). The basal readers

remained popular in school through the early 1960s, despite the popularity of Flesch's

book (Hoffman et al., 2002; Peck, 2012). American students were not doing as well in any academic areas as their European counterparts, so in 1958, in partial response to the Soviet launch of the Sputnik satellite, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the National Defense Education Act in to law in the hopes of leveling the international education field (Wallender, 2014).

In the latter 20th century, school generally focused on three major reading approaches.  Beginning in the early 1960s, educators began to integrate writing and reading, having students write their own reading materials (Ashbrook, 2010; Hoffman et al., 2002). This approach, known as the Language Experience Approach, used the student's personal knowledge to develop their reading skills, especially among student that learned English as a second language (Ashbrook, 2010). A second approach, known as the Linguistic Approach, ignored phonics; instead, it focused on word families (Peck, 2012).  The third major approach of the late 20th century was the Whole Language Approach.  This philosophy, based on Noam Chomsky's ideas on language and promoted by psychologist Kenneth Goodman, focused on writing and literature, ignoring the need for phonics instruction (Shafer, 1998).  By the second decade of the 21st century, educators were struggling to find the most effective approach to reading instruction, utilizing a combination of several different approaches, geared towards the needs of each student (Peck, 2012; Sears, 2008; Vogt & Shearer, 2010). These approaches grew out of the education act created in 1965, which stated that "full educational opportunity" should be "our first national goal" (U.S. Department of Education, 2015; Wallender, 2014).

**A Nation at Risk**. In the early 1980s the United States Secretary of Education, Terrel H. Bell felt that the state of education across the United States was failing to meet the needs of the nation (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Wallender, 2014). Bell asked then president, Ronald Reagan, to form a Blue Ribbon Commission to investigate the state of education in the United States at that time. In 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education published its finding in *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (1983). The scathing report warned the American people that, "the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people" (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 1).

*A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) stated that everyone in the United States, regardless of ethnicity or economic status, is entitled to the skills needed to secure gainful employment (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). The researchers found that at the time of the study, 13% of high school seniors were functionally illiterate, just as there was a greater demand for higher skilled workers and higher demands from post-secondary educational facilities (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 5). The commission recommended that secondary schools increase rigor in all areas, as well as the amount of time students spent in school (Borek, 2008). The commission's claim that education was not living up to the needs of the nation encouraged state governors to meet to try to reform education within their perspective states (Scott, 2011).

In 1989, the first education summit since the Great Depression met to work on education goals (Wallender, 2014). The summit laid the groundwork for America 200, which emphasized national standards in education (New York State Education Department, 2009). This summit and groundwork developed into the National Governors Association Education Summit in 1996, a group of governors and business leaders set the priorities of education reform for the next two of decades, with scarce input from educators or education associations (Scott, 2011; Wallender, 2014). Part of the outcome of the reprioritization of education reform was an increase in high stakes testing to evaluate student academic readiness (Sears, 2008; Wallender, 2014). The idea of increasing academic rigor in public education were goals of the administrations of George H. W. Bush, William Clinton, and George W. Bush. George W. Bush was the president who codified this increased rigor within the law established by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (New York State Education Department, 2009).

**No Child Left Behind Act**. The No Child Left Behind Act or "NCLB" was the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act that former United States President George W. Bush, signed into law on January 8, 2002, bringing about significant change to school districts across the country (Meier & Wood, 2004; National Education Association, 2007; U.S. Department of Education, 2002).  The stated goal of the NCLB was to ensure that every student would be at grade level in reading and math by 2014 (US Department of Education, 2002).  NCLB was originally composed of four pieces: "stronger accountability for results", "greater flexibility in the use of federal funds", "more choices for parents", and "an emphasis on teaching methods that have been demonstrated to work" (U.S. Department of Education, 2004, p. 1).

In a speech given shortly after the law was created, Bush (2003) asserted "we help children by measuring the educational progress of every single child and by insisting on change when progress is not made" (para. 12).  NCLB was designed to shift the focus of public education from teaching students content, to a focused effort to close the achievement gap among students of different economic backgrounds by making schools accountable for the success of its students and their quality of education (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Schools originally had a five-year window to make marked improvements, if they were not up to the expected standard.  If there was no, or not enough, measurable improvement within the allocated time, then the state could impose sanctions on schools that did not meet the expectations (Foorman & Nixon, 2006).

NCLB stated that all students would be statistically proficient in reading by the year 2014, with an emphasis in struggling readers up to third grade increasing reading scores (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). NCLB required schools to assess student reading ability once between third and fifth grade, once again during sixth though ninth grade, and finally one more time during 10th through 12th grade (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

One of the provisions of NCLB included the recognition that literacy skills in early elementary grades needed concentrated instruction.  Reading First is a program created to allocate funds to states and school districts to establish a focused reading program for students enrolled from Kindergarten through third grade (Scholastic, Inc, 2014; Wise, 2009;).  As a result of the testing increases demanded by NCLB, teachers found themselves being pulled in two directions. They felt that they had to increase

scores on the high stakes assessments, while still working to increase the reading skills of their students (Sears, 2008).

In middle and high school the legislation offered fewer grant opportunities, but still required data collection and accountability. NCLB offered a grant called Striving Readers for struggling students in middle school (Learning Point Associates, 2007).  To qualify, schools had to qualify for Title I money by showing a trend of low reading scores (Learning Point Associates, 2007).  One reason that the NCLB included few provisions to support literacy interventions for middle and high school students was because the legislators did not realize the massive amount of students that were falling through the cracks at those higher levels (Wise, 2009).  The legislation created a focused intervention for the early school years, but the lack of specific tools combined with the new emphasis on school accountability in the middle and high school years meant that secondary schools had to scramble to come close to the legislated mandate of proficiency by 2014. This scramble led many states to consider alternatives to NCLB and one of those alternatives was Common Core (New York State Education Department, 2009; Wallender, 2014).

**Common Core State Standards**. The Council of State School Officers and the National Governors Association created the Common Core State Standards to increase school rigor and prepare students for higher education and the workforce (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2014; McLaughlin & Overturf, 2012). These standards were broken into two main categories, English Language Arts and Mathematics, since these disciplines included the skills necessary for all other content areas (Wallender, 2014). By

the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century, more than 41 states had adopted the Common Core State Standards (ACT, Inc., 2010).

Historically, state standards had teachers teach content specific information for the sake of knowing the content (Gardner & Powell, 2013). The expectation for Common Core was that students would learn skills and methods to use those skills to evaluate content. (Drew, 2013; Gardner & Powell, 2013; Manderino & Wickens, 2014). According to ACT, there were too few graduating high school students prepared to properly interpret complex text (ACT, Inc., 2010).

 The Common Core emphasized the use literacy skills to demonstrate an understanding of content knowledge (ACT, Inc, 2010; Drew, 2013; Gardner & Powell, 2013; Wallender, 2014). As a result of more rigorous literacy instruction, student should benefit in their decoding ability and their understanding of content vocabulary (ACT, Inc, 2010).

Districts that adopted and implemented Common Core standards with fidelity noticed an increase in student achievement (Gardner & Powell, 2013). The emphasis on increased rigor translated across all content areas. According to Gardener and Powell, students were expected to be able to demonstrate very specific skills with Common Core (2013). The expectation with Common Core was that students would develop skills to help them access all disciplines through multiple texts (Gardner & Powell, 2013; Manderino & Wickens, 2014). ACT, Inc. (2010) stressed the need to utilize subject-area expertise to increase student ability to effectively communicate in all educational fields. Since initial adoption, some states have since dropped out of the consortium, or changed

the program to meet the needs of their particular state, but the need for increased

academic rigor has remained strong (Wallender, 2014).

All of these programs were designed to guide state and local school boards in

creating more rigorous curricula that will increase student skills in all academic areas,

especially in reading and literacy.  The next section will discuss the development of

middle school in the United States.

**Middle School**

The middle school years are a miasma of learning and socialization. Data for

decades has shown that students in the early adolescent grades struggle to perform

academically (Meyer, 2011).  Middle schools developed in the 1960s out of the junior

high school model. Junior high schools developed in the early 20th century as a way to

segregate the upper level elementary students from the primary grades, while still

keeping the middle grades away from the upper level secondary or high school students

(Trustees of Boston University, 1915, 1916; Weiss & Kipnes, 2006). Junior high had

been a weak link in public education, with an emphasis on watered down high school

curriculum and little focus on the specific needs of the preadolescent student (Meyer,

2011; Weiss & Kipnes, 2006). In 1963, at the peak of the junior high school model,

William Alexander gave a speech for school administrators where he outlined the need

for a new way of teaching and thinking when it came to the middle grade students. His

design emphasized the idea of a school within a school to strengthen the social ties of

adolescents (Weiss & Kipnes, 2006).

Middle school was designed to help bridge the gap academically and socially

from elementary to high school, while focusing on the student as a whole person. Nearly

50 years after the middle school model took hold, academic data did not substantiate

significant academic increases based upon grade segregation (Meyer, 2011; Reising,

2003). Despite the lack of substantial evidence to support the segregation of the middle

grades from elementary schools, most school systems were still set up along the pattern

of the primary or elementary grades, denoted by grades Kindergarten through fifth grade,

followed by secondary grades as grades six through 12, with secondary further delineated

into grades six through eight, called middle school, and grades nine through 12, called

high school (Meyer, 2011). During the integral years of middle school, the literacy skills

of students fails to grow at the rate of the same students during elementary years.

Reading is a skill developed with practice and it is a skill that not consistently

practiced by students in middle and high school. Middle schools found themselves

receiving a great deal of attention due to the overall decline in student achievement

during these middle school years (Cantrell et al., 2009; Fisher & Frey, 2007). A large

number of students were entering high school without the "knowledge-based

competencies" needed for high school and in life (Reardon et al., 2012, p. 19).

Elementary schools had the opportunity to have extended time spent in literacy strategies

that were just not available to students in middle school, but these students still needed up

to 90 minutes a day of sustained reading to be a fully capable reader (Dennis et al., 2011;

Ma'ayan, 2010; Sanacore & Palumbo, 2010). Middle school students generally did not

enjoy the idea of sustained silent reading, or reading logs, but it was up to teachers to

provide students with meaningful opportunities to become better readers, and therefore

more successful students (Sanacore & Palumbo, 2010). In 2007, with almost nine-million

students in the eighth grade, the National Assessment of Education Process revealed that

26% of them did not reach the basic levels of literacy (Greenleaf & Hinchman, 2007, p.

5).

     **Reluctant Readers in Middle School**. Middle school aged students were at an

obvious crossroads; they were far too immature for the academic rigor of high school and

far too grown up for the simpler strategies utilized in elementary schools.  The middle

school students that filled the halls of these educational morasses were all at very

different levels emotionally, socially, physically and academically and it was difficult for

teachers to recognize all of the needs of these students individually (Werderich, 2008).  It

was important that teachers investigated opportunities to engage students in their interests

while tying literacy opportunities to the content they teach (Dennis et al., 2011;

Werderich, 2008).  Teachers needed to find intrinsic motivations to entice reluctant

readers to read more.  Most middle school students strived for an independent, adult-like

atmosphere where their choices and opinions are recognized and valued (Dennis et al.,

2011).  Unfortunately, many adolescent students in the middle school years just were not

motivated to read and had negative attitudes about reading (Dennis et al., 2011; Robb,

2011; Sanacore & Palumbo, 2010; Werderich, 2008).

     Despite the statistics, there were successes in middle school literacy instruction.

According to the 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), eighth

grade students assessed could identify the main idea, theme, setting, and characters in

literary texts, while identifying the main idea, inferences, and supporting details of

informational texts (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011; Reardon et al., 2012).

The problem for older students was not in their ability to read the words on the page, but

it is in their inability to comprehend and apply what they have read (Nichols et al., 2007).

To help bridge this comprehension gap, teachers needed to find resources to pique

students interests and motivate students to want to become better readers (Werderich,

2008).

In other studies geared towards reluctant readers, research measured significant

growth for students that obtained reading intervention strategies with fidelity across all

content areas (Taylor, 2002). Research from master reading teacher, Benning (2014),

indicated that as reluctant readers gain more exposure to reading, their reading scores

increase. According to Greenleaf and Hinchman (2007), the failure of the system to reach

these reluctant readers is a result of cookie cutter programs that fail to address the literacy

needs of the reluctant reader.

**Pyramid of Intervention**

To encourage students to read at their grade level, teachers work within a

particular system of interventions. The Pyramid Model Interventions were a tier-based

framework meant to help students reach a desired achievement levels by promoting the

appropriate behaviors in children (Fox, Carta, Strain, Dunlap, & Hemmeter, 2009). The

Pyramid Model helped educators assign students to the appropriate level of intervention

based on data collected over time. In the 2013-2014 school year, the Midwestern School

District used several reading interventions to reach students that read far below grade

level expectations, even though there was not any intervention for students that were

between 0 and 6 months below grade level.

*System 44*. The lowest rung in the Reading Pyramid of Intervention in the

Midwestern School District was System 44.  Scholastic developed System 44 in 2006 to

reach the most-challenged older readers (Scholastic, Inc., 2009). System 44 was another

computer-based reading program offered by Scholastic, Incorporated designed to reach

the students with the lowest reading scores in their grade level.  System 44 was

"foundational" instruction uniquely designed to build mastery for each student to increase

their phonic, decoding and reading skills (Scholastic, Inc., 2013d). Students took an

active role in their education in the System 44 classroom, where they began with

language warm ups and setting daily goals (Tulsa Public Schools, 2013). Students would

stay in System 44 until they gained enough reading ability to progress to the next

intervention, Read 180.

*Read 180*. The next step in the Reading Pyramid of Intervention is Read 180.

Read 180 was a reading instruction approach designed for all primary and secondary

students that read two or more grades below grade level (Kim, Samson, Fitzgerald, &

Harty, 2010; Scholastic, Inc., 2013). Read 180 was a research-based program that

improved performance on state tests, reduced dropout rates and improved reading

achievement for students across all ethnic and gender groups (Scholastic, Inc., 2013a).

In the class, the computer-based instruction adapted to the reading ability of each

student to increase rigor and intensity, based on the interest and success of the individual

student (Hanzl & Seitelman, 2014). The software developed for the class tracked student

progress in a structured 90 minute class environment that used workbooks, computers,

audiobooks and independent reading sessions designed to increase student reading

achievement (Kim et al., 2010; Lupino, 2005).  The Read 180 software utilized videos that

built background knowledge for each student and explained high frequency vocabulary.

The program continually measured student comprehension through adaptive assessments

that increased rigor as students master concepts (Hanzl & Seitelman, 2014; Kim et al.,

2010; Lupino, 2005). If Read 180 was not effective for the student and they continued to struggle, then they are progressed into the next and final reading intervention, System 44.

   ***ELA tutoring***. If students were not reading low enough to qualify for Read 180 or System 44, and the English language Arts teacher noticed that the student needed additional supports in reading, then a select number of students were selected for ELA tutoring. This support was the highest level in the Midwestern School District's Reading Pyramid of Intervention was English Language Arts (ELA) Tutoring. It was geared to supplement student reading skills for those students that are less than two years below grade level and struggle to keep up in class. The Midwestern School District tasked English Language Arts teachers to create a tutoring class for those students that were struggling to keep up with the concepts taught in the English Language Arts class (J. Ferri, personal communication, March 31, 2014). The teachers utilized the district curriculum as a jumping off point to focus instruction in areas that the students showed weakness. In English Language Arts Tutoring classes, the teacher met with four to five students twice a week where they did hands on activities, read magazines, played games, wrote shorter pieces, peer edited, and whatever else they needed to do to build their literacy skills (J. Ferri, personal communication, March 31, 2014). These students were pulled out of their physical education classes once a week to receive this focused intervention. Teachers selected the students that would receive this intervention within each building. Although this practice was new to the district, the need for some kind of extra help for these reluctant students was not. If students did not find success in the focused intervention then they progressed to the next step in the pyramid, Read 180.

**Reading Assessments**

Since so many middle school students were reading below grade level, schools, districts, states and the federal government used various assessments to evaluate student reading ability. In education, assessments were any method for evaluating student learning. In this dissertation, I discussed a few of the most widely utilized.

**The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).** The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) was the largest national assessment of the various subject areas (National Center For Educational Statistics, 2014). The United States Department of Education administered NAEP uniformly across the nation. The assessment given was the same for each student randomly selected to take the assessment. The results gathered from NAEP provided the federal government with a snapshot of student achievement in subject-matter. The test also provided data on the demographics of schools and students. The assessment did not provide individual scores for students or schools (National Center For Educational Statistics, 2014; National Center for Education Statistics, 2011). Results of the NAEP were based on representative samples and the trends these samples indicated (National Center For Educational Statistics, 2011, 2014).

**The Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests (Gates Test).** The Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests were reading tests given to students by districts to assess student achievement in literacy (Institute of Education Sciences, 2012; Lee, 2013). The tests, which were scored by either teachers or by the publisher, were used at the kindergarten through high school to identify students that needed additional reading instruction (Lee, 2013). If students scored far below grade level, then they were generally placed in a

reading remediation program, where the lagging skills were addressed until such a time

that the student improved to a point that the remediation was no longer warranted (Lee,

2013).

        **Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI).** As of 1996, the state of Missouri required

all public schools to provide a solid foundation in reading and literacy (Missouri

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 1996). To evaluate whether or not

schools have met this goal, they used various assessments. One of these assessments is

the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI). The SRI was a computer-based assessment of

reading ability, based on Lexile measures (Scholastic, Inc, 2013b). In general, the SRI

assessment provided easy to interpret data, along with student focused interventions

designed to increase student reading scores, as measured with Lexile scores. The SRI test

was an adaptive assessment, in which a series of questions became increasingly difficult,

plateauing once the student struggles, giving a snap-shot of the students reading level

(Scholastic, Inc, 2013c). In this low stakes assessment, students did not need to know any

background information or have any subject matter knowledge.  They simply read a

passage and answered questions about the passage until the assessment ends, normally

within 20 to 30 minutes after the student began.

Table 1

*Lexile Ranges in Correspondence to Grade Levels 2008*

| Grade | Lexile Range |
|---|---|
| First Grade | Up to 300 |
| Second Grade | 140-500 |
| Third Grade | 330-700 |
| Fourth Grade | 445-810 |
| Fifth Grade | 565-910 |
| Sixth Grade | 665-1000 |
| Seventh Grade | 735-1065 |
| Eighth Grade | 805-1100 |
| Ninth Grade | 855-1165 |
| Tenth Grade | 905-1195 |
| Eleventh and Twelfth Grade | 940-1210 |

*Note.* Source: A Guide for Educators (MetaMetrics, 2015)

Table 1 represents the 2008 Lexile Ranges and Table 2 represents the updated

Lexile band Ranges. With Common Core State Standards, Lexile bands or ranges were

overlapping. Lexile ranges combined the text complexity with reader and task

considerations (MetaMetrics, 2015). States that adopted the Common Core Standards had

to adjust the bands to meet the increased expectations of Common Core. As of 2014,

before the full-scale adoption of the Common Core State Standards, the accepted grade

level Lexile scores were ranged in such a way that student growth could be easily

measured within each particular grade level.

Table 2

*Lexile Ranges for Common Core English Language Arts Standards*

| Grade Band | Current Lexile Band | Stretch Lexile Band |
|------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| K – 1 | NA | NA |
| 2 – 3 | 450L-730L | 420L-820L |
| 4 – 5 | 640L–850L | 740L–1010L |
| 6 – 8 | 860L–1010L | 925L–1185L |
| 9 – 10 | 960L–1120L | 1050L–1335L |
| 11 – CCR | 1070L–1220L | 1185L–1385L |

*Note.* Source: The Lexile Framework for Reading (MetaMetrics, 2015)

**Literacy Professional Development**

For nearly half a century education, business and political leaders have argued for the importance of integrating literacy instruction into content area classes (Cantrell et al., 2009).  At the secondary level, middle school teachers had consistently resisted literacy instruction in the content areas due to a lack of confidence in their own abilities (Cantrell et al., 2009).  These content area teachers had very little training in literacy instruction, perhaps only one or two semesters of undergraduate classes, depending on whether the teacher was a middle school certified teacher, or a secondary certified teacher, but it was important for school districts and teacher preparation programs to find opportunities to expand teacher knowledge in literacy instruction for all teachers (Nichols et al., 2007). Once in their class rooms, teachers struggled with the responsibility of teaching the content the state and school board required and the need for all students to be career and college ready when they left the school system (Cantrell et al., 2009; Dennis et al., 2011).

The job market of the early 21st century demanded that employees come into the workplace with increased literacy skills that secondary schools are not teaching (Reed, 2009). It was the responsibility of schools to prepare students ready for this demanding job market with an increased expectation of student literacy. Secondary teachers struggled with implementing literacy within the classroom due to the rigid requirements of teaching their content and the focus on standardized testing (Nokes, 2010; Reed, 2009; Warren-Kring & Warren, 2013). Most secondary teachers had little more than one or two classes taken in college to help them incorporate literacy instruction into their content classes.

In many secondary schools, literacy was something that English/Language Arts teachers tried to cram into their classes, and unfortunately, most had little to no training to teach literacy (Wise, 2009).  As of this writing, legislators have recently come to the realization that the success of the early school age literacy interventions is being lost on middle and high school students (Faggella-Luby & Deshler, 2008), and something radical needed to be done about it.  Research from the early twenty-first century revealed that while many students were advancing on to the next grade in secondary schools, 26% of eighth-grade students could not read essential life skill materials needed for daily living, like newspapers and job applications, and nearly two-thirds of the same eighth-graders and 12th-graders read at lower than the "proficient" level (Brozo, 2009; Faggella-Luby & Deshler, 2008; Wise, 2009).

The expectation of secondary school curriculum was that students will have language tools that will enable them to explore diverse content areas, like history, math, science and literature, but these tools were absent in far too may students. The lack of

research in literacy at the middle and high school level has driven schools to develop

their own programs for adolescent literacy (Brozo, 2009). Often, the largest deterent to

student success in school was the student's own lack of capability, not the lack of student

desire. Additionally, current curriculum models did not address student interests or

outside-of school competencies as often as they tended to repeat past mistakes in the

hopes of generating different outcomes (Brozo, 2009; Wise, 2009).

**Student Literacy Professional Development**. During the 2013-2014 school year,

the district of the study conducted a professional development based on *Developing*

*Readers in the Academic Disciplines* by Buehl (2011). According to Buehl, there are six

key shifts in English Language Arts or Literacy including: balancing informational and

literary text, building knowledge in the disciplines, staircase of complexity, text-based

answers, writing from sources, academic vocabulary.

The second topic Buehl (2011) wrote about was the need for non-English

Language Arts secondary teachers to use literacy to help students with their knowledge in

the disciplines or content specific knowledge. If done with fidelity, students would

become better readers by building background content knowledge (Buehl, 2011).

Students would be better prepared to handle primary source documents with confidence

(Buehl, 2011). Students would have the skills to infer where the evidence is in the text to

support arguments and opinions (Buehl, 2011). Students would also be able to see the

text as a source of evidence (Buehl, 2011).

The activities used in the class should begin with the idea that all teachers teach

students how to be better readers, not just literacy or English Language Arts teachers

(Buehl, 2011). Teachers should find opportunities to teach students to write about

evidence from the text and teach different approaches to different types of text (Buehl, 2011). Teachers should treat text as a source of evidence and teach students to support opinions with evidence from the text by having students ask questions about what they are reading (Buehl, 2011). When people read, they comprehend the reading based on their personal identities, based on their nature and personal traits (Buehl, 2011). By understanding the role of the reader in academic reading, teachers can gradually release responsibility to the student for their own learning (Buehl, 2011).

When given assignments to read by teachers, students tend to read to "get it done." This pseudo-reading includes skimming for answers, reading and forgetting, and surface reading. Skimming for answers was when students were given an assignment based on the reading, and they simply looked through the reading to find the answers to the assignment (Buehl, 2011). This produced easily forgettable facts, but offered little chance of retention of what the students read. Reading and forgetting is based on forced classroom reading activities (Buehl, 2011). Students generally find these activities boring, and they are not invested in the content. Surface processing is when students scan the text with their eyes, reading the whole section and not know what it is about (Buehl, 2011).

To increase student comprehension of texts, teachers should implement processes and strategies that engage the students (Buehl, 2011). Teachers should have students generate questions about the text they are reading. Students should analyze the content to create sensory images of the text. These strategies will help students make connections to the text. If students can use the text to make inferences or determine the importance of the events in the text, then they will have a greater understanding of what they read.

Generally, teachers assign reading and assess performance. Secondary teachers teach with the expectation that students already know how to read before middle and high school (Buehl, 2011). If students cannot read, then secondary teachers feel that students should be placed in reading programs to fix their deficiencies (Buehl, 2011). Teachers should embed literacy comprehension instruction in all lessons and model their thinking about their content to show how professional think about that content (Buehl, 2011).

Teachers have to remember that their strength is the content, not literacy. Teachers should use literacy to emphasize the content and scaffold students to lead students to deeper comprehension by keeping the academic thought processes transparent (Buehl, 2011). Text relationships can be implicit or subtle and are often embedded in the message (Buehl, 2011). The richness of detail helps the reader to navigate sophisticated material to gain understanding. The text structure is less about organization and more about the relationship between ideas (Buehl, 2011).

According to Buehl (2011), Quick Writes are great for students who have much knowledge of the content. The teacher provides the prompt and reactivates prior student learning. Another effective tool is meaningful associations, like concept maps provide students with visual representations of what they are reading (Buehl, 2011). Alphabet brainstorming is a method for teachers to use that engages student thinking on their reading by associating the reading to a specific topic (Buehl, 2011). According to Buehl, the more educators embed literacy practices into instruction, the better students perform in not only reading, but in all academic areas.

**Pre-Service Education**

Despite the lack of secondary teacher training in literacy, many colleges had increased literacy instruction in secondary content area classes (Nokes, 2010; Warren-Kring & Warren, 2013).  Pre-service teachers had a great deal of content-heavy courses and a few courses on pedagogy. One of these courses, at most universities is a content area reading/literacy class. Many pre-service teachers found these courses to be boring and irrelevant and the method courses they take may even contradict the information taught in the literacy courses (Nokes, 2010).  Many method courses focused heavily on discovery or project based learning, eliminating the perceived need for literacy instruction (Nokes, 2010; Warren-Kring & Warren, 2013).

**School Culture**

There was a cultural resistance to change with secondary teachers. Secondary content area teachers tended to be experts in their content. As a result, these teachers were slow to implement new strategies that took time away from their content (Warren-Kring & Warren, 2013).  When secondary teachers supported literacy instruction, there were noticeable increases in student literacy scores (Nokes, 2010; Warren-Kring & Warren, 2013). When middle school and high school teachers recognized and implemented literacy strategies within their classes, students better understood the content (Nokes, 2010; Reed, 2009).

**Barriers**

There were several barriers to successful implementation of literacy instruction embedded within non-English Language Arts (ELA) content. A major issue for the successful implementation of any new professional development strategy was that

secondary teachers did not often put new concepts into practice in their classes (Nokes, 2010; Reed, 2009). Even when the strategy was research-based, they still struggled to fully implementing it with fidelity due to the difficulty of balancing the content with the new strategy (Reed, 2009; Warren-Kring & Warren, 2013). Another issue for many secondary teachers was that they were taught to teach using direct instruction and demonstration (Nokes, 2010; Reed, 2009). An overarching issue for secondary teachers was the need to address the vast difference in students' specific socio-economic backgrounds while attempting to meet the needs of high stakes standardized tests (Reed, 2009).

The biggest impediment to change was quality professional development. When quality research based professional development was instituted with fidelity, teachers and students saw increases in reading scores (Reed, 2009). Teachers also needed time to prepare lessons and critically reflect upon successful implementation of the lessons to gain confidence in using new strategies (Reed, 2009; Warren-Kring & Warren, 2013).

The national focus on assessment and teacher accountability has led administrators to focus on measurable content standards that could be easily evaluated with standardized tests (The New Teacher Project, 2010). As a result of these shortcomings in the nation's literacy expectations for middle and high school students, students were falling through the cracks and were leaving the system less prepared for the work force than ever before (Cantrell et al., 2009). Nationally, students who could not read were the largest percentage of high school dropouts (Bridgeland, Dilulio, Jr., & Morison, 2006). These dropouts accounted for a far greater burden on the nations economy and over their life, they lose an average of $260,000 in income (Wise, 2009).

By comparison, high school graduate make nearly ten times the income of dropouts (Azzam, 2007; Bridgeland et al., 2006; Wise, 2009). Literacy was not simply an elementary school problem, it was a national problem that educators and law makers needed to find solutions to.

**Teacher Collaboration**

Teachers need to balance the need to teach content with the need for students to learn the skill of reading.  Teachers wanted the strategies they used to produce growth in literacy, while teaching students the content they teach.  Some of the more successful middle school strategies included balancing independent reading with varied "textual experiences" (Sanacore & Palumbo, 2010).  Teachers should also guide learners in extensive content and skill based vocabulary strategies that made reading less cumbersome when done independently (Palumbo & Sanacore, 2009; Cantrell et al., 2009; Robb, 2011).

When secondary teachers worked as teams to collaborate on strategies to link instruction over content areas, there was less of a burden on any one teacher (Reed, 2009).  Another way school districts could overcome perceived boundaries to implementing literacy strategies was adopting an overarching literacy theme. This would help increase the fidelity of instruction would give teachers opportunities to work as teams to implement the strategies (Buehl, 2011; Reed, 2009). This quality professional development must be ongoing, and frequently job-embedded to help avoid the stigma of just one more program to get through (Reed, 2009).

**Summary**

In this chapter, I provided several resources illustrating the various methods of literacy instruction as well as the need for student interventions in literacy. I also briefly provided evidence of the history of reading and literacy instruction in the United States. I provided valuable research on reluctant readers and some insight on methods being used to address their unique reading needs. Additionally, the various reading assessments used in the United States and the Scholastic Reading Inventory Assessment were briefly explained. Finally, I provided practical professional development research to help guide teacher instruction. In the next chapter, I will discuss the methodology of the study, including a description of the evaluation of the professional development.

**Chapter Three: Methodology**

**Overview**

The purpose of this dissertation was to determine if school-wide literacy instruction and student reading interventions increased student reading scores with students who read 0 to 6 months below grade level as measured by the Student Reading Inventory (SRI) Assessment and the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test, and as indicated by the Lexile reading score measured by the SRI.  Another purpose of the study was to evaluate whether the classroom and student developed interventions increased student desire to read.  A third purpose of this study was to determine whether or not teachers felt that professional development focused on literacy instruction better prepared teachers to incorporate literacy instruction within their classes.

The majority of the data evaluated was secondary data, already gathered by the district where I worked previously as a teacher and administrative intern.  Through a building wide testing program, some students were identified as reading between 0 and 6 months below grade level by the district. The students were identified from the general population based on several indicators, including, but not limited to, their 2012-2013 Gates-MacGinitie Test and the 2012-2013 Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) data to determine if a student consistently fell within a range of 0 to 6 months below the grade level expectation of their grade level.

The district used quantitative data from a variety of sources to measure student achievement over a period of one year.  The sources the district used to gather data were Gates-MacGinitie Tests, MAP Tests, and quarterly SRI tests.  The latter being the

primary instrument for the data collected throughout the school year.  I then compiled all of the data from the various assessments.

At the conclusion of the secondary data sample identification, two survey instruments were used by the school administrators.  The first survey was given to two groups of students. One group was a completely randomized group of students that volunteered to do the survey. The other group were the students that were a part of the reading intervention program and had been identified as reading 0 to 6 months below grade level.  Students were asked to rate their opinions on reading and whether or not they felt like they read more during the 2013-2014 school year. Both groups were given the exact same survey on Surveymonkey.com, but the survey data was segregated based on the group surveyed.

The school administrators sent an additional survey on Surveymonkey.com to 70 teachers to measure their opinions about the professional development on literacy of the 2013-2104 school year, as well as the implementation of literacy and whether or not they felt that the professional development had helped them to increase student literacy. Twenty-eight teachers responded to the survey, a 40% response rate. In early February 2016, I compared all the data during the analysis phase of the study.  I documented and described in detail the activities, topics, strategies, and meetings that were a part of the professional development in literacy for staff at the study school. All data gathered through documents, reflections, notes, and interviews were coded for themes and reported in the dissertation.

I gathered this data from the district in January 2016. In April 2016 I interviewed several teachers in the district about the literacy instruction professional development of

the 2013-2014 school year where the research was conducted to further develop an

understanding of the teacher perceptions of the literacy professional development. The

collected data was then coded for similarities and themes in answers to interview

questions.

**The Research Site**

The initial data gathering was conducted at a suburban middle school in a major

metropolitan area by school administrators. The middle school had an enrollment of 879

students. The students were 70.9% White, 13.8% Black, 6.3% Asian, and 5.2% Hispanic,

with the balance of student enrollment was composed of percentages too low to calculate.

The school's free and reduced lunch rate was 29.7% in the 2014-2015 school year. The

school's staffing ratios were 20 to 1 for students and teachers and 293 to 1 for students to

administrators; 85.6% of the staff had advanced degrees. The state assessment data for

English Language Arts in 2014 revealed that 47.6% of sixth grade students were not

proficient or advanced, 37.7% of seventh graders were not proficient or advanced, and

41.1% of eighth graders were not proficient or advanced. The overall school average of

students that did not attain proficient or advanced in English Language Arts was 40.4% in

2014.

**Developing the Intervention**

During the 2012-2013 school year, school administrators evaluated student-

reading scores.  The administrators investigated the reading scores of students that who

fell in a Lexile Score range 0 to 6 months below grade level, generally 0 to 75 Lexile

points lower than the lowest acceptable reading score for that grade level. The school

administrators met with social studies teachers to encourage them to develop pre-reading

strategies and encouraged them to utilize them.  There was not strong administrative

oversight, just encouragement from the department and the school administrators. There

were some incremental increases in student literacy, based on the fidelity of

implementation within the classroom of the social studies teachers, but nothing

statistically significant.

During the 2013-2014 school year, the district leadership decided to implement a

district-wide emphasis on secondary student literacy along with a professional

development program for the 2013-2014 school year based on the book *Developing*

*Readers in the Academic Disciplines*, by Buehl (2011) that focused on student literacy

instruction.  During this period, every non-English Language Arts and Math teacher met

four times over the course of the year to learn and collaborate about reading strategies

and methods of using literacy in the classroom.

**2013-2014 School Year - Literacy Professional Development**

During the 2013-2014 school year, the district developed a professional

development plan focused on increasing student literacy scores. Over the course of the

school year, teachers met within content disciplines to discuss methods of increasing

literacy strategies within their classroom with the intent of increasing student literacy

scores. The professional development was led by content area leaders that had previously

been trained in literacy instruction. The textbook used by the Content Area Leaders,

*Developing Readers in the Academic Disciplines* by Buehl (2011), focused on

disciplinary literacy instruction (A. Jandt, personal communication, March 8, 2015; D.

Nuckolls, personal communication, February 13, 2015).

The four dedicated professional development days over the course of the 2013-2014 school year were broken into strategies that could be taught and discussed during one training day, and then taken into the classroom over the course of the next couple of months to be used and reflected upon.  Teachers were encouraged to bring back success stories and failures to share with the content area leaders to help teachers reflect upon the literacy strategies and find the best practices in use (A. Jandt, personal communication, March 8, 2015).

On the first day of professional development the literacy trainers, called Content Area Leaders or CALS, spent time explaining the need to teach literacy in all content areas (A. Jandt, personal communication, March 8, 2015; D. Nuckolls, personal communication, February 13, 2015). They began by explaining the six key shifts in English Language Arts classes, so that non English Language Arts teachers would better understand the point of the professional development (A. Jandt, personal communication, March 8, 2015; D. Nuckolls, personal communication, February 13, 2015).

The second topic discussed was the need for non-English Language Arts secondary teachers to use literacy to help students with their knowledge in the disciplines or content specific knowledge. The English Language Arts teachers were not included in the professional development activities because they were using the same professional development time to create the new curricula using the Common Core State Standards. If done with fidelity, students would become better readers by building background content knowledge (Buehl, 2011). Additionally, the Content Area Leaders discussed the need for non- English Language Arts or Literacy teachers to rethink their role in teaching literacy

in the classroom (A. Jandt, personal communication, March 8, 2015; D. Nuckolls,

personal communication, February 13, 2015).

The activities used in the professional development began with the idea that all

teachers teach students how to be better readers, not just literacy or English language arts

teachers. The content area leaders told the staff that teachers should stop referring to the

text and summarizing the text and give students opportunities to start reading. During the

training, the Content Area Leaders then discussed the role of the classroom teacher in

mentoring students to become literate in the perspective academic discipline. The first

step is to help the student find their reader identity (A. Jandt, personal communication,

March 8, 2015; D. Nuckolls, personal communication, February 13, 2015).

The Content Area Leaders then taught about the need to think about reading

comprehension in the content area in a new way (A. Jandt, personal communication,

March 8, 2015; D. Nuckolls, personal communication, February 13, 2015). The trainers

began with a brainstorming activity based on the current practices in classroom reading.

The content area leaders proposed a new way of thinking, based on Buehl, where teachers

see their discipline from a literacy perspective (A. Jandt, personal communication, March

8, 2015; D. Nuckolls, personal communication, February 13, 2015). Teachers should

embed literacy comprehension instruction in all lessons. Teachers should model their

thinking about their content to show how professional think about that content (Buehl,

2011). The training emphasized the importance of modeling and think-aloud activities to

strengthen the content knowledge of the students (A. Jandt, personal communication,

March 8, 2015; D. Nuckolls, personal communication, February 13, 2015).

The trainers spent time teaching about the nature of complex text (A. Jandt, personal communication, March 8, 2015; D. Nuckolls, personal communication, February 13, 2015). They led a discussion where the teachers shared what text was. The content area leaders then told the group that "complex" means more than a just a longer text or a more difficult text. They spelled out six qualities of complex text: text relationships, richness of detail, text structure, writing style, vocabulary density, and the author's purpose (Buehl, 2011). The final portion of the first day of professional development included the unpacking of the Common Core Standards for Reading. Unpacking the standards included looking at the Common Core standards and the specific curricula to evaluate how best to build literacy instruction into the content area.

During the next professional development, Content Area Leaders led the non-English Language Arts content teachers in frontloading activities (A. Jandt, personal communication, March 8, 2015; D. Nuckolls, personal communication, February 13, 2015). These included pre-reading strategies, as well as teaching the teachers how to differentiate based on the depth of content knowledge the students have. During this second training session, the Content Area Leaders also taught the teachers about Lightening Rod Statements and Prediction Anticipation Guides (A. Jandt, personal communication, March 8, 2015; D. Nuckolls, personal communication, February 13, 2015).  Lightening Rod Statements were focal points designed to have students bring text-to-text, text-to-self, and text to world knowledge on their thoughts (Buehl, 2011).

The third monthly district professional development led by the content area leaders focused on Think-Alouds and Self Questioning Taxonomy (A. Jandt, personal communication, March 8, 2015; D. Nuckolls, personal communication, February 13,

2015). The content area leaders then led the teachers in how to question text through a disciplinary lens (A. Jandt, personal communication, March 8, 2015; D. Nuckolls, personal communication, February 13, 2015). The leaders began by examining how to read complex text. The content leaders recommended that teachers should constantly build the vocabulary the students need so that students that struggle could get the access to grade level complex texts (A. Jandt, personal communication, March 8, 2015).

The next portion of the professional development dealt with close reading (A. Jandt, personal communication, March 8, 2015; D. Nuckolls, personal communication, February 13, 2015).. Close reading is defined by College and Career Readiness Standards as text that is read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it (Buehl, 2011). One specific method the content area leaders taught was to have teachers build inquiring minds around disciplinary texts (A. Jandt, personal communication, March 8, 2015; D. Nuckolls, personal communication, February 13, 2015)..

The final professional development the school district held on literacy instruction focused mostly on note taking strategies and graphic organizers (A. Jandt, personal communication, March 8, 2015; D. Nuckolls, personal communication, February 13, 2015). They began the professional development explaining the reason why students should practice note-taking and graphic organizers. The content area leaders then encouraged teachers to use similar methods of note taking (A. Jandt, personal communication, March 8, 2015; D. Nuckolls, personal communication, February 13, 2015).. The major focus of the professional development was a comprehensive review of close reading as a more in-depth analysis of text (A. Jandt, personal communication,

March 8, 2015; D. Nuckolls, personal communication, February 13, 2015).. The three

main goals of close reading were to clarify understanding, interacting with or question an

author and personalize a message.

The content area leaders briefly discussed three strategies to encourage close

reading; text coding, taking notes and graphic organizers (Buehl, 2011). The most

common method recommended for taking notes out of the textbook was double-column

notes (A. Jandt, personal communication, March 8, 2015; D. Nuckolls, personal

communication, February 13, 2015).. Upon the conclusion of the yearlong professional

development on literacy instruction in all non-English Language Arts and Mathematics

classrooms, the content area leader team collected examples from teachers and the

content teams collaborated among themselves to determine best practices and to find

strategies for overcoming obstacles to better implementation of literacy instruction in the

classroom (A. Jandt, personal communication, March 8, 2015; D. Nuckolls, personal

communication, February 13, 2015)..

**Design and Analysis of the Research**

The research was a mixed-method study using both qualitative and quantitative

data. The reason I decided to make the study mixed-method was due to the fact that the

quantitative data the district collected was all secondary data and I felt that combining the

secondary data with interviews I collected would give me more insight into the viability

of replicating the project at a different school. The quantitative portion of the study used

secondary data gathered by the district over the course of the 2013-2014 school year to

measure the change in reading scores of the students in the focus group as well as

comparing those scores to the school as a whole.  The qualitative portion of the study

measured both the students' perception of reading and the of the literacy instruction they received during the 2013-2014 school year. Additionally, the qualitative portion of the research included the teachers' perception of the professional development in literacy instruction as well as the teachers' opinion of implementing literacy instruction in their classrooms. The district gathered the reading intervention data for their own purposes. I selected the secondary data because it was the data that the district used for the reading intervention at the school. The district also collected the survey data. The teacher survey data was not very comprehensive, so I used it to help me design an interview protocol to uncover the teachers' opinions about the 2014-2015 literacy professional development.

I randomly selected data from the school where the research was conducted and used a $z$-test for difference in means to determine if there was a significant increase in reading level and reading scores of students receiving the district-required interventions. I also used a $z$-test for difference in means to determine if there was a significant difference in reading scores of students receiving the district-required interventions, when comparing grades six, seven, and eight.

The other secondary data that I utilized was collected from a survey sent to the 64 teachers in the building where the program was implemented, with 28 teacher responses. I coded the teacher survey data for themes to determine teacher opinions of the district literacy interventions.  Additionally, I used a $z$-test for difference to compare the proportion of participating teachers who perceive the literacy program as effective to the proportion of those who do not.

I then evaluated the literacy professional development implemented in the 2013-2014 school year for district teachers in Secondary non-English Language Arts or

Mathematics classes. I documented and described the activities, topics, strategies, and meetings that were a part of the Professional Development in literacy for staff at the study school. I gathered data through documents, reflections, notes, and interviews that were be coded for themes and analyzed. This qualitative primary data research consisted of interviews of eight teachers in the building where the professional development and research was conducted to further develop an understanding of the teacher perceptions of the literacy professional development from the 2013-2014 school year. Data were coded for similarities and themes in answers to interview questions.

**Student and Teacher Participants**

The district used previous reading scores to identify the students that would be a part of the intervention.  All students in middle school were tested annually for reading ability.  Students that scored at or above grade reading level were excluded and students that scored more than 6 months below grade level were excluded if they were receiving some other kind of intervention.  Some students not initially intended for the study who were also tested, although not included in the data, were English Language Learner (ELL) students that the building administration also wanted to have tested and participate in the small group intervention based on their understanding of the English language.

Table 3 illustrates the entire population of the school.  Due to the redaction of student information, I had no data to determine the ethnic composure of the sample, nor the socio-economic composition of the group.

Table 3

*Demographics (Suburban Middle School 2013-2014)*

|  | Students | Percentage of Population |
|---|---|---|
| Total Number of Students | 879 |  |
| Sixth Grade | 290 | 33.0% |
| Seventh Grade | 303 | 34.5% |
| Eighth Grade | 286 | 32.5% |
| Male | 409 | 46.5% |
| Female | 470 | 53.5% |

Table 4 illustrates the students that the district selected for the reluctant reader group. The district did not try to balance the groups, rather it tried to include as many students as qualified into the group.

Table 4

*Demographics (Reluctant Reader Group)*

|  | Students | Percentage of Group |
|---|---|---|
| Total Number of Participants | 45 |  |
| Sixth Grade | 19 | 42.2% |
| Seventh Grade | 12 | 26.7% |
| Eighth Grade | 14 | 31.1% |
| Male | 25 | 55.6% |
| Female | 20 | 44.4% |

Figure 1 illustrates that of the 45 students in the focus group were not proportional to the population of the school. The most obvious concern of I was that there was a disproportionately high number of sixth grade participants and low number of seventh grade students, when compared to the student population at the middle school.
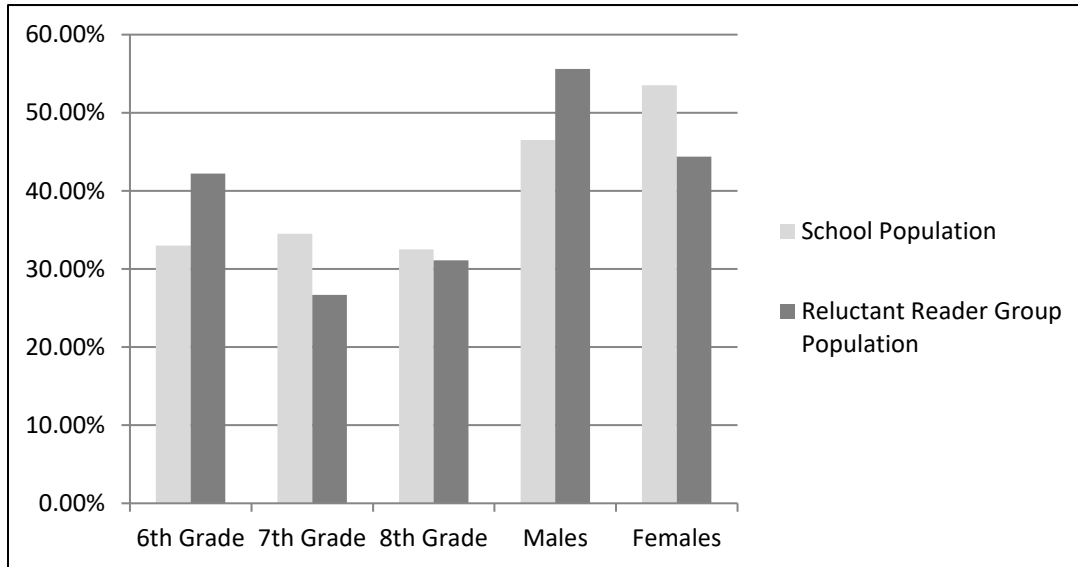


*Figure 1*. School population compared to reluctant reader population.

The percentage of sixth grade students in the group was far greater than the population and the percentage of seventh graders was lower than the population. Although the eighth grade group was a better representation of the population. The figure also illustrates a disproportionately higher number of males in the group compared to the school population and a disproportionately lower number of females in the group compared to the school population.

Table 5 illustrates the sixth grade population percentage for participants in the literacy focus group. The percent of boys represented was far greater than the school's population.

Table 5

*Demographics (6th grade Reluctant Reader Group)*

|  | Students | Percentage of Group |
|---|---|---|
| Total Number of Participants | 20 | |
| Male | 13 | 65% |
| Female | 7 | 35% |

Table 6 illustrates the seventh grade population percentage for participants in the literacy focus group. The percentage of both groups is representative of the population of the grade and school.

Table 6

*Demographics (7th grade Reluctant Reader Group)*

|  | Students | Percentage of Group |
|---|---|---|
| Total Number of Participants | 12 | |
| Male | 6 | 50% |
| Female | 6 | 50% |

Table 7 illustrates the eighth grade population percentage for participants in the literacy focus group. The percent of boys represented was greater than the school's population.

Table 7

*Demographics (8th grade Reluctant Reader Group)*

|  | Students | Percentage of Group |
|---|---|---|
| Total Number of Participants | 14 | |
| Male | 8 | 57.1% |
| Female | 6 | 42.9% |

Table 8 illustrates the population percentages of the participants in the primary

qualitative data collected from interviews conducted after the literacy professional

development was fully implemented in the classroom. To gather this data, I contacted

potential participants and set up interviews with eight teachers that worked at the school

where the intervention was implemented.

Table 8

*Demographics (Teachers Interviewed)*

|  | Teachers | Percentage of Group |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Total Number of Participants | 8 |  |
| Male | 4 | 50% |
| Female | 4 | 50% |

**Data Collection and Analysis Procedures**

1. Before the 2013-2014 school year, the district included the 2012-2013 data and the

   2013-2014 intervention into the building's School Improvement Plan.  With this

   accomplished, the district tweaked the intervention to include a focus group that

   would get focused intervention time with the district and with grade level peers to

   facilitate discussions and encourage reading outside of the class.  The district

   identified the students who scored 0 to 6 months below grade level, and was receiving

   no additional intervention and began the testing process in September 2013.

2. Once the initial group of 90 students were given the SRI test, the scores of the

   students were compared to the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test and MAP Test data

   from the previous year. The district excluded any students that were then reading at or

   above grade level and the group make up was determined for the 2013-2014 school

   year.  Any students who scored significantly below grade level (more than 6 months)

were placed in a focused reading intervention, such as Read 180 or System 44,

depending on how they scored. The remaining 48 students all met with the

administrative team, and a letter was sent home to inform the students' guardians of

the participants in the reading intervention program.

3. Once a quarter, the district gave an SRI assessment to the students identified at 0 to 6

    months below grade level. The district then compared the recent scores to the

    previous data to measure student achievement. The district also compared the Gates-

    MacGinitie Reading Test scores of the 2013-2014 school year to determine if any

    measurable growth had occurred.

4. During the 4th quarter of the 2013-2014 school year, the district used a Likert-scale

    Survey to survey two groups of students. A Likert-scale survey allowed the

    participants to choose from a range of responses that make it easier to uncover

    degrees of opinions (SurveyMonkey, 2014). The first group, previously identified as

    reluctant readers and part of the reading intervention group, took an anonymous

    survey that the district set up on "Survey Monkey." The second group of students

    took the same anonymous survey, identified by a different group name that the

    district also set up on "Survey Monkey." The district identified each group in Survey

    Monkey as two different surveys to keep the comparable data separate, but the

    surveys were identical in every other way.

5. The student survey, developed by the school district and located in Appendix A,

    asked the students to rate their opinions on reading. In addition, the survey asked

    students whether they read more because of school. The survey gave students four

    possible answer choices for each of the ten questions. The choices were

"Absolutely," meaning that the student completely agreed with the statement or

question; "Somewhat," meaning that the student agreed with the statement or

question; "Partially," meaning that the student disagreed with the statement; and "Not

at All," meaning that the student strongly disagreed with the statement or question.

The district assumed that an answer of "Absolutely" and "Somewhat" were favorable

responses to the question or statement, while "Partially" and "Not at All" indicated a

non-favorable response to the statement or questions.

6.  The district also developed a Likert-scale survey, located in Appendix B, to ask

teachers within the school that the interventions occurred if the teachers felt the

interventions were successful.  The survey also measured if the teachers felt that had

been prepared effectively to implement literacy strategies into their classroom.  The

survey also gave teachers four choices.  Like the student survey, the choices were

"Absolutely," meaning that the student completely agreed with the statement or

question; "Somewhat," meaning that the student agreed with the statement or

question; "Partially," meaning that the student disagreed with the statement; and "Not

at All," meaning that the student strongly disagreed with the statement or question.  I

assumed that an answer of "Absolutely" and "Somewhat" were favorable responses

to the question or statement, while "Partially" and "Not at All" indicated a non-

favorable response to the statement or questions.  Teachers also could utilize a

comments box, where they could expand or discuss any of their opinions in detail.

7.  I statistically analyzed the change in student Lexile scores mean using the data

collected from the district's use of the Scholastic Reading Inventory during the 2013-

2014 school year using a $t$-test for dependent mean and a $z$-test of two independent

means. I also compared the reading growth of the school as a whole using a *z*-test of

two proportions, seeing if their growth was consistent with the school's growth, using

the data gathered from the Gates- MacGinitie Reading Test. Once I collected the

primary data from the district, I correlated all of the data, including the surveys and

the assessment data to determine if the hypotheses were valid. Once the teacher

survey data was collected and analyzed, I used the responses to develop an interview

protocol that would further develop teacher opinions of the professional development.

8. The final part of the study was the qualitative primary data analysis. I interviewed

   eight teachers in the building where the professional development and research was

   conducted to further develop an understanding of the teacher perceptions of the

   literacy professional development from the 2013-2014 school year. The data were

   coded for similarities and themes in answers to interview questions. The teachers

   were interviewed using the following interview questions:

   a. What kind of training did you have in literacy instruction, before the 2013-

      2014 school year?

   b. In the 2013-2014 school year, your school district provided you with

      professional development in literacy strategies. What were your perceptions of

      the literacy instruction professional development?

   c. If you had any, what were some of the challenges with implementing literacy

      instruction into your instruction?

      i. How did these challenges make you less likely to implement reading

         strategies with fidelity?

   d. How important is literacy instruction in your class?

e.  How did teachers in your building perceive implementing the literacy

strategies?

f.  What, if any challenges did implementing literacy instruction within your

content affect your planning and instruction?

g.  After participating in a year of literacy training from the school district, what

are your perceptions of incorporating literacy instruction into our class?

**Summary**

The participants in the program were representative of the population of the

school.  No subgroup was drastically over or under represented.  The design of the

program allowed for students to remain active in the regular classroom, with limited

intrusion into regular classroom instruction.  The intervention and data collection was

carried out with the support of the teachers and staff of the students' school.  The

research provided measureable sets of data to analyze.  The interviews offered insight

into the mentality of the teachers that implemented the instruction throughout the 2013-

2014 school year. The analysis of the results in Chapter IV will address the hypothesis of

the study and answer the research questions.

## Chapter Four: Results

**Data Presentation**

The data presented in this chapter is the culmination of the research. The findings are presented in tables and graphs. Additionally, there is a brief explanation of the data. The data is organized into topics based on the data type. The first section presents the secondary data of the change in students reading scores, as measured by the Gates-MacGinitie and SRI reading assessments. The second section presents the quantitative secondary data. This is followed by the student survey data and the teacher survey data. The final section presents the data collected from the interviews. The purpose of this chapter is to present the data to verify if the hypotheses were supported and if the Literacy Intervention Program significantly raised student achievement. Additionally, the chapter will analyze if teachers in the middle school perceived the emphasis on student literacy instruction as being effective.

The data collected was both qualitative and quantitative. The quantitative data were secondary data collected from Midwest middle school's databases. This data was used to measure the difference between two means: small dependent samples $t$-test to determine if there was a statistically significant increase in Lexile scores from pretest to posttest using the Scholastic Reading Inventory scores. A $z$-test of two independent means was used to evaluate the Scholastic Reading Inventory scores of the reluctant reader group, as well as a paired $t$-test of two dependent means for those same Scholastic Reading Inventory scores was performed using Microsoft Excel.

I also used a $z$-test of two proportions to measure the change in reading scores for the school population using Microsoft Excel. The data for this analysis came from the

school's Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test scores for the 2012-2013 school year compared
to the 2013-2014 school year. The study went on to determine if the program was
successful for each grade level as well, using both a *z*-test and t-test, as well as a Pearson
p Correlation Coefficient test. To analyze if the program was successful, the results were
processed to determine if I should reject the hypotheses or fail to reject the hypotheses.

**Results of Hypothesis Testing**

The hypothesis for this project ($H_a$) was that reluctant readers taught by teachers
who implement reading strategies in their classrooms will significantly increase in
reading level as measured by scores on the Scholastic Reading Inventory Test. The null
hypotheses ($H_0$) must be rejected if the data analysis reveals that the *t*-statistic is less than
the critical value (Bluman, 2013). The alpha value represents the confidence level of the
significance test. For me to have a 95% confidence in the results, the alpha is equal to .05
(Bluman, 2013).

I gathered a portion of the qualitative data from the school's databases. This data
was limited to survey data the district gathered about reading interventions from teachers
and students. I gathered the qualitative data in the form of interviews collected as primary
data.

**Reading at Grade Level – Total School Population**. Table 9 illustrates that the
entire school had a slight increase in reading scores by the end of the 2013-2014 school
year as measured by the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test. The total population had an
overall increase of 3.13%. That included an 8.5% decrease in students reading at grade
level for sixth grade. Seventh grade students increased 5.7% through the school year and
eighth grade students increased 14.4% during the school year.

Table 9

*Students Reading at Grade Level*

|  | Beginning of 2013-2014 School Year | End of 2013-2014 School Year |
|---|---|---|
| Total Population | 62% | 65.13% |
| Total 6th Grade Population | 66.4% | 57.9% |
| Total 7th Grade Population | 59.6% | 65.3% |
| Total 8th Grade Population | 57.8% | 72.2% |

Figure 2 illustrates the growth of the entire school over the course of the 2013-2014 school year as measured by the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test. The data shows that there was a decrease in sixth grade reading scores, a slight increase in seventh grade reading scores and a more substantial increase for eighth grade reading scores. The district wide reading intervention was systemic and the scores represent the impact on the entire school.
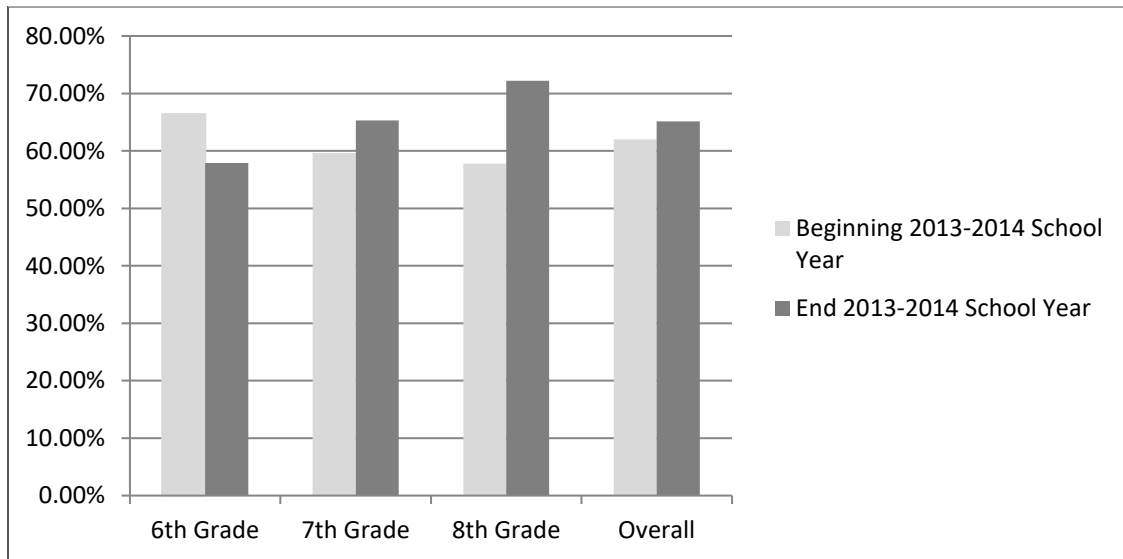


*Figure 2*. Percentage of students reading at grade level.

   **SRI Results – Descriptive Statistics**. The district reading intervention focused on

increasing all student reading scores. The school had an additional focus group composed

of students that were reading 0-6 months below grade level and were receiving no

specific academic intervention, such as the English Language Arts Intervention Class,

Read-180 or System 44, or any kind of Special Education class. The district selected this

group of students from the school population based on their reading scores the previous

year. Once selected, the group took the SRI. The district then selected those students who

tested below grade level for the school reading intervention program. All students in the

school received focused literacy instruction in all content areas, but the students

identified as reluctant readers met quarterly to discuss reading strategies and retest using

the SRI assessment.
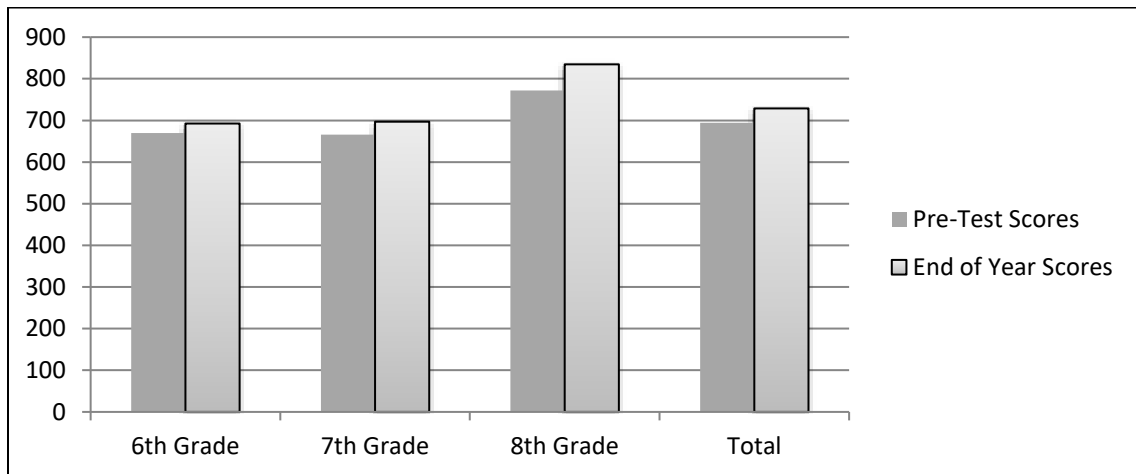


*Figure 3*. SRI student growth.

      Figure 3 illustrates that there were slight increases in each of the grade levels.

Sixth grade increased 22.54 points. Seventh grade increased 31.32 points. Eighth grade

increased 62.64 points. The increases were not large, but it was an average increase of

more than 4.7%. When the SRI scores are compared to the Gates-MacGinitie Reading

test, there is not the same decrease in reading scores for the sixth grade class, but there is also not as significant an increase for eighth grade students.

**Quantitative Analysis - Secondary Data**

**Research Question 1:** How do literacy interventions for reluctant Middle School readers affect Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test scores and Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) scores?

Despite what appears to be numeric gains in student reading scores, it is important to verify if the gains were statistically significant. I statistically analyzed the pre-intervention reading scores with the end of the year reading scores using a $z$-test to analyze two independent means. The null hypothesis was that reluctant readers taught by teachers who implement reading strategies in their classrooms will not increase in reading scores as measured by scores on the Scholastic Reading Inventory test.
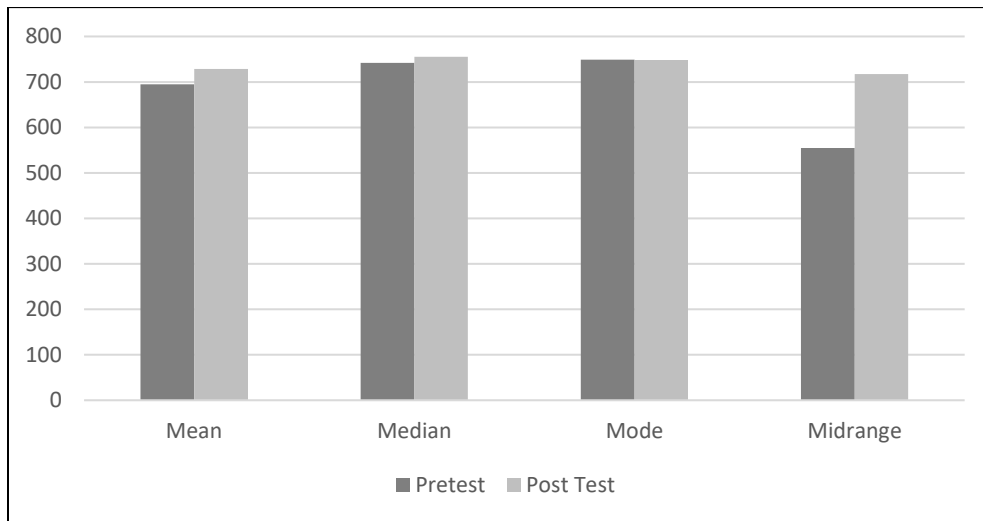


*Figure 4*. Pre and post-intervention test scores: Reluctant reader group.

Figure 4 illustrates that when statistically examining the pre-intervention scores, the mean was 694.55, but the median was 742. The midrange was 554.5. The population standard deviation was 151.22. When doing the same statistical analysis of the end of

year scores the mean was 728.82, and the median was 755.5. The midrange was

considerably higher at 717.5. The standard deviation was also different at 167.01. When

the confidence interval is 95% the critical value is 1.645. The $z$-test statistic is -1.009,

which is less than the critical values. Since the $z$-stat is less than the critical value, it was

necessary to fail to reject the null hypothesis ($H_0$).  This means that although there was a

change in student reading scores, there change was not significant.

When using a $t$-test of two dependent mean, the results were similar.  Using a

confidence interval of 95%, the critical values for the $t$-test were 1.681. The $t$-stat was -

2.707. The $t$-stat was less than the critical values. Since the $t$-stat was lower than the

critical value, it is necessary to fail to reject the null hypothesis ($H_0$).  Using the Pearson

P Correlation to verify the correlation of the data, the Correlation Coefficient is 0.915,

indicating a strong positive linear relationship in the pre and post test scores. This means

that there was positive growth in student scores.
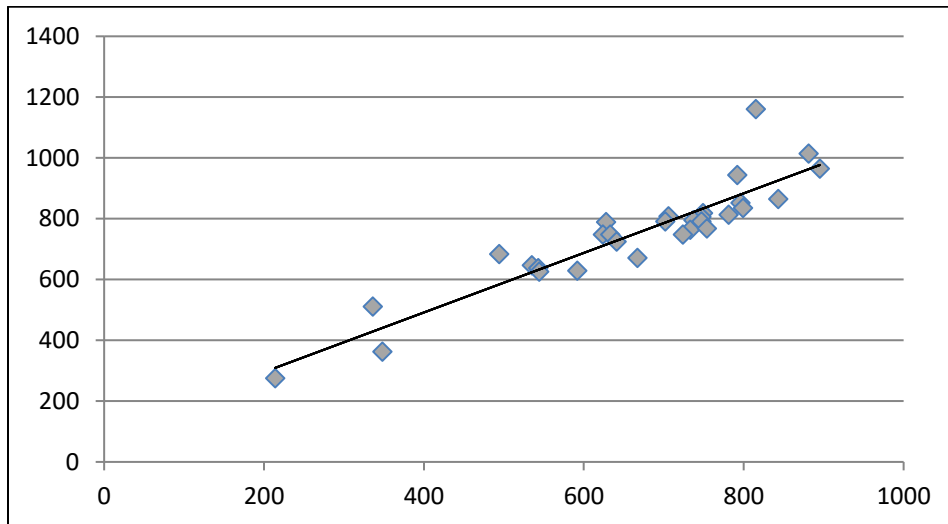


*Figure 5*. Regression Line for all students in the reluctant reader group.

Figure 5 illustrates the results of student SRI from the reluctant reader group. The

data illustrates a strong positive linear relationship of the pre and post test scores.

*Reading Levels.*

Table 10

*SRI Scores*

|  | Pre-Intervention SRI Score | Post- Intervention SRI Score |
|---|---|---|
| Total Population | 694.55 | 728.82 |
| Total 6th Grade Population | 669.92 | 692.46 |
| Total 7th Grade Population | 665.56 | 696.88 |
| Total 8th Grade Population | 772.00 | 834.64 |

Table 10 illustrates the pre-intervention mean SRI score for the population of intervention participants was 694.55. This score falls in the Lexile Ranges for Common Core English Language Arts Standards in the 4-5 grades for Current Lexile Band (640L–850L) and 2-3 grade for the Stretch Lexile Band (420L-820L). The post-intervention mean score for the entire intervention population rose 34.27 Lexile points to 728.82. Although there was a rise in the mean scores for all levels, as well as the population, it did not increase enough to change the reading band for any specific sector of the population. This means that although there was growth in student reading scores, the growth was not enough to move the average to the next reading level.

**Sixth grade data**. I statistically analyzed the pre-intervention reading scores for sixth grade students with the end of the year reading scores using a *z*-test to analyze two independent means.

*Figure 6*. Comparison of pre and post test scores for the 6th grade students in the

reluctant reader group.

Figure 6 illustrates that when statistically examining the pre-intervention scores

the mean for sixth grade was 692.46, but the median was 713. The midrange was 567.5.

The sample standard deviation was 119.48. When conducting the same statistical analysis

of the end of year scores the mean was 692.46, and the median was 687.5. The midrange

was considerable lower at 631. The standard deviation was also different at 132.99. With

the confidence interval is 95%, the critical value is 1.645. The *z*-test statistic was -0.618

which is less than the critical values.  Since the *z*-stat is less than the critical values, it is

necessary to fail to reject the null hypothesis ($H_{02}$).  This means that although there was a

change in student scores, the change was not significant enough.

When using a *t*-test of two dependent mean, the results were similar.  Using a

confidence interval of 95%, the critical value for the *t*-test was 1.714. The *t*-stat was -

1.021. The *t*-stat was less than the critical values. Since the *t*-stat was less than the critical

values, it is necessary to fail to reject the null hypothesis ($H_{02}$).  Once again, this means

that although there was a change in student reading scores, the change was not enough to be statistically significant.

The null hypothesis, which was not rejected by either test, stated that sixth grade reluctant readers taught by teachers that implement reading strategies in their classrooms will not measure an increase in student reading scores, as measured by the Scholastic Reading Inventory Test. This means that when testing the reading scores of sixth grade students, the change was not significant enough with either statistical test to support the hypothesis.

*Seventh grade data*. I statistically analyzed the pre-intervention reading scores for seventh grade students with the end of the year reading scores using a *z*-test to analyze two independent means.
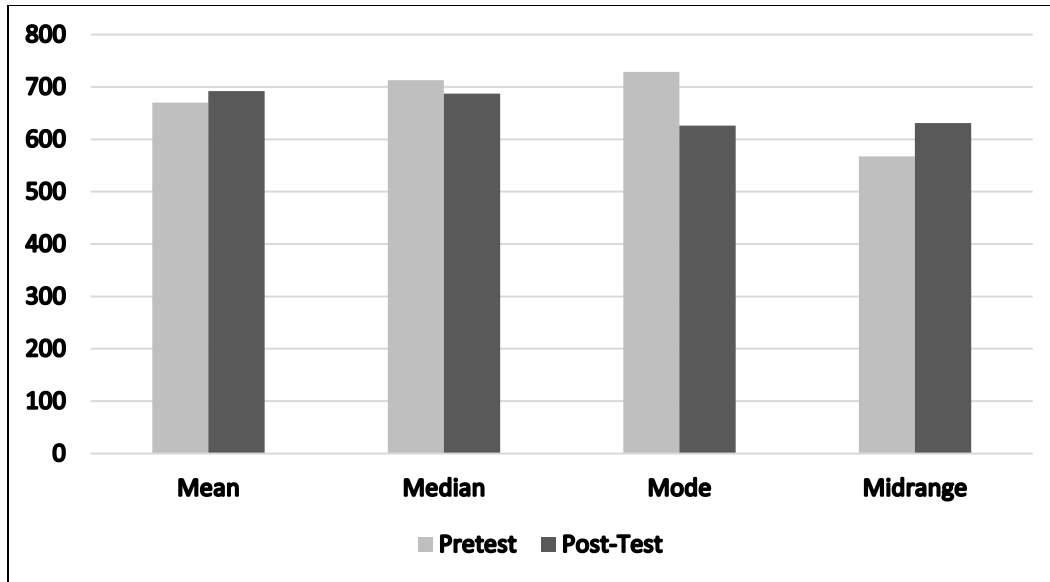


*Figure 7*. Comparison of pre and post test scores for the 7th grade reluctant reader group.

Figure 7 illustrates that when statistically examining the pre-intervention scores the mean for seventh grade was 665.56, but the median was 706. The midrange was 531. The sample standard deviation was 197.76. When doing the same statistical analysis of the end of year scores the mean was 696.44, and the median was 748. The midrange was

higher at 569.5. The standard deviation was also different at 174.34. With the confidence interval is 95% the critical value was 1.860. The $z$-test statistic was -0.329, which is less than the critical value.  Since the $z$-stat is less than the critical values, it is necessary to fail to reject the null hypothesis ($H_{03}$).  This means that although there is growth in all areas, they are not statistically significant.

When using a $t$-test of two dependent mean, the results were similar for seventh grade.  Using a confidence interval of 95%, the critical values for the $t$-test were 1.860. The $t$-stat was -1.299. The t-stat was less than the critical value. Since the t-stat was less than the critical value, I must fail to reject the null hypothesis ($H_{03}$).  The null hypothesis, which was not rejected by either test, stated seventh grade reluctant readers taught by teachers that implement reading strategies in their classrooms would not measure an increase in student reading scores, as measured by the Scholastic Reading Inventory Test. This means that even though there was a change in reading scores, the growth was not statistically significant.

*Eighth grade data*. I statistically analyzed the pre-intervention reading scores for eighth grade students with the end of the year reading scores using a $z$-test to analyze two independent means.
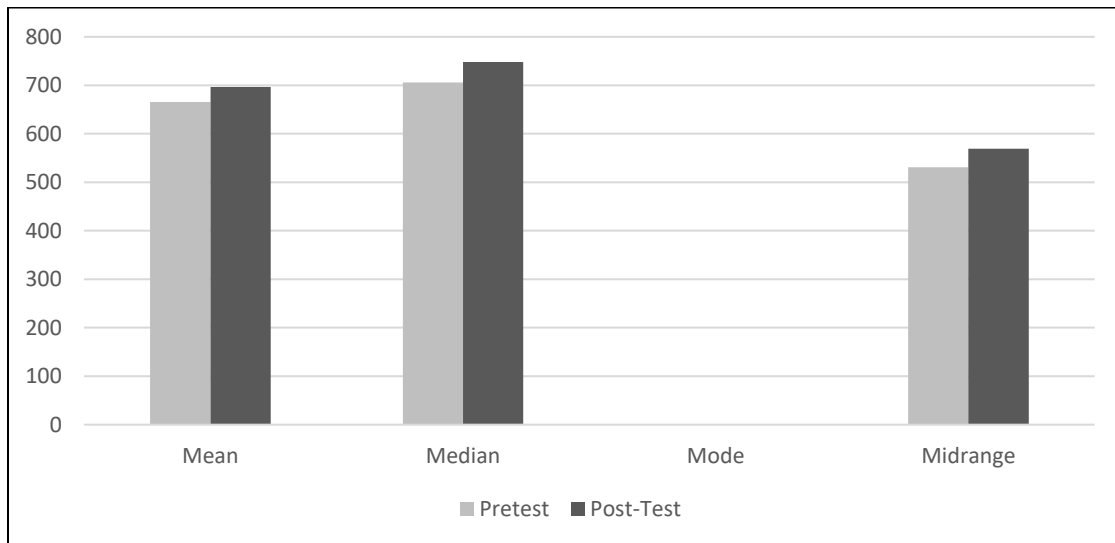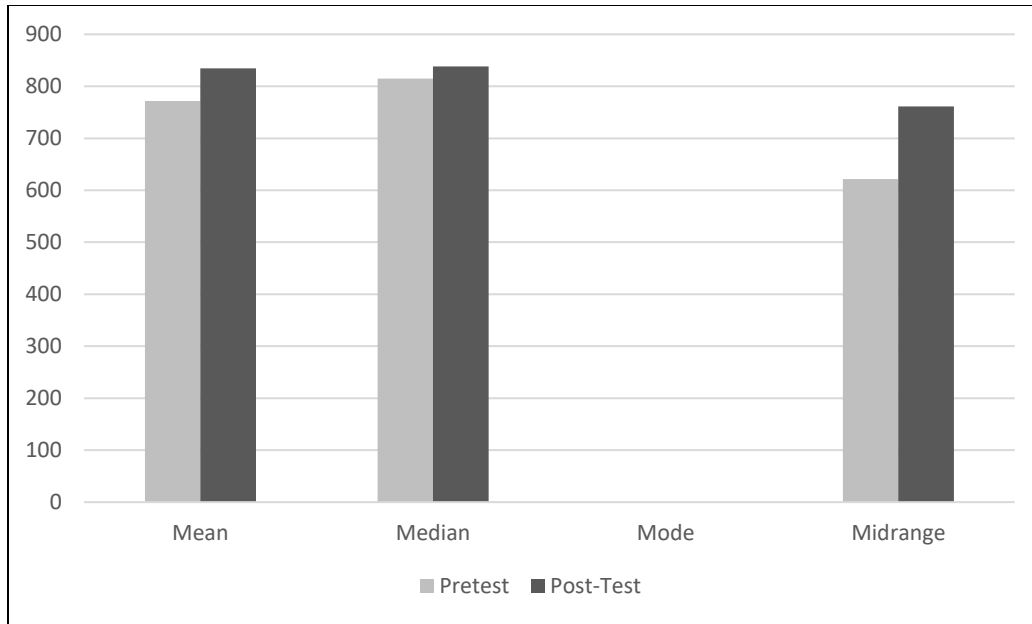
*Figure 8*. Comparison of pre and post test scores for the 8th grade students in the

reluctant reader group.

      Figure 8 illustrates that when statistically examining the pre-intervention scores,

the mean for seventh grade was 772, but the median was 815. The midrange was 621.5.

The sample standard deviation was 162.06. When doing the same statistical analysis of

the end of year scores the mean was 834.64, and the median was 838. The midrange was

considerably higher at 761. The standard deviation was 198.82. With the confidence

interval is 95% the critical value was 1.812. The *z*-test statistic was -0.810, which is less

than the critical value.  Since the *t*-stat is less than the critical value, it is necessary to fail

to reject the null hypothesis ($H_{04}$).  This means that although there was a change in

reading scores, there was not enough growth to be statistically significant.

      When using a *t*-test of two dependent mean, the results were similar.  Using a

confidence interval of 95%, the critical values for the t-test were 1.812. The *t*-stat was -

1.926. The *t*-stat was less than the critical value. Since the *t*-stat was less than the critical

values it is necessary to fail to reject the null hypothesis ($H_{04}$).  The null hypothesis,

which was not rejected by either test, stated that eighth grade reluctant readers taught by

teachers who implement reading strategies in their classrooms will not measure an

increase in student reading scores, as measured by the Scholastic Reading Inventory Test.

This means that there was not enough change in reading scores to be statistically

significant.

**Comparison of School to Reluctant Reader Group**. Since this null hypothesis

($Ho_5$) stated that there would be no difference in growth in reading scores between the

building population and program participants taught by teachers who implement reading

strategies in their classrooms, as measured by student scores on the Gates-MacGinitie

Reading Test, I conducted a *z*-test of two proportions. The confidence interval was once

again at 95% making the critical value equal to +1.96 and -1.96. The z-stat was -1.201,

falling between the critical values, indicating that there was not enough evidence to reject

the null hypothesis ($Ho_5$), signifying that there was not a statistically significant

difference in growth between the building population and the program participants.

**Student Survey Results – Secondary Data Analysis**

**Research Question 2:** How do the survey responses compare between the

general population and reluctant readers after completing the program?

The school district surveyed the participants in the Reluctant Reader Program to

evaluate the success of the literacy interventions for reluctant readers. The district

developed the voluntary survey. The district gave the survey to two groups of students.

The first group were the students in the reluctant reader intervention group and the

second group was a voluntary sample from the remaining students at the school. All 44

reluctant reader participants responded to the survey and 56 students from the school

population. The survey was a Likert-scale survey on www.surveymonkey.com with four

answers possible for each question, along with a space for comments. The possible

answers the participant could choose were; "Absolutely" which meant that the participant

strongly agreed with the statement, "Somewhat" meaning the participant agreed with

most of the statement, "Very Little" meaning the participant disagreed with the most of

the statement, and "Not at All" meaning that the participant strongly disagreed with all of

the statement.  Every survey question also had a place for comments, except of the

demographics question.

The survey consisted of nine Likert-scale questions and one demographic

question, asking about the students' grade level. I assumed that an answer of

"Absolutely" and "Somewhat" were favorable responses to the question or prompt, while

"Very Little" and "Not at All" would be non-favorable responses to the question or

prompt.

*Survey Question 1:  I enjoy reading time at school.*
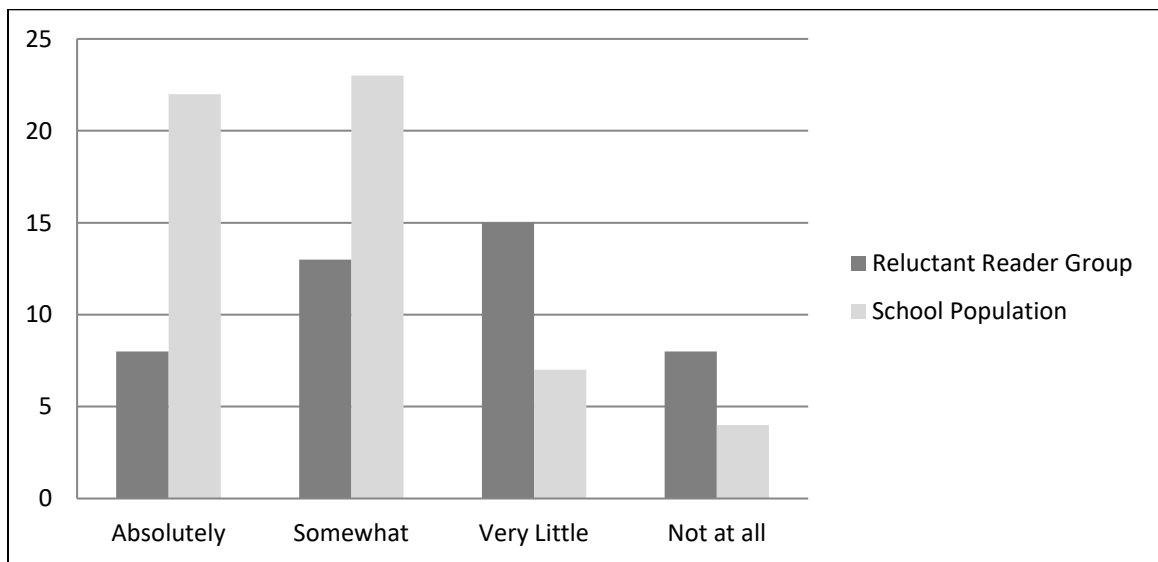


*Figure 9*. Survey question 1: I enjoy reading time at school.

Figure 9 illustrates the opinions of the 54 students in the reluctant reader group and the 56 students surveyed from the school population on question one. Forty-seven percent of the reluctant readers enjoyed reading time at school, as compared to eighty percent of the general school population.

There were two comments left on this question by the reluctant readers. They included, "I kinda do," and "I sometimes like to read, but not all the time." There were eight comments from the 56 students surveyed from the school population. They included, "Always," "And frequently get in trouble for doing it," "I love reading," "Love it, I read all the time," "I use that time to clear my mind," "I don't like reading," "Sometimes I don't want to sit still and read," and "I like reading."

### *Survey Question 2:  I feel books are boring.*



*Figure 10*. Survey question 2: I feel books are boring.

Figure 10 illustrates the opinions of the 44 students in the reluctant reader group and the 56 students surveyed from the school population on question two. Forty-seven

percent of the reluctant readers felt that books are boring, as compared to only 30% of the general school population.

There were two comments left on this question by the reluctant readers. They included; "Sometimes I don't like the book cause it gets boring to me," and "Unless you give me a book that stinks, I'm good." There were seven comments from the 56 students surveyed from the school population. They included; "And disgust people who think otherwise (sometimes)," "Only books I like," "As I said above I read all the time and love it," "It depends on the book," "I think that mystery books are mind grabbing," "You have to find the one you like," and "Some books are boring."

**Survey Question 3: I like to recommend books to my friends.**
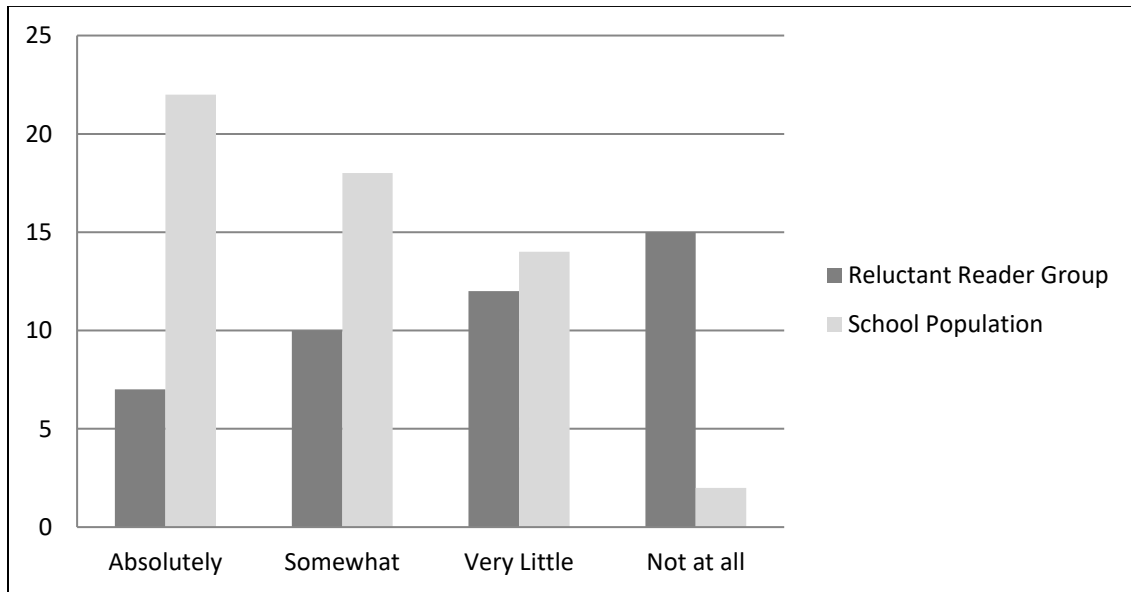


*Figure 51*. Survey question 3: I like to recommend books to my friends.

Figure 11 illustrates the opinions of the 44 students in the reluctant reader group and the 56 students surveyed from the school population on question three. Thirty-eight percent of the reluctant readers liked to recommend books to their friends, as compared to 71% of the general school population.

There was only comment left on this question by the reluctant readers. It was, "I don't really tell them they just ask what I like to read." There was one comment from the 56 students surveyed from the school population. It was, "Only if it's good in my opinion."

### *Survey Question 4:  I feel that reading is fun.*
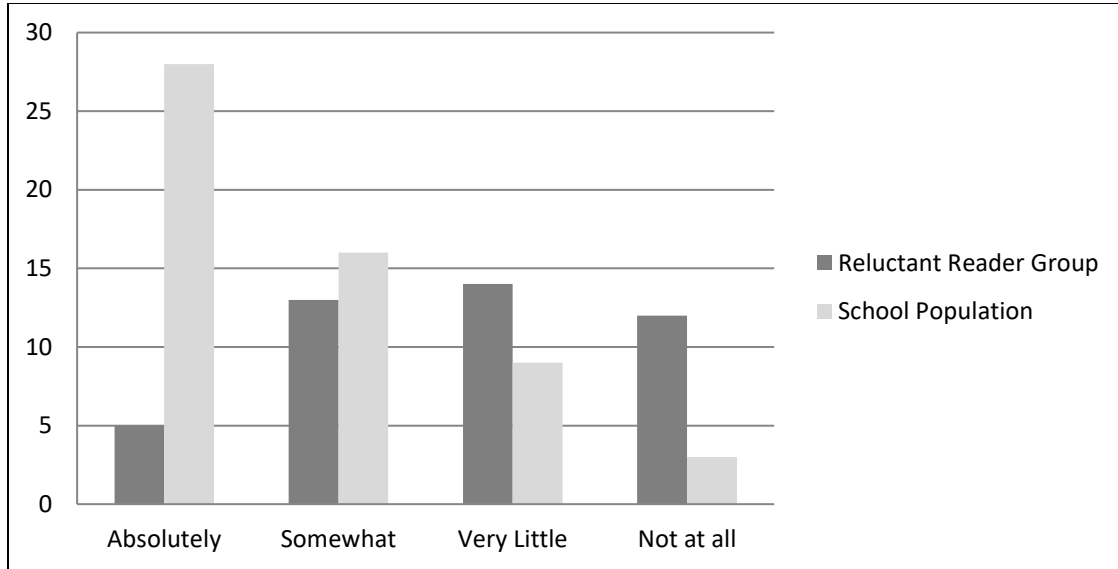


*Figure 62*. Survey question 4: I feel that reading is fun.

Figure 12 illustrates the opinions of the 44 students in the reluctant reader group and the 56 students surveyed from the school population on question four. Forty-one percent of the reluctant readers felt that reading was fun, as compared to 78% of the general school population.

There was one comment left on this question by the reluctant readers. It was, "I like to read when I get board [sic] and when my iPad and iPod get took away." There were no comments from the 56 students surveyed from the school population.

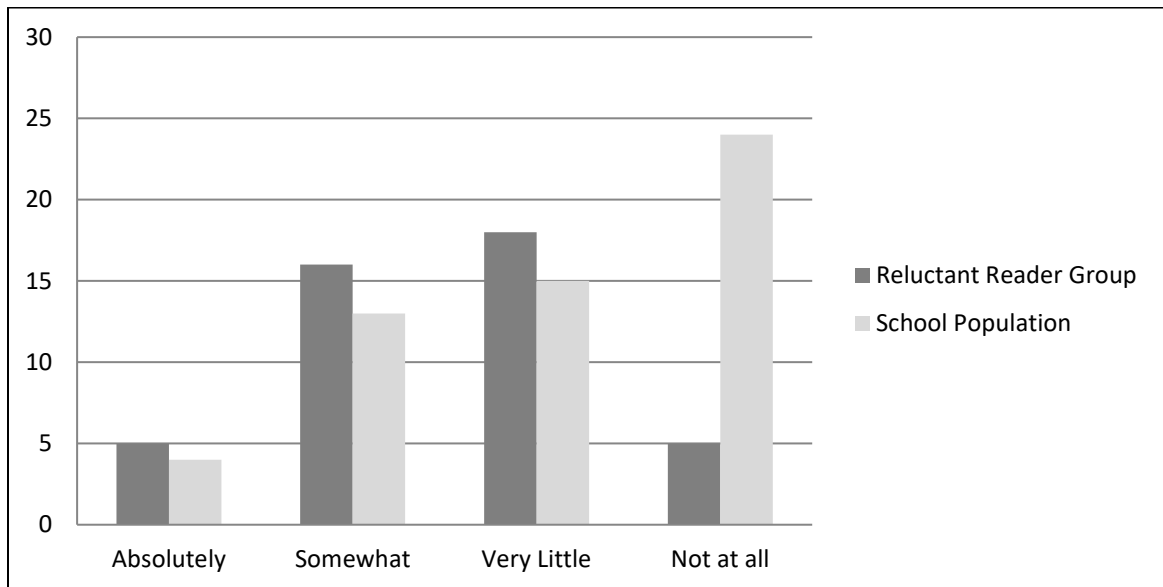**Survey Question 5:  I think reading is hard.**
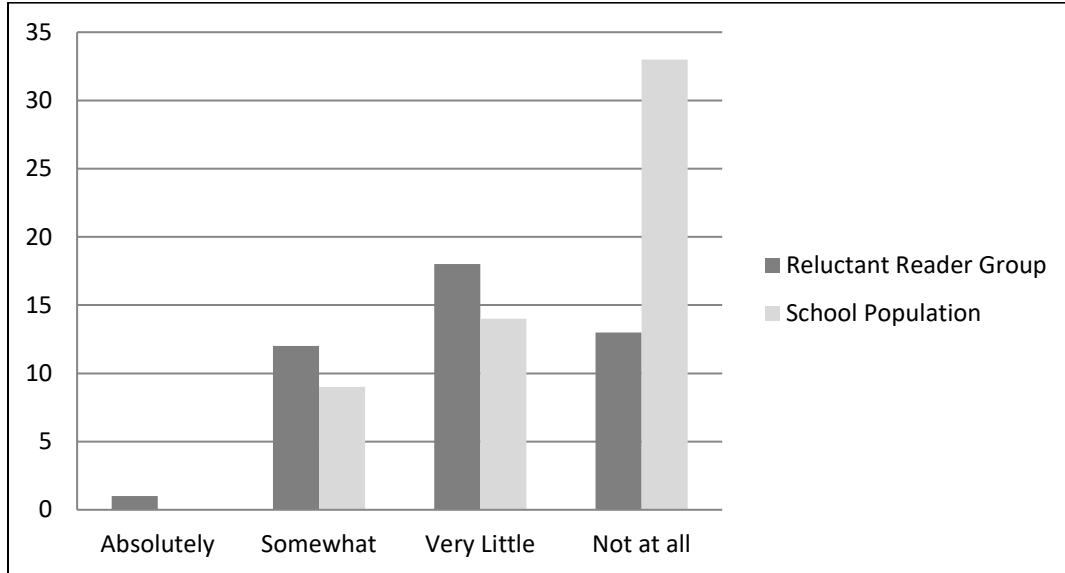


*Figure 73*. Survey question 5: I think reading is hard.

Figure 13 illustrates the opinions of the 44 students in the reluctant reader group and the 56 students surveyed from the school population on question five. Twenty-nine percent of the reluctant readers felt that reading was hard, as compared to only 16% of the general school population.

There were one comment left on this question by the reluctant readers. It was, "I don't realy (sic) think it is realy (sic) hard it's just rembering (sic) words in the book." There were two comments from the 56 students surveyed from the school population. They included, "I'm in challenge comm arts, but feel that there isn't much challenge," and "It's hard when I finish a series I really like and I have to start a new one."

**Survey Question 6: I like to read when I have spare time.**
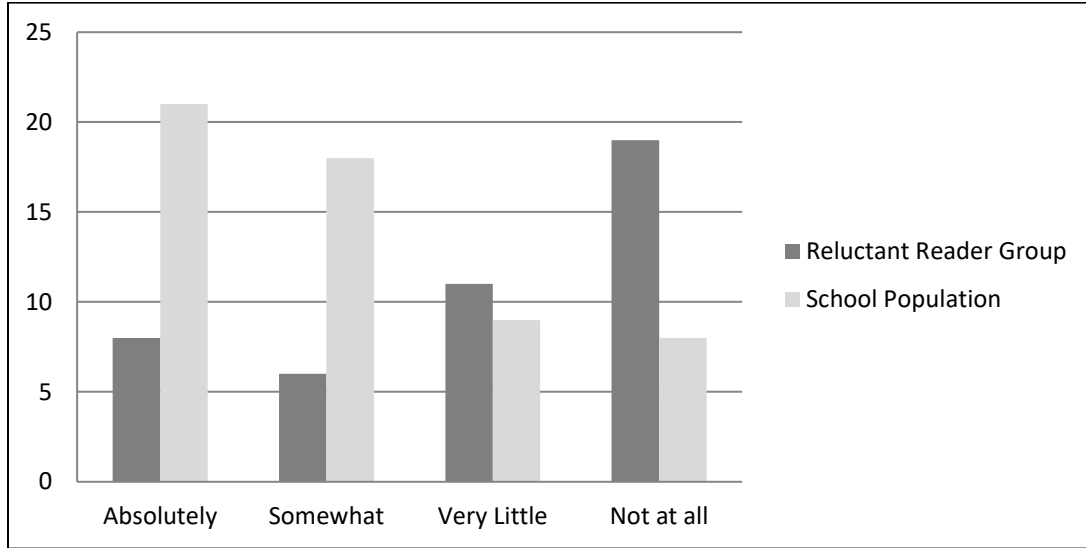


*Figure 84*. Survey question 6: I like to read when I have spare time.

Figure 14 illustrates the opinions of the 44 students in the reluctant reader group and the 56 students surveyed from the school population on question six. Thirty-two percent of the reluctant readers stated that they like to read when they have spare time, as compared to seventy percent of the general school population.

There was one comment left on this question by the reluctant readers. It was, "Sometimes I like to read other times I'm just sleeping." There were zero comments from the 56 students surveyed from the school population.

*Survey Question 7:  I like to read when I am not at school.*
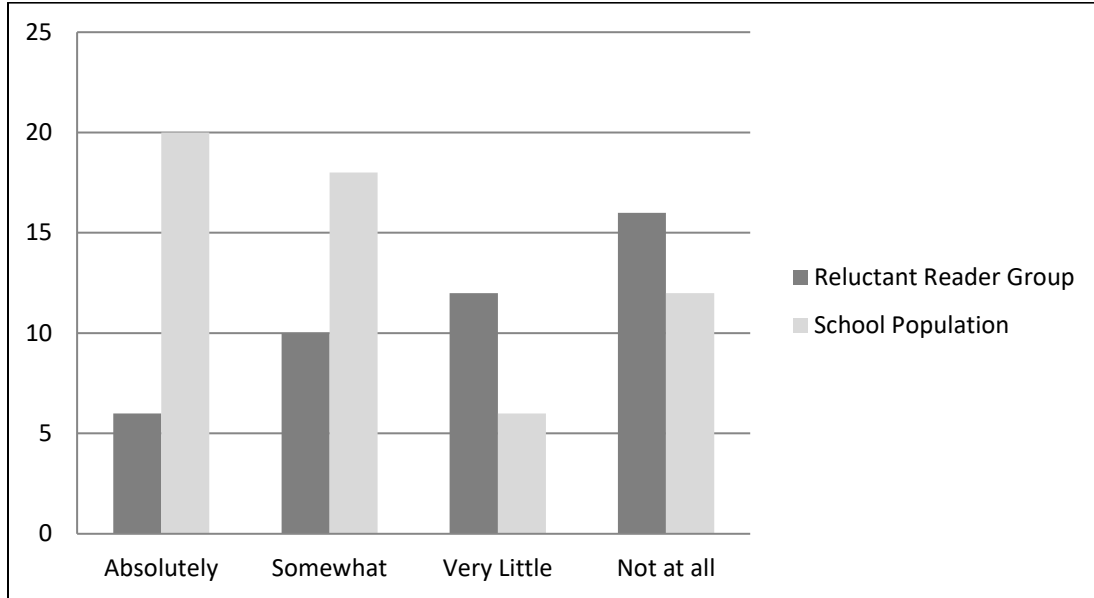


*Figure 95*. Survey question 7: I like to read when I am not at school.

Figure 15 illustrates the opinions of the 44 students in the reluctant reader group and the 56 students surveyed from the school population on question seven. Thirty-six percent of the reluctant readers stated that they like to read when they are not at school, as compared to 68% of the general school population.

There was one comment left on this question by the reluctant readers. It was, "when I get stuff done then I kinda (sic) read a book but I also just play around." There were zero comments from the 56 students surveyed from the school population.

**Survey Question 8:  Do you feel that you have read more this year in your classes?**
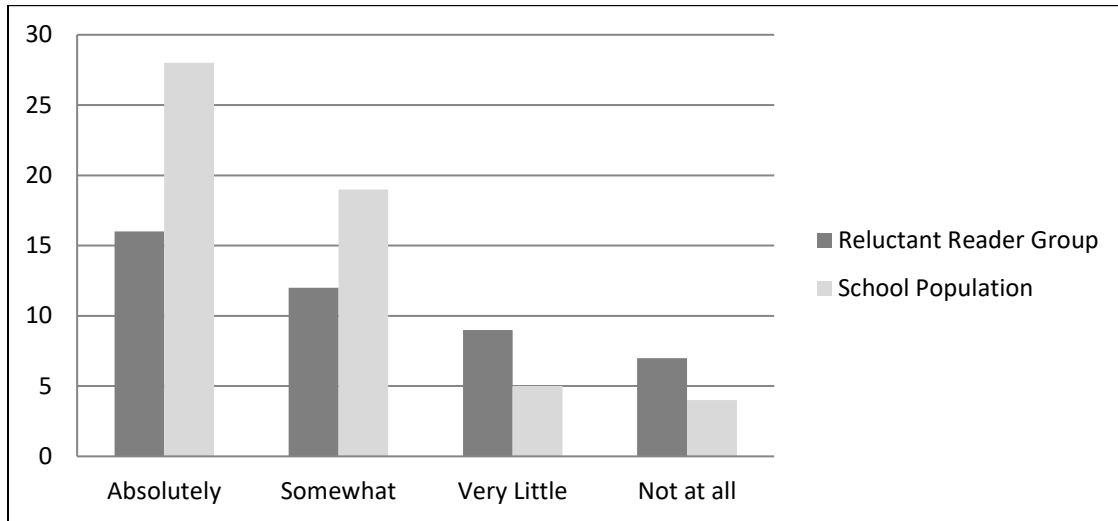


*Figure 106*. Survey question 8: Do you feel that you have read more this year in your classes?

Figure 16 illustrates the opinions of the 44 students in the reluctant reader group and the 56 students surveyed from the school population on question seven. Sixty-four percent of the reluctant readers stated that they felt like they had to read more in their classes in the 2013-2104 school year, as compared to 84% of the general school population.

There was one comment left on this question by the reluctant readers. It was, "sometimes I kinda (sic) read a lot and I mostly don't really read this much." There were zero comments from the 56 students surveyed from the school population.

***Survey Question 9:  Do you feel that you read more for pleasure this year because of school?***
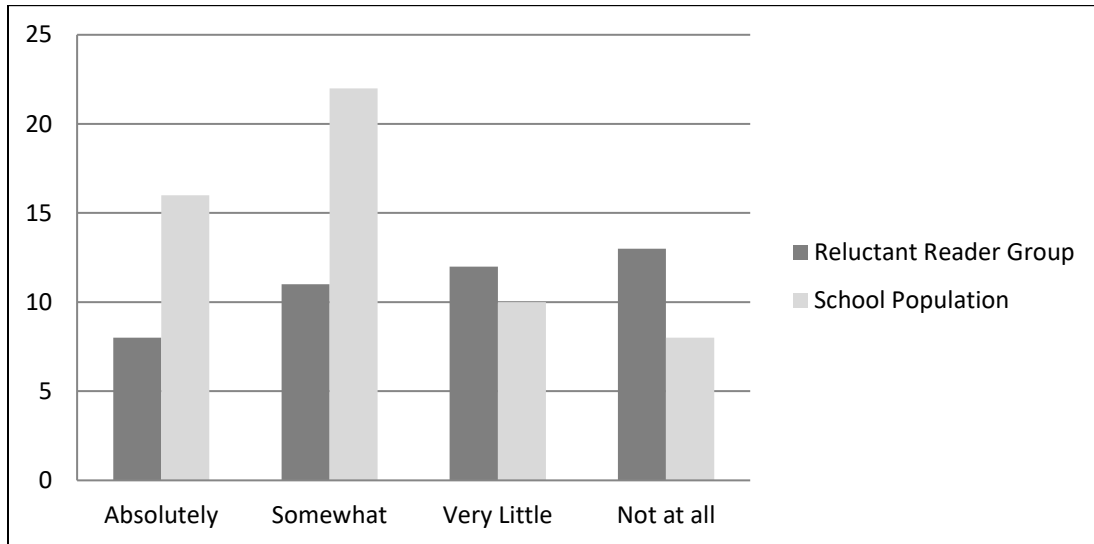


*Figure 117*. Survey question 9: Do you feel that you read more for pleasure this year because of school?

Figure 17 illustrates the opinions of the 44 students in the reluctant reader group and the 56 students surveyed from the school population on question seven. Forty-three percent of the reluctant readers stated that they felt like they read more for pleasure this year because of school, as compared to 68% of the general school population.

There was one comment left on this question by the reluctant readers. It was, "I just read to read, I like to read what I want to read not to just read for school." There was also just one comments from the 56 students surveyed from the school population. It was, "I ALWAYS read for pleasure!"

*Survey Question 10:  What grade are you in?*
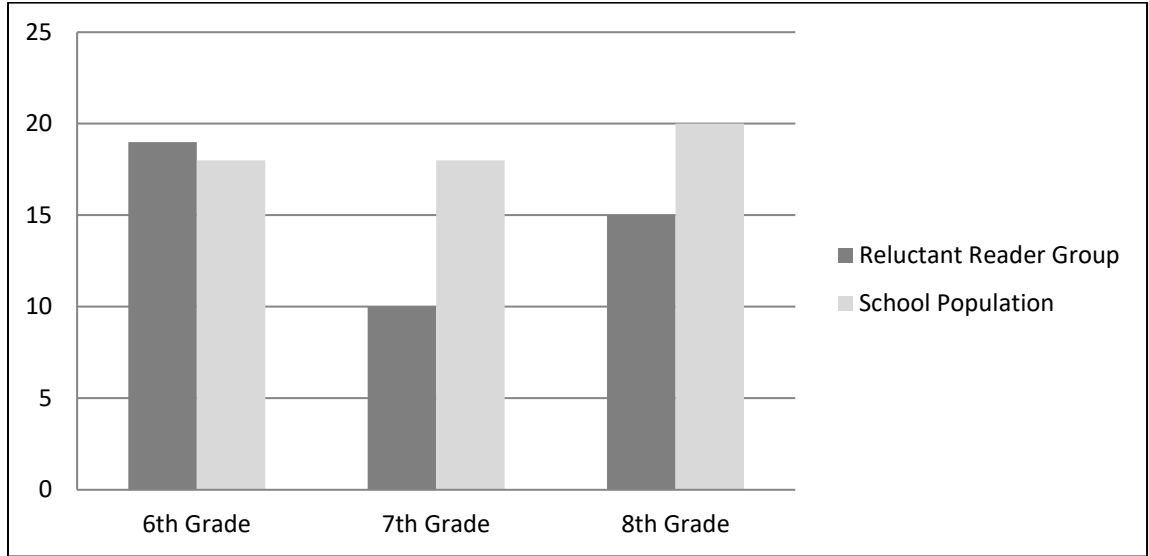


*Figure 128*. Survey question 10: What grade are you in?

Figure 18 illustrates the year in school for the 44 students in the reluctant reader group and the 56 students surveyed from the school population on question seven. Forty-three percent of the students were in sixth grade in the reluctant reader group, compared to 32% in the regular population. Twenty-three percent of the students were in seventh grade in the reluctant reader group, compared to 32% in the regular population. Thirty-four percent of the students were in eighth grade in the reluctant reader group, compared to 36% in the regular population.

**Middle School Student Survey**

I conducted a *z*-test of two proportions of the positive answers for question eight and nine because these questions were about whether or not students liked to read and the goal of the program was to increase students' opinions of reading. The confidence interval was once again at 95% making the critical value equal to +1.96 and -1.96. The *z*-stat was 0.041, falling between the critical value, indicating that there was not a

significant difference in survey opinion between the building population and the program participants. I also conducted a *z*-test of two proportions of the positive answers for questions nine. The confidence interval was once again at 95% making the critical value equal to +1.96 and -1.96. The *z*-stat was 0.095, falling between the critical value, indicating that there was not a significant difference in survey opinion between the building population and the program participants. This means that data from the survey indicates that there is no significant statistical difference in the positive opinions on questions eight and nine of the student survey.

**Teacher Survey Results– Secondary Data Analysis**

**Research Question 3:** What are the perceptions of teachers about the emphasis on reading interventions in the school?

The school district surveyed teachers in one middle school in the district where the professional development was conducted to accurately evaluate the success of the value of the literacy professional development conducted in the 2013-2014 school year. The district developed the survey, and participation was voluntary. Twenty-eight out of 70 teachers in the building responded to the survey. The survey was a Likert-scale survey on www.surveymonkey.com with four answers possible for each question, along a space for comments. The possible answers the participant could choose were as follows: "Absolutely" which meant that the participant strongly agreed with the statement, "Somewhat" meaning the participant agreed with most of the statement, "Very Little" meaning the participant disagreed with the most of the statement, and "Not at All" meaning that the participant strongly disagreed with all of the statement. Every survey question also had a place for comments, except for the demographics question.

The survey consisted of seven Likert-scale questions, one demographic question, asking about the teachers' years of experience and one opportunity for open-ended comments or questions. I assumed that an answer of "Absolutely" and "Somewhat" were favorable responses to the question or prompt, while "Very Little" and "Not at All" would be non-favorable responses to the question or prompt.

*Survey Question 1:  Before the school year began, did you feel prepared to integrate literacy instruction into your class?*
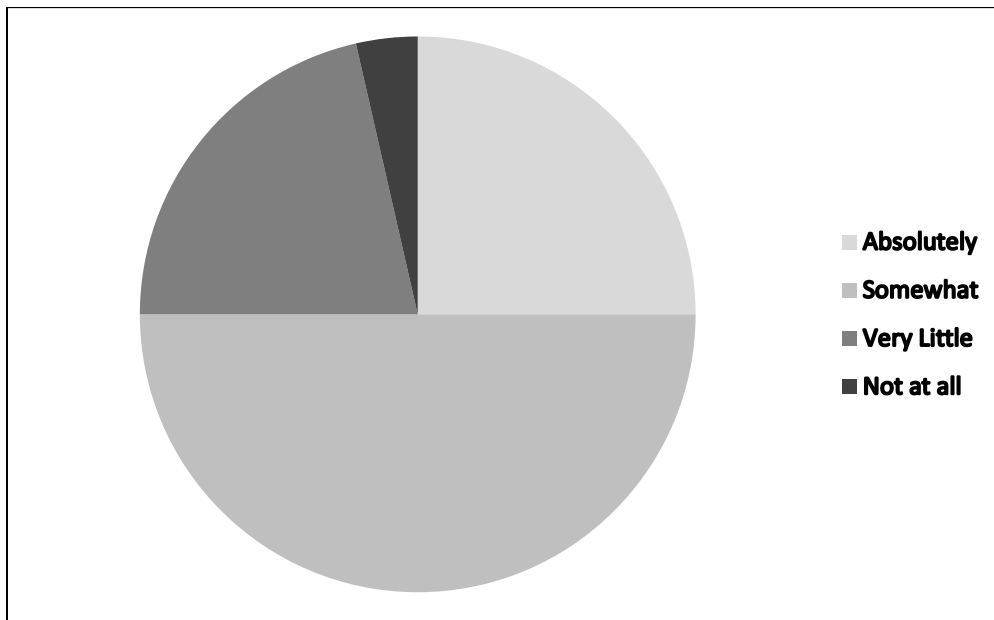


*Figure 139*. Survey question 1: Before the school year began, did you feel prepared to integrate literacy instruction into your class?

Figure 19 illustrates the opinions of the 28 teachers that responded to the survey from the school population on question one. Seventy-five percent of the teachers responded that they felt prepared to integrate literacy instruction into the class before the year began. The following is a numeric breakdown of the responses from the teachers surveyed: seven responded with "Absolutely," fourteen responded "Somewhat," six responded "Very Little," and one responded "Not at All." There were two comments left

on this question by the teachers. They included, "NA," and "I have taught Com Arts

before, so this was very comfortable."

***Survey Question 2: Do you feel that your literacy instruction significantly helped***

***students to become better readers?***
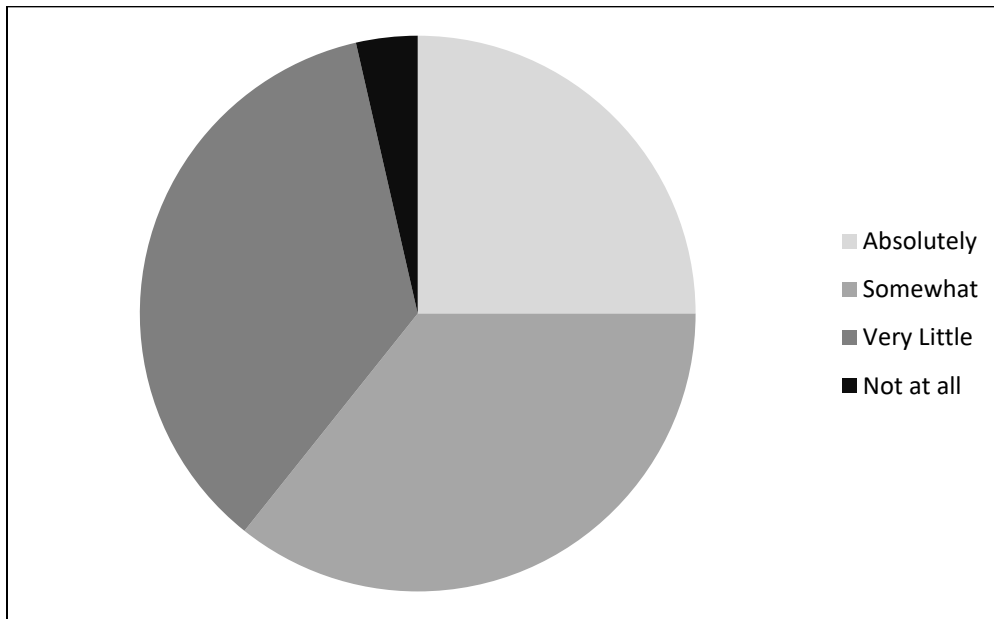


*Figure 20*. Survey question 2: Do you feel that your literacy instruction significantly

helped students to become better readers?

Figure 20 illustrates the opinions of the 28 teachers that responded to the survey

from the school population on question two. Sixty percent of the teachers responded that

they felt their instruction significantly helped students to become better readers. The

following is a numeric breakdown of the responses from the teachers surveyed: seven

responded with "Absolutely," ten responded "Somewhat," ten responded "Very Little,"

and one responded "Not at All." There was one comment left on this question by a

teacher. It was, "More specifically, I feel as though my literacy instruction helped them

become better readers in my specific content."

*Survey Question 3:  Were there challenges to implementing literacy instruction that made teachers less likely to implement reading strategies with fidelity?*
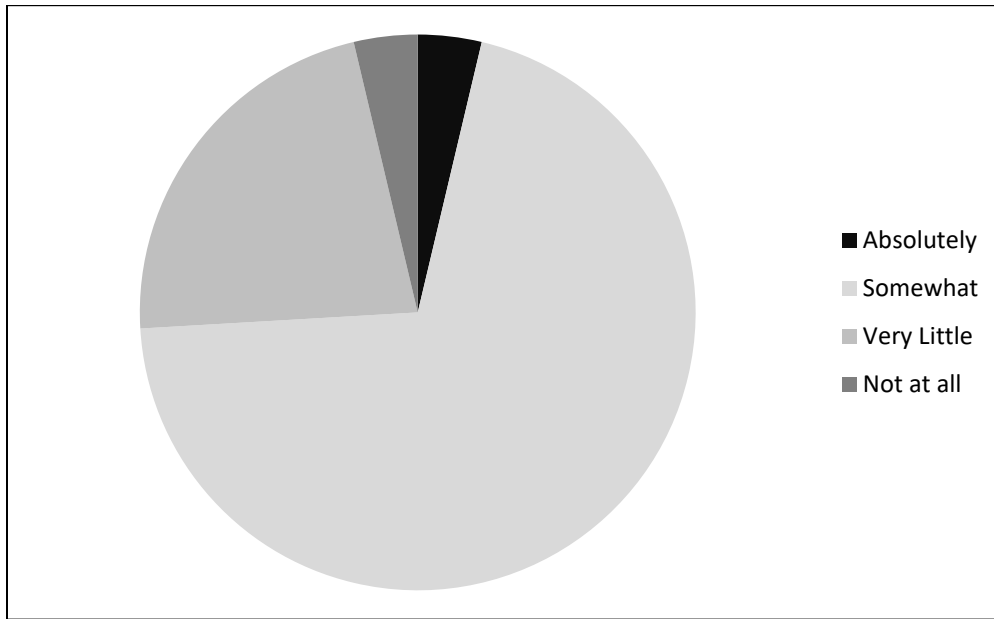


*Figure 141*. Survey question 3: Were there challenges to implementing literacy instruction that made teachers less likely to implement reading strategies with fidelity?

Figure 21 illustrates the opinions of the 28 teachers that responded to the survey from the school population on question three. Seventy-one percent of the teachers responded that there were challenges to implementing literacy instruction that made teachers less likely to implement reading strategies with fidelity. The following is a numeric breakdown of the responses from the teachers surveyed: one responded with "Absolutely," 19 responded "Somewhat," six responded "Very Little," and two responded "Not at All." There were six comments left on this question by teachers. They were, "I don't think I used this program," "It would be nice to get advice from the reading teachers on a regular basis, "LOL 'fidelity'," "NA," "subject matter," "Real Challenges? Virtually none. Perceived Challenges- a few."

*Survey Question 4:  Do you feel that it is important to implement literacy instruction in your classes?*
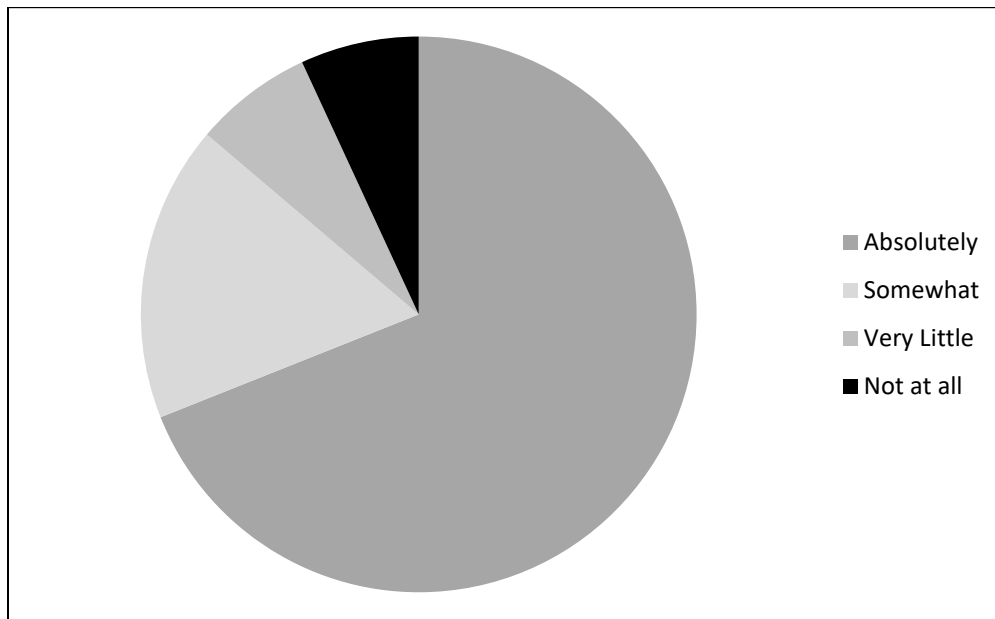


*Figure 152*. Survey question 4: Do you feel that it is important to implement literacy instruction in your classes?

Figure 22 illustrates the opinions of the 28 teachers that responded to the survey from the school population on question four. Eighty-nine percent of the teachers responded that they feel that it is important to implement literacy instruction in their classes. The following is a numeric breakdown of the responses from the teachers surveyed: 20 responded with "Absolutely," five responded "Somewhat," two responded "Very Little," and one responded "Not at All." There were two comments left on this question by teachers. They were, "NA," and "music is wholistic [sic]."

*Survey Question 5:  Have you heard other teachers express concerns about difficulties of implementing literacy strategies?*
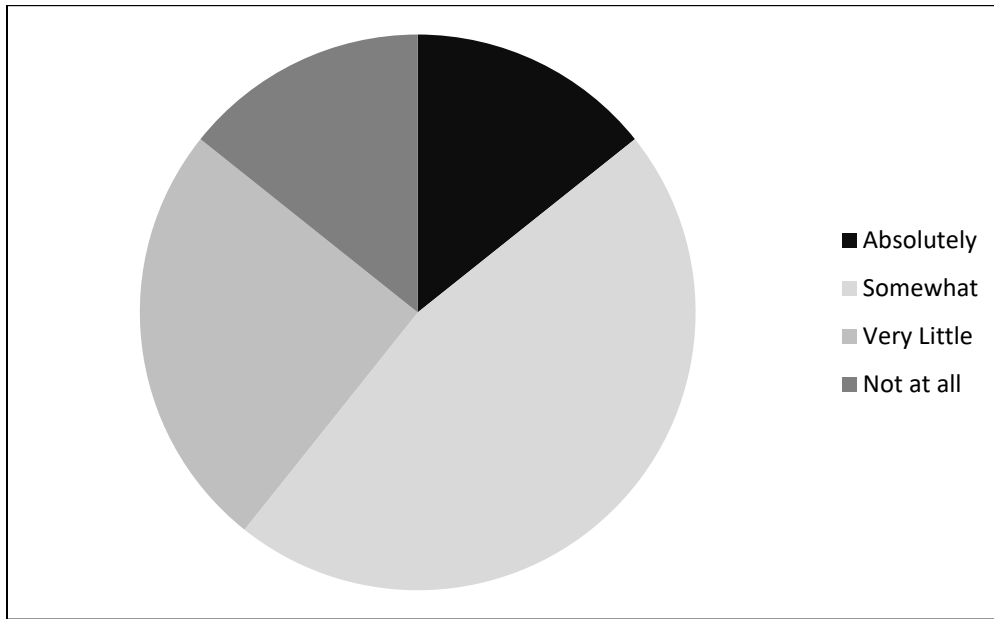


*Figure 163*. Survey question 5: Have you heard other teachers express concerns about difficulties of implementing literacy strategies?

Figure 23 illustrates the opinions of the 28 teachers that responded to the survey from the school population on question five. Sixty percent of the teachers responded that they had heard other teachers express concerns about difficulties of implementing literacy strategies. The following is a numeric breakdown of the responses from the teachers surveyed: four responded with "Absolutely," 13 responded "Somewhat," seven responded "Very Little," and four responded "Not at All." There were three comments left on this question by teachers. They were, "The typical issue I hear is that non-ELA teachers feel as though they should not be expected to be reading teachers, which is sad," "stubborn old people," and "Time."

*Survey Question 6:  Did you feel that you could not teach all of the required content in your class, due to the literacy strategies that you had to implement during the school year?*
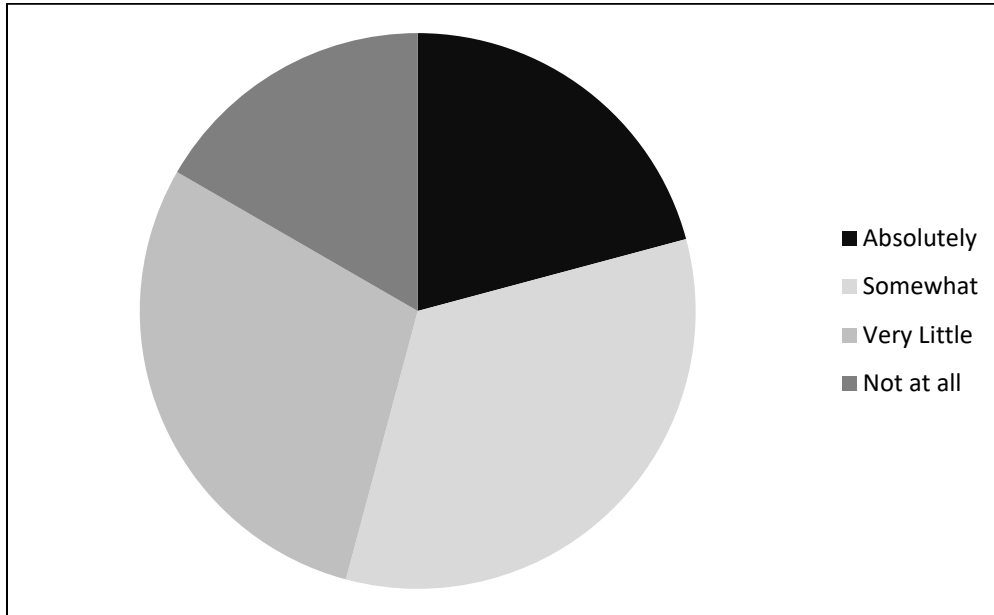


*Figure 174*. Survey question 6: Did you feel that you could not teach all of the required content in your class, due to the literacy strategies that you had to implement during the school year?

Figure 24 illustrates the opinions of the 28 teachers that responded to the survey from the school population on question six. Forty-six percent of the teachers responded that they felt that they could not teach all of the required content in their class, due to the literacy strategies that they had to implement during the school year. The following is a numeric breakdown of the responses from the teachers surveyed: five responded with "Absolutely," eight responded "Somewhat," seven responded "Very Little," and eight responded "Not at All." There were four comments left on this question by teachers. They were, "NA," "Most existing lessons could be easily modified to incorporate many of the new literacy strategies that were introduced in our training," "NA," and "My

curriculum is very hard to complete already so I am trying to implement while covering
things I usually do not with said strategies."

***Survey Question 7: After a year of literacy training, do you feel better prepared to
incorporate literacy in your class?***
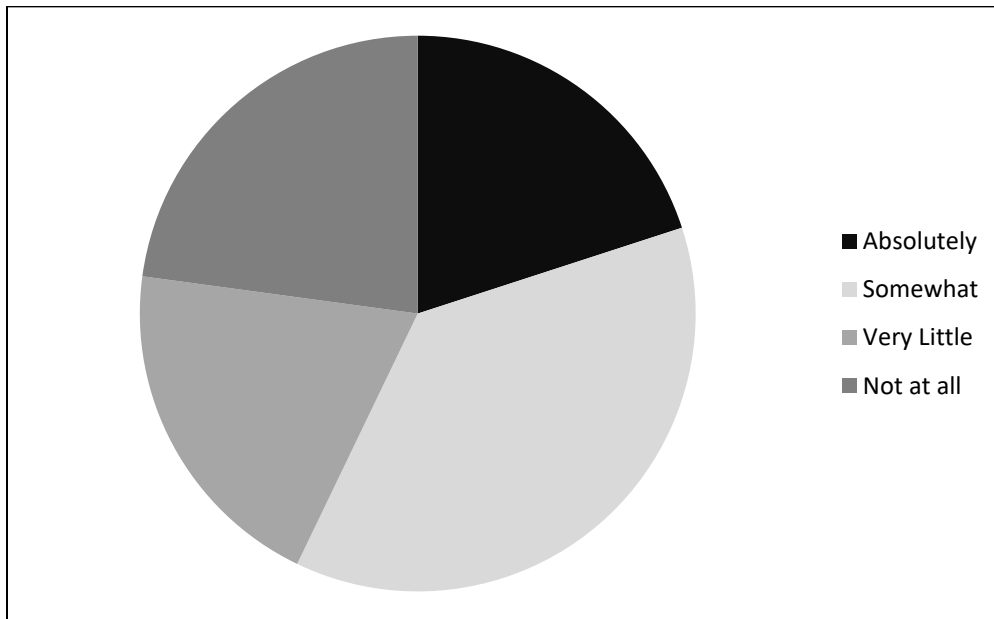


*Figure 185*. Survey question 7: After a year of literacy training, do you feel better
prepared to incorporate literacy in your class?

Figure 25 illustrates the opinions of the 28 teachers that responded to the survey
from the school population on question seven. Seventy-one percent of the teachers
responded that after a year of literacy training, they felt better prepared to incorporate
literacy in their class.

*Survey Question 8:  How long have you been an educator?*
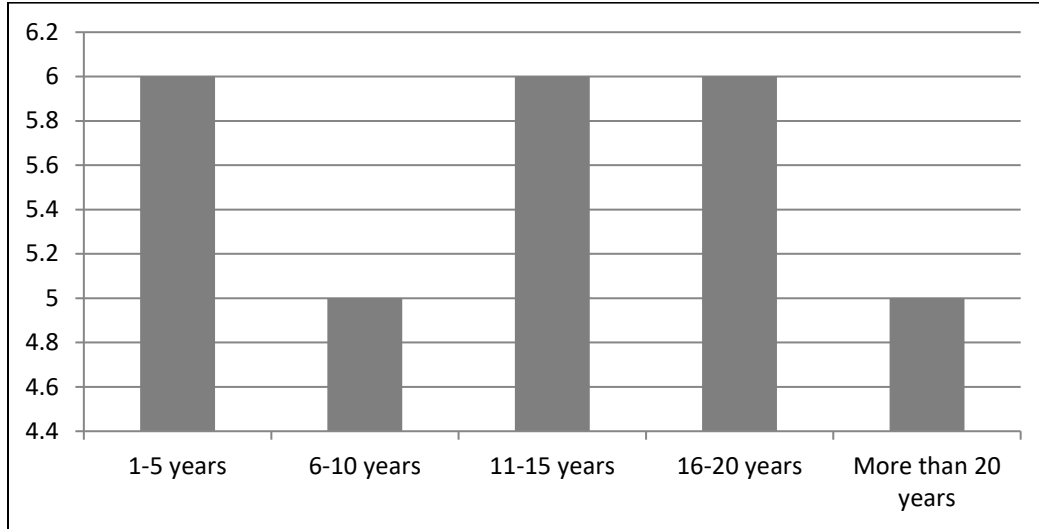


*Figure 196*. Survey question 8: How long have you been an educator?

Figure 26 illustrates the experience of the 28 teachers that responded to the survey from the school population. Twenty-one percent of the teachers had been in education one to five years. Seventeen percent of the teachers had been in education six to ten years. Twenty-one percent of the teachers had been in education less 11 to 15 years. Twenty-one percent of the teachers had been in education less 16 to 20 years. Seventeen percent of the teachers had been in education more than 20 years.

*Survey Question 9:  Do you have any additional comments or questions?*

There were two responses to this question. The first was:

As a general observation, our good teachers are good teachers and are already trying to incorporate best practices into their lessons. On the other hand, our mediocre and bad teachers find it difficult to juggle running their classroom and incorporate new methods into their teaching. Rarely did I hear our better teachers complaining about implementing literacy into their classroom because they see the value in reading for their students.

The second was, "I believe more needs to be addressed at the home level if education and start separating the different levels if learners so that America can thrive. Ex. Japanese ed. System."

*Null Hypothesis 8:* Middle school teachers. I cannot support the null hypothesis ($H_{07}$): Teachers in the middle school will not perceive the emphasis on student literacy as being effective, as measured by a Likert-scale perception survey. More than 71% of the teachers surveyed responded to question seven that they were prepared to incorporate literacy in their class.

**Interviews – Primary Data Analysis**

**Research Question 4:** What are the perceptions of teachers about the literacy intervention professional development implemented in the 2013-2014 school year?

The final part of the study was the qualitative primary data analysis. I used the teacher survey data to develop an interview protocol. I contacted the school to set up interviews with teachers that participated in the district professional development. In total, I interviewed eight teachers that participated in the professional development in school literacy instruction. The responses below were organized by question.

1.  What kind of training did you have in literacy instruction, before the 2013-2014 school year?

All of the eight teachers interviewed noted that they had received one class in college that focused on reading in the content area, but otherwise received no other pre-service instruction in teaching literacy. One of the social studies teachers that was also certified in Special Education said that he had received some training in basic reading skills from the special education department once he was hired. Another social studies

teacher commented on previous professional development pilot programs she had recently participated in that focused on student literacy. Over the course of most of the teachers' careers, that spanned from as little as two or three years of experience, up through more than 20 years of experience, they had received various professional developments emphasizing student literacy in all content areas. Once of the teachers was originally certified as an elementary teacher. She stated that, "a lot of my courses were geared towards content area literacy."  Once she moved to middle school, she participated in literacy training that focused on reading strategies.

2.  In the 2013-2014 school year, your school district provided you with professional development in literacy strategies. How do you feel the literacy instruction helped students to become better readers?

Several of the teachers I interviewed commented about how the professional development focused teachers on the issue, especially if the teacher was not certified in English Language Arts. More than half the teachers indicated that the literacy training and district wide emphasis on literacy in all content areas made them realize that students needed help increasing their reading skills. The teachers felt that the administration gave them amble support and supervision to keep them accountable.

Nearly all the teachers stated that the professional development gave them specific strategies that helped them be more confident articulating what good readers did. The teacher collaboration that each day of professional development offered helped the content teams develop specific tools to use in each content area. Some of the tools, like "reading role cards," become so prevalent that teacher confidence grew. In several content areas, the teams collaborated to find articles that supplemented the textbook.

Many of the teachers indicated by building the competence in the teachers students grew confident as well.

The two opinions that differed were the Spanish teacher and gifted teacher. The Spanish teacher's biggest concern to the literacy instruction was the depth of the language learners. Her students' level of comprehension was at a basic level. Some of the strategies were helpful though, "Especially looking for context clues." The gifted education teacher stated that, "These students are already solid performers in reading and do not need the encouragement or training to increase their reading skills." An opinion she would continue to demonstrate through the interview.

3. If you had any, what were some of the challenges with implementing literacy instruction into your instruction?

The consistent response from all interviewees was the idea that implementing literacy instruction within their content area would take additional time. Not just time to teach the strategies, but the time to find relevant articles. An additional challenge to the teachers was the mix of student reading abilities within any given class. Several teachers commented on the need to implement literacy instruction with fidelity, but time and content needs often "got in the way."

The teachers that used literacy strategies consistently said they felt less challenge to implementing it in their class. Two social studies teachers commented that once they learned how to implement it within their class it became "a habit." A challenge that was also note was gathering the data on literacy, "To see if they really got it and where they struggle."

4. How did these challenges make you less likely to implement reading strategies with fidelity?

As a follow up question, the teachers that I interviewed said that since need to "get through" the entire curriculum often drove how often they could implement a literacy strategy within their lesson plans. Another issue for the more veteran teachers was the need to "convince yourself that you are going to do it better." They felt that they already knew how to be successful teachers of their content, and supplementing their methods with reading strategies got in the way of activities they "always did."' Nearly every teacher interviewed commented that time was the biggest constraint to implementing reading strategies with any kind of fidelity. A couple of teachers said that the over exposure students had to reading strategies caused students to begin to "push back." The students felt that all they were doing was reading.

5. How important is literacy instruction in your class?

The social studies and science content areas all stated that they felt it was very important. One social studies teacher went on to say that, "Over the course of the implementation of the newer standards, social studies is become a non-fiction reading class."  The science teachers stated that increasing reading skills was critical to success in their class. Another social studies teacher stated that teachers can no longer assume that students know how to summarize what they are reading. The teacher stated that teachers have to train them what is "expected of good readers and model that for them."

The vast majority of teachers interviewed felt that even if students knew how to read for pleasure they still needed to be taught how to gather information from non-fiction texts. The foreign language teacher commented that literacy was imperative. From

the very first lesson on, students have to know how break apart the text in a meaningful way. The one opinion that digressed was the gifted education teacher. The gifted education teacher stated that increasing reading skills was "not as important for these students." She said that her students already read at higher levels, so the need to teach literacy strategies was not as important.

6. What kind of complaints did you hear about implementing the literacy strategies?

There were two distinct answers to this question. The majority of the teachers I interviewed commented about students complaining about the amount of reading they had. When teachers would come back from the professional development, they would all implement a strategy they had just learned. As a result, students would get bombarded with the same strategy over and over again. Students often complained that reading non-fiction or textbooks was boring. Some of the complaints were that students prefer to skip through the reading and just "find the answers." The students often stated that "this is not a reading class."

Some teachers tended to complain about the amount of time the literacy instruction took away from their content area. These comments about time and curricula implementation were a constant underlying comment, but were not overwhelming. The teachers I interviewed said that they heard complaints occasionally from other teachers about how this emphasis on literacy took too much time away from their content. One comment from one of the interviewees was, "I am not a reading teacher. Why don't they know this by the sixth grade?"

7. In what ways did teaching literacy in your class interfere with the content you are required to teach?

Nearly every teacher interviewed said that after the year was completely over with and they had time to evaluate their instructional strategies, that implementing literacy within their curricula really did not interfere in any meaningful way. Some of the teachers even commented that once students became comfortable with the reading strategies they became beneficial. One teacher stated that it just became one more thing to do. Something to "get checked off the list." When teachers that seemed to offer negative opinions about reading instruction reflected they admitted that it may have even benefited their students. One teacher commented that, "It is more of an attitude adjustment." All content areas had a need to teach some literacy strategies and when it was done consistently students felt more comfortable doing it. The Spanish teacher commented that without some kind of literacy instruction, students would not be able to get through the content.

8.  After getting a year of literacy training from the school district, in what ways do you feel better prepared to incorporate literacy instruction into our class?

All of the teachers, except the gifted education teacher, said that they loved the collaboration time that was built into the professional development. After the content leaders taught the strategies, the content area teachers collaborated to generate takeaways specific to their content. The collaboration opportunity after the professional development was the biggest benefit the teachers I interviewed noted. The sharing of tools and strategies by the participants helped all of the teachers incorporate literacy instruction in their classes.

I decided to use the interview time to change up the question to the gifted teacher. Since the majority of the answers she gave differed slightly from the group, I asked, "Are

there ways you can use literacy instruction in your content to stretch your student's

skills?" She responded that she often uses literacy strategies for her twice exceptional

students. Twice exceptional students are students that are identified as gifted and also

have a diagnosis of Asperger's. She stated that she often used reading strategies to build

some of their skills needed to get them to the higher levels of content understanding.

**Summary**

The proposal that increasing student-reading opportunities would benefit students

is not far reaching. In this study, the increase to student reading scores of students in the

Reluctant Reading Group, as measured by the SRI test was not statistically significant.

The data collected from the student surveys indicated that the majority of reluctant

readers' opinions about reading were lower than those students not in the reluctant reader

program. Additionally, the survey data gathered from teachers was valuable. The survey

showed a majority of teachers found value with literacy training and literacy instruction.

This opinion was supported with the interviews that I conducted. Both student and

teacher responses were supportive of increased literacy strategies in the classroom, even

though the quantitative data was not statistically significant.

**Chapter Five: Discussion and Reflection**

The purpose of this study was to determine if the literacy intervention program for

reluctant readers in one suburban Midwestern middle school was effective as indicated by

an increase in student reading scores measured by the Student Reading Inventory

Assessment. Secondary qualitative data was collected from the school district that

illustrated the Scholastic Reading Inventory Levels for students in the reluctant reader

group and the students reading at grade for the entire school as measured by the Gates-

MacGinitie Reading Test. Student confidence in the literacy instruction was measured by

the district as survey data. The research also analyzed teacher confidence in the literacy

instruction in two forms: secondary survey data gathered by the district of teachers in the

school and teacher interviews conducted by me. The secondary data used was gathered

during the 2013-2014 school year, and the primary interview data was gathered after the

2013-2014 school year.

**Summary of Findings and Conclusions**

**Research Questions.** The main research question the study answered was: How

do literacy interventions for reluctant Middle School readers affect Gates-MacGinitie

Reading Test scores and Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) scores? Three additional

questions were answered by the study:

1. How do the survey responses compare between the general population and
   reluctant readers after completing the program?

2. What are the perceptions of teachers about the emphasis on reading
   interventions in the school?

3.  What are the perceptions of teachers about the literacy intervention

    professional development?

The research questions examined the details that led to the outcomes of the

program and evaluated how successful it was for students and teachers. The research

examined the growth of students over the course of one school year and it evaluated

middle school student opinions of reading both in school and out. Additionally, the

research evaluated the opinions of teachers in the implementation of literacy instruction

in their classrooms. . Recall in Chapter Two that Meyer (2011) found that data indicated

that students in middle school struggled to perform academically, even though middle

school was developed to bridge this academic gap. Unfortunately, according to several

sources in Chapter Two, almost half of all students entering high school read below grade

level (Cantrell et al., 2009; Nichols et al., 2007).

During this project, I investigated the following research question: How do

literacy interventions for reluctant Middle School readers affect Gates-MacGinitie

Reading Test scores and Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) scores? Before doing the

research, with my experiences as a teacher, I felt that having reluctant readers participate

in increased literacy instruction would increase their reading scores. The literature in

Chapter Two also indicated that teachers needed to build literacy opportunities into their

content instruction if they hoped to see student gains (Werderich, 2008). The data

collected indicated that there were increases, but not enough to be statistically significant.

My second research question: How do the survey responses compare between the

general population and reluctant readers after completing the program? I thought that the

reluctant readers would score fall below the average scores of the regular population on

the survey each group was given. In the Literature Review, Buehl (2011) indicated that if literacy instruction is done with fidelity, students would become better readers. When examining survey question 8, a question that analyzed growth of exposure to literacy instruction, both groups indicated that they felt that they read more in their classes during the 2013-2014 school year than they previously had. The regular population felt they read far more than the reluctant reader group, but that could be because the reluctant reader group did not like to read very much at all, as indicated by survey question 1.

The third question I studied: What are the perceptions of teachers about the emphasis on reading interventions in the school? I thought that teachers would feel that the program helped students be better readers and the data from teacher survey question 2 indicated the same with more than 60% of the teachers indicating that they felt that their literacy instruction helped students to become better readers. In Chapter Two, Buehl (2011) indicated that when educators embed literacy practices into content instruction, students perform better in the content and as readers.

The fourth and final question I studied: What are the perceptions of teachers about the literacy intervention professional development? Despite numerous barriers to implementing literacy in all content areas, the literature in Chapter Two stated that when teachers collaborated on incorporating reading strategies across content areas, it was more successful (Reed, 2009). The survey and interview data in Chapter Four fully support this idea of collaboration being important to successfully implementing reading strategies across all non-English Language Arts classes.

The survey helped to provide some background into teaches opinions about the literacy professional development with 71% of those surveyed stating that they felt better

prepared to incorporate literacy into their classes. I was concerned that although teachers

would see value to the professional development, there would be a sense of one thing too

many being added to their already full workload, but less than half of the teachers

surveyed indicated that they felt this way in survey question 6. When I interviewed

teachers about the literacy professional development, the majority of teachers felt that the

professional development helped them with resources to use and time to collaborate.

        **Hypotheses.** The hypothesis for this study was that reluctant readers taught by

teachers that implement reading strategies in their classrooms will significantly increase

in student reading scores, as measured by scores on the SRI Test. The data used to

determine if the program was successful were the student Lexile scores from the SRI

Test. SRI is a computer based reading test that determines student-reading levels through

a series of reading scenarios and the students' responses. Reading levels were measured

at the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year to determine student reading levels.

Throughout the school year, the district tested the 44 students in the reluctant reader

program to evaluate their reading growth through the Scholastic Reading Inventory test.

        I analyzed the first pre-test and post-test Lexile scores with a $t$-test for the

difference in the means, as well as a $z$-test. I also analyzed survey data gathered from

students and teachers in the school to get a better picture of the value the program offered

to schools. When analyzing the data gathered from the SRI test scores with a t-test and a

z-test for the difference in means, the null hypothesis ($H_0$) was not rejected and the

hypothesis ($H_a$) was rejected. The SRI data indicated that although there was growth in

the average scores of reluctant readers, the growth was not statistically significant. I

believe that there is a couple for reasons for lack of statistical growth.

One reason I believe there was not statistical growth was a lack of fidelity of teachers to implement literacy instruction. In the teacher survey and interviews, teachers indicated they felt they did not have time to incorporate literacy instruction with the constraints of implementing their curricula.  Another reason why I believe the reluctant readers did not show statistical growth is the lack of desire for the reluctant readers to read. According to the surveys of the reluctant readers, they do not like reading with more than 59% of them saying that reading just is not fun, as compared to 78% of the regular population surveyed saying that it was fun. Sixty-eight percent of the reluctant reader group also does not like to read when they have spare time, as compared to 70% of the regular population indicating that they do like to read when they have spare time. Sixty-six percent of the reluctant reader group did not like to read when they were not at school. I believe until teachers find methods to engage reluctant readers in literacy, these students will continue to fall through the cracks.

When examining the grade levels individually with the same *t*-test, each grade failed to make statistically significant gains. Even though each grade failed to make significant increases, the size of the samples could have made them insignificant. The null hypothesis which was rejected by a *t*-test and a z-test stated that reluctant readers taught by teachers who implement reading strategies in their classrooms will not increase in reading level as measured by scores on the Scholastic Reading Inventory Test. Despite the failure of any class to increase enough to be statistically significant, the qualitative data gathered from the study indicates that the reluctant reader program was beneficial to the participants.

When analyzing the survey and interview data, there is data that supports the need for literacy instruction in all classrooms. In both the reluctant reader group and students surveyed from the regular population, the survey data indicated that students felt that they were reading more in their classes.  Across the board, when comparing the student surveys, the students in the reluctant reader group were consistently more negative about reading than those surveyed from the school population, but based on questions eight and nine, all students felt that the literacy instruction teachers implemented mattered. The staff was successful at implementing various reading strategies across all content areas, and this culture of reading influenced all students to read more, both in school and out of school. According to student survey question 8, even students who did not like to read found that they were reading more in their classes. As stated in Chapter Two, for middle school students to be better readers, they must read more frequently and in all content areas.

The teacher survey and interview data indicated that although they felt overwhelmed at times implementing another educational strategy into their already busy schedule, teachers found that literacy and literacy instruction was important to students. When interviewed, the teachers had time to discuss their opinions in greater depth. The overarching theme of the interviews was that the teachers felt that the literacy training gave them resources they could use in their classes to better implement reading strategies for their students. Most of those interviewed felt that the literacy instruction did not interfere with the curricula. Instead, it was one of many tools used to teach their content. The few negative responses were based on the content the teachers taught. For those who taught encore classes, rather than core classes, they felt that they already incorporated a

great deal of literacy instruction in their classes and the focused literacy instruction was

either too far below the student level or far too high for the content they were teaching.

**Recommendations**

To make future research more generalizable and valid to a larger community, the

researcher should be involved in the quantitative data collection and not have to rely so

heavily on secondary data. The gathering of secondary data for both the quantitative and

the qualitative data lead to a lack of connection for me in the design and implementation

of the study.

**Recommendations for Future Research**.  The most important research that

recommended would be a longitudinal study of reluctant readers to evaluate if the reading

strategies they learned in the 2013-2014 school year led to increases in their reading

scores through the remainder of their education. Additionally, the survey for each student

group could be better designed to evaluate skills taught during the school year, to see if

students recognize specific strategies that affect student-reading scores.  The survey used

for teachers was a better tool to gather their opinion, but once again, the researcher

should try to generate this tool as part of the research process. Having all of the

secondary data did help create interview protocols that better analyzed the teachers'

opinions on the literacy professional development.

**Recommendations for School of Study**. In a community where cutbacks, layoffs

and teacher reduction in force is part of budget discussions every year, the literacy

intervention program was an excellent low cost professional development that teachers

and students found to be valuable. The research examined the growth of students over the

course of one school year and it evaluated middle school student opinions of reading both

in school and out. To ensure greater success with literacy instruction in all classes, the

administrators at the school site should demand that teachers implement the strategies

with fidelity. The administrators and teachers need to develop a culture where reading

and literacy is a part of every classroom, not just the English Language Arts classes. Any

future research should include direct instruction for reluctant readers to help them find

success as readers.

      **Personal Reflections and Conclusion**. Recall in Chapter Two that Meyer (2011)

found that data indicated that students in middle school struggled to perform

academically, even though middle school was developed to bridge this academic gap.

Unfortunately, according to several sources in Chapter Two, almost half of all students

entering high school read below grade level (Cantrell et al., 2009; Nichols et al., 2007).

The literature indicated that teachers needed to build literacy opportunities into their

content instruction (Werderich, 2008).

      Survey and interview data was valuable in determining the success of the program

being evaluated and the Literacy Professional Development of the 2013-2014 school year

was a valuable professional development for the teachers in the district. They had

numerous opportunities for collaboration and time to develop in class instruction that

could impact student outcomes.

      Even though there were increases in student reading scores, I had to reject all of

the quantitative hypotheses. Perhaps one reason for this was the lack of control I had on

the data collection process because the quantitative data was already gathered by the

school district. The hypothesis stated that reluctant readers taught by teachers that

implement reading strategies in their classrooms would significantly increase in student

reading scores, as measured by scores on the Scholastic Reading Inventory Test. The main research question: How do literacy interventions for reluctant Middle School readers affect Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test scores and Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) scores? My second research question: How do the survey responses compare between the general population and reluctant readers after completing the program? The third question I studied: What are the perceptions of teachers about the emphasis on reading interventions in the school? The fourth and final question I studied: What are the perceptions of teachers about the literacy intervention professional development?

I could not statistically analyze how reading interventions affected student-reading scores over time because the district did not collected them. The research did show that there was no significant difference in the increase in scores of the reluctant reader group when compared to the school population. Perhaps the most profound discovery of the research is that teachers found value in the professional development. The culture of literacy emphasized by the district created opportunities for students at all grade levels and across all content to engage more in literacy strategies. Although the quantitative data from the program revealed no statistically significant improvement, the qualitative data illustrated the value of literacy instruction across all content areas. Struggling readers are in every school, in every district, in every state in this country. Far too often, the system fails students that struggle with literacy because teachers are too focused on their curricula and not the needs of the students. With a greater emphasis on implementing student literacy strategies with fidelity, students will have opportunities to become better readers.

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**Appendix A**

**Middle School Student Literacy Survey**

4/14/14                          [SURVEY PREVIEW MODE] Middle School Student Literacy Survey

Middle School Student Literacy Survey

**＊1. I enjoy free reading time at school.**

Absolutely          Somewhat              Very Little              Not At All

Comment

＊**2. I feel that books are boring.**

Absolutely          Somewhat              Very Little              Not At All

Comment

＊**3. I like to recommend books to my friends.**

Absolutely          Somewhat              Very Little              Not At All

Comment

＊**4. Reading is fun.**

Absolutely          Somewhat              Very Little              Not At All

Comment

＊**5. I think reading is hard.**

Absolutely          Somewhat              Very Little              Not At All

Comment

＊**6. I like to read when I have spare time**

Absolutely          Somewhat              Very Little              Not At All

Comment

www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?PREVIEW_MODE=DO_NOT_USE_THIS_LINK_FOR_COLLECTION&sm=KiEzbtKb2lE9EmTGcDoA3niTTiiVqpLd2UYG7Tp...   1/2

**✱ 7. I like to read when I'm not at school**

Absolutely            Somewhat            Very Little            Not At All

Comment

[                                    ]

**✱ 8. Do you feel that you read more this year in your classes?**

Absolutely            Somewhat            Very Little            Not At All

Comment

[                                    ]

**✱ 9. Do you feel that you read more for pleasure this year because of school?**

Absolutely            Somewhat            Very Little            Not At All

Comment

[                                    ]

**✱ 10. What grade are you in?**

6th

7th

8th

Done

Powered by **SurveyMonkey**
Check out our sample surveys and create your own now!

**Appendix B**

**Literacy Survey - Teacher**

Literacy Survey - Teacher

\* 1. Before this school year began, did you feel prepared to integrate literacy instruction into your class?

Absolutely          Somewhat          Very Little          Not At All

Comment

\* 2. Do you feel that your literacy instruction significantly helped students to become better readers?

Absolutely          Somewhat          Very Little          Not At All

Comment

\* 3. Were there challenges to implementing literacy instruction that made teachers less likely to implement reading strategies with fidelity?

Absolutely          Somewhat          Very Little          Not At All

Comment

\* 4. Do you feel that it is important to implement literacy instruction in your classes?

Absolutely          Somewhat          Very Little          Not At All

Comment

\* 5. Have you heard other teachers express concerns about the difficulties of implementing literacy strategies?

Absolutely          Somewhat          Very Little          Not At All

Comment

\* 6. Did you feel that you could not teach all of the required content of your class, due to the literacy strategies that you had to implement during the school year?

| Absolutely | Somewhat | Very Little | Not At All |
|---|---|---|---|

Comment

*7. After a year of literacy training, do you feel better prepared to incorporate literacy instruction into our class?

| Absolutely | Somewhat | Very Little | Not At All |
|---|---|---|---|

Comment

*8. How long have you been an educator?

1-5 years

6-10 years

11-15 years

16-20 years

More than 20 years

9. Do you have any additional comments or questions?

Done

**Appendix C**

**Interview Protocol for Literacy Instruction**

1.  What kind of training did you have in literacy instruction, before the 2013-2014 school year?

2.  In the 2013-2014 school year, your school district provided you with professional development in literacy strategies. How do you feel the literacy instruction helped students to become better readers?

3.  If you had any, what were some of the challenges with implementing literacy instruction into your instruction?

    a.  How did these challenges make you less likely to implement reading strategies with fidelity?

4.  How important is literacy instruction in your class?

5.  What kind of complaints did you hear about implementing the literacy strategies?

6.  In what ways did teaching literacy in your class interfere with the content you are required to teach?

7.  After getting a year of literacy training from the school district, in what ways do you feel better prepared to incorporate literacy instruction into our class?

**Appendix D**

**FRANCIS HOWELL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

4545 Central School Road • St. Charles, MO 63304-7113
Phone: 636-851-4000 • Fax: 636-851-4093 • www.fhsdschools.org

Dr. Bryan Williams
Director of Assessment & Program
Development
Phone: 636-851-4074
Fax: 636-851-4091
bryan.williams@fhsdschools.org

February 10, 2014

James Allison
664 Woodstream Drive
Saint Charles, MO 63304

Dear James,

You have permission to conduct a research project at Barnwell Middle School to determine if student reading interventions increase student reading abilities with students that read zero to six months below grade level. Your study will provide the District with valuable information from a research standpoint. You have permission to use Barnwell Middle School reading achievement data from 2013-2014 school year. During our conversation, you indicated that you will be utilizing a student survey at the end of your study to measure the student attitudes towards reading. You also indicated agreement that student participation in the survey is voluntary. Additionally, you will keep all personally identifiable information confidential.

I wish you the best on your study which promises to provide valuable research information to the field of education in general and to the Francis Howell School District in particular.

Sincerely,

Dr. Bryan Williams, Director
Francis Howell Schools

CC:    Dr. Pam Sloan, Superintendent of Schools
       Dr. Mary Hendricks-Harris, Chief Academic Officer

**Appendix E**

**SRI Raw Data**

| Student | Grade | Pre-test | Post-Test |
|---------|-------|----------|-----------|
| 1 | 6 | 336 | 511 |
| 2 | 8 | 815 | 1160 |
| 3 | 6 | 494 | 683 |
| 4 | 7 | 214 | 275 |
| 5 | 6 | 628 | 789 |
| 6 | 7 | 535 | 647 |
| 7 | 8 | 624 | 748 |
| 8 | 6 | 792 | 943 |
| 9 | 7 | 633 | 748 |
| 10 | 6 | 543 | 637 |
| 11 | 8 | 881 | 1014 |
| 12 | 6 | 544 | 626 |
| 13 | 7 | 706 | 808 |
| 14 | 6 | 641 | 724 |
| 15 | 6 | 702 | 791 |
| 16 | 6 | 749 | 818 |
| 17 | 7 | 747 | 806 |
| 18 | 6 | 737 | 795 |
| 19 | 8 | 895 | 965 |
| 20 | 6 | 796 | 852 |
| 21 | 6 | 592 | 629 |
| 22 | 6 | 747 | 791 |
| 23 | 6 | 799 | 835 |
| 24 | 8 | 781 | 813 |
| 25 | 8 | 733 | 763 |
| 26 | 8 | 348 | 362 |
| 27 | 6 | 724 | 748 |
| 28 | 7 | 843 | 864 |
| 29 | 6 | 754 | 768 |
| 30 | 6 | 667 | 671 |
| 31 | 8 | 879 | 876 |
| 32 | 8 | 802 | 792 |
| 33 | 7 | 665 | 653 |
| 34 | 8 | 860 | 838 |
| 35 | 6 | 664 | 647 |
| 36 | 8 | 874 | 850 |
| 37 | 6 | 660 | 626 |
| 38 | 6 | 751 | 692 |

| 39 | 7 | 848 | 774 |
| 40 | 7 | 799 | 693 |
| 41 | 6 | 749 | 614 |
| 42 | 6 | 791 | 645 |
| 43 | 6 | 452 | 319 |
| 44 | 6 | 766 | 465 |

**Appendix F**

# LINDENWOOD

**Lindenwood University ● St. Charles, Missouri**

**Educational Leadership - IRB Protocol**

**Date** ___December 9, 2014_____

**Chair** __Dr. John Long_____  **Student** __James Allison_____

**James Allison,**

Your IRB Protocol Draft has been approved. Please, make changes in the 3 spots marked with bubble comments. Then, please, work with your chair to upload documents into IRBNet for submission to the Lindenwood University IRB.

Thank you,

Sherrie Wisdom, EdD
Associate Professor - Education Leadership
Supervisor of Graduate Research

# LINDENWOOD

**Application for Expedited IRB Review of Human Subjects Research Signature Page**

Please check the box(es) if your research involves any of the following:

☐ Gathering data from anyone under the age of 18

☐ Gathering data from persons with diminished autonomy (e.g., seniors, medical

patients, persons in correctional facilities, etc.)

☐ Potential risks to participants in the study (i.e., physical, psychological, social,

economic, legal, etc.)

☐ Deception of the participants

☐ Gathering information about sensitive topics, which are defined as political

affiliations; psychological disorders of participants or their families; sexual behavior or

attitudes; illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating or demeaning behavior; critical appraisals

of participants' families or employers; legally recognized privileged relationships

(lawyers, doctors, ministers); income; religious beliefs and practices.

**If you have checked any of these boxes, you will need to complete an application for**

**Full IRB Review.  If you are at all unsure if your research meets these criteria,**

**complete an application for Full IRB Review or consult your school's IRB**

**representative.**

*Please check the appropriate box(es) that describe your research.  Your research must fit*
*at least one of these categories to be considered for an expedited application.*

☒         Research conducted in ESTABLISHED or COMMONLY ACCEPTED
EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS, involving normal educational practices, such as

i. research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or

ii. research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

☐ Research involving the use of EDUCATIONAL TESTS (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, or achievement), SURVEY procedures, INTERVIEW procedures, or OBSERVATION OF PUBLIC BEHAVIOR, unless

iii. information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; **AND**

iv. any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research reasonably could place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or could be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

☐ Research involving the use of EDUCATIONAL TESTS (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, or achievement), SURVEY procedures, INTERVIEW procedures, or OBSERVATION OF PUBLIC BEHAVIOR that is NOT exempt under (b) above if

v. the human subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office; **or**

vi. federal status requires, without exception, that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.

☐ Research involving the collection or study of EXISTING DATA DOCUMENTS, RECORDS, PATHOLOGICAL SPECIMENS, or DIAGNOSTIC SPECIMENS, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

In submitting this application the Principle Investigator and any supervising faculty certify that (a) the information presented in this application is accurate, (b) only the procedures approved by the IRB will be used in this project, and (c) modifications to this project will be submitted for approval prior to use.

*All PIs and supervising faculty must submit a copy of the NIH Human Subjects Protection training completion certificate.*

Typed Name of Primary Investigator

Signature of Primary Investigator

_____ Date 12/10/2014


Typed Name of Supervising Faculty Member


Signature of Supervising Faculty Member (if PI is a student)

_____ Date 12/10/2014



*Primary Investigators should submit this signature page to the IRB chair certifying the accuracy of the application.  The signature page may be submitted by email or through inter-office mail, but the signature page must be received by the date of the IRB meeting for the application to be reviewed.*

# LINDENWOOD

**Expedited Application for IRB Review of**
**Research Proposal Involving Human Subjects**

*If you have any questions about whether you need to complete a full or expedited application, please review the expedited application criteria at*
*http://www.lindenwood.edu/academics/irb/*

1.      Title of Project: **A program evaluation of a literacy intervention for reluctant Middle School readers.**

2.      Date of Last Revision (if this is the first submission, list NA): NA

3.      List the names of all researchers/faculty advisors and their contact information in the table below.

| Name | Email | Phone Number | Department | Student/Faculty |
|------|-------|--------------|------------|-----------------|
| **James Allison** | **jda248@lionmail.lindenwood.edu** <br> **jallison1211@gmail.com** | **636-734-3864** | **Francis Howell School District** | **Ed.D. Student** |
| **John Long** | **jlong@lindenwood.edu** | **636-949-4937** | **Educational Leadership** | **Dissertation Chair** |
| **Dean Vazis** | **dvazis@lindenwood.edu** | **636-949-4402** | **Educational Leadership** | **Committee Member** |
| **Donald Heidenreich** | **dheidenreich@lindenwood.edu** | **636-949-4414** | **History** | **Committee Member** |

*Note: adjunct faculty may only serve as researchers with the approval of the Dean of the appropriate school.*

4.      Anticipated starting date for this project: 12/01/2014   Anticipated ending date: 12/01/2016

(Collection of *primary* data – data you collect yourself - cannot begin without IRB approval. Completion/Amendment form required yearly, even if stated anticipated ending date is more than one year in the future.)

5.      Will the results of this research be published in any way?

(Publication involves dissemination of results to the public in any manner, including but not limited to: publication in print or online, presentation at a conference, display at an event open to the public, etc.)

☒ Yes*                                    ☐ No

* If yes, briefly describe how you intend to publish this research: This research is for my doctoral dissertation.

6.      Lay Summary

Summarize the proposed research using non-technical language that can be readily understood by IRB members whose primary concerns are nonscientific. The summary should include a statement of the purpose of the project (what you want to accomplish), background information necessary to understand the study including definitions of terms that may be unfamiliar to the reader, and the hypothesis(es) or research question(s) of the proposed project. The complete summary must not exceed 750 words. Use complete sentences.

The purpose of this study is to determine if the literacy intervention program for reluctant readers in one middle school was effective as indicated by an increase in student reading scores measured by the Student Reading Inventory Assessment and the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test. The researcher will investigate perceptions of students and teachers regarding the literacy intervention program through the use of district-administered surveys. The researcher will also interview teachers regarding their delivery of the literacy interventions in the classroom setting.

The literacy intervention program targeted the population of students identified as reluctant readers that were not already receiving any reading intervention, but were reading below grade level.  Identification was accomplished through evaluation of student reading scores by school administrators. The administrators then called these students "reluctant readers" based on their reading scores. The reluctant reader program participants were then told what their reading level was. The administrators instructed all school staff to provide individualized student reading interventions, like group discussions, read-a-louds, and cooperative learning strategies, as well as individual encouragement, in the hopes of increasing the reading scores of the reluctant readers.

The study will investigate whether or not the specialized intervention contributed to an increase in student reading abilities with students that read zero to six months below grade level, as measured by the Student Reading Inventory Assessment and the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test. Specific academic interventions excluded classroom programs such as Special Education Services, English Language Learners (ELL), Read 180 and

**Research Question 4:** What are the perceptions of teachers about the literacy intervention professional development?

Null hypotheses.

•        H0 = Reluctant readers taught by teachers who implement reading strategies in their classrooms will not increase in reading level as measured by scores on the SRI and Gates scores pre and post-test.

•        H1 = Reluctant Readers taught by teachers who implement reading strategies in their classrooms will not measure growth in student reading scores, as measured by pre- and post- SRI and Gates Tests.

•        H2 = There will be no difference in growth between the Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth grade reading for students taught by teachers who implement reading strategies in their classrooms, as measured by student scores on SRI and Gates Test.

7. Research Funding

    a.   Is this research funded?
☒ No. Continue to question 8.
☐ Yes or pending. Complete the rest of this section (below).

    b.   Check all of the appropriate boxes for funding sources (including pending sources) for this research.
☐ Federal Agency Name:
☐ Foundation Name:
☐ State Agency Name:
☐ Industry Sponsor Name:
☐ Other – Name:

*Please attach a copy of the grant or contract to this application for federally funded research where Lindenwood University is the awardee institution or lead site.*

8.        a. Has this research project been reviewed or is it currently being reviewed by an

official or        institutional research department at another institution?

☐ Yes                     ☒ No                     ☐ Pending

b. Has this research project been reviewed by another department or educational institution?

If yes, please state where the research has been/will be reviewed.  Provide a copy of any related documents in the appendix if the research was approved.
*Note: if another institution's review procedure requires changes to the research protocol after Lindenwood IRB approval has been granted, the researcher must submit an amendment to the LU IRB and gain approval before research can commence or continue as amended.*

9.       What is the PI's relationship with the participants in the study or research site?  If you have no relationship, indicate that.  Explain how any coercion will be reduced or how the identities of the participants will remain anonymous if the PI is a superior.

Researcher was a teacher who worked in the researched building/school understudy. The researcher no longer works for Francis Howell School District but has permission from the district to use the secondary data collected in 2013-2014.

10.     Participants involved in the study:

a.   Indicate the minimum and maximum number of persons, of what type, will be recruited as participants in this study.
a.   For the Secondary Data there are 0 people being recruited for the study, but for the primary data collection of teacher interviews, the researcher will recruit between 8 and 18 subjects to be interviewed.

Total requested number of LU subjects:  0
Total subjects enrolled at sites that do not fall under the responsibility of the LU IRB:  0

b.   Primary Focus of Age Range (check all that apply):

☐ Newborn to 17 years of age *(students in the LPP that are 17 years of age have a signed parental consent form on file and can be treated as consenting adults)*
☒ 18-64 Years – 8-18 participants
☐ 65+ Years

c.   Populations that are the PRIMARY FOCUS of this research. Remember to take into account the location in which recruitment will occur and where the research will be conducted. Also note that additional information and/or

safeguards will be required when a subject population has been designated as vulnerable (with an asterisk *).
Check all that apply:

☐ Adults: Health Subjects or Control Subjects (for biomedical research)
☐ Pregnant Women, Neonates, Fetuses/Fetal Tissue*
☐ Prisoners*
☐ Decisionally-Impaired*
☐ Economically and/or Educationally Disadvantaged*
☐ Vulnerable to Coercion or Undue Influence*
☐ LU Employees**
☐ LU Students (not LPP)**
☐ Lindenwood Participant Pool (LPP)**
☒ Other: specify: Adults

*Note: groups listed above marked with an asterisk (*), as well as subjects under the age of 18, are considered "vulnerable" and require special consideration by the federal regulatory agencies and/or by the LU IRB.*

*Note: any survey of more than 100 LU faculty, staff, or students, marked above with two asterisks (**), requires approval by the Provost after IRB approval has been granted. Electronic surveys of LU faculty, staff, or students must use the University's Survey Monkey account, which must be created by an authorized administrator.*

a. From what source(s) will the potential participants be recruited? From school district where the literacy program was implemented.

b. Describe the process of participant recruitment.  Teachers in the district where the researcher used to work will be sent an invitation to be interviewed. The researcher will then conduct interviews with a minimum of 8 to a maximum of 18 of those that respond with interest.

c. Will any participants be excluded?

☐ Yes          ☒ No

If yes, explain why and how.

d. Where will the study take place?

☐ On campus – Explain:

☒ Off campus – Explain: Primary data will be gathered through interviews held off campus. Secondary data will be gathered from school district databases.

Methodology/procedures:
Secondary Data Research

a.   Gather and evaluate secondary reading data from Barnwell Middle School Francis Howell School District. The researcher will randomly select data collected from the district. He will then analyze Secondary Data gathered by the school district.

   i.   The researcher will use a z-test for difference in means to determine if there is a significant increase in reading level and reading scores of students receiving the district-required interventions.
   ii.   The researcher will use a z-test for difference in means to determine if there is a significant difference in reading scores of students receiving the district-required interventions, when comparing grades 6, 7, and 8. .
   iii.   The researcher will also use a z-test for difference in means to compare the reading scores of all 900 students in the same building that the program participants attended to the scores of the program participants, at the end of the intervention.
   iv.   Additionally, the researcher will use a z-test for difference to compare the proportion of participating teachers who perceive the literacy program as effective to the proportion of those who do not.

b.   Gather and evaluate secondary survey data from Francis Howell School District.

   i.   The researcher will analyze Secondary Data the district collected.
   ii.   The final piece of data that researcher will utilize is secondary data collected from a survey sent to the 64 teachers in the building where the program was implemented. 28 teachers responded.
   iii.   The secondary data collected from the teacher survey will be qualitatively coded for themes to determine teacher opinions of the district literacy interventions.

c.   Professional Development for district employees
   The researcher will document and describe in detail the activities, topics, strategies, and meetings that were a part of the Professional Development in literacy for staff at the study school.
   All data gathered through documents, reflections, notes, and interviews will be coded for themes and reported.

d.   Qualitative Primary Research: Interview between 8 and 18 teachers in the building where the professional development and research will be conducted to further develop an understanding of the teacher perceptions of the literacy professional development from the 2013-2014 school year. Data will be coded for similarities and themes in answers to interview questions.

a.   Which of the following data-gathering procedures will be used?
Provide a copy of all materials to be used in this study with application.

☐   Observing participants (i.e., in a classroom, playground, school board meeting, etc.)

When?

Where?

For how long?

How often?

What data will be recorded?

☐    Survey / questionnaire:              ☐ paper          ☐ email or Web based
        Source of survey:

☒        Interview(s)                      ☒ (in person)          ☐ (by telephone)

☐        Focus group(s)

☐        Audio recording

☐    Video recording

☐      Analysis of deidentified secondary data - specify source (who
gathered data initially and for what purpose?):  Data from the school
district will be used with permission from the district. **Student scores on
the Scholastic Reading Inventory
Student scores on the Gates-McGinitie Reading Test
Literacy Perception Surveys**

|  | School population | District program participants (reluctant readers) | Random Sample for survey |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6th grade | 307 | 20 | 17 |
| 7th grade | 290 | 11 | 18 |
| 8th grade | 303 | 14 | 20 |
| total | 900 | 45 | 55 |
| Adults | 64 |  | 28 |

☐     Test     ☐ paper        ☐ email or Web based

Source of test:

Type of test (such as memory, verbal skills):

☐        Interactive

Describe (e.g., completed time puzzle, watch video and respond to questions, sample items to compare):

☐     Other (specify):

b.   Based on the boxes checked above, provide a detailed description of how the participants will be treated and what will happen to all information and/or materials collected for the research.

12.      Will the results of this research be made accessible to participants, institutions, or schools/district?

☒ Yes          ☐ No

If yes, explain when and how: Upon dissertation publication

13.     Potential benefits and compensation from the study:

a.   Identify and describe any known or anticipated benefits to the participants (perhaps academic, psychological, or social) from their involvement in the project.

b.   Identify and describe any known or anticipated benefits to society from this study.  According to Buffum, Mattos and Weber, (2010) some suburban school districts do not generally begin implementing reading interventions until students are more than 6 months below grade level in literacy skills. In this study, comparisons will be made between students' current performance in reading and their expected performance, which is reading at grade level, measured by the traditionally administered Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test and the Student Reading Inventory Assessment, to verify whether or not identification of reluctant readers in middle school can result in improved reading levels following a literacy intervention program.

c.   Describe any anticipated compensation to participants (money, grades, extra credit). NA

*Note: this information must exactly match the compensation described in the consent form.*

14.     Potential risks from the study:

      a.   Identify and describe any known or anticipated risks (i.e., physical, psychological, social, economic, legal, etc.) to participants involved in this study:  none

      b.   Describe, in detail,  how your research design addresses these potential risks: NA

      c.   Will deception be used in this study?  If so, explain the rationale. NA

      d.   Does this project involve gathering information about *sensitive topics*?

[*Sensitive topics* are defined as political affiliations; psychological disorders of participants or their families; sexual behavior or attitudes; illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior; critical appraisals of participants' families or employers; legally recognized privileged relationships (lawyers, doctors, ministers); income; religious beliefs and practices.]

☐ Yes            ☒ No

If yes, explain:

      e.   Indicate the identifiable elements that will be collected and/or included in the research records.  Check all that apply:

| | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Names | ☐ Social Security Numbers* |
| ☐ Device identifiers/Serial numbers | ☐ Phone numbers |
| ☐ Medical record numbers | ☐ Web URLs |
| ☐ Street address | ☐ Health plan numbers |
| ☐ City or State | ☐ IP address numbers |
| ☐ Zip Code | ☐ Biometric identifiers** |
| ☐ Account numbers | ☐ Fax numbers |
| ☐ Vehicle ID numbers | ☐ E-mail address |
| ☐ License/Certificate numbers | ☐ Facial Photos/Images |
| ☐ Financial account information (including student ID) | ☐ Date of Birth |

☐ Any other unique identifier – Specify:

☒ None of the identifiers listed above
*If Social Security Numbers will be collected, explain below why they are necessary and how they will be used:*

*** Biometric identifiers are observable biological characteristics which could be used to identify an individual, e.g., fingerprints, iris/retina patterns, and facial patterns.*

    f.   Indicate how data will be stored and secured. Please mark all that apply.

Electronic data:
☐ Not applicable
☒ De-identified only (i.e., no personal identifiers, including 18 HIPAA identifiers, are included with or linked to the data via a code)
☒ Password access
☒ Coded, with a master list secured and kept separately
☐ Encryption software will be used. Specify encryption software:
☐ Secure network server will be used to store data. Specify secure server:

☐ Stand-alone desktop/laptop computer will be used to store data
       ☐ Not connected to server/internet
☐ An organization outside of the LU covered entity will store the code key. The organization will have a business associate agreement with LU.
☐ Other (specify):

Hardcopy data (consents and other study documents, recordings, artifacts, and specimens):
☐ Not applicable
☐ De-identified only (i.e., no personal identifiers, including 18 HIPAA identifiers, are included with or linked to the data via a code)
☒ Coded, with a master list secured and kept separately
☒ Locked file cabinet
☒ Locked office/lab
☐ Locked suite
☐ Locked refrigerator/freezer
☐ Specimens coded with a master list secured and kept separately
☐ Other (specify):

g.  Explain the procedures to be used to ensure anonymity of participants and confidentiality of data during the data-gathering phase of the research, in the storage of data, and in the release of the findings. Hardcopy data will be stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home office. All digital data will be stored on a password protected drive.

h.   How will confidentiality be explained to participants? The Adult Confidentiality Agreement will spell out the protections for the participants, including the de-identification of all names and information that could be used to identify participants.

i.   Indicate the duration and location of secure data storage and the method to be used for final disposition of the data.

**Paper Records**
☒ Data will be retained for 3 years according to federal regulation.
☐ Data will be retained indefinitely in a secure location.
      Where?

**Audio/Video Recordings**
☒ Audio/video recordings will be retained for 3 years according to federal regulation.
☐ Data will be retained indefinitely in a secure location.
      Where?

**Electronic Data (computer files)**
☒ Electronic data will be retained for 3 years according to federal regulation.
☐ Data will be retained indefinitely in a secure location.
      Where?

15.   Informed consent process:

a.   What process will be used to inform the potential participants about the study details and (if necessary) to obtain their written consent for participation?

☒     An information letter / written consent form for participants or their legally authorized agents will be used; <u>include a copy with application</u>.

☐     An information letter from director of institution involved will be provided; <u>include a copy with application</u>.

☐     Other (specify):

☐     If any copyrighted survey or instrument has been used, include a letter or email of permission to use it in this research.

b.   What special provisions have been made for providing information to those not fluent in English, mentally disabled persons, or other populations for whom it may be difficult to ensure that they can give informed consent? NA

16.     All supporting materials/documentation for this application are to be uploaded to IRBNet and attached to the package with your protocol and your credentials. Please indicate which appendices are included with your application. Submission of an incomplete application package will result in the application being returned to you unevaluated.

☐ Recruitment materials: A copy of any posters, fliers, advertisements, letters, telephone, or other verbal scripts used to recruit/gain access to participants.

☒ Data gathering materials:  A copy of all surveys, questionnaires, interview questions, focus group questions, or any standardized tests used to collect data.

☐ Permission if using a copyrighted instrument

☐ Information letter for participants

☒ Informed Consent Form: Adult

☐ Informed Consent Form: guardian to sign consent for minor to participate

☐ Informed Assent Form for minors

☐ Information/Cover letters used in studies involving surveys or questionnaires

☒ Permission letter from research site

☒ Certificate from NIH IRB training for all students and faculty

☐ IRBNet electronic signature of faculty/student

☐ PPSRC Form (*Psychology Applications Only*)
Adapted, in part, from LU Ethics Form 8/03

*Revised 10/14/2013*

**Vitae**

James Allison is currently Assistant Principal at Berkeley Middle School in the Ferguson-Florissant School District in Berkeley, Missouri. He has served in his current position since July, 2014. Prior to his current assignment, James was an administrative intern and social studies teacher in the Francis Howell School District.

**Education, Honors and Certifications**

Specialist in Education in Elementary and Secondary Education

Lindenwood University, St. Charles, Missouri, May 2013

Masters of Arts in Education with an Emphasis in Historical Interpretation/Curriculum

Lindenwood University, St. Charles, Missouri, May 2011

Bachelor of Arts in History with a Minor in Social Studies

Lindenwood University, St. Charles, Missouri, May 2008

**Education Certifications**

Elementary and Secondary Administration, 2013

Secondary Social Studies Education, 2008

Middle School Social Studies Education, 2008

**Employment History**

**Leadership and Experiences in Education**

Assistant Principal – July 2014- Present

*Ferguson-Florissant School District,* Florissant, MO

Administrative Internship - Leadership in Educational Administrative Program (LEAP) - August 2012 to June 2014

*Francis Howell School District*, St. Charles, MO

Secondary Social Studies Teacher

Barnwell Middle School, July 2009 – June 2014

Francis Howell North High School, July 2008- June 2009

*Francis Howell School District*, St. Charles, MO

**Higher Education Teaching Experience**

Undergraduate and Graduate Level Adjunct Professor

EDU 335 Secondary Social Studies Methods

EDU 535 Secondary Social Studies Methods

*Lindenwood University*, St. Charles, MO August 2014-Present

**Professional Academic Affiliations**

Lindenwood University Alumni

National Association of Secondary School Principals

**Publications**

Dissertation – Pending

**Academic Honors**

Lindenwood University Francis and Elizabeth Huss Graduate Award in
Educational Administration –Spring 2014 – Awarded to the graduate student who
demonstrated outstanding academic achievement, leadership, and potential as a
professional school administrator.

**Community Service**

New Life Church of the Nazarene – O'Fallon

Leadership Team, Praise Team