

**Adolescent Literacy: A Comparison of Instructional Structure and
Its Impact on Student Achievement**

Prissy LeMay

B.S.Ed., University of Arkansas, 1990

M.S.Ed., University of Arkansas, 1994

Ed.S., University of Arkansas, 2000

Submitted to the Graduate Department and Faculty of the School of Education of
Baker University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

James Robins, Ed. D
Major Advisor

Harold Frye, Ed. D.
Committee Member

Kenny Rodriquez, Ed. D.
Committee Member

Date Defended: November 20, 2019

Copyright 2019 by Prissy LeMay

Abstract

Despite the work of teachers, reading specialists, curriculum directors, and principals in the secondary levels, adolescent literacy skills are not keeping pace with the rapid growth of the informational age (Alvermann, 2001). As students progress to the secondary level, formal reading instruction decreases at the middle school and high school. Adolescent literacy is varied and builds on the foundational skills acquired in the elementary grades. Secondary educators struggle with how to best equip students to be college, career, and life ready.

The setting for this study (District A) was an urban school district located in the south Kansas City, Missouri metropolitan area. Participants in the study were 333 sixth grade students (50.5% females and 49.5% males) in two middle schools. The primary purpose of the study was to examine the difference of 6th grade students' reading achievement after being taught by a reading specialist compared to being taught by a regular classroom teacher based on two assessments. The first assessment to be used was the required Missouri state English Language Arts assessment and the second assessment to be used was the Scholastic Reading Inventory.

The results of the study provided evidence that there was not a statistically significant difference in the students' MAP English Language Arts mean score and the Scholastic Reading Inventory mean score whether the students were taught by a reading specialist or a general classroom teacher.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to every student who struggles in school and especially reading. I will continue to have a passion and an urgency on finding ways to help children who have not obtained the necessary skills to become literate members of our society. I believe reading is a key factor that leads to success in life. Studies should continue to look at the research based strategies to provide support to students to ensure they have the skills to be successful.

Acknowledgements

First, and foremost, I would like to acknowledge my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I would not be where I am without Him. There were times during the completion of this study that I asked why am I doing this. It was only through the strength provided to me by God that I have been able to complete this dissertation.

Secondly, I would like to acknowledge my family. To my parents, J.R. and Vesta LeMay, thank you for providing a family life that required all of us to work hard and persevere even when things did not seem fair. Dad, I have kept the words you said to me many years ago close to my heart. You may not remember, but you told me “People may take your material possessions, but they can never take your education.” These words have been a motivation for me through all the years schooling. To my sister, Missy LeMay-Teel, thank you for always being my biggest cheerleader. You have been a huge support for me over the years. To my big brother, Philip LeMay, thank you for your encouragement throughout this journey.

Last, many thanks to my advisor, Dr. Jim Robins for your patience and encouragement with me during this process. The many revisions made me a better writer and challenged my thinking. Thank you to Dr. Harold Frye and Dr. Li Chen-Bouck for your assistance and support on the completion of this dissertation. A special acknowledgement to two mentors, Mrs. Alicia Ketchum and Dr. Kenny Rodrequez, for believing in me by providing many opportunities to grow and learn as an educator and person.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Table of Contents	v
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Background	2
Statement of the Problem	4
Purpose of the Study	5
Significance of the Study	6
Delimitations	6
Assumptions	6
Research Questions	7
Definition of Terms	7
Organization of the Study	9
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature	10
Phonics Instruction	12
Whole Language	15
Computer Based Reading Instruction	17
Balanced Literacy	19
Readers Workshop	20
Reading in the Content Area	22
Middle School Reading Instruction	24

National Initiatives.....	32
A Nation at Risk.....	33
No Child Left Behind.....	34
Every Child Succeeds Act.....	35
Role of Leadership in Student Achievement.....	35
Summary.....	40
Chapter 3: Methods.....	41
Research Design.....	41
Selection of Participants.....	41
Measurement.....	42
Data Collection Procedures.....	46
Data Analysis and Hypothesis Testing.....	47
Limitations.....	48
Summary.....	48
Chapter 4: Results.....	49
Descriptive Analysis.....	49
Hypothesis Testing.....	49
Summary.....	51
Chapter 5: Interpretation and Recommendations	52
Study Summary.....	52
Overview of the Problem	52
Purpose Statement and Research Questions	53
Review of the Methodology.....	53

Major Findings.....	54
Findings Related to the Literature.....	54
Conclusions.....	55
Implications for Action	56
Recommendations for Future Research	57
Concluding Remarks.....	58
References	59
Appendices.....	75
Appendix A. Proposal for Research to Baker University	76
Appendix B. IRB Letter of Approval.....	80
Appendix C: Research Approval Document.....	83

Chapter 1

Introduction

Alvermann (2001) states that despite the work of teachers, reading specialists, curriculum directors, and principals in the secondary schools, adolescent's literacy skills are not keeping pace with the demands of the information age. The demands of this informational age are changing rapidly and show no signs of slowing down. As educators, it is our responsibility to prepare students for this changing world and to equip them with the reading skills needed for them to succeed. As students' progress to the secondary level, formal reading instruction typically decreases at the middle and high school from the elementary level (National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, 2008). This would appear to be a mistake as these students need additional reading instruction to make the transition to either the work world or to higher education. Secondary educators have grappled with how to best equip these students for success in the world ahead of them.

Literacy has been defined as the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, compute, and communicate using visual, audible, and digital materials across disciplines and in any context (International Literacy Association, 2018). Adolescent literacy is varied and builds upon the skills acquired in the elementary grades (International Literacy Association, 2018). To be truly literate, adolescents must be successful at decoding, comprehending complex texts, and should be able to learn from the content matter of the text (National Federation of Teachers, 2007).

Adolescent literacy involves a complicated process. Literacy is more than a set of numbers on a standardized assessment. Literacy involves reading in content areas where the information is presented using various text features (National Center for Education Evaluation

and Regional Assistance, 2008). There is a growing concern that middle and high school students are not able to read, write, speak, or listen to the degree set by national reform movements. (Plaut, 2009). Students should be able to attend schools where the building administrators and teachers are committed to modeling what a literate reader looks like and to teaching the effective instructional strategies needed for secondary students to be successful in not only a reading course, but in any content area (Plaut, 2009).

As students' progress through the grade levels, reading instruction becomes less and less a part of students' learning and thinking. (Plaut, 2009). Middle school teachers play a crucial role in developing students who think deeply about the content they are reading (Plaut, 2009). For students to be literate, teachers must provide them tools they can use to deconstruct, reformulate, examine, critique, retain, and claim ideas (National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, 2008). Many middle school teachers argue that they are not reading teachers. Often, the teaching of reading takes place only at the elementary level (Plaut, 2009), but as Sterl Artley (cited in RAND, 2002, p. 6) stated: "Every teacher is a teacher of reading."

Background

District A is an urban school district located in the south Kansas City, Missouri metropolitan area. The district has an enrollment of 4,282 students with a breakdown of 52.4% black, 20.30% white, 19.6% Hispanic, and 6.5% multi-race. According to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Missouri Elementary and Secondary Education, 2017), the district has four elementary schools, one middle school encompassing grades 6-8, one K-8 school, and one high school. District-wide the percentage of students who qualify for free and reduced lunch is 77.8%. The district percentage of 6th grade students scoring

proficient or advanced on the MAP ELA assessment in 2015 were 46.4%, in 2016 were 51.4%, and in 2017 were 51.4%.

School A is a middle school of grades 6-8 with a student enrollment of 610 with 210 students in 6th grade, 189 in 7th grade, and 211 in 8th grade. The demographic breakdown is 60.4% black, 16.6% Hispanic, and 16.4% white. The school's percentage of students who qualify for free or reduced lunch is 74.0%. The student attendance rate for the 2017 school year was 86.0%. The school's overall 2017 English Language Arts MAP Proficient and Advanced student results were 52.3%. The percentage of 6th graders scoring proficient or advanced on the MAP ELA assessment in 2015 were 45.5%, in 2016 were 51.4%, and in 2017 53.8% (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2017).

School B is a K-8 school with the student enrollment of 363 with 132 students in 6th grade, 111 in 7th grade, and 120 in 8th grade. The demographic breakdown is 39.4% black, 28.4% Hispanic, and 24.8% white. The school's percentage of students who qualify for free or reduced lunch was 81.5%. The student attendance rate was 83.7%. The school's overall 2017 English Language Arts MAP Proficient and Advanced student results were 44.7%. The percentage of 6th graders scoring proficient or advanced on the MAP ELA assessment in 2015 were 43.8%, in 2016 were 45.5%, and in 2017 were 46.6% (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2017).

The Missouri Assessment Program assesses students' progress toward mastery of the Show-Me Standards, which are the educational standards in Missouri. The Grade-Level Assessment is a yearly standards-based online test that measures specific skills defined for each grade by the state of Missouri. For the past two years, the English Language Arts assessment has been changed to accommodate the change in the state standards.

The English Language Arts assessment is administered to all students in grades 3-8 with only a few groups of students exempt from certain portions of the assessment. Students whose Individual Education Plan (IEP) team have determined that the MAP – Alternative assessment is the appropriate test do not take the Grade-Level assessment. The MAP-A is administered to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who meet the grade level and eligibility criteria that are determined by the student's IEP team using the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) eligibility criteria. (DESE) English Language Learners (ELL) who have been in the United States 12 cumulative months or fewer at the time of the administration may be exempted from taking the English Language Arts assessment.

The district middle school students have demonstrated inconsistent growth on the Missouri English Language Arts (ELA) Grade-Level Assessment. The middle school students consistently score either below or at 50% for advanced and proficient achievement levels (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2017). The assessment results show the district's students' reading skills are comparable.

District A has reviewed two methods of reading instruction at the middle school. One method used in the district has been that each regular classroom teacher teaches one 45-minute period of reading to 6th grade students. The second method utilized has been employing a reading specialist to teach one 45-minute period of reading to 6th grade students.

Statement of the Problem

District A's historical 6th grade MAP English Language Arts data indicates that between 2006-2017 the student performance has ranged from a low of 20.3% proficient or advanced to a high of 49.4% proficient or advanced (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2018).

The teachers who taught the reading minimum course of study may or may not have been a reading specialist or have certification in English language arts. The minimum course of study was the district's attempt to provide a clear delineation of the curriculum that was aligned to the Missouri Learning Standards between what was taught in the English Language Arts classroom and what was taught in the reading curriculum. In the district every core content teacher taught one 45-minute period of reading. The students were heterogeneously grouped so there was not a delineation of students who needed more reading support based off their MAP English Language Arts data from the previous year or any other assessments (District A).

A problem may exist when teachers who are not certified reading specialists may or may not have received the appropriate training to teach reading. It is possible that without the proper training or ongoing professional development, a core content teacher may not be able to determine the skill gaps in the learning progression students have. After examining the reading achievement level of the sixth-grade students, the study attempted to examine whether a teacher who had training and completed course work to be reading specialist had an impact on higher student reading achievement levels than a teacher who did not receive the training and course work for a reading specialist.

Purpose of the Study

A primary purpose of this study was to examine the difference of 6th grade students' reading achievement after being taught by a reading specialist compared to being taught by a regular classroom teacher based on two assessments. More specifically, the first assessment to be used was the required Missouri state English Language Arts assessment and the second assessment to be used was the Scholastic Reading Inventory.

Significance of the Study

District A's historical data indicate that students are entering the middle schools with low reading skills and the achievement gap was not closing. The significance of the study was to examine if a student's reading achievement level was higher when being taught by a teacher with a reading specialist license or a teacher without the specialist license.

Delimitations

Delimitations are self-imposed boundaries set by the researcher on the purpose and scope of the study (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). This study had the following delimitations.

1. The study was limited to a small urban school district in the South Kansas City Metropolitan Area.
2. The study is limited to sixth grade students from the two middle schools.
3. The measurement was limited to the reading scores from the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) and Scholastic Reading Inventory Lexile Level (SRI).

Assumptions

Lunenburg and Irby (2008) state assumptions are the "postulates, premises, and propositions that are accepted as operational for the purpose of the research" (p. 135). The following underlying assumptions were made about this study.

1. The 6th grade reading specialist taught the required district curriculum.
2. The 6th grade regular classroom teacher taught the required district curriculum.
3. Sampled 6th graders were focused on doing their best on the Missouri English Language Arts assessment and the Scholastic Reading Inventory.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study, which examined the impact of reading instruction by two different methods. The first method was instruction by a certified reading specialist and the second method was reading instruction taught by a general classroom teacher.

RQ1. Is there a difference in reading achievement for District A sixth graders who were taught by a reading specialist and sixth graders who were taught by a regular classroom teacher based on the MAP grade level English Language Arts assessment?

RQ2. Is there a difference in reading achievement for District A sixth graders who were taught by a reading specialist and sixth graders who were taught by a regular classroom based on the Scholastic Reading Inventory assessment?

Definition of Terms

Academic Literacy. The reading proficiency required to construct meaning of content-area texts and literature encountered in school (Torgeson, J. K., Houston, D. D., Risman, L. M., Decker, S. M., Roberts, G., Vaughn, S., ...Lasaux, N., 2007).

Balanced Literacy. Balanced literacy is a “philosophical orientation that assumes that reading and writing achievement are developed through instruction and support in multiple environments using various approaches that differ by level of teacher support and child control” (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Whole Language. Whole Language is a comprehensive reading and writing program for all children, from prereaders to students throughout their school years (Daniels, H., Zemelman, S., & Bizar, M., 1999).

Whole Class Instruction. Whole class instruction incorporates the instructional concepts of interactive read aloud, phonics, spelling, and language instruction. The instructional goals consist of the students building a community of learners through a collection of shared texts at the appropriate reading level, and develop the ability to talk about the text (Fountas and Pinnell, 1996).

Independent Reading. Independent reading provides for differentiated reading instruction by using a wide variety of text for student choice, allows for teaching of all aspects of reading individually, and students can be assessed in reading fluency, accuracy, and comprehension (Fountas and Pinnell, 1996).

Phonics. Phonics is the ability to understand that there is a relationship between the sounds of spoken language, and the symbols and spellings that represent those sounds (Bronfreund, 2012).

Fluency. Fluency is the ability to read with speed, accuracy, and proper expression (Bronfreund, 2012).

Phonemic Awareness. Phonemic awareness is the ability to focus on and manipulate individual sounds in spoken words (Bronfreund, 2012).

Lexile Framework. The Lexile Framework for Reading is a scientific approach to measuring reading ability and text complexity of reading material. According to MetaMetrics (2009), “the Lexile scale ranges with ranges from below 0L for beginning readers and beginning texts to above 1700L for advanced readers and texts” (p.1).

Reading Comprehension. Reading comprehension is the ability to understand the content of a text (Bronfreund, 2012).

Guided Reading. Teaching students in small groups based on similar reading

behaviors at a particular time. The groupings are flexible and students may enter or exit the group depending on the text difficulty (Fountas, 1999).

Struggling Reader. A struggling reader is a middle or secondary school student who reads two or more years behind grade level (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007).

Organization of the Study

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 includes the introduction, background, and statement of the problem. Additionally, the significance of the study is described along with the purpose statement, delimitations and assumptions underlying the study. The chapter concludes with a listing of the research questions that guided the study, and definitions of terms. Chapter 2 provides the reader with a review of the literature related to school reform efforts in reading instruction, national initiatives, and the role of building and district leadership in student achievement. Chapter 3 describes the methodology used, including the research design, population, data collection and analyses, and limitations. Chapter 4 shows the results of the analysis of the data. Chapter 5 provides a summary of the study related to the literature, interpretation of the results of the data analysis, a statement of conclusions drawn, and recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Throughout history, a controversy has existed regarding what it means to read. Some learning theorists believed that readers recognized the marks and symbols and created meaning from that material. Other scholars believed that reading was much more complex. Wilson (1970) believed that reading was much more than this and required the reader to have an understanding of the meaning of words and the ability to make sense of those words.

The McGuffey reader was one of the first commonly utilized books for the instruction of reading. Written by William and Alexander McGuffey, the McGuffey reader was very similar to other reading instruction books during that time period. The purpose of most of these books was to teach morals and values. These books were commonly designed to appeal to the adventurers heading to the New West portion of the United States (Nietz, 1964).

The foundational theory of reading as an act of creating began with researchers who believed that reading comprehension should not be equal to reading speed or to repetition of previous reading material (Tierney, 1990). One of these researchers was Edward Thorndike. Thorndike's (1917) research indicated reading was a process that included many elements. These elements include the organization and connotation of words in a sentence. His philosophy emphasized that reading was not mechanical or a passive task, but was an active task of judging and making connections to the print (Thorndike, 1917).

The linguistic approach to reading began in the 1920s with the work of Leonard Bloomfield (Sizemore & Blossom, 1969). Linguistics is the structure of the English language and words are viewed as a code to be broken by analyzing patterns of speech (Criscuolo, 1970). Bloomfield rejected the teaching of phonics, but instead believed children should be taught in

visual discrimination and to discriminate between letters and word shapes (Sizemore & Blossom, 1969).

There has been debate over the differences between phonics and linguistics as the terms have been used similarly (Criscuolo, 1970). People who believe in linguistics argue that phonics requires students learn rules in isolation and then apply to understand unknown words. The linguistic approach requires students to use what they have learned about phonetically regular patterns and then apply in a systematic way to comprehend language structures (Criscuolo, 1970).

The whole-word model was introduced by Chall (1967) in the *Great Debate*, which stated that words should be learned through their meaning. Chall's analysis (1967) of over twenty basal reading programs on the effectiveness of phonics and whole-word approaches led her to conclude that teaching phonics in a systematic way provided better word recognition, spelling, vocabulary and comprehension. According to Hempenstall (2013), Chall's analysis created controversy then and continues today.

The whole-word model expanded to include the whole-sentence and then the whole-story became a unit of learning (Hempenstall, 2013). Students listened to the sentence being read and then the focus was on the words in the sentence. The whole-story approach had the teacher read the story before there was any discussion about words or sentences. This model was thought to be more interesting for the student and thus increase learning (Hempenstall, 2013).

The first challenge to the whole word approach came from Rudolph Flesch in the 1950s. He believed it was a disservice to the children because he stated that it was "treating children like as if they were dogs" (Flesch, 1955, p. 126). Flesch called for a return to the teaching of phonics

and his recommendation had an important impact on parents and communities to have a voice in educational decisions (Hempenstall, 2013).

Schema theory refers to the method in which readers use their prior knowledge to comprehend and learn new information from text. The theory assumes the text provides a map for readers to determine how they will construct meaning from their own knowledge. This knowledge was referred to as the reader's background knowledge (prior knowledge) (An, 2013).

In the 1980s, the schema theory was known as the integral schema teaching model (An, 2013). The model assumed there was a positive interaction between the reader and writer. This teaching model tended to be helpful in teaching students' reading skills in isolation and to acquire general information (An, 2013).

Over the course of the past 50 years, there has been a debate on the best approach to teach reading. From this debate, two approaches to reading have emerged as the most widely used: a) skills-based instruction, which focuses on the use of phonics and b) meaning-based instruction, which focuses on comprehension and enrichment (Johnson, 1999). Researchers have supported that successful reading instruction should include phonics and phonemic awareness, with stimulating reading and writing experiences (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

Phonics Instruction

Phonics instruction has been one of the most debated topics in education (International Literacy Association, 2018). Phonics is the relationship between sounds and letters and is an important element of reading instruction in the primary grades. The instruction helps students to understand the relationship between letters, patterns of letters and sounds (International Literacy Association, 2018).

The International Literacy Association (2019) has stated that phonics instruction can be helpful for all students, harmful for none, and crucial for some. There is an ongoing debate regarding the effectiveness of phonics instruction. According to the ILA (2019), the problem is that the translation between research to instructional practice differs in the implementation. For example, the instructional practices are sometimes ineffective or unbalanced and the instructional materials are not designed to meet the needs of the students or teachers (International Literacy Association, 2019).

Phonics instruction consists of phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. These components are necessary for the learner to read process (Ivey & Baker, 2004). The National Reading Panel's (2000) research showed that phonemic awareness is a good predictor of success for younger readers. The Panel's (2000) report indicated phonics instruction and training had a significant benefit for young students, with less benefits for older students.

There is a continual debate about how readers are utilizing phonics. Phonics can be used to assist the reader to obtain a pronunciation for a written word that gets the reader closer to the meaning of the word (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott & Wilkerson, 1985). The goal of phonics is to develop the students' ability to read connected text independently (International Literacy Association, 2019).

There are several methods for teaching phonics and most use letter-sound relationships and word patterns (International Literacy Association, 2018). The International Literacy Association (2018) describes the English writing system with three layers. These layers are described below.

- The alphabetic layer, in which the letter-sound correspondences are learned.

- The pattern layer, where students examine consonant – vowel patterns (e.g., CVCe/cake, CVVC/nail, CVV/say).
- The meaning and morphological layer, where students learn new vocabulary and make generalizations about meaning structures of affixes (e.g., prefixes, suffixes) and root words (International Literacy Association, 2018, p. 4).

Students who learn the first two layers for single-syllable words have the foundation of phonics. This foundation is usually learned by the third grade for most students (International Literacy Association, 2018). Third grade is an important grade to ensure students are reading on grade level (National Reading Panel, 2000). Students who fail to learn to read on grade level by the end of third grade tend to continue to struggle and typically drop out of high school (Hernandez, 2011).

Although there are various ways of teaching phonics, much of the research encourages instruction that is explicit and systematic (International Reading Association, 2019). Explicit means that the first introduction of letter-sound relationship is directly stated to the students. Students are told that a letter makes a distinctive sound (International Reading Association, 2019). Systematic means that students follow a linear journey from easy to complex skills, slowly being introduced to new skills. The systematic instruction incorporates review and repetition cycle to achieve mastery and goes from the known to new in a way that makes the learning more obvious and connected (International Reading Association, 2019).

Since the National Reading Panel report (2000), phonemic awareness and phonics instruction has been applied across all grade levels without investigating the evidence to see if the instruction is effective for older students. According to Ivey and Baker (2004), there is no evidence that supports phonemic awareness training or phonics instruction helps older struggling

students become better readers. The National Reading Panel's (2005) research showed phonics instruction does not significantly improve the reading performance of struggling readers beyond 1st grade and it does not improve reading comprehension skills for the older students.

The linguistic approach of teaching reading does not go without criticism. According to Sizemore and Blossom (1969), there are pedagogical points that linguists have ignored when talking about reading. Sizemore and Blossom (1969) state that linguistics ignore typography, illustrations, and storyline and characters. According to the researchers, linguists who are interested in reading presume teachers have not learned from their experiences (Sizemore & Blossom, 1969).

Whole Language

The Whole Language approach is a philosophy of teaching and learning that is not a recent innovation. Beginning in the 1970s, Whole Language was accepted by teachers who rejected the traditional basal approach to teaching reading. The pedagogy of Whole Language has been called by different names, such as literature based instruction (Daniels, Zemelman, & Bizar, 1999). Whole Language offers a holistic comprehensive approach to teaching reading and writing for all students. This approach teaches reading more holistic and is not limited to the teaching of specific grammar and phonic skills in isolation (Daniels, Zemelman, & Bizar, 1999).

Educators utilizing the Whole Language approach incorporate many key strategies in their instruction. These include the following (Daniels, Zemelman, & Bizar, 1999, pgs. 32-33).

- Using classic children's literature
- Reading aloud daily
- Structuring the student's independent reading and writing
- Using broad themes and utilizing literacy activities throughout

- Stressing higher order thinking skills
- Regular conferences between teacher and student to discuss reading, and writing skills
- Teaching writing as a staged process
- Inviting early writing with developmental inventive spelling
- Grammar instruction and correctiveness based on the student's need
- Teacher modeling adult literacy.

The one defining characteristic of whole language classrooms is a commitment to independent reading, which is delivered through the structures a reading workshop model, literature circle, and book clubs. A student's accountability comes from the use of reading logs, journal, and teacher-student conferences (Daniels, Zemelman, & Bizar, 1999). Whole language utilizes the students' authentic writing as a means to incorporate mini-lessons that are specific for individual students. Even though there are multiple strategies in the whole language classroom, there is research to back the effectiveness of the philosophical approach at different grade levels. In 1968, Fader documented significant gains in reading achievement for adolescent students in a literature-based instructional program that stressed independent reading instead of teacher directed instruction.

There are critics who contend that every part of whole language can be countered by research (Moats, 2000). According to Pressley (2003), whole language instruction is obsolete and was never well-versed about children and their intellectual development. Moats (2000) states that whole language beliefs about how students learn to read are mistaken in theory and ineffective in practice.

The practices of whole language are contradicted. Critics of whole language argue that learning to read is not natural and a large number of students fail to read with fluency, accuracy,

and comprehension (Liberman, 1999). According to Liberman (1999), an alphabetic writing system is not what humans are biologically specialized to do. Spoken language is hard-wired in the brain, but written language must be taught to students. Students who struggle with written language are typically proficient in the spoken language (Moats, 2000).

Critics argue the proponents of whole language reject reliable and viable measures of achievement (Moats, 2000). In 1994, Steven Stahl and P.D. Miller updated their analysis from 1989 study, they reported twenty of the forty-five studies did not use any form of standardized measure of reading achievement (as cited in Moats, 2000). Defenders of whole language reject traditional achievement tests as being unauthentic and replaced with rubrics of motivation, enjoyment, or self-esteem (Moats, 2000).

Computer Based Reading Instruction

In 1984 after two years working with International Business Machines (IBM) Dr. John H. Martin, a retired educator, developed the Writing to Read program. Martin developed the program to provide a solution for the problem of illiteracy and help improve the quality of education students receive (Brandt, 1981). The computer-based instructional system was created specifically for developing writing and reading skills of kindergarten and first grade students.

Writing to Read was designed as a classroom lab experience. The room was set-up with centers for the students to rotate to three of the five activities each day in an hour block. The centers consisted of children wearing headphones to work on phonics by listening to words and repeating a sound or word; listening to a story on tape; manipulating letter shapes to make words; working in workbooks; typing letters words or sentences on computers and a session working with the teacher (Freyd & Lytle, 1990).

One program that has come under scrutiny to improve adolescent literacy is READ 180. The company claims the program meets the needs of students who read below grade level. READ 180 is marketed as an intensive reading intervention program that helps teachers with struggling readers (Whitford, 2012). The program addresses the need through adaptive instructional software, through high interest literature and direct instruction in reading, writing, and vocabulary skills (Skwara, 2016).

The program consists of whole group instruction where the teacher begins the class with instruction in reading skills and strategies, academic vocabulary, writing and grammar to the whole class. After the whole group instruction, the students rotate through three stations. The stations include time at a computer working on the READ 180 software that is individualized for each student; small group instruction with the teacher; and a station where students are reading text (READ 180, 2014).

According to Nancie Atwell (1998), READ 180 methodology reinforces a dislike towards reading for students. The methodology includes students completing two worksheets for each chosen text they read. Whitford (2011) states the instructional strategy is not necessary poor, but the procedure students must do is repetitive and it is a struggle for them to care about what is written or engage in text-to-self activity. In one of the rotations when students have completed reading the text, the student must take an electronic comprehension test and the assessment is scored automatically. Company literature states the assessments make students accountable (Whitford, 2011).

Atwell (1998) states the program perpetuates what the students think about reading.

- Reading is performance for an audience of one: the teacher and program.
- Reading requires memorization and mastery of information.

- Reading is always followed by a test.
- Reading is a solitary activity the reader performs as an individual.
- There is another kind of reading, an enjoyable, secret, satisfying kind you can do on your free time or outside school.
- You can fail English [a READ 180 quiz] yet still succeed at and love the other kind of reading. (p. 28)

Balanced Literacy

Balanced Literacy is a philosophical approach to teaching that assumes reading, writing, listening, and speaking are developed through instruction and the support of teachers through the use of using a variety of strategies (Frey, Lee, Tollefson, Pass & Massengill, 2005). The program of balanced literacy originated in California in 1996 to address low reading scores on a national assessment (California Department of Education, 1996). Since the development of the program there has been debate as to which elements of reading and writing should be balanced to effect student literacy (Frey et al., 2005).

According to Fountas and Pinnell (1996), a balanced literacy program should include a structured classroom plan and use read alouds, guided reading, shared reading, independent reading and writing. Snow, Burns and Griffin (1998) argue that a successful literacy program should have a combination of teacher-directed instruction and student-centered activities. In balanced literacy programs teachers must emphasize reading, writing and literature by providing students with extended time for reading every day; create a positive learning environment where expectations are set high for all students; and writing is incorporated across all content areas (Pressley & Allington, 1998).

According to Shanahan (2008), the idea of balanced literacy was an agreement

between two groups in reading education. One group of educators wanted lots of explicit teaching in phonological awareness, phonics, oral reading fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, writing, and spelling. The other group wanted students to be free to have an experience with literacy with little intervention from the teacher so they can enjoy themselves (Shanahan, 2008).

Balanced literacy makes the two positions seem equal (Shanahan, 2008). Educators who support balanced literacy are afraid explicit teaching of skills will be on the lowest levels rather focusing on the whole concept of language development and the teaching of logic and reasoning. According to Shanahan (2008, p.1), “students benefit from explicit instruction in a range of skills in differentiating language sounds to matching sounds with letters to making a text sound like oral language.”

Readers Workshop

The Reading Workshop model provided a framework for teachers to meet the reading needs of all students (Towle, 2000). In the Readers Workshop model, students spend their time reading and writing to create meaning. The Reading Workshop model incorporates five components of instruction.

The first component of the workshop model is teacher commitment and passion for literature. Teachers must provide students motivation and desire to participate in reading. Within the Reading Workshop model, the teacher may share a lesson around a theme. The teacher might share excerpts of various books around a particular genre. The teachers modeling the desired behavior of the student is imperative as this sets the example for the student (Towle, 2000).

The second component of the Readers Workshop model is the use of focused lessons. These are lessons that address a specific topic and are tailored to the whole class or small group

of students. Teachers may give students procedures, discuss the elements of literature and often teach skills and strategies (Towle, 2000).

A third component is the state of the class conference in which the teacher determines what each student will be doing for the rest of the workshop time. Students may be assigned to meet in small groups or pairs to discuss a book, work on book responses, or to read silently or conference with the teacher (Towle, 2000). At times, the teacher and students may meet for direct instruction.

An additional component allows for independent reading time. During this time student self-selects their reading material and respond to the text. The heart of the reading model is independent reading and responding. Students may respond by writing in journals, projects and reading conferences (Towle, 2000).

The final component gives students the opportunity to share what they have read and to report on their progress. Students may report on projects or participate in a discussion on a specific activity. The sharing promotes the excitement of reading and creates the community of readers and learners (Towle, 2000).

For the workshop model to be successful, two things must occur. First, teachers must know student's independent reading levels. Teachers can quickly assess reading level by using running records to measure student's fluency and miscues. Secondly, books must be categorized in the classroom libraries by grouping, reading level or genre. Students must be able to identify easily if the book is the right one for them (Towle, 2000). For a reading program to be successful students must have access to books that provide interest and readability (Towle, 2000).

The workshop approach is not based on ability grouping but instead provides an organization model to focus on the strengths and needs of the individual student (Towle, 2000). An important aspect of this approach is the ongoing assessment of each student's strengths and needs. Student responses demonstrate if they have made the personal connections with the text. (Towle, 2000).

Reader's Workshop model has not gone unscathed from critics. Shanahan (2017) states that if the purpose of the model is to teach students to be powerful readers, then it is lacking because the practice is for mini-lessons to be taught which limits teaching. In order for the teacher to push students to a deeper understanding of the text, the teachers would need to have read each text students are selecting and have a deep understanding of it as well.

Another problem with the model is student conferencing. The conference will more than likely be asking questions to see if students are reading the text at least superficially (Shanahan, 2017). In order to meet with individual students, the teacher is not going to be able to engage students in a deep understanding into the text's meaning and craft (Shanahan, 2017).

Reading in the Content Area

Reading in the content areas at the secondary level originated in the 1930s (Wadleigh, 1982). Due to declining student academic performance, a correlation was made between a student's reading ability and the lack of reading instruction. Therefore, secondary reading instruction was more remedial.

There is more to reading than the basics and it becomes more apparent as students enter their journey of academic content areas (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007). Middle school students must learn that in different content areas they will be required to read skeptically, or to question the author's assumptions, or to analyze the writer's style. The goal of content area instruction is

to introduce students to the ways experts in the academic disciplines look at the world (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007). Heller and Greenleaf (2007) state reading in the content area requires students to spend more time reading and writing in the various content areas.

For students to be prepared for college, career, and life, they must have a solid foundation in literacy and must learn advanced literacy skills for the content areas, especially history, English, math, and science (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007). Teaching reading in the content area should be the cornerstone of a district's initiative to provide students the high quality schools they deserve (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007). Literacy instruction should provide help for students reading below grade level and for students who lack necessary skills entering the middle school grades. Without direct instruction students will continue to be below grade level and never master the college and career skills necessary for life (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007).

Reading advocates believe that middle school is not too late for struggling readers to be helped (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007). At the middle school level, students start to realize that there is more to reading than the basics. At the middle level, students are required to read more complex texts in their academic areas. (Heller and Greenleaf, 2007). The reading assignments at the middle school level are longer, varied in style, purpose and vocabulary.

Several researchers have suggested that the teaching of basic reading comprehension skills has value and that there are routines students can employ to help them comprehend different kinds of text (Kamil, 2003; RAND Reading Group Study, 2002). The first of these routines is pre-reading activities, such as reviewing the vocabulary, making predictions about the text, and identifying text features, such as the table of contents and headings (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007). Secondly, strategies may be used while reading. These would include drawing non-linguistic representations, asking questions about the text, or making notations on

unfamiliar vocabulary word, concepts, ideas (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007). Finally, students can use post reading strategies like summarizing the text, restating the main idea or sharing notes with other students (Heller et al., 2007).

The major argument against reading in the content area is that the concept is not focused on imparting reading and study skills that may help students to better understand and remember what they read. Shanahan & Shanahan (2012) state a better way would be to aim at what is taught rather than how we teach. For example, the researchers (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012) suggest that disciplinary literacy would be a more effective way having students engaged with the content reading. This is accomplished by the students not only learning the content field, but also how reading and writing are used in a particular field (mathematics, science, and history).

Middle School Reading Instruction

Reading is key for students to be proficient in all academic areas. While oral language is what humans do naturally, reading must be taught. Typically, reading instruction ends in the elementary schools, but reading development is incomplete at that level and so reading instruction at the middle school is rare (Ivey & Broadus, 2002; Daggett & Hasselbring, 2007).

Adolescent literacy is a critical problem (Daggett & Hasselbring, 2007). The reading level of an adolescent is a large factor in determining success in high school and life. Adolescents who are not efficient in reading are unlikely to engage in learning and generally drop out of high school (Daggett & Hasselberg, 2007). According to the Alliance for Excellent Education (2014), students reading below grade level are twice as likely to drop out of high school compared to the students who are reading at or above the proficient reading level.

The problem not only lies with the students, but with middle school teachers. Many teachers are reluctant to teach reading because of two reasons. First, they do not feel they have

adequate training to teach reading and secondly, they also consider teaching reading is someone else's responsibility (Ivey & Broaddus, 2000; Bornfreund, 2012). Typically, secondary teachers do not have the proper training in their degree programs to develop student's advanced literacy skills (Bornfreund, 2012).

In many states, secondary teachers are required to take at most only one course related to literacy or teaching reading in their university coursework (Farrell & Cirrincione, 1986). Farrell and Cirrincione's (1986) research shows the time between when a preservice teacher learns a reading strategy to the time of implementation is about a year. The implementation of a strategy after a year has lapsed since introduced in a preservice course was not going to happen (Farrell and Crinnione, 1986). Content areas teachers may have been trained to use reading strategies in their university level coursework, but research indicates they are less likely to incorporate those strategies in their daily instruction (Schumm, Vaughn, & Saumell, 1992).

There are many long held beliefs and attitudes regarding the teaching of reading at the secondary level. Many content area teachers do not believe literacy strategies should be a part of their teaching practices. They think it does not apply to the discipline and would take away time from the content. (Stewart & O'Brien, 1989). Some pre-service educators haven't experienced secondary teachers using the strategies in their own schooling because it is not a predominant practice in secondary schools (Steward & O'Brien, 1989).

According to Gibbs (2009), secondary teachers find themselves protecting students because of their lack of reading skills and comprehension of the text. In today's atmosphere of college and career readiness, the youth are required to have more sophisticated reading skills than previous generations (Kamil, Borman, Dole, Kral, Salinger, & Torgeson, 2008). When

students reach middle school, many have the mechanics of reading, but lack the tenacity to read and interpret complex text (Vacca, 2002).

Middle school teachers consider themselves first to be teachers of content areas, such as science, history and mathematics. When teachers are asked to integrate reading into their instruction they often state “Why doesn’t the reading teacher do it?” (Jacobs, 2002, p.58). Content area teachers need to recognize reading as a means of making meaning of the reading process for students so they can understand the content (Jacobs, 2002).

Despite the quantity and quality of research-based knowledge on reading comprehension, student’s reading achievement will not improve unless teachers use that knowledge to change their classroom practices (Rand, 2002). The teaching of reading strategies along in the core content areas, such as science and history, reinforces students’ comprehension skills (RAND, 2002).

The importance of primary reading instruction in first through third grades, although very important, should only be the first step. Reading between primary and secondary levels is different because the primary is learning to read and secondary is focused on using reading to learn (Chall, 1983). The foundational skills of fluency and word recognition are important, but they do not guarantee effective comprehension (RAND, 2002). Some third graders will become proficient readers on their own, while others will need well-designed instruction in comprehension to make progress (RAND Report, 2002).

The task of teaching young children to read is an expectation for elementary teachers, especially the teacher in grades kindergarten through third grade, but the instructional methods vary as well as does the expertise of the teachers (Durrance, 2017). After examining a large body of research, the National Reading Panel (2000) published a report on the best scientifically

based instructional practices on the different approaches to teaching reading. The report stated that all students need instruction in the five major components of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (National Reading Panel, 2000).

As students enter middle and high school, the expectation from teachers is that students should be able to read and comprehend the text (Boogart, 2013). Secondary teachers should know and understand the major areas of reading so that they are able to discuss with colleagues how to assist a student with reading fluency or help a student with complex, multi-syllable words in the textbook (Boogart, 2013). Teachers would be empowered with the knowledge of different reading areas with which students struggle and be able to provide interventions to help students not fall further behind (Boogart, 2013).

Since the start of the middle school movement in the mid-1960s, middle school advocates have called for a different learning experience for young adolescents (DeCicco, Cook, & Faulkner, 2016). The middle school is really not a part of either the elementary or high school level; therefore, the problem with middle school reading instruction is a combination of the preparedness of the teachers, the type of instructional model implemented, and what support is being offered by administrators. A common misunderstanding is that middle school students have already learned all the necessary reading skills by the time they enter middle school (Rycik & Irvin, 2005). Rycik and Irvin (2005) contend that middle school students need to continue to learn the basic reading skills, including reading comprehension, fluency, synthesizing, making inferences and predictions, using inflection, summarizing and understanding vocabulary. Developing strong middle school readers requires time, access, emphasis on skilled reading instruction and a supportive administration (Middle School Reading Network, 2009).

A middle school reading program should reflect the variety of text source available to today's students. In addition to prose literacy, students need document literacy, technological literacy, and quantitative literacy (Daggett & Hasselbring, 2014). When students have document literacy, they have the ability to use information in various forms, such as personal information from government issued documents, newspapers, and legal documents to online research authenticity (Daggett & Hasselbring, 2014). Technological literacy refers to the ability to comprehend, and use information from Web pages, multi-dimensional, multimedia, links, and animation that many times replaces sequential print documents (Daggett & Hasselbring, 2014). Students who have quantitative literacy have the skills necessary to use information that is numerical, diagrammed or statistical. An example of this type of literacy would be the ability to read and complete an order form. Middle school teachers have an opportunity to provide students with literacy instruction to ensure they have the skills necessary to read each type of text.

According to Torgenson et al. (2007), there are three goals for improving academic literacy in adolescents. First, the students' level of reading must increase to help them be successful for the higher levels of text complexity in postsecondary education and in their career. Second, for students who are reading on grade level at the end of 3rd grade, teachers must continue to monitor their progress so they are prepared for the demands in middle and high schools. Finally, teachers need to work with students who are reading below specific grade level expectations to ensure students acquire the deficient skills necessary. These students must make more than one year's growth to close the gap (Torgenson et al, 2007).

After third grade, six essential skills are necessary for students to continue to improve and grow from 4th-12th grades to maintain the minimum grade level reading skills. Students who

are reading below grade level will need to receive high quality instruction to close the achievement gap (Torgenson et al., 2007). The essential areas in reading growth are reading fluency, vocabulary knowledge, content knowledge, higher-reasoning, and thinking skills, cognitive strategies specific to reading comprehension, and motivation and engagement (Torgenson et al., 2007). Each area is described below.

Reading fluency does not increase dramatically after sixth grade, but students must continue to increase the number of words they are able to identify at a glance (sight words) to meet the grade level standards and expectations for fluency (Torgenson & Hudson, 2006). Students must increase their repertoire of sight vocabulary to read complex text fluently. Those students who do not maintain high levels of reading practice will fall further behind (Torgenson et al., 2007).

Vocabulary knowledge is vital because the text range a student encounters grows quickly after third grade (Anderson & Nagy, 1992). The ways students can be supported in expanding their vocabulary knowledge are inferring the meaning of words from how they are used in the text and teaching them how to break apart the words (Torgenson et al, 2007). Students expand their vocabulary after third grade by their exposure to the words by reading a variety of text (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998).

As students continue to read more complex text and broaden their understanding in content areas their knowledge base will continue to grow. Content-area teachers provide a substantial impact by helping students gain important knowledge and understanding in the content domains. When their instruction is differentiated for students who are not reading on grade-level, then students are able to to acquire the knowledge and skills in each of the content domains (Torgenson et al., 2007).

Missouri Project Success, led by Mid-Continent Research and Education Laboratory, was an attempt to provide a systematic approach to vocabulary development in 25 of the lowest performing middle and high schools in the state (H. Frye, personal communication, March, 28, 2019). According to the National Reading Panel's *Teaching Children to Read* (2000), vocabulary development plays an imperative role in students learning to read. The project provided a consistent approach to the teaching of vocabulary across disciplines (H. Frye, personal communication, March 28, 2019).

Marzano's 6-Step Process for vocabulary development was utilized in the Missouri Project Success (H. Frye, personal communication, March 28, 2019). The six-step process included the following steps.

1. The teacher provides a description or explanation of the term.
2. Students restate the description or explanation in their own word.
3. Students provide a nonlinguistic representation by constructing a picture of the term.
4. The teacher provides activities for students to engage with the term to add to their knowledge of the term in their vocabulary notebooks.
5. Students are periodically asked to discuss the terms with classmates.
6. Teachers provide students with games to enable them to play with the terms and reinforce their knowledge of the terms.

The teacher needs to engage the students at least six times with the terms for students to have an understanding of the words (Marzano, 2004).

The Kansas Reading Roadmap is a reading initiative of the Kansas Department for Children and Families. It is funded with public and private funds to implement reading programs in 45 low-income schools across Kansas (Reading Roadmap, 2013). The initiative is primarily

for working with public schools to ensure all children are reading on grade level by the second semester of third grade.

Through a partnership with the Kansas Department of Education, the Roadmap is making a priority to train teachers how to teach reading and support students. The initiative goes beyond the traditional school day and extends to after-school programs. The after-school program provides structured reading practice to help students improve their literacy skills.

During the 2017 Arkansas legislative session, the legislators passed Act 1063, which is also known as The Right to Read Act. The act requires educators in grades K-6 to be properly trained in the the knowledge and skills of reading (Arkansas Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2018). The teachers in grades K-6 core content areas of English, Science, Math, Social Studies and teachers in K-12 Special Education must show proficiency in the science of reading by the 2021-22 school year. All other teachers and administrators must show an awareness.

The need for the Right to Read Act became apparent in 2015 when the nationally normed assessment, ACT Aspire, results indicated that less than half of Arkansas' students in grades 3-10 scored ready or above in reading, and only 39 percent of that year's graduating seniors met reading readiness benchmarks on the ACT (Arkansas Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2018). Arkansas ranked in the lower third of states on the NAEP (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015).

The increasing complexity of texts students need to comprehend as they move from elementary to the secondary level will require them to continue to sharpen their skills in making inferences, drawing conclusions, and critical analysis (Pressley, 2002). There is an increasing demand for students to be able to engage in higher critical thinking and respond to text questions

in with a sophisticated answer. This requires teachers to provide the necessary support in the classroom instruction and experiences (Torgenson et al., 2007).

According to the National Reading Panel research (2000), the research shows students who are more proficient in reading use a variety of cognitive strategies to further develop their comprehension of text. The type of strategies would include rereading to solve any confusion, paraphrasing their reading, making connections from the text to prior experiences, annotating the text and visualizing the events in the text (National Reading Panel, 2000). Good readers are constantly monitoring their comprehension to improve understanding or refocus when it breaks down.

Motivation and engagement are contributing factors for the decline in reading by students, who particularly struggle with the beginning stages of reading. The decline has two consequences and both impact the proficiency of adolescent readers. First, students, who are not motivated or engaged, are less likely to read as much as motivated students (Baker & Wigfield, 1995; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). The lack of practice affects necessary skills, such as the fluency, the development of sophisticated vocabulary and content knowledge (Torgenson & Hudson, 2006; Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998; Pressley, 2000). Second, students who are less motivated are less engaged in the text they do read (Guthrie, Wigfield et al., 2004).

National Initiatives

The history of middle level or intermediate education spans over a century, but after the introduction of middle schools in the 1960s there was no position statement that provided guidelines on what middle schools should include for students to be successful (National Middle School Association, 2003). In 1980 the Middle Level Association commissioned a committee to research and submit recommendations for what adolescent education should encompass. The

recommendations were published in 1982 in the paper, *This We Believe* (National Middle School Association, 2003).

The National Middle School Association's (2003) vision for a successful middle school encompassed 14 characteristics with eight addressing the culture of the school and the other six involving the programming offered at the middle school level. The 14 are unique in of themselves, but all must work together to ensure a successful school and thus, a successful student. The middle school student should be taught by educators who value and understand working with this age group and are prepared to do so (National Middle School Association, 2003), but some are not prepared for the instructional challenges of working with students who struggle.

Students who struggle are typically reading below grade level which makes it difficult for middle school teachers. Reading below grade level requires intensive instruction over a significant length of time to make up skill deficiencies (Torgenson, 2004). These students require comprehensive instruction with enough time to practice to improve and master the skills lacking (Torgenson et al., 2007).

A Nation at Risk

In August, 1981, Secretary of Education Terrel Howard Bell created the National Commission on Excellence in Education to study the quality of education in the United States and report the findings to the Nation and his office within 18 months. The commission was created because of a concern about the quality of the schools (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). As a result of the group's findings, the publication of the *A Nation At Risk Report* (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) raised the

level of public concern about reading achievement in the nation to a heightened level (Scott, 2012).

The media reported that America's schools were failing, students were not competitive in comparison with other countries and the education standards were declining (Kamenetz, 2018). Individuals testifying to the National Commission shared, for example, that approximately 23 million American adults were functionally illiterate by simple tests of reading, writing and comprehension. Furthermore, the report stated that the average citizen in 1983 was more literate, and experienced more mathematics, sciences, and literature than the average citizen of the previous generation (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

No Child Left Behind Act

In January, 2002, President George W. Bush signed The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to ensure that all students would receive a quality education and attain proficiency in the core content areas. The legislation required school districts to meet federal guidelines based on the schools' and districts' Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). These requirements were measured by student performance annual grades 3-8 tests in reading and mathematics, and assessments in science in grades 5 and 8. High school students were to be assessed once in reading, mathematics and science (Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2015).

The goal of this legislation was to bring all students to a proficient level on state reading tests by the 2013-14 school year (NCLB, 2002). NCLB made improving children's reading skills central to the education reform. The law required that all teachers in core content areas of reading are "highly qualified" in the subjects they teach by the end of the 2005-2006 school year (NCLB, 2002).

Every Student Succeeds Act

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed by President Barack Obama on December 10, 2015 to replace the NCLB. ESSA maintains some of the same requirements as NCLB in many areas, but allows states to determine accountability, resources, interventions and teacher evaluations. States are still required to assess students in reading or language arts and math annually in grades 3-8 and once in grades 10-12, and in science once in the following grade spans: 3-5, 6-8 and 9-12 (Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2015).

ESSA created a program that is for all students and gave local control for instructional decisions. The program called Literacy Education for All or LEARN, aimed at improving achievement in reading and writing. LEARN authorized the secretary of education to give grants to states for evidence-based literacy instruction in high-need schools (Heititen, 2016).

Role of Leadership in Student Achievement

Research results indicate effective leadership is crucial for schools to be successful and does make a difference (Louis, K.S., Dretzke, B., & Wahlstrom, K., 2010; Bauer & Previts, 2014). When schools have principals that are highly effective there is a positive correlation to higher student achievement (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005). The principal must articulate the purpose and mission of the school as well as define the importance of student achievement and therefore be the instructional leader (Williamson, R., 2011).

The idea of instructional leadership continues to be a topic of discussion and research. Hallinger (2005) states that a clear definition of what instructional leadership means is lacking. The role of the instructional leader requires an understanding of the curriculum and quality instructional strategies, and the ability to give constructive feedback to staff (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005).

In a meta-analysis of research by Leithwood, Seashore-Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004), three core school leadership practices were established. The first core practice was the development of people that entails allowing teachers and other staff to do their jobs effectively and providing support through modeling of the practice. Second, the practice is setting the direction of the organization which means developing the shared goals, monitoring the organizational achievement and ensuring there is ongoing effective communication. Third, the core practice is developing and maintaining the school culture and removing any road blocks that slow the work.

The research of Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom (2004) provides two ways building leaders can be successful in influencing student achievement. The first way is for leaders to impact student growth and progress by the influence they have on teachers or activities in the school. Second, the leader should pay attention to the alignment of the school mission and outcomes, culture, the leadership team participating in decision-making, and relationships with parents and the community.

There is research to support that principals do make a significant impact on student achievement. The research of Leithwood et al. (2004) indicated most leaders help raise student learning through influence on teachers or activities of the school. Hallinger (2005) stated that the impact was more indirect through the fostering of the school climate. Principals who place an importance on activities and strategies aligned to the mission and vision of the school see an upward trend in student academic growth (Hallinger, 2005, Leithwood, 2004). Johnson and Stevens (2006) state there is a significant relationship between school climate and student achievement. This indicates that school climate established by the principal should to be considered as a factor for student achievement (Allen, Grigsby, & Peters, 2005).

Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) state that principal leadership was not important, but the principal has an indirect impact on student achievement. Principals had a high effect on student achievement when they focus their attention on the specific behaviors of teachers (Onorato, 2013). Research results indicated that the impact of the principal was greater when the attention is targeted on building the culture of the school as a whole and thus would have an impact on student learning (Allen, Grigsby & Peters, 2015).

Burn's (1978) research provided an assessment of the power and purpose of leadership and the two types of leadership: transactional and transformational. Most leaders have utilized transactional leadership where the status quo was not expected, but in the school community transformational leadership was not the most prominent (Moolenaar, Daly & Slegers, 2010). Transformational leadership emphasizes the leader's ability to acknowledge the current and potential skills of the employee and offer support to develop those skills (Stewart, 2006).

Transformational leadership focused on the end product, developing the staff to be a cohesive group to reach the goal determined by the principal (Burns, 1978). Some high performing schools have leaders who are transformational and this may add to the belief that it is an effective leadership style (Finnigan & Stewart, 2009). Three broad categories of leadership practices were associated with transformational leadership.

The first practice has been referred to as defining the purpose, visioning strategies and setting the direction (Hallinger & Heck, 1999; Conger & Kanungo, 1998; Leithwood, 1996; Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe & Meyerson, 2005). This practice was critical in leading a group to understand the organization's goals and develop a shared vision (Hallinger & Heck, 2002). By communicating a common mission and providing compelling personal reasons for the

individual to be involved, there has been an increased motivation for each to be committed to the organization's goals.

A second practice of transformational leadership was developing people or efficacy building strategies (Hallinger & Heck, 1999; Conger & Kanungo, 1998; Leithwood, 1996; Davis et al., 2005). A leader's ability to develop people is determined by their ability to know what is required to improve teaching and learning that will raise student achievement (Leithwood, 2004). There are specific leadership practices that engage the people to develop their teaching craft for example, offering intellectual learning, providing individualized support and modeling appropriate instruction.

The last of transformational leadership was termed structures and social systems, context changing strategies and redesigning the organization (Hallinger & Heck, 1999; Leithwood, 1996; Davis et al., 2005). This category of practices came from the research about professional learning communities and how learning organizations are formed (Leithwood et al., 2004). Practices appear that the objective was the organizational culture and structures are to facilitate the group and through the school improvement plan (Leithwood et al., 2004).

Many different approaches are being used by schools to emphasize academic reform to overcome the effects of poverty in their neighborhoods. Other schools are struggling with issues to help students experiencing anxiety and depression. As the building leader, principals have to juggle the demands of both situations (International Literacy Association, 2019). The principal's behavior can prevent or promote ownership towards a collective goal (International Literacy Association, 2019)

Educators are striving to work together to support students to overcome obstacles they are facing (International Literacy Association, 2019). According to the International Literacy

Association (2019), there are strategies principals can employ as a way to overcome the challenges facing educators to improve student achievement. First, principals have a moral imperative to monitor and ensure that all students are receiving equitable instruction to enhance student achievement. This can be accomplished with principals seeking the cooperation of others and reinforcing practices that advance learning and literacy (International Literacy Association, 2019).

Secondly, the principal position may imply that person is the sole decision maker, but principals must collaborate with staff members to develop a culture of learning and of high expectations. The principal's behavior can help or hinder the the work towards the growth of a learning culture (International Literacy Association, 2019). Principals are responsible for setting high literacy expectations and engaging staff members in reflective conversations about instruction and student learning (International Literacy Association, 2019).

The impact of district leadership in student achievement, until recently, has been defined as too indirect or complex (Leithwood et al., 2004). There is evidence to show the value of district leaders providing the basic leadership skills, but less is known about what else superintendents do (Leithwood et al., 2004). Hart and Ogawa (1987) conducted a study to statistically estimate the influence of superintendents on the mathematics and reading achievement of students in grades six and 12 in 70 California districts. The results showed superintendents do have an influence on student achievement, but the study did not identify how the influence was used.

Murphy and Hallinger's (1986) research involved interviewing 12 superintendents from California districts described as instructionally effective school districts. The purpose of the study was to determine what district level policies and practices were used by the

superintendents to utilize their instructional leadership responsibilities with principals. The research (Murphy & Hallinger, 1986) indicated there was a core set of leadership responsibilities that included: setting goals and establishing standards; selecting staff; supervising and evaluating staff; establishing an instructional and curricular focus; ensuring consistency in curriculum and instruction; and monitoring curriculum and instruction.

The influence of district-level and building leadership on student achievement was significant, but only second to instructional practices of the classroom teacher (Leithwood et al., 2004; Davis et al., 2005). The effect of leadership on student achievement becomes more substantial when greater pressure was placed on leaders and their role was expanded (Davis et al., 2005).

The role of district administrative leader and principal in student achievement in literacy is of the utmost importance. The commitment to long term professional development of teachers is a critical function of effective leadership (DESE, 2019). There are two types of expertise needed to improve literacy in schools: one is in the content of literacy and the other in the leading the change process (Olson & Roswell, 2007).

Summary

First, the literature review provided research on the theories of reading instruction and included different methods, pedagogies, and programs for teaching reading. The review continued with a look at the adolescent reader and middle school reading instruction.

Chapter 3 provides the research design, measurement, data collection procedures, analysis and synthesis of the data, limitations and summary.

Chapter 3

Methods

A primary purpose of this study was to examine the difference of 6th grade students' reading achievement after being taught by a reading specialist compared to being taught by a regular classroom teacher based on two assessments. A comparison was made between students taught by a certified reading specialist and students taught by a regular certified teacher. Chapter three describes the research design of the study by discussing the population, instrumentation, and data collection procedures. A description of the analysis used to test the hypothesis is included. The chapter concludes with a statement of the study's limitations.

Research Design

The research method used was a causal-comparative research design. The quantitative study was based on data provided by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Scholastic Corporation. The assessment data utilized were the MAP English Language Arts and the Scholastic Reading Inventory. Methodology was utilized to attempt to examine the difference of reading achievement level of sixth grade students who had been taught by a certified reading specialist and those had been taught by a teacher not certified as a reading specialist.

Selection of Participants

The target population for the study was students in an urban Missouri school district located in the South Kansas City area. Convenience sampling was utilized because the data were accessible and students were randomly assigned their reading teacher. Students receiving special education services for reading were not included in the study. All other students were enrolled in a reading class. Students in the sample were in the sixth grade and there was a total of 338

students in the study. Sixth graders were the only students selected to include in the study because as students transition into the middle school the teachers at the sixth grade level have an elementary certification and in this study a couple of the teachers have a reading specialist certification. None of the teachers teaching the seventh or eight grade have a reading specialist license.

Measurement

The instrumentation used in this study consisted of two major assessment tools. The first was the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI). Scholastic, Inc. (2002) described the SRI as an assessment tool that measured student reading proficiency based on varying levels of difficulty (Scholastic, 2002). The assessment is available in print format or as an interactive software program. The Scholastic Reading Inventory provides an interactive format similar to the print version. Within this study the interactive software format was utilized. Study participants were assessed three times during the school year. The first assessment was administered in September; the second assessment was given in December; and the final assessment was in May.

The SRI assessment contained comprehension questions from an item bank of over 5,000 multiple choice items and is based on fictional and non-fictional reading passages from children's books, articles, periodicals, magazines, and classical fiction. Multi-choice questions are designed to be simple completion items. Students were required to remember certain information about the passage to answer the question correctly (Scholastic, Inc., 2007). The SRI does not require a time limit, but students typically complete the assessment within 40-60 minutes.

SRI scores are reported as percentile ranks, grade level equivalency, normal curve equivalent, and Lexile scores (Caggiano, 2007). Percentile ranks, a form of norm-referencing,

indicate a percentage of scores that are at or below a given score (Lunenberg & Irby, 2008). Grade level equivalency scores, another form of norm-referencing, describe the students' scores in terms of their grade level and month. Normal curve equivalent scores are a norm-referenced comparison between different tests are used for determining an average score for groups of students (STAR Reading, 2016a). Lexile scores use a criterion-reference scale to indicate a student's reading level on a metric scale (Morsey, Kiefer, & Snow, 2010). The current study used the Lexile scores to examine the students' reading ability.

The SRI normative information was based on a sample of 512,244 students from a medium-large state in 1996 (Scholastic Inc., 2002a). In the normative studies, the state had shown similar means, and standard deviations to the nation as a whole based on demographic and score distributions. This similarity makes the sample suitable for approximating national norms (Scholastic, 2002b). According to Morsey, Kiefer, and Snow (2010), the SRI provides a common scale for matching reader ability and text difficulty because the texts vary reading levels.

Three types of validity were evaluated for the SRI: content validity, criterion-related validity, and construct validity. "The content validity of a test refers to the adequacy with which relevant content has been sampled and represented in the test" (Scholastic Inc., 2014, p. 107). In the development of the SRI content validity was built in to ensure the texts were authentic, developmentally appropriate, and relevant (Scholastic, Inc., 2014). Criterion-related validity of a test indicates the test's effectiveness in predicting an individual's behavior in a specific situation (Scholastic, Inc., 2014).

Reading comprehension generally increases as a student progresses through school. It increases rapidly in elementary school because students are instructed in reading. In the middle

school, reading comprehension grows at a slower rate because instruction focuses more the content areas, such as science, literature, and social studies. The SRI was designed to be a developmental measure of reading comprehension (Scholastic, Inc., 2014). “Construct validity of a test is the extent to which the test may be said to measure a theoretical construct or trait, such as reading ability” (Scholastic, Inc., 2014, p. 120). Multiple studies were conducted to determine the the construct validity of the SRI (Scholastic, Inc., 2014). Based on the results of multiple studies, it can be concluded that the SRI measures a similar construct validity as other standardized assessments designed to measure reading comprehension (Scholastic, Inc., 2014).

The SRI is a computer adaptive test in which there are not established test forms and the items and test are calibrated using item-response theory so the appropriate measures of reliability are not appropriate (Green, Bock, Humphreys, Linn, & Reckase, 1984). Fortunately, the item-response theory provides an index of reliability for an entire test that does not require students to be administered the same items.

Within the Winsteps item analysis program (Linacre, 2010), the marginal reliability can be calculated as the model reliability. The model reliability estimate describes the upper bound of the true reliability of the student ordering and is dependent on the sample ability variance, length of the test, number of categories per item, and sample-item targeting. In 2013, a study was conducted by MetaMetrics to examine the marginal reliability of the SRI (Scholastic, 2014). The SRI was administered to 3,488 students in a grades 2-12 in a large, Midwestern, urban district. Based on the marginal reliability estimates, the SRI was able to consistently order students and these upper bound for all other estimates of reliability for the SRI (Scholastic, Inc., 2014).

The second instrument was the MAP Grade Level English Language Arts assessment. This assessment requires between three to five hours of administration. Students respond to a variety of types of assessment items. These include selected-response items, constructed-response items and performance events. The selected-response items require students to determine the correct answer for up to five response options, while the constructed-items ask students to write a response by showing their work and how they arrive at their answers (Data Recognition Corporation, 20017).

Student's performance on the MAP English Language Arts test was reported as one of four levels: below basic, basic, proficient, or advanced (DESE, 2017). The number of correct responses given by a student were used to determine a MAP scale score. Scale scores were used to determine the student's achievement level. In 2017, the MAP scale score ranged from 260-467 would place a student in the below basic achievement level. Scale scores for basic achievement level were 468-498. The range for the proficient achievement level was 499-549. MAP scale scores between 550 -790 placed students in the advanced level.

Reliability refers to the consistency of students' test scores on parallel forms of a test. A reliable test is one that has scores that are expected to be relatively stable if the test is administered repeatedly under similar conditions (DRC, 2017). Sometimes it is unreasonable to administer multiple forms of an assessment, and reliability is estimated based on one administration (DRC, 2017, p152). Reliability of this type is known as internal consistency and provides an estimate of how consistency examinees perform across items within a test during a single administration (Crocker & Algina, 1986). The reliability of the 2017 MAP raw scores by test form was evaluated using Cronbach's coefficient alpha (DRC, 2017). The reliability

coefficients ranged from 0.90 to 0.92 for all ELA forms. These results indicate acceptable reliability coefficients for MAP tests (DRC, 2017).

Evidence of construct-related validity – supporting the intended interpretation of test scores and their use – is the central concept underlying the MAP ELA, Mathematics and Science validation process (DRC, 2017). Through multiple tests DRC (2017) provided evidence of construct-related validity through test reliability, evaluation on internal test structure, and evaluation of the relationship of test scores with external variables. Specification and review (in which test blueprints are developed and reviewed) and the alignment analysis are primary steps in the development process designed to ensure that content is appropriately represented (DRC, 2017). Careful specification of content and review of the items were conducted. Both the SRI and MAP ELA have been shown to have good reliability and validity. Student scores from the SRI and ELA are reliable indicators of student achievement; therefore, both measures are appropriate for this study.

Data Collection Procedures

The first step in the process of collecting the data was to submit an IRB application to obtain permission from Baker University to conduct the study. The IRB was approved by Baker University. After receiving the approval, an email was submitted by the researcher to District A's superintendent of schools to obtain the district's 6th grade students' MAP English Language Arts and Scholastic Reading Inventory data. The final step was the acquisition of the data from the District A.

Students' demographic or other personal information was not disclosed in the data received by the researcher. District A sent the data with the teacher names for identification of students who were taught by a teacher with a reading specialist certification and those who were

taught by teacher who does not have a reading specialist certification. Teacher certification was obtained through the Missouri Department of Education and Secondary website. The data was stored on a remote disc for analysis and was kept for five years and then deleted from researcher's remote disc.

Data Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

The following research questions and hypothesis were used to guide the data analysis for this study:

RQ1. Is there a difference in reading achievement for District A sixth graders who were taught by a reading specialist and sixth graders who were taught by a regular classroom teacher based on the MAP grade level English Language Arts assessment?

H1. There is a difference in reading achievement for District A sixth graders who were taught by a reading specialist and sixth graders who were taught by a regular classroom teacher based on the MAP grade level English Language Arts assessment.

An independent-samples *t* test was conducted to address H1. The mean MAP ELA performance level for sixth graders taught by a reading specialist was compared to the mean of the MAP ELA performance levels for sixth graders taught by a regular classroom teacher. An independent samples *t* test was chosen for the hypothesis testing since it examines the mean difference between two mutually exclusive independent groups, and both means of two groups are continuous variables. The level of significance was set at .05. When appropriate, an effect size is reported.

RQ2. Is there a difference in reading achievement for District A sixth graders who were taught by a reading specialist and sixth graders who were taught by a regular classroom based on the Scholastic Reading Inventory assessment?

H2. There is a difference in reading achievement for District A sixth graders who were taught by a reading specialist and sixth graders who were taught by a regular classroom teacher based on the Scholastic Reading Inventory assessment.

An independent-samples *t* test was conducted to address H2. The mean of the Scholastic Reading Inventory assessment growth for sixth graders taught by a reading specialist was compared to the mean of the Scholastic Reading Inventory assessment growth for sixth graders taught by a regular classroom teacher. An independent samples *t* test was chosen for the hypothesis testing since it examines the mean difference between two mutually exclusive independent groups, and both means of two groups are continuous variables. The level of significance was set at .05. When appropriate, an effect size is reported.

Limitations

Limitations were features of a study that may negatively affect the results and ability to generalize (Roberts, 2004). Lunenberg and Irby (2008) described limitations as factors not under the control of the researcher. The accuracy of the records and measurability of the MAP English Language Arts Test and SRI were factors that were not in the researcher's control. Additional limitations were the teaching abilities of the teachers with a Reading Specialist certification and the teachers who did not have a Reading Specialist certification.

Summary

The objective of this chapter was to present the components of the study's methodology. The research design, measurement, data collection procedures, data analysis and hypothesis testing and limitations were discussed. Chapter 4 presents the findings based on each of the research questions of the study.

Chapter 4

Results

A primary purpose of this study was to examine the difference of 6th grade students' reading achievement after being taught by a reading specialist compared to being taught by a regular classroom teacher based on two assessments. More specifically, the first assessment used was the required Missouri State English Language Arts assessment and the second assessment used was the Scholastic Reading Inventory.

Descriptive Analysis

The participants in this study were 333 sixth grade students (50.5% females and 49.5% males) in two middle schools in an urban school district located in the South Kansas City metropolitan area. The students were randomly assigned to reading classes. The teachers were identified as having a reading specialist license and teachers who did not have a reading specialist license.

Hypothesis Testing

The results of the hypothesis testing are discussed in this section. Each research question is provided, followed by the hypothesis for the research question. The following research questions and hypothesis were used to guide the data analysis for this study:

RQ1. Is there a difference in reading achievement for District A sixth graders who were taught by a reading specialist and sixth graders who were taught by a regular classroom teacher based on the MAP grade level English Language Arts assessment?

H1. There is a difference in reading achievement for District A sixth graders who were taught by a reading specialist and sixth graders who were taught by a regular classroom teacher based on the MAP grade level English Language Arts assessment.

The test used to analyze the data was an independent samples t-test. Outliers were detected and 13 outliers were excluded from the following analysis. The results of the independent samples t-test indicated that there was not a statistically significant difference between the two means, $t(318) = 0.520, p = .603$. The sample mean for the group taught by a teacher with a reading specialist ($M = 497.14, SD = 34.748, n = 176$) was not significant different than the sample mean for the group taught by a regular classroom teacher ($M = 494.99, SD = 39.110, n = 144$). The hypothesis was not supported. The results indicated that there was not a difference in the students' MAP grade level English Language Arts assessment score despite if the students were taught by a reading specialist or taught by a regular classroom teacher.

RQ2. Is there a difference in reading achievement for District A sixth graders who were taught by a reading specialist and sixth graders who were taught by a regular classroom based on the Scholastic Reading Inventory assessment?

H2. There is a difference in reading achievement for District A sixth graders who were taught by a reading specialist and sixth graders who were taught by a regular classroom teacher based on the Scholastic Reading Inventory assessment.

The test used to analyze the data was an independent samples t-test. Outliers were detected and 25 outliers were excluded from the following analysis. The results of the independent samples t-test indicated that there was not a statistically significant difference between the two means, $t(288) = 0.508, p = .612$. The sample mean for the group taught by a reading specialist ($M = 861.62, SD = 193.42, n = 168$) was not significant different than the sample mean for the group taught by a regular classroom teacher ($M = 849.54, SD = 208.52, n = 122$). The hypothesis was not supported. The results indicated that there was not a difference in

the students' Scholastic Reading Inventory mean score despite whether the students were taught by a reading specialist or taught by a regular classroom teacher.

Summary

This chapter utilized the descriptive statistics to describe the participants of the study in terms of the grade level of the students and gender of the students. The results of the independent samples t-test provided evidence that there was not a statistically significant difference in the students' MAP English Language Arts mean score and the Scholastic Reading Inventory mean score whether the students were taught by a reading specialist or a general classroom teacher. Chapter 5 describes the findings related to the literature, implications for action, conclusions, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 5

Interpretation and Recommendations

Chapter 5 provides a summary of the study with an overview of the problem, the purpose statement and research questions, the methodology, and the major findings. In the next section of chapter 5 is a discussion of the findings related to the literature. In the final section the concluding remarks, which include the implications for action, the recommendations for future research, and the concluding remarks are presented.

Study Summary

Examined in this study were an urban school district's sixth grade students' reading achievement on the MAP grade level assessment and the Scholastic Reading Inventory based on whether the student was taught by a teacher having a reading specialist certification or a teacher who does not have the reading certification. The results of this study could provide further insight into how well prepared middle school teachers are to teach reading at the middle school level. This section includes an overview of the problem, the purpose statement and research questions, and an overview of the methodology, and the major findings.

Overview of the problem

Alvermann (2001) states that despite the work of teachers, reading specialists, curriculum directors, and principals in the secondary schools, adolescent's literacy skills are not keeping pace with the informational age. As students progress to the secondary level, formal reading instruction typically decreases at the middle school and high school levels (National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, 2008). This appears to be a mistake because students need additional instruction to make the transition to the work world or to higher education. Secondary educators have struggled with how best to equip these students for success

in the world ahead of them. Middle school teachers play a crucial role in the development of students being able to think deeply about the content they are reading, but many middle school teachers argue that they are not reading teachers (Plaut, 2009).

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

A primary purpose of this study was to compare the reading achievement examine of 6th grade students' reading achievement after being taught by a reading specialist compared to being taught by a regular classroom teacher based on two assessments. Two assessments were used for this comparison. The first assessment used was the required Missouri state English Language Arts assessment and the second assessment used was the Scholastic Reading Inventory.

The following research questions guided this study, which examined the impact of reading instruction by two different methods. The first method was instruction by a certified reading specialist and the second method was reading instruction taught by a general classroom teacher.

RQ1. Is there a difference in reading achievement for District A sixth graders who were taught by a reading specialist and sixth graders who were taught by a regular classroom teacher based on the MAP grade level English Language Arts assessment?

RQ2. Is there a difference in reading achievement for District A sixth graders who were taught by a reading specialist and sixth graders who were taught by a regular classroom based on the Scholastic Reading Inventory assessment?

Review of the Methodology

The study consisted of 333 sixth grade students in two middle schools in an urban school district. The research method used was a causal-comparative research design. The quantitative study was based on data provided by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary

Education and the Scholastic Corporation. The assessment data utilized were the MAP English Language Arts and the Scholastic Reading Inventory. Methodology was utilized to attempt to examine the difference of reading achievement level of sixth grade students who had been taught by a certified reading specialist and who had been taught by a teacher not certified as a reading specialist.

Major Findings

The primary purpose of the study was to examine the difference in reading achievement for sixth graders who were taught by a certified reading specialist and sixth graders who were taught by a regular classroom teacher based on the Missouri MAP grade level English Language Arts assessment and the Scholastic Reading Inventory. Results revealed there was not a statistically significant difference in the students' reading achievement whether they were taught by a reading specialist or a regular classroom teacher.

Findings Related to the Literature

Sixth grade students' reading achievement level was examined and analyzed to determine if students reading level growth was impacted by being taught by a teacher with a reading specialist or if taught by a general classroom teacher. There is a plethora of research studies examining what is the best reading model to implement to help middle school educators become proficient in teaching reading. Typically, middle level teachers do not have the course work and training to determine what reading deficiencies students may have. However, there has not been much research conducted examining specific programs that align for supporting middle level students and teachers (DeCiecco, Cook, & Faulkner, 2016).

Analysis of the data revealed that having a reading specialist licensed showed no significant difference in the students' reading achievement level. The data showed the

instructional methods and expertise of the teacher were factors in reading achievement instead of certification (Boogart, 2013). Secondary teachers should know the major areas of reading so they can assist students with reading fluency or help students with complex multi-syllable words in the text (Boogart, 2013).

The results of Farrell and Cirrincione research (1986) showed that teachers are not receiving the coursework in their pre-service programs to teach reading. Many secondary teachers are only required to take one course in reading. The timeline between learning a strategy and the implementation in the classroom is significant. This study looked at the certification of the teachers.

Reading advocates believe middle school is not too late to help struggling readers (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007). Researchers state that for students to be college and career ready the students must learn advanced literacy skills (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007). Reading in the content area would be one way to help students reading below grade level (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007). In sharp contrast, Shanahan and Shanahan (2013) dispute reading in the content area as the best way to help struggling readers. The researchers (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2013) believe the best way is through discipline literacy in which teachers teach students have to read and write like a historian, scientist, or mathematician.

Conclusions

The findings of this study provide impactful documentation to superintendents who are analyzing their students' reading achievement and looking for a direction in providing teachers instructional support through professional development. The following section includes implications for action by educational leaders to assist in determining next steps for providing

reading professional development to support teachers in the secondary classrooms. This section contains recommendations for future research and concluding comments.

Implications for Action

The results of this research may assist superintendents and public-school districts in the following ways: First, the research suggests that we should continue to teach reading at the secondary level, but the strategies should be focused on the content as to how to read like a historian, scientist, and mathematician. Second, district leaders and building principals should have the best teachers teaching reading at the primary level. The foundational skills are vitally important.

School districts should not quit teaching reading strategies to students. Superintendents and school leaders should review what strategies are being used in the content area. Secondary teachers will need professional development to be comfortable in incorporating strategies into their content. The conversation of the why behind teaching reading strategies should occur. As Stewart and O'Brien (1989) have shared, teachers do not believe literacy practices should be a part of their content and that teaching these literacy practices would take away time from the content area.

Findings show that students' reading achievement will not improve unless teachers have the knowledge to change classroom practices. Reading strategies aligned not along with the content area should relate to the subject area (Kamil, 2003). In contrast, Shanahan and Shanahan (2012) state that the strategies should be more about aiming how reading and writing are used in the particular disciplines.

There needs to be an evaluation of the assignment of teachers for reading instruction in the primary grades. These teachers need to have a strong background in teaching reading. Chall

(1983) states that the importance of teaching reading at the primary level and reading at the secondary level is to teach students to focus on using reading to learn. The foundational skills of fluency and word recognition are important (Rand Report, 2002). The International Reading Association (2018) recommends that reading instruction should be explicit and systematic.

Recommendations for Future Research

Below are recommendations for future research with modifications, extensions, and revisions for studying the studying students' reading achievement level by comparing whether the student was taught by a teacher with a reading specialist or taught by a general classroom teacher.

1. It is recommended that future researchers replicate the current study but disaggregate the data based on the ethnicity of the students as an extension of the study.
2. It is recommended that future researchers replicate the current study but expand it to other grade levels.
3. It is recommended that future researchers replicate the current study and include more participants and disaggregate the data based on the participants free and reduced lunch status as an extension of the study.
4. It is recommended that future researchers replicate the current study using additional reading assessments to analyze the students' reading achievement levels.
5. It is recommended that future researchers replicate the current study and disaggregate the data based on student gender.
6. It is recommended that future researchers replicate the current study and compare results between urban, suburban, and rural school districts. This type of study would expand the current body of knowledge to include a more varied group of students.

Concluding Remarks

This study offers contributions to the field of education by analyzing reading instructional models and programs. Growth in student reading achievement at the middle school level is much more difficult. Developing strong middle school readers requires time, access, emphasis on skilled reading instruction (Middle School Reading Network, 2009). Students still need the support to be successful in being able to read deeply and analyze complex text. Without direct instruction students will continue to read below grade level and not master the skills necessary for college, career, and life (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007).

References

- Albright, L. K., & Ariail, M. (2006). Tapping the potential of teacher read-aloud in middle schools. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 48(7), 582-591.
- Allington, R. L. (2011). What at-risk readers need. *Educational Leadership*, 68(6), 40-45.
- Alvermann, D. E. (2001). *Effective literacy instruction for adolescents*. Executive Summary and Paper Commissioned by the National Reading Conference. Chicago, IL: National Reading Conference.
- Alvermann, D. E. (2002). Effective literacy instruction for adolescents. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 34(2), 189-208.
- Anderson, R.C., Hiebert, E.H., Scott, J.A., & Wilkerson, I.A.G. (1985). *Becoming a nation of readers: The report of the commission on reading*. Champaign, IL: Center for the Study of Reading.
- Anderson, R.C. & Nagy, W.E. (1992). The vocabulary conundrum. *The Professional Journal of the American Federation of Teachers*, 16(4), 14-18, 44-47.
- Arkansas Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2018). Reading initiative for student success. Retrieved from: <http://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/divisions/learning-services/r.i.s.e.-arkansas>
- Atwell, N. (1998). *In the middle: New understandings about writing, reading, and learning* (2nd ed.). Portsmouth, ME: Boyntoni/Cook Publishers.
- Boogart, A.V. (2013, April 23). Every teacher a teacher of reading: how teacher preparation programs help teachers to meet the common core standards [Blog Post]. Retrieved from <http://edge.ascd.org/blogpost/every-teacher-a-teacher-of-reading-how-teacher-preparation-programs-can-help-teachers-to-meet-the-common-core-standards>

- Bryant, D. (2003). Effective instruction for struggling secondary students. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 26(2), 73-154.
- Burns, J.M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Caggiano, J. A. (2007). Addressing the learning needs of struggling adolescent readers: The impact of a reading intervention program on students in a middle school setting. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3257319)
- Carrekar, S., (2017). Supporting non-proficient adolescent readers: Identifying and addressing the why they struggle. Retrieved from <https://www.lexialearning.com/blog/why-teaching-non-proficient-adolescent-readers-so-complex>
- Chall, J.S. (1983). *Stages of reading development*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Chall, J.S. (1967). *Learning to Read: The Great Debate*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Chomsky, C. (1972). Stages in language development and reading exposure. *Harvard Educational Review*, 42, 1-33.
- Criscuolo, N. P. (1970). A look at linguistic readers. *Reading Horizons*, 10(3). Retrieved from https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading_horizons/vol10/iss3/5
- Cunningham, A. E. & Stanovich, K. E. (1998). What reading does for the mind. Retrieved from: <https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/periodicals/cunningham.pdf>
- Daniels, H., Zemelman, S., & Bizar, M. (1999). Whole language works: Sixty years of research. *Educational Leadership*, 57(2), 32-37.
- Daggett, W. R., & Hassellberg, T. S. (2007), What we know about adolescent reading. Retrieved from: http://www.leadered.com/pdf/What_We_Know_About_Adolesent_Reading_2014.pdf

Data Recognition Corporation. (2017). Missouri assessment program grade-level assessments:

Grades 3-8 english language arts and mathematics grades 5 and 8 science technical report. MN: Maple Grove.

Davis, S., Darling-Hammond, L., LaPointe, M. & Meyerson, D. (2005). School leadership:

Developing successful principals. Retrieved from:

<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.123.7780&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

DeCicco, M., Cook, C. M. & Faulkner, S. A. (2016). Teaching in the middle grades today:

Examining teachers' beliefs about middle grades teaching. Retrieved from:

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1154810.pdf>

Durrance, S. (2017). *Ready to Read: Ready to Succeed*. Southern Regional Education Board:

Atlanta.

Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, Pub. L. No. 114-95 § 114 Stat. 1177 (2015)

Farrell, R. T., & Cirrincione, J. M. (1986.) The Introductory Developmental Reading

Course for Content Teachers: A State of the Art Survey. *Journal of Reading*

29(8), 717–23.

Fader, D. (1968). *Hooked on books: Program and proof*. New York: Berkeley.

Finnigan, K.S., & Stewart, T.J. (2009). Leading change under pressure: An examination of

principal leadership in low performing schools. *Journal of School Leadership*, 19(5),

586-618.

Fisher, D., Frey, N., & Williams, D. (2002). Seven literacy strategies that work. *Educational*

Leadership, 60(3), 70.

Flesch, R. (1955). *Why Johnny Can't Read*. New York: Harper & Row.

Fountas, G.S. (1999). Effective literacy programs. *Council Connections*, Winter, 9-11.

- Fountas, I.C., & Pinnell, G.S., (1996). *Guided reading: Good first teaching for all children*. Portsmouth, NH: Heineman.
- Francois, C. (2013). Reading is about relating: Urban youths give voice to the possibilities for school literacy. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 57(2), 141-149.
- Freyd, P., & Lytle, J. H. (1990). A corporate approach to the 2 r's: A critique of IBMs writing to read program. *Educational Leadership*, 47(6), 83-89.
- Fuchs, L. S., Fuchs, D., & Kazden, S. (1999). Effects of peer-assisted learning strategies on high school students with serious reading problems. *Remedial and Special Education*, 20(5), 309-318.
- Gilliam, B. K., Dykes, F., Gerla, J. K., & Wright, G. L. (2011). Silent reading manifestations of adolescent struggling readers. *Reading Improvement*, 48(3), 118-127.
- Gray, L., & Reese, D. (1957). *Teaching children to read*, NY: Ronald Press.
- Green, B., Bock, R.D., Humpheys, L., Linn, R., & Reckase, M. (1984). Technical guidelines for assessing computerized adaptive tests. *Journal of Educational Measurement*, 21, 342-360.
- Gregory, G. H., & Kuzmich, L. (Eds). (2005). *Differentiated literacy strategies for student growth and achievement in grades 7-12*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Grimes, J. L. (2010). *The relationship between fourth grade literacy levels and eighth grade student achievement* (Doctoral dissertation). Baker University, Baldwin City.
- Guthrie, J. T., & Davis, M. (2003). Motivating struggling readers in middle school through an engagement model of classroom practice. *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, 19, 59-85.
- Guthrie, J. T., & Humenick, N. M. (2004). Motivating students to read: Evidence for classroom practices that increase reading motivation and achievement. In P. McCardle & V.

- Chhabra (Eds.), *The voice of evidence in reading research* (pp. 329-354). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.
- Guthrie, J. T., & McCann, A. D. (1997). Characteristics of classrooms that promote motivations and strategies for learning. In J. T. Guthrie & A. Wigfield (Eds.), *Reading engagement: Motivating readers through integrated instruction* (pp. 128-148). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Halford, J.M. (1997). Focusing the debate on student achievement. *ASCD Infobrief* (10). Retrieved from: <http://www.ascd.org/publications/newsletters/policy-priorities/sept97/num10/toc.aspx>
- Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. (2002). What do you call people with visions? The role of vision, mission, and goals in school leadership and improvement. In K. Leithwood & P. Hallinger (Eds.), *Second international handbook of educational leadership and administration* (pp. 9–40). Netherlands: Kluwer.
- Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. (1999). Can leadership enhance school effectiveness. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Philip_Hallinger/publication/280886551_Can_leadership_enhance_school_effectiveness/links/55caab3f08aeb975674a5602/Can-leadership-enhance-school-effectiveness.pdf
- Hansel, L., & Pondiscio, R. (2016). Essa creates an opportunity –and an obligation- to help every child become a strong reader. *Knowledge Matters* (4). Retrieved from: <http://knowledgematterscampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/ESSA-brief.pdf>
- Hart, A., & Ogawa, R. (1987). The influence of superintendents on the academic achievement of school districts. *The Journal of Educational Administration*, 25(1), 72-84.

- Harvey, S., & Goudvis, A. (2000). *Strategies that work: Teaching comprehension to enhance understanding*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.
- Hasselbring, T. S., & Groin, L. I. (2004). Literacy instruction for older struggling readers: What is the role of technology? *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 20(2), 123-144.
- Heiten, L., (2016). Essa reigns in, reshapes the federal role in literacy. Retrieved: <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2016/01/06/essa-reins-in-reshapes-federal-role-in.html>
- Heller, R., & Greenleaf, C.L. (2007). *Literacy instruction in the content areas: Getting to the core of middle and high school improvement*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.
- Hempenstall, K. (2013). A history of disputes about reading instruction. Retrieved from: <https://www.nifdi.org/news-latest-2/blog-hempenstall/396-a-history-of-disputes-about-reading-instruction>
- Hernandez, D.J. (2011). Double Jeopardy: How third-grade reading skills and poverty influence high school graduation. Annie E. Casey Foundation. 2011
- Huey, E. (1968). *The psychology and pedagogy of reading*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- International Dyslexia Association. (2016). *Essa gives states more control: Targets needs of struggling readers*. Retrieved from: <https://dyslexiaida.org/essa-gives-states-more-control-targets-needs-of-struggling-readers/>
- International Literacy Association. (2018). *Explaining phonics instruction: An educator's guide* [Literacy leadership brief]. Newark, DE.
- International Literacy Association. (2019). *Principals as literacy leaders* [Literacy leadership brief]. Newark, DE.

- Ivey, G. (2002). Getting started: Manageable literacy practices. *Educational Leadership*, 60(3), 20-23.
- Ivey, G., & Baker, M.I. (2004). Phonics instruction for older students: just say no. *Educational Leadership*, 61(6), 35-39.
- Ivey, G., & Broaddus, R. (2001). "Just plain reading": A survey of what makes students want to read in middle school classrooms. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 36(4), 350.
- Ivey, G. (1999). A multicase study in the middle school. Complexities among young adolescent readers. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 34(2), 172-192.
- Jacobs, V. A. (2002). Reading, writing and understanding. *Educational Leadership*, 60(3), 58-61.
- Janz, M.L., & Smith, E.H. (1972). Students' reading ability and readability of secondary school subjects. *Elementary English*, 49, 622-624.
- Johnson, B., & Stevens, J., (2006). Student achievement and elementary teachers' perceptions of school climate. *Learning Environment Research*, 9(3), 111-122.
- Johnson, D. (1999). Balanced reading instruction: Review of Literature. Ncrel.org
- Kamil, M. L., Borman, G. D., Dole, J., Kral, C. C., Salinger, T., & Torgesen, J. (2008). *Improving adolescent literacy: Effective classroom and intervention practices: A practical guide*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.
- Kamenetz, A. (2018). What a nation at risk got wrong and right about schools. Retrieved: <https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2018/04/29/604986823/what-a-nation-at-risk-got-wrong-and-right-about-u-s-schools>

- Langer, J.A. (2002). *Effective literacy instruction: Building successful reading and writing programs*. Urbana: IL: National Council on Teachers of English.
- Lapp, D., & Fisher, D. (2009). It's all about the book: Motivating teens to read. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 52(7), 556-561.
- Leithwood, K., (1996). School restructuring, transformational leadership and amelioration of teacher burnout. *Anxiety, Stress and Coping*, 9, 199-215.
- Leithwood, K., University of Minnesota., Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto., & Wallace Foundation (2004). How leadership influences student learning: Review of research. Minneapolis, MN: Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement, University of Minnesota.
- Lengyel, E. (2010). *The motivational factors that affect adolescent readers' comprehension* (Doctoral dissertation). St. Joseph's University, Philadelphia.
- Lenters, K. (2006). Resistance, struggle, and the adolescent reader. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 50(2), 136-146.
- Lewis, C., & Fabbo, B. (2000). But will it work in the heartland? A response and illustration. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 43, 462-469.
- Liberman, A.M. (1999). The reading researcher and the reading teacher need the right theory of speech. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 3, 95-111.
- Louis, K.S., Dretzke, B., & Wahlstrom, K. (2010). How does leadership affect student achievement: Results from a national US survey. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 21(3), 315-336.

- Lunenburg, F. C., & Irby, B. J. (2008). Writing a successful thesis or dissertation: Tips and strategies for students in the social and behavioral sciences. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Matson, B. (1996). Whole language or phonics. Teachers and researchers find the middle ground most fertile. The great reading debate. *Harvard Education Letter*, 12(2), 1-5.
- Marzano, R., Waters, T., & McNulty, B. (2005). *School leadership that works*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Mesmer, H.A., & Griffith, P.L. (2005). Everybody's selling it but just what is explicit, systematic phonics instruction. *Reading Teacher*, 59(4), 366-376.
- MetaMetrics. (2009). Linking DIBELS oral reading fluency with the Lexile framework for reading [Brochure].
- Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2015). *Missouri Assessment Program*. Jefferson City, MO.
- Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2017). *Missouri Assessment Program*. Jefferson City, MO.
- Moats, L. (2007). *Whole-language high jinks: How to tell when scientifically-based reading instruction isn't*. Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Institute.
- Moats, L. (2000). *Whole language lives on: The illusion of balanced reading instruction*. Retrieved from: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED449465.pdf>
- Moolenaar, N.M., Daly, A.J., & Slegers, P.J.C. (2010). Occupying the principal position: Examining relationship between transformational leadership, social network position, and school innovative climate. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 46(5), 623-670.

- Moore, D. W., Bean, T. W., Byrdshaw, D., & Rycik, J. A. (1999). *Adolescent literacy: A position statement*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Morsy, L. Kieffer, M., & Snow, C. (2010). *Measure for measure: A critical consumer's guide to reading comprehension assessment for adolescents*. New York, NY: Carnegie Corporation of New York.
- Murphy, J. & Hallinger, P. (1986). The superintendent as instructional leader: Findings from effective school districts. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 24(2), 213-236.
- National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. (2008). *Improving adolescent literacy: Effective classroom and intervention practices*. Retrieved from: https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/adlit_pg_082608.pdf
- National Center for Education Statistics (2015). *The nation's report card: A first look: 2015 mathematics and reading* (NCES 2014-451). Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C.
- National Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983). *A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform: a report to the Nation and the Secretary of Education, United States Department of Education*. Washington, D.C.: The Commission.
- National Institute for Literacy. (2007). *What content-area teachers should know about literacy*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Child and Human Development.
- National Middle School Association. (2003). *This we believe*. Westerville, OH: National Middle School Association.
- National Reading Panel. (2000). *Teaching children to read*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

National Reading Panel. (2005). *Practical advice for teachers*. Naperville, IL: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

Nietz, J. (1964). Why the longevity of the mcguffey readers. *History of Education Quarterly*, 4(2), 119-125.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-110, § 20, 115 Stat. 1425 (2002)

Olukolu, R. M. (2013). *The relationship of culturally responsive instruction and reading comprehension and attitude of struggling urban adolescent readers* (Doctoral dissertation). Florida International University, Miami.

Onorato, M. (2013). Transformational leadership study in the educational sector: An empirical study of corporate managers and educational leaders. *Academy of Educational Leadership Journal*, 17(1), 33-47.

Plaut, S. (Ed.). (2009). *The right to literacy in the secondary schools: Creating a culture of thinking*. New York, NY: Teachers College.

Pressley, M. (2000). What should comprehension instruction be the instruction of?

In M. L. Kamil, P. B. Mosenthal, P. D. Pearson, & R. Barr (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research*, Vol. 3, pp. 545-561. Mahwah, NJ, US: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

READ 180. (2015). The power of blended learning. Retrieved from:

http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/READ180/pdfs/R180_MM_Brochure-singlepg.pdf

Reading Roadmap. (2013). Creating a pathway in literacy for every child. Retrieved from:

<https://www.readingroadmap.org/>

Rycik, J.A. & Irvin, J.A. (2005). *Teaching Reading in the Middle School: Understanding and Supporting Literacy Development*. New York: Pearson.

- Sapp, L. (2012). *Reading horizons phonics program and success for all foundation's the reading edge program: The effect on reading achievement levels of struggling middle school readers* (Doctoral dissertation). Baker University, Baldwin City.
- Schumm, J.S., Vaughn, S., & Saumell, L. (1992). What teachers do when the textbook is tough: Students speak out. *Journal of Reading Behavior* 29(4), 481-503.
- Scholastic Inc. (2002a). Product overview and alignment guide title IV, part B. New York, NY: Author.
- Scholastic Inc. (2002b). READ 180: Proven reading intervention for elementary through high school. New York, NY: Author.
- Scholastic Incorporated. (2014). SRI college and career technical guide: Using a valid and reliable assessment of college and career readiness across grades k-12. Retrieved from: https://www.hmhco.com/products/assessmentsolutions/assets/pdfs/sri/SRI_TechGuide.pdf
- Scott, D. (2012). *The effect of the read 180 reading intervention program on the reading proficiency of sixth grade students in three suburban missouri middle schools*. (Doctoral dissertation). Baker University, Baldwin City.
- Shanahan, T. (2012). *Discipline reading is not the same as content area reading*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdl.org/articles/disciplinary-literacy-is-not-the-same-as-content-area-reading/>
- Shanahan, T. (2017, October 22). Does reader's workshop promote reading adequately. (Web log post). Retrieved from: <https://shanahanonliteracy.com/blog/does-readers-workshop-promote-close-reading-adequately>

Shanahan, T. (2008, September 29). Why balanced literacy is a problem. (Web log post).

Retrieved from: <https://shanahanonliteracy.com/blog/why-balanced-literacy-is-a-problem>

Shanahan, T., & Shanahan, C. (2011). What is disciplinary literacy and why does it matter.

Topics in Language Disorders, 32(1), 7-18.

Sizemore, M., & Blossom, G. (1969). Linguistic method of teaching reading: Is it a kind of neophonics. *Arizona English Bulletin*, 12(1), 36-42.

Skwara, C. (2016). A case study: Why a program like read 180 doesn't work to improve adolescent literacy. Retrieved from: <https://medium.com/literate-schools/a-case-study-why-a-program-like-read-180-doesnt-work-to-improve-adolescent-literacy-835c04bf0d27>

Slavin, R. E., Cheung, C., Groff, C., & Lake, C. (2008). Effective reading programs for middle and high schools: A best-evidence synthesis. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 43(3), 290-322.

Snow, C.E., (2002). *Reading for understanding: Toward a research and development program in reading comprehension*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND.

Snow, C. E., Burns, M. S., & Griffin, P. (1998). *Preventing reading difficulties in young children*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Squires, S. (2014). *The effects of reading interest, reading purpose, and reading maturity on reading comprehension of high school students* (Doctoral dissertation). Baker University, Baldwin City.

STAR Reading (2016). *Renaissance STAR Reading: Score Definitions*. Wisconsin Rapids, WI: Renaissance Learning, Inc.

- Stewart, R.A., & O'Brien, D.G. (1989). Resistance to content area reading: A focus on preservice teachers. *Journal of Reading*, 32(5), 396-401.
- Thorndike, E. L. (1917). Reading as reasoning: A study of mistakes in paragraph reading. *The Journal of Educational Psychology*, 13(6), 323-332.
- Tierney, R.J. (1990). Redefining reading comprehension. *Educational Leadership*, 47(6), 37-42.
- Torgenson, J.K., & Hudson, R. (2006). Reading fluency: critical issues for struggling readers. In S.J. Samuels and A. Farstrup (Eds.), *Reading fluency: The forgotten dimension of reading success*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Torgenson, J.K., Houston, D.D., Rissman, L.M., Decker, S.M., Roberts, G., Vaughn, S., Wexler, J., Francis, D.J., Rivera, M.O., Lesaux, N. (2007). *Academic literacy instruction for adolescents: A guidance document from the Center on Instruction*. Portsmouth, NH: RMC Research Corporation, Center on Instruction.
- Towle, W. (2000). The art of the reading workshop. *Educational Leadership*, 58(1).
- Tovani, C. (2000). *I read it, but I don't get it: Comprehension strategies for adolescent readers*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.
- Vacca, R. (2002). Reading and writing in the content areas: From efficient decoders to strategic readers. *Educational Leadership*, 60(3), 6-11.
- Whitford, S. (2012). Read 180: Policy gone wrong. *Language Arts of Journal of Michigan* (26), 2, 29-32.
- Williamson, Ronald (2011). The importance of the school principal.
- Wilson, R.M. (1970). Teaching reading: A history. Retrieved from:
<http://www.educationoasis.com/visitor-resources/articles/teaching-reading/>

Woodcock, R. (1987). *Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests-Revised*. Circle Pines, MN: American Guidance Service

Appendices

Appendix A: IRB Request



IRB Request

Date March 28, 2019

IRB Protocol Number _____
(IRB use only)

I. Research Investigator(s) (students must list faculty sponsor)

Department(s) School of Education Graduate

	Name	Signature	
1.	<u>Ms. Prissy LeMay</u>		Principal Investigator
2.	<u>Dr. James Robins</u>	_____	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check if faculty sponsor
3.	<u>Dr. Harold Frye</u>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Check if faculty sponsor
4.	<u>Dr. Kenny Rodriquez</u>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Check if faculty sponsor

Principal investigator contact information

Phone 913-909-5345

Note: When submitting your finalized, signed form to the IRB, please ensure that you cc all investigators and faculty sponsors using their official Baker University (or respective organization's) email addresses.

Email VelmaRLeMay@stu.bakeru.

Address 1312 S Kaydeen Ct

Independence, MO 64057

Faculty sponsor contact information

Phone 816-604-8054

Email JRobins@bakeru.edu

Expected Category of Review: ☐ Exempt ☒ Expedited ☐ Full ☐ Renewal

II. Protocol Title

Effective Middle School Instructional Reading Programs

III. Summary:

The following questions must be answered. Be specific about exactly what participants will experience and about the protections that have been included to safeguard participants from harm.

A. In a sentence or two, please describe the background and purpose of the research.

A primary purpose of this study was to examine the difference of sixth grade students' reading achievement after being taught by a reading specialist compared to being taught by a regular classroom teacher based on two assessments. The first assessment to be used to examine the reading level achievement was the Missouri state English Language Arts assessments. This yearly state required test assigns a student's level of performance. The second assessment is the Scholastic Reading Inventory. It is a nationally normed assessment to determine a student's reading Lexile level.

B. Briefly describe each condition, manipulation, or archival data set to be included within the study.

There are no conditions or manipulations in this study.

IV. Protocol Details

A. What measures or observations will be taken in the study? If any questionnaire or other instruments are used, provide a brief description and attach a copy.

Two diagnostic assessments are being used. The first assessment is the required Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) for English Language Arts. This assessment is administered to all sixth grade students. It is a summative assessment that identifies student's achievement performance at four levels. The second assessment is the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI), which is a nationally normed assessment of reading and provides a Lexile score. This assessment was administered to all sixth grade students. Both assessments are administered electronically and not available in hard copy.

B. Will the subjects encounter the risk of psychological, social, physical, or legal risk? If so, please describe the nature of the risk and any measures designed to mitigate that risk.

There are no psychological, social, physical or legal risks involved in this study.

C. Will any stress to subjects be involved? If so, please describe.

There will not be any stress to subjects in this study.

D. Will the subjects be deceived or misled in any way? If so, include an outline or script of the debriefing.
In this study, no subjects will be deceived or misled.

E. Will there be a request for information which subjects might consider to be personal or sensitive? If so, please include a description.

For this study there will be no requests for personal or sensitive information from any subject.

F. Will the subjects be presented with materials which might be considered to be offensive, threatening, or degrading? If so, please describe.

For this study no subjects will be presented with materials that might be considered offensive, threatening, or degrading.

G. Approximately how much time will be demanded of each subject?

For this study no subjects will be under demand for time completion.

H. Who will be the subjects in this study? How will they be solicited or contacted? Provide an outline or script of the information which will be provided to subjects prior to their volunteering to participate. Include a copy of any written solicitation as well as an outline of any oral solicitation.

The subjects in this study are sixth grade students in District A and these students are housed in two buildings. There are approximately 150 students in School A and approximately 125 students in School B. There will be no contact with students for this study and no student participation is required.

I. What steps will be taken to insure that each subject's participation is voluntary? What if any inducements will be offered to the subjects for their participation?

Subject participation will be in the form of archival data. There was not pursuit of participation or inducement of any kind to participate in this study.

J. How will you insure that the subjects give their consent prior to participating? Will a written consent form be used? If so, include the form. If not, explain why not.

Since only archival data will be used in this study, no written consent will be used.

K. Will any aspect of the data be made a part of any permanent record that can be identified with the subject? If so, please explain the necessity.

No aspect of the data will be made part of the record.

L. Will the fact that a subject did or did not participate in a specific experiment or study be made part of any permanent record available to a supervisor, teacher, or employer? If so, explain.

No subject participation in this study will be made part of the record.

M. What steps will be taken to insure the confidentiality of the data? Where will it be stored? How long will it be stored? What will be done with the data after the study is completed?

The subjects are identified by a Missouri state identification number. There will be no names or personal information included in this study. The data will be stored for 5 years and then will be deleted.

N. If there are any risks involved in the study, are there any offsetting benefits that might accrue to either the subjects or society?

There are no known risks for participants involved in this study.

O. Will any data from files or archival data be used? If so, please describe.

The data will be used from historical MAP English Language Arts assessments for years 2015-2017 and the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) from the same years.

Appendix B: IRB Approval

Baker University Institutional Review Board

May 3rd, 2019

Dear Prissy LeMay and James Robins,

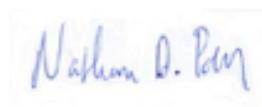
The Baker University IRB has reviewed your project application and approved this project under Exempt Status Review. As described, the project complies with all the requirements and policies established by the University for protection of human subjects in research. Unless renewed, approval lapses one year after approval date.

Please be aware of the following:

1. Any significant change in the research protocol as described should be reviewed by this Committee prior to altering the project.
2. Notify the IRB about any new investigators not named in original application.
3. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents of the research activity.
4. If this is a funded project, keep a copy of this approval letter with your proposal/grant file.
5. If the results of the research are used to prepare papers for publication or oral presentation at professional conferences, manuscripts or abstracts are requested for IRB as part of the project record.

Please inform this Committee or myself when this project is terminated or completed. As noted above, you must also provide IRB with an annual status report and receive approval for maintaining your status. If you have any questions, please contact me at npoell@bakeru.edu or 785.594.4582.

Sincerely,



Nathan Poell, MA
Chair, Baker University IRB

Baker University IRB Committee
Scott Crenshaw
Erin Morris, PhD
Jamin Perry, PhD
Susan Rogers, PhD

Appendix C: Data Request

Prissy LeMay <prissy_lemay@idschools.org>

Sun, Mar 10, 4:12 PM



to Kenny ▾

Hi Kenny,

Since the beginning of my journey to obtain my doctorate, you and I have discussed the type of data I would need for my study. As a reminder, I am conducting a study of sixth graders receiving reading instruction by a sixth grade teacher with a reading specialist and those who are receiving reading instruction by a sixth grade teacher who is not certified as a reading specialist. I would like to have access to data related to the students' reading achievement as measured by the SRI and MAP Communications Arts Test. I am respectfully requesting access to the following.

1. SRI scores from Fall, Winter, and Spring from the 2016-2017 school year
2. MAP Communication Arts scores for the same student groups from spring 2017, specifically,
 - * Terra Nova NP scores
 - * Terra Nova Scale scores

I appreciate your help. If it is okay with you, I am willing to speak to the Director of Instructional Technology to discuss the data in detail. Of course, I will keep all student information confidential. I do not need student names or MOSIS numbers.

Please let me know how I should proceed. I am ready to get finished with my dissertation.

Respectfully,
Prissy

Prissy LeMay
Assist. Supt. of Curriculum/Instruction and PD

Prissy

I am excited to hear that you are at the point where you need data! This shows you are progressing and swiftly moving toward the conclusion of this journey.

I happily approve the collection of this data and have included the necessary parties in this email. Please let me know if there is anything additional you need.

Looking forward to your defense!

K

