A CASE STUDY OF PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS ENGAGED IN TEACHING

READING TO ADOLESCENT STUDENTS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

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by
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The undersigned, appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School, have examined the dissertation entitled

A CASE STUDY OF PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS ENGAGED IN TEACHING
READING TO ADOLESCENT STUDENTS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

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And hereby certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my wife, Terry. The endless hours of discussion and sharing research and ideas about teaching reading provided the motivation to complete this project. Her knowledge of reading and commitment to train teachers to teach reading encouraged me that middle school students who struggle with reading can learn to read and improve their reading ability.

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ABSTRACT

Reading is a foundational skill that contributes to success in school and life-long endeavors. Teaching students to read and ensuring they learn how to master the five components of the reading process is a primary task of those in the education system. However, there are many students who reach middle school who have not become proficient or advanced readers. Many students continue to struggle with reading, functioning only at a basic or below basic level. The impact of struggling to read can be catastrophic for students and can negatively affect their ability to learn.

The focus of this study is a middle school that continually reported a high number of students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades that struggled with reading. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the perceptions of teachers engaged in teaching reading to adolescent middle school students. Further, the study sought to gain ideas from the teachers regarding adolescent literacy and how to address the problem of middle school students who struggled with reading. This study utilized a qualitative case study methodology. Data were collected through two surveys that used closed and open-ended questions. Data were also gathered from the researcher's classroom observation, team meeting, and informal conversation notes.

This study found that a discrepancy existed about the extent of the problem between teachers' perceptions of struggling readers and reported assessment scores. Findings from the study also suggested mixed perceptions regarding the setting and who is responsible for teaching reading among the middle school teachers. In the findings, elements that block students from learning to read or express their reading abilities were identified. The teachers identified numerous ways to assist students but were hesitant to adopt strategies to use in the classroom beyond the aligned curriculum instruction. The findings also revealed that teachers were very definite in listing training needs for teachers and what elements must be included in teaching adolescent literacy. A theme emerged of resistance for some teachers based on the demand to teach a separate reading class and individual perceptions about whose responsibility it is to teach reading.

This study may have implications for teachers dealing with similar issues based on the problem of a high number of students that struggle with reading in the middle school setting.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Reid Lyon (1998), past chief of the Child Development and Behavior Branch of

the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, declared in testimony to

the U.S. Congress,

> . . . for about 60% of our nation's children, learning to read is a formidable
> challenge, and for at least 20% to 30% of these youngsters, reading is one
> of the most difficult tasks that they will have to master though-out their
> schooling. (n.p.)

Moats (1999) asserted, "The most fundamental responsibility of schools is

teaching students to read. Indeed, the future success of all students hinges upon their

ability to become proficient readers" (p. 7). Learning to read is not a simple task. If the

basics of reading are not developed by 3rd grade, the intensity and complexity of the

learning process increases as students enter later grades (Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2002).

The 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress reading test scores for the

nation's 8th graders showed that 69% of the students read at the basic or below basic

levels. (NCES, 2007).

This case study was an examination of the perceptions of teachers teaching

reading to adolescents at Eastside Middle School in the Eastside School District. The

purpose of this case study was to gain an understanding of the perceptions of core subject

teachers about teaching reading to adolescent students in a middle school setting. The

statement of the problem and the significance of the study were based on the high

percentage of middle school students reading below grade level. Vocabulary, potential

bias, and limitations for this study were identified and defined. Background information about the development of the Eastside Middle School reading program and the reading process was outlined to provide a setting for the study. The chapter summary affirmed the need for the study and purpose of evaluating perceptions of teachers teaching reading to adolescents at Eastside Middle School.

Statement of the Problem

The 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading test scores for 8th grade students in the United States showed only 31% of 8th graders performed at or above the proficient level (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2007). The proficient level is defined by NAEP as "solid academic performance" for the assessed grade (NCES, 2007, n.p.). The 31% was an increase of only three percentage points from 1992 to 2007. Approximately eight million, or 70% of the nation's 8th grade students, performed at the basic or below basic performance level. Scores for reading increased slightly for 4th graders but declined for 12th graders during this same time period.

Jacobs (2008) raised concern about the adolescent literacy crisis by citing the high percentage of students in the functional illiterate category of the NAEP reports. Jacobs confirmed that "gains for thirteen- and seventeen-year-olds had either flat-lined or increased insignificantly since 1971" (p. 8).

The results of the 2007 Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) test for Eastside Middle School showed 57% of the students scored at the basic or below basic level for reading and communication arts (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

[DESE], 2007). The STAR report for May 2007, a computer-based reading comprehension assessment of student scores, revealed that 62% of Eastside Middle School students read at least one grade level or more below their current grade level placement (STAR Report, 2007). The MAP and STAR tests were administered to 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students. The average of the two assessments showed that 60% of Eastside Middle School students read below grade level.

There were 620 students in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade levels enrolled at Eastside Middle School at the beginning of the 2007-2008 school year. Of this total number of students, approximately 370 read at least one grade level below their current grade level placement at the beginning of the school year. This number was based on test scores from the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) and STAR assessments.

The term "Eastside" is a pseudo name for the middle school and school district that were the setting for this study. The middle school and school district are located in a Midwestern state. The middle school in this study is one of three middle schools in the district. The middle school has students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade and is the smallest of the three middle schools. There are less than four percent minority students enrolled and there is a free and reduced meal rate of 56%.

The Eastside School District Board of Education, Central Office, and Eastside Middle School administrators determined that the high percentage of students at Eastside Middle School not reading at grade level, though not as high as the national average, was unacceptable. Based on the number of students reading below grade level, a decision was made at the end of the 2006-2007 school year to implement a new reading program for

Eastside students for the 2007-2008 school year (Eastside School Board of Directors, 2007). All Eastside Middle School core subject teachers were mandated to teach a reading class for one hour a day in addition to their core subject curriculum for the 2007-2008 school year.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this case study was to examine the perceptions of core subject teachers about teaching reading to adolescent students at Eastside Middle School. The examination of the perceptions of teachers was focused on their responsibility to teach reading, the setting for teaching reading, and why adolescent students struggle with reading. The purpose of this case study was grounded in a thesis that perceptions of teachers about these issues impacted middle school students learning or not learning to read or not demonstrating their reading abilities in the middle school setting.

The setting for this case study was a 6th, 7th, and 8th grade middle school where core-subject teachers were mandated to teach a one-hour daily reading class. The teachers participated in the case study and shared their perceptions continuously throughout the 2007-2008 school year about teaching reading to middle school adolescents.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What were the perceptions of core subject teachers engaged in teaching reading to adolescents in a middle school setting?

2. To what extent had teachers integrated components of the reading process into core subject curriculum and instructional strategies?

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3.   What professional development experience would enable teachers to better teach reading in a middle school setting?

Significance of this Case Study

Academic success, as defined by high school graduation, can be predicted with reasonable accuracy by knowing someone's reading skill at the end of grade 3 (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). A person who is not at least a modestly skilled reader by the end of third grade is quite unlikely to graduate from high school. The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) reported:

> . . . though the information and knowledge is available to teach students to read, it is estimated that 20% - 40% of public school age students have significant problems learning to read. It is estimated that 75% of students not reading by third grade at grade level do not acquire adequate reading skills by the 9th grade. (NICHD, 2000a, n.p.)

McCardle and Chhabra (2004) concluded, "very little converging evidence addresses how best to teach literacy – reading and writing – to middle and high school students" (p. 471). These researchers asked the pressing question, "Why does it seem that learning to read is more difficult after age 9, and how can we best intervene after that age?" (p. 471).

The National Reading Panel (NICHD, 2000a) identified the five components of the reading process as Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension. Learning to read and read well is a complicated endeavor reflected in the interrelatedness of the five components. The task of learning to read or read well becomes more complex for adolescent students if they have not achieved a functioning level of each component matched to the demands of a middle school setting.

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The Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties identified three stumbling blocks known to throw children off course on the journey to skilled reading (Snow et al., 1998). One obstacle is difficulty in understanding and using the alphabetic principle. A second obstacle is the failure to acquire and use comprehension skills and strategies. A third obstacle involves motivation, especially after the primary grades, when skills have not been developed. Levels of literacy adequate for high school completion, employability, and responsible citizenship are feasible for all but a very small number of individuals. Yet a substantial percentage of American youth graduate from high school with very low levels of literacy (Snow et al., 1998).

Many students at Eastside Middle School struggled with reading as revealed in assessment scores. The 2007 NAEP report identified 70% of the nation's 8th graders reading at the basic or below basic level (NCES, 2007). The MAP and STAR scores for 2006 identified 60% of Eastside Middle School students read at least one grade level or more below current grade placement (DESE, 2007; STAR Report, 2007).

This case study dealt with the persistent issue of the high percentage of middle school students not reading at grade level by evaluating the perceptions of the teachers about issues embedded in the questions and obstacles listed above. The issues identified for this study included components of the reading process, adolescent literacy, and teacher interventions. The knowledge and action learning generated from this study addressed the three research questions that had a significant impact on Eastside Middle School students learning to read.

Through an evaluation of the perceptions of teachers in this case study, insights were forthcoming about the issues that impacted teaching literacy at the middle school level. The perceptions and findings about teaching literacy at the middle school level were shared with core subject teachers, teaching/learning coaches, and administrators to enhance future planning and teaching in the reading classes and core subject classes.

Bias and Limitations

Herr and Anderson (2005) acknowledged that all researchers bring their own perspective and understanding to any research study. The issue is not to ignore the perspectives but to recognize the potential bias that is created in gathering and interpreting data. Reason (2001) described an approach of "critical subjectivity" to address potential bias in a study. Reason suggested critical reflexivity activities such as journaling, field notes, or dialogue with critical friends as ways to recognize and articulate the bias (p. 327). There were potential bias and limitations in this study based on several components.

The researcher was an administrator at Eastside Middle School in the Eastside School District. There was opportunity for bias for participants and researcher in the gathering and analysis of data. There was potential for bias in interviews, reflections, and group process due to the supervisory position of the researcher and peer relationship with other administrators. There was potential also for limited access to teachers based on their perception of the researcher because of his supervisory role.

The study was limited in scope to one school, Eastside Middle School, in the Eastside School District. There was no provision for comparison of data or program structure with other middle schools in or outside of the district.

It was assumed the Missouri Reading Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) defined by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for middle schools were appropriate and represented research-based strategies and components to guide students in learning to read. The GLEs identify broad goals and concepts of reading. However, the specific instructional and learning strategies for teaching reading were determined by individual teachers, building personnel, or district personnel.

Teacher perception of teaching reading in this middle school setting may be influenced by issues related to the mandatory change in teaching assignments and lack of preparation and qualification for teaching reading. Teacher perception of expectations from district and school administrators may influence their participation in the process of learning to teach reading. The perceptions may also influence the implementation of the Success For All program.

<center>Vocabulary Pertinent to this Study</center>

For the purpose of this study the following terms shall be defined.

Comprehension. The reason for reading. Being aware of what is understood and identify what is not understood and using appropriate fix-up strategies to resolve problems in understanding (NICHD, 2000a, p. 4-2). It is the reconstruction of the intended meaning of a communication, accurately understanding what is written. The process occurs through the interaction of the reader with the text based on their

perceptions, prior knowledge and experience, and application of reading skills and strategies (Harris & Hodges, 1995).

Core subject classes. Core subject classes at Eastside Middle School are math, science, language arts, and science taught by certified teachers. In this case study, the term includes exploratory classes and teachers. Some exploratory teachers also taught a reading class for one hour each day.

Fluency. The ability to read a text accurately and quickly (NICHD, 2000a, p. 3-1).

Grade Level Expectations (GLEs). A curriculum guide for grade levels K-12 for the subjects of Reading, Communication Arts, Science, Math, Social Studies, Health and Physical Education and selected exploratory courses (DESE, 2007). A copy of the reading GLEs for all grades is attached as Appendix A. Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, and Fluency, three components of the reading process, are taught in grades K- 2 and then applied in grades 3-12. Vocabulary and Comprehension, the other two components of the reading process, are taught and applied in grades K-12.

Missouri Assessment Program (MAP). A state-wide assessment for the four core subjects of Math, Communication Arts, Science, and Social Studies developed, administered and scored by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The assessment is organized as 67% reading and 33% writing activities and is administered in grades 6, 7, and 8 (DESE, 2006).

Reading Across the Disciplines (RAD). A four-hour district initiated professional development workshop that emphasized the components of reciprocal teaching for reading: questioning, clarifying, visualizing, and summarizing.

Reading Process. The reading process consists of five identified components: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (NICHD, 2000a).

Phonemic Awareness. The ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds, phonemes, in spoken and written words (NICHD, 2000a, p. 2-1).

Phonics. The relationships between the letters of written language and the sounds of spoken language (NICHD, 2000a, p. 2-89).

STAR test. Computer reading assessment that requires students to silently read a passage and answer multiple choice questions about the passage. The score for a STAR test is translated to a grade level equivalent. STAR test is not an acronym; the letters have no assigned meaning (Star Test, n.d.).

Success For All. Success For All is a reading program that requires all students to be grouped by reading level based on STAR scores. The program is organized by a prescribed curriculum, designated instructional activities, defined classroom organization procedures, and leveled books. Training and staff support are provided on a regular basis (Slavin & Madelen, 2004).

Vocabulary. The words that must be known to communicate effectively. Oral vocabulary refers to words that are used in speaking or listening (NICHD, 2000a, p. 4-1). Reading vocabulary refers to words recognized or used in print (NICHD, 2000a, p. 4-2).

Background Information to this Case Study

To better understand this research project, background information is provided about the reading process and the development of the Eastside Middle School reading program. The instructional strategies for teaching reading discussed in this study were embedded in the reading process components of vocabulary and comprehension. The background information of the development of the reading program provided the context for the perceptions of teachers teaching reading to adolescent students.

Reading Process

Two national committees, The National Reading Council and the National Reading Panel (NRP), appointed by the U.S. Congress in 1998 and 2000 respectively, were commissioned to review the scientific research and data available about reading. The report of the National Reading Council, published in March 1998, was entitled *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*. Catherine Snow, chairperson of the Department of Education at Harvard, was the chair of this council. The findings of the National Reading Panel, published in 2000, were entitled *An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and its Implications for Reading Instruction* (Snow et al., 1998). The committees reviewed over 100,000 research studies on reading. The review of the studies resulted in the identification of the five components of the reading process and a definition of reading. The National Reading Panel (2000a) identified five components of the reading process and a definition of reading. The five components of the reading process are phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

A definition of reading emerged from the research review conducted by the National Reading Panel (NICHD, 2000a). Reading is a complex system of deriving meaning from print that requires understanding how phonemes and speech sounds are connected to print. It also requires the ability to decode new words and to read fluently, to bring personal background information to the reading, to understand vocabulary, to use comprehension strategies to understand the meaning of a text, and to maintain interest and purpose in reading.

Hoover and Gough (1990) recognized a simple view of reading. The simple view consisted of decoding plus comprehension equals reading. The simple view of reading is more complex when the five components of the reading process and the elements of the expanded definition of reading listed above are added (adapted from Hoover & Gough, 1990, p. 127).

Decoding	+	Fluency	+	Vocabulary	+	Comprehension	=	Reading
Phonemic		Rate		Sight words		Previous Knowledge		
Awareness		Flow		Subject specific		Interpretation/Inferences		
and				Definitions		Synthesis/Application		
Phonics						Meanings assigned		

Figure 1. A simple view of reading

Jacobs (2008) cited the contribution of Thorndike in 1917 to the understanding of the reading process when a distinction was made between "the skill necessary 'to read' and the reasoning ability necessary to comprehend, noting that comprehension required

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the mind to 'select, repress, soften, emphasize, correlate, and organize all under the influence of the right mental set or purpose or demand'" (p.139).

Chall (1983) also contributed to the understanding of the reading process by identifying the two-fold purpose of reading as learning to read and using reading to learn. Chall defined stages of reading by age level and relationship to the two purposes. Adolescents, specifically middle school aged students, were assigned to Stage 3: Reading for Learning the New. The task of this stage is for middle school students "to use reading to learn new ideas and gain knowledge from a wide variety of genres and fields of study, generally from a single viewpoint or perspective" (Chall, 1983, p. 85). Chall emphasized that the level of proficiency achieved or not achieved at previous stages has a positive or negative effect on subsequent stages and tasks of reading.

Development of the Eastside Middle School Reading Program

The five components of the reading process outlined by The National Reading Panel (NICHD, 2000a) were adopted as the basic concepts of the Eastside School District reading program in 1998 (personal communication, Dr. Patty Schumacher, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Eastside School District, May 24, 2005). The primary focus of teaching reading in grades K-2 is decoding skills. The emphasis of teaching reading in grades 3 to 12 is fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. In middle school and high school, the focus of teaching reading includes the application of reading skills in core subject classes.

In grades K-2, an emphasis is placed on the explicit and systematic teaching of phonemic awareness and phonics. This is not to the exclusion of fluency, vocabulary, or

comprehension. These three components are taught at the K-2 grade levels based on student readiness. The district identified the fundamental need for students to master phonemic awareness and phonics skills prior to giving full attention to the development of skills associated with the three other components of the reading process. This developmental pedagogy is represented in the curriculum design of K-2 basic skill development, and grades three and above focused on higher level thinking and reasoning skills as taught in core subjects (personal communication, Dr. Patty Schumacher, May 24, 2005).

In 2004, Eastside School District administrators analyzed the 7th grade reading, communication arts, and math scores of the MAP tests for the previous two years. The MAP test results from the previous two years revealed that approximately 57% of Eastside School District middle school students performed at the basic or below basic level (DESE, 2007). When the scores were compared to eight other school districts in geographic and demographic proximity to the Eastside School District, it was discovered Eastside ranked 8th out of the nine districts. The ranking was based on a comparison of scores in the three subject areas of reading, communication arts, and math (DESE, 2007).

A task force appointed by the Superintendent of the Eastside School District was challenged to provide curriculum suggestions and action steps to address the high percentage of students reading below grade level and the reported low test scores on the MAP. The task force worked for one year and identified three significant concerns related to curriculum and structure of the middle school program (personal communication, Dave Mitchell, Eastside Middle School Principal, task force member, May 24, 2005).

First, there was no alignment of curriculum in any subject area between the middle schools and from grade level to grade level. Second, middle school students were moving each year to a different building and new environment. Each grade level of 6th, 7th, and 8th was housed in a different building on the middle school campus. Third, the reading process was not included in the middle school curriculum. The components of the reading process were taught only as individual teachers included them in teaching the core subject classes.

The task force presented actions steps to address each of the concerns:

1. The 6th, 7th, and 8th grade levels were to be housed in each of the three middle school buildings.

2. The curriculum, subjects, and grade level expectations were to be similarly aligned for each of the three middle schools.

3. Every middle school student (6th, 7th and 8th grade) was required to take a reading class every day for all three years in middle school.

The first concern was addressed when the three middle schools were reconfigured at the beginning of the 2005-2006 school year to have 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students in each building. The district elementary schools were designated to send students to the middle schools based on student population and high school attendance areas. This change necessitated some faculty movement based on certifications and number of students assigned to each building.

The second issue of alignment of all curricula for core subjects by grade level was resolved when the State of Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

produced the Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) in 2004 (DESE, 2007). The skills for Missouri students to achieve in each of the five components of the reading process were listed by grade level K-12 in the GLEs. The defined skills listed in the GLEs are the underpinnings for the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP). The GLEs were adopted by The Eastside School District as the guiding criteria for an aligned Communication Arts, Reading, and Math curriculum for 6th, 7th and 8th grades.

The Board of Education for the Eastside School District approved the implementation of a middle school reading program for the 2005-2006 school year (Eastside School Board of Directors, 2005). Prior to the 2005-2006 school year, a group of middle school teachers, under the leadership of a teaching/learning coach, engaged in writing the reading curriculum. The aligned reading curriculum for the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade levels at each of the three middle schools was based on the reading grade level expectations. The focus of the middle school reading curriculum was practice of reading skills and instructional strategies in fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

For the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 school year, every student at each grade level in all three middle school buildings was assigned a one-hour daily reading class for the entire school year. Students were homogeneously grouped based on scores from the STAR test. Reading teachers were given copies of the 6th, 7th, or 8th grade level curriculum and asked to follow it as closely as possible.

Two models were developed to teach the reading curriculum on the middle school campus. The two middle schools with the greater number of students hired full time reading teachers. Core subject teachers, especially communication arts teachers,

supported the reading curriculum in their content area classes. At Eastside Middle School, due to a smaller number of students, one half of the core subject teachers were required to teach the reading classes, and the other half taught a homeroom class. All teachers were asked to incorporate the components of the reading process into their core subject classes. However, exposure to the reading curriculum was limited to the teachers teaching the reading classes.

One half of the full time core subject teachers at Eastside Middle School were required to teach two sections of reading daily. Core subject teachers volunteered to teach reading. Math teachers taught two sections of remedial math, and so were exempt from teaching reading.

A full time teaching/learning coach, a certified teacher, was hired to support and train all teachers assigned to teach reading. Training sessions were held on a regular basis, curriculum was revised with additional instructional strategies and activities, and benchmark assessments in reading and communication arts were developed for all three middle schools.

Student performance did not change significantly at any of the middle schools for the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 school years. The STAR test results at the end of the 2006-2007 school year for Eastside Middle School showed 62% of the students read below grade level (STAR Report, 2007). The Missouri Assessment Program for communication arts and reading scores increased just enough to meet annual performance goals (DESE, 2006; 2007). A variety of strategies to address test taking and specific assessment issues of the MAP were also introduced during this two-year time period.

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At-Risk Task Force

The Superintendent of the Eastside School District concluded at the end of the 2005-2006 school year that the reading program and interventions initiated one year earlier were not as effective as predicted (personal communication, Judy Webb, Chairperson, At-Risk Task Force, May 7, 2007). An At-Risk middle school task force was formed at the direction of the superintendent at the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year. The task force identified at-risk students and made reading program recommendations.

A subcommittee of the task force consisting of middle school teachers from all three buildings, the three building principals, and one central office administrator focused on a review of the existing reading program. The subcommittee identified how to increase the effectiveness of the reading program. Interviews with teachers from the three middle schools revealed that the teacher-written curriculum was not adequate, the responsibility to teach reading was not that of the core subject teachers, and perception of teachers regarding their inadequacy as reading teachers was very high (personal communication, Judy Webb, Chairperson, At-Risk Task Force, May 7, 2007).

The findings of this subcommittee dealt with two areas of concern that impact this research project. The findings included information regarding middle school teacher certification and reading programs applicable to the middle school setting.

Thirty-five certified teachers were designated to teach a one-hour reading class daily at Eastside Middle School for the 2007-2008 school year. The teachers designated to teach reading included eight core subject teachers at 6th, 7th, and 8th grades, one Special

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Education teacher at each grade level, and eight exploratory teachers. Twenty teachers (57%) were subject and middle school certified by the State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Fifteen teachers (43%) had certification only in a specific subject.

The requirements for middle school certification include a minimum of five semester hours of reading and three courses in core subject areas. Two middle school certified teachers had taken reading classes or degrees beyond the amount required for middle school certification. Two teachers, not middle school certified, had some education in the reading process and teaching reading. All teachers at Eastside Middle School had participated in a four-hour district initiated professional development workshop on reading across the disciplines (RAD).

The subcommittee reviewed numerous reading programs and visited 10 middle schools, each using a different reading program. A rubric was developed to evaluate the reading programs based on the needs of the Eastside middle schools. A copy of the rubric and list of programs reviewed is found in Appendix B.

The Success For All (SFA) reading program was adopted based on the recommendation of the reading subcommittee. The SFA reading program was reported to include a comprehensive reading curriculum for all grade levels and a professional development program for training teachers to teach reading. The program was adopted for use in the 2007-2008 school year.

The faculty at Eastside was informed of the decision to use the Success For All (SFA) reading program three weeks prior to the end of the 2006-2007 school year. Each

faculty member was given the opportunity to list a preference of the student reading level they wanted to teach. The options included levels 1-8. Level l is equal to grade 2, with level 8 equal to high school and above. The first preview of teacher requests showed 10% requested the lower levels, and 90% of the teaching staff indicated level 5 or higher. STAR scores determined the number of students at each level. Teachers were assigned based on the number of students at each reading level. The initial professional development training and introduction to the SFA reading program occurred during the first two days of the 2007-2008 school year.

Summary

The Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) and STAR test results at Eastside Middle School for 2007 showed that a considerable number of students read below current grade level. The statement of the problem and the significance of this study were framed by the high percentage – 70% at the national level and 60% at Eastside Middle School – of middle school students that read at the basic or below basic level.

The purpose of this case study was the examination of the perceptions of teachers teaching reading in a middle school setting. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What were the perceptions of the core subject teachers engaged in the process of teaching reading to adolescent students in a middle school setting?

2. To what extent had teachers integrated the components of the reading process into the core curriculum and instructional strategies?

3.   What professional development experience would enable teachers to better teach reading in a middle school setting?

The five components of the reading process and a definition of reading were identified through a review of the research on reading by the National Reading Council and the National Reading Panel. The components of the reading process were adopted by the Eastside School District as the basis for the district reading curriculum.

In 2004 it was determined that many Eastside Middle School students struggled with reading and successful achievement on a variety of assessments. The district reorganized the structure of the middle schools and added a reading class for all students in the 2005-2006 school year. Reading and assessment scores did not significantly improve after the changes were made.

An At-Risk task force appointed in the 2006-2007 school year addressed the needs of at-risk students and evaluated the middle school reading program. The task force recommended the implementation of the Success For All reading program structure for teaching reading and training core subject faculty for the 2007-2008 school year. All core subject teachers were mandated to teach a one-hour reading class daily in addition to other assigned responsibilities.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

Learning to read is not a simple task. Learning to read involves all five components of the reading process: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) for the State of Missouri assigned responsible teaching and learning of phonemic awareness and phonics to grades K-2. These basic skills are to be applied in grades 3 -12. The teaching and learning of fluency, vocabulary and comprehension, while started in K-2, are taught and applied in grades 3-12. The task for students, once the basics are learned, is to become better readers and apply reading skills. To become a better reader involves learning to be more fluent, increase vocabulary, and apply comprehension skills in a variety of subjects and settings.

If the basics of reading are not developed by 3rd grade, the intensity and complexity of the learning process increases as students enter later grades (Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2002). The STAR and Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) tests showed that 60% of the middle school students at Eastside Middle School read at the basic or below basic levels. Moats (1999) confirmed that teaching older students (adolescents ages 11 to 14) to read is a complicated task. The challenging aspects of teaching older students to read include lack of phonological processing and word recognition, behaviors learned to avoid reading, lack of success in earlier grades, unfamiliarity with comprehension strategies, sentence structure, text organization, and low self-esteem.

The purpose of this case study was the evaluation of the perceptions of teachers teaching reading to adolescent middle school students at Eastside Middle School in the Eastside School District. Three research questions guided the study:

1. What were the perceptions of core subject teachers engaged in the process of teaching reading to adolescent students in a middle school setting?

2. To what extent had teachers integrated components of the reading process into the core subject curriculum and instructional strategies?

3. What professional development experience would enable teachers to better teach reading in a middle school setting?

The data presented in Chapter One concerning the reading scores of middle school students, the percentage of teachers trained in reading, and the Success For All reading program were used to identify the three topics for the review of literature and research. The three topics included the reading components of vocabulary and comprehension, adolescent literacy, and teacher interventions.

<center>Vocabulary and Comprehension Components</center>

The National Reading Panel (NICHD, 2000a) identified phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension as the five components of the reading process. The five components are listed in this sequential order of curriculum instruction in the Missouri Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) determined by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for Missouri (DESE, 2007). The acquisition, or lack thereof, of the skills or strategies defined in each component influences the learning of the next leveled component. Vocabulary and comprehension, two components of the

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reading process, were the central focus of instruction for the Success For All middle school reading program (Slavin & Madelen, 2004).

The end goal of reading is comprehension. Durkin (1993) defined reading comprehension as "intentional thinking during which meaning is constructed through interactions between text and reader" (p. 10). "Reading comprehension is the construction of the meaning of a written text through a reciprocal interchange of ideas between the reader and the message in a particular text" (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 39).

Snow (2002), in the RAND report, defined reading comprehension as:

the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language . . . Comprehension entails three elements: (a) The reader who is doing the comprehending; (b) the text that is to be comprehended; and (c) the activity in which comprehension is a part. (p. 11)

Snow (2002) further clarified the three elements. The reader was identified with all the capacities, abilities, knowledge, and experiences that a person brings to the reading process. The material to be comprehended included all printed or electronic text. The activity in which comprehension is a part denoted the purposes, processes, and consequences involved in doing comprehension.

Pressley and Afflerbach (1995) suggested the reading process is purposeful and active. The purpose of reading is for the reader to understand the text, to construct memory representations of what is understood, and then to put the understanding of the text into use. The use of the understanding varies from gaining knowledge to gathering information or just for personal pleasure (NICHD, 2000a).

Comprehension is comprised of two "skills": word knowledge or vocabulary and reasoning (Davis, 1942). "Growth in reading power means, therefore, continuous enriching and enlarging of the reading vocabulary and increasing clarity of discrimination in appreciation of word values" (NICHD, 2000a, p. 4).

Michael Kamil (2003) described the importance of vocabulary in the reading process:

> One way to understand the importance of vocabulary is to look at beginning readers. Beginning reading involves teaching students to decode text to speech. When a reader accomplishes that objective, the assumption is that the reader can comprehend the speech. This can only happen if the words that are decoded are in the reader's oral vocabulary. The importance of a strong oral-language vocabulary is thus critical to learning to read. (p. 10)

Anderson, Wilson and Fielding (1988) reported that students with increased comprehension abilities encountered a greater number of words in leisure reading than students with less comprehension abilities. Research supported that reading ability and vocabulary size are related. Through analysis of printed texts for grades 3-9, it was estimated that good readers read about one million words per year (Nagy & Anderson, 1984).

The National Reading Panel (NICHD, 2002) concluded from their examination of 50 studies on vocabulary in the reading process that there were eight implications for reading instruction:

1. There is a need for direct and indirect instruction of vocabulary items required for a specific text.

2. Repetition and multiple exposures to vocabulary items are important. Students should be given items that will be likely to appear in many contexts.

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3. Learning in rich contexts is valuable for vocabulary learning. Vocabulary words should be those that the learner will find useful in many contexts. When vocabulary items are derived from content learning materials, the learner will be better equipped to deal with specific reading matter in content areas.

4. Vocabulary tasks should be restructured when necessary. It is important to be certain that students fully understand what is asked of them in the context of reading, rather than focusing only on the words to be learned. Restructuring seems to be most effective for low-achieving or at-risk students.

5. Vocabulary learning should entail active engagement in learning tasks.

6. Computer technology can be used effectively to help teach vocabulary.

7. Vocabulary can be acquired through incidental learning. Much of a student's vocabulary will have to be learned in the course of doing things other than explicit vocabulary learning. Repetition, richness of context, and motivation may also add to the efficacy of incidental learning of vocabulary.

8. Dependence on a single vocabulary instruction method will not result in optimal learning. A variety of methods was used effectively with emphasis on multimedia aspects of learning, richness of context in which words are to be learned, and the number of exposures to words that learners receive. (p. 4-4)

The National Reading Panel analyzed 203 studies on the instruction of comprehension. The members of the panel affirmed eight strategies that improve comprehension (NICHD, 2000a). The review of the studies found that students improved their ability to comprehend a text when they used specific strategies that taught them to reason and interact with the text. The strategies are used best in conjunction with each other and not taught as separate tasks. The eight kinds of instruction that appeared most for classroom instruction were:

1. Comprehension monitoring in which the reader learns how to be aware or conscious of his or her understanding during reading and learns procedures to deal with problems in understanding as they arise.

2. Cooperative learning in which readers work together to learn strategies in the context of reading.

3. Graphic and semantic organizers that allow the reader to represent graphically (write or draw) the meanings and relationship of the ideas that underlie the words in the text.

4. Story structure from which the reader learns to ask and answer who, what, where, when and why questions about the plot and, in some cases, maps out the time line, characters, and events in stories.

5. Question answering in which the reader answers questions posed by the teacher and is given feedback on the correctness.

6. Questions generation in which the reader asks himself or herself what, when, where, why, what will happen, how, and who questions.

7. Summarization in which the reader attempts to identify and write the main or most important ideas that integrate or unite the other ideas or meanings of the text into a coherent whole.

8. Multiple-strategy teaching in which the reader uses several of the procedures in interaction with the teacher over the text. Multiple-strategy teaching is effective when the procedures are used flexibly and appropriately by the reader or the teacher in naturalistic contexts. (NICHD, p. 4-5)

An extensive list of categories of comprehension instruction are found in Appendix C.

The purpose of using comprehension strategies during reading in the classroom setting is threefold:

1. The development of an awareness and understanding of the reader's own cognitive processes that are amenable to instruction and learning.

2. A teacher guiding the reader or modeling for the reader the actions that the reader can take to enhance the comprehension processes used during reading.

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3. The reader practicing those strategies with the teacher assisting until the reader achieves a gradual internalization and independent mastery of those processes (Palinscar & Brown, 1984; Pressley, Almasi, Schuder, Bergman, & Kurita, 1994).

Reading is a process that involves all five components. For some students the task is to learn to read better by applying skills, but for some students, the task is to learn and acquire basic skills. Learning to read is not a simple task. If the basics of reading are not developed by 3rd grade, the intensity and complexity of the learning process increases as students enter later grades (Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2002). There are special concerns for students in the middle school setting that struggle with reading. These concerns are addressed in the next section on adolescent literacy.

Adolescent Literacy

The National Institute for Literacy (2002) defined "adolescent" as students in the middle and high school period and "literacy" as simply reading and writing done in middle school and high school. The term "adolescent" in this study is limited to middle school students, ages 11 to 14.

Jacobs (2008), however, indicated the concept of literacy entailed more than just reading and writing. Beginning in the 1990s, discussion about content-area reading and reading across the curriculum shifted to a discussion about content literacy. Similarly, secondary reading was reframed as adolescent literacy. Literacy now included the social and political contexts of reading: race, ethnicity, language, socioeconomic status, gender, motivation, and special needs (Jacobs, 2008).

Manzo, Manzo and Thomas (2005) further suggested that *reading* refers to gaining the "strategies needed to successfully complete schooling" (p. 13), while *literacy* refers to "the breadth of education needed to function in modern life, where ordinary citizens are given the executive power of the vote but also must live in a milieu of rapid technological change and job displacement" (p. 13).

Carol D'Amico, former Assistant Secretary of the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education, in the opening remarks to the 2002 National Institute for Literacy (NIL) workshop, described the issue of adolescent literacy as an urgent national challenge. The challenge was defined in the context that

> …despite the significant advances that have been made in our understanding of the abilities children must acquire to become successful readers and the conditions under which the necessary skills are most effectively taught, very little converging evidence addresses how adolescents learn and how best to teach literacy – reading and writing – to middle and high school students. (NIL Conference Report, 2002, n.p.)

Reid Lyon (1998), former director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, stated,

> The psychological, social, and economic consequences of reading failure are legion. It is for this reason that the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development considers reading failure to reflect not only an educational problem, but a significant public health problem as well (n.p.)

Moats (2001) verified that students at later ages continue to struggle with reading if basic skills are not developed at earlier grade levels. Lyon (1998) stated,

> For 60% of the nation's children….learning to read is a much more formidable challenge, and for at least 20% to 30% of these youngsters, reading is one of the most difficult tasks they will have to master throughout their schooling. (n.p.)

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Dr. Sally Shaywitz , Professor of Pediatrics and Co-Director of the Yale Center for the Study of Learning and Attention, observed that "for adolescents who are not able to read and have not mastered these basic skills, learning to read at a later age is more complicated due to multi-faceted influences of age and experience" (Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2002, p. 428). It is estimated that 75%-80% of students not reading at grade level by third grade do not acquire adequate reading skills by 9th grade (Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 1996).

Shaywitz and associates studied 144 children, 70 readers with dyslexia, and 74 readers with no reading impairments, ages 7-18 years. All children had intelligence scores in the average range. The cross-sectional study subjected students to a variety of medical neurobiological procedures. The findings strongly suggested that children do not outgrow their reading difficulties and that the disruption that interferes with reading childhood remains into adulthood. The researchers further concluded that "reading difficulties are not outgrown, do not represent a developmental lag, and remain with the child unless proven and powerful interventions are provided" (Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 1996, p. 442).

The 2007 NAEP report supported Shaywitz's conclusion about struggling adolescent readers. The report showed only a 3% increase in the number of 8th grade students who demonstrated the ability to read and apply comprehension strategies at grade level from 1992 to 2007 (NCES, 2007).

Snow (2002) confirmed in the RAND report that reading or learning to read is not just a simple task of teaching or learning a set of strategies. Teachers often incorrectly

assume that students will learn to comprehend merely by reading. While good readers use vocabulary and comprehension strategies, there are many variables that contribute to students learning or not learning to read. The list of variables reported by Snow (2002) that affect learning to read included: the reader's level of skill development of all five components of the reading process; intellectual development of a reader; socio-cultural attitudes and perspectives; group differences; peer pressure and motivation; the reader's perceptions of how competent she or he is as a reader; difficulty level of text; and teacher training, motivation and sense of responsibility to teach reading in core subjects.

Lyon (1998) reported four factors that hinder children's reading development irrespective of their socioeconomic status or ethnicity. The four factors included deficits in phoneme awareness and alphabetic principle, lack of comprehension strategies, appropriate motivation, and the inadequate preparation of teachers.

Biancarosa and Snow (2006) identified a wide range of literacy needs for struggling readers in middle school and high school. The challenges presented by these students requires more than simply teaching a set of skills or strategies. The challenges included:

1. Some students had difficulty simply reading words accurately.

2. Many students read (decode or identify) words accurately, but they do not comprehend what they read, for a variety of reasons.

3. For some the problem is fluency; they read words but not with enough fluidity to facilitate comprehension.

4. Some students read quickly and accurately enough but lacked strategies to help them comprehend.

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5. Students may know comprehension strategies but have had such limited exposure to a variety of texts and situations that they cannot comprehend…They do not know how to apply the strategies to the specific subject areas.

6. Some students beyond the third grade encounter teachers or school settings that assume basic skills are in place and do not feel the need to engage students in the learning process.

7. Students with learning disabilities or do not speak English as their first language find learning to engage in the reading process very difficult. (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006, p. 8)

Lenters (2006) contributed to the list of reasons some adolescents resist reading in the middle school setting. The reasons included:

. . . the complexity of text used in the school setting, lack of meaning to the student's out-of-school life, poor reading ability, limited purposes for reading and lack of family support for literacy. Students that struggled in early grades find literacy difficult at the upper grades based on the graded curriculum and increased complicated tasks of comprehension. (p. 136)

While some adolescents resist improving their reading ability, Manzo et al. (2005) suggested that "content area literacy is based on the premise that all students can be taught to read, learn, and think better, and that all teachers can share the challenges and rewards of helping them to do so" (p. 9).

Elish-Piper and Tatum (2006), as background to their conversations with adolescent students, noted two trends regarding adolescent literacy. First, there had been a shift away from a longstanding focus on remediating sub-skills to help older, struggling readers toward honoring the multiple identities (e.g., adolescent, cultural, gender, social) that adolescents bring into the classroom. Second, greater attention was paid to bridging the gap between the out-of-school lives and in-school lives of adolescents.

Elish-Piper and Tatum (2006) addressed the issue of adolescent literacy by asking struggling readers what was needed to assist them to read. The conversations with students confirmed that texts must be relevant to their experiences in life and have potential for use. For students to learn to read, the literacy classroom climate must reflect a positive relationship between student and teacher, respect for each person, feeling of safety, support for risk-taking, and positive classroom organization and management. The third finding was that reading in school must have a real purpose and focus on real-life applications or answer questions that pertain to their lives.

The complexity of adolescent literacy, specifically middle school students reading or demonstrating reading skills, was expressed in three myths discussed by Moak, Shuy and McCardle (2006). Myth 1 was that students are not interested in reading. Myth 2 was that all teachers should be reading teachers. Myth 3 was that adolescent students do not need decoding instruction.

Myth 1 was that students are not interested in reading. Kamil (2003) suggested that motivation is one of the determiners of learning to read for adolescents. Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) defined motivation (in reading) as "the cluster of personal goals, values, and beliefs with regard to the topics, processes, and outcomes of reading that an individual possesses" (p. 404). Moak et al. (2006) distinguished between motivation and simply having an interest in reading. Motivation is the underlying factor that disposes one to read or not (Kamil). Engagement in reading is the extent to which an individual reads to the exclusion of other activities, particularly when faced with the other choices.

Moje (2006) indicated that motivating and engaging adolescents in the reading process is difficult. The difficulty is presented in the complexity of the reading and comprehending process. The end result of reading, which is comprehension, occurs at the intersection of a text, a reader, and a context. Each component – a text, a reader, and a context – include multiple factors that affect the interaction of the reading and comprehending process (Moje).

The motivation of adolescent students is more complicated with the progression through higher grades due to the narrowly defined text and content of specific subject fields of study. The specificity of subject content areas of study and a concentration on teaching higher level thinking skills begins in the third grade (DESE, 2007). Moje (2006) concluded that factors including the background and ability of students and the high degree of specification in disciplinary texts in the same classroom setting may interfere with comprehension.

Moje (2006) reported many students who were considered lacking in literacy skills actually read well in non-academic settings with materials that were of high interest to them. Motivation of students is dependent on context and texts. The complexity of the text, interest level, and background knowledge influence the ability of students to read and comprehend. Alvermann (2002) found students exhibit far more sophisticated reading skills when they are in situations away from the classroom.

Moje (2006) indicated that eighth-grade students were more motivated to read and comprehend texts when the texts were perceived as having utility and important value to them personally. Math texts were valued more than science and English. The study

concluded that motivation for students to read is directly related to the perceived

usefulness of the text. Texts chosen for reading out of school were based on:

> (a) text feeling real to the youth in terms of age, geography, and
> ethnicity/race; (b) impart life lessons (e.g., resilience/survival, inspiration;
> (c) offer utility/practical knowledge; and (d) allow youth to explore
> relationships with friends, family and romantic partners. (p. 13)

Moje (2006) concluded that the utility value of texts has a strong impact on the

motivation of young people to read in or out of school.

Some studies found that literacy skills and motivation to read for adolescents were

increased when different texts and context were evaluated. Adolescents demonstrated

comprehension skills when engaged with the Internet (Chandler-Olcott & Mahar, 2003),

in Instant Messenger (Lewis & Fabos, 2005), and in video and computer games (Leander

& Loworn, 2006).

In a case study of three struggling readers, one each in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade, Hall

(2006) addressed the issue of student motivation as a primary factor that influences

student reading. Student engagement in the reading process was influenced by "(a) his or

her perception of his or her ability as a reader, (b) how he or she wanted to be seen as a

reader; and (c) his or her desire to comprehend and learn from text" (p. 425). The

interaction of teachers with each of the struggling readers was influenced by their

perceptions of "(a) the student's cognitive strengths and weaknesses as a reader and (b)

how motivated the teacher thought the student was in trying to apply behaviors that might

increase comprehension" (Hall, p. 425).

Hall (2006) drew two conclusions from the study that impacted struggling

students learning to read. First, struggling students, though they may have negative views

about their reading abilities, try to find ways to comprehend and learn text. Students are not lazy. Second, perceptions of teachers of struggling readers had a greater impact on students learning to read than teaching proper methodology or strategies.

Pitcher and associates (2007) adapted the elementary Motivation to Read Profile for use with adolescent students. The results of administering this instrument and comments from student interviews led to four findings. First, teachers did not acknowledge the out-of-school reading done by students as literacy. Second, the perception of teachers and students was that the only form of valid reading is that which is done in school through the use of academic texts. Third, a decline in reading by adolescents, especially among males, was related to the lack of acceptable literacy sources used in the classroom. Fourth, students rejected literacy tasks that were lacking in purpose and interest to them. Pitcher et al. (2007) observed, "when reading is limited to textbooks and whole-class literature, we limit ourselves as teachers, and our students as readers" (p. 395).

Myth 2 was that all teachers should be reading teachers. Myth 2 was based on the perspective that literacy needs of adolescents are complex and multifaceted. "Reading comprehension involves a complex combination of word recognition, language comprehension and executive process abilities" (Deshler et al., 2006, p. 22). Not all teachers can develop these skills with adolescent students nor respond appropriately when mistakes are encountered in the reading process.

Deshler et al. (2006) identified four types of reading difficulties encountered by adolescents. The first difficulty was that many struggling adolescent readers lack

sufficient fluency in decoding and word recognition skills that impede their ability to comprehend texts. Second, some struggling readers do not have vocabulary, grammar, or text-level language knowledge to form an initial understanding of the text. Third, students often lack efficient strategies for relating the text to past knowledge and experience. The fourth issue was that struggling adolescent readers lack knowledge of and fluency with critical processes that allow for effective monitoring and problem solving during the reading process.

Deshler and associates (2006) offered the following suggestions for teaching literacy to adolescents. Students that need intensive work in decoding (phonemic awareness and phonics) and fluency require assistance of teachers specifically trained in these components of the reading process. The task of core subject teachers is the incorporation of comprehension strategy instruction, vocabulary instruction, and techniques that build background knowledge in the regular core subject curriculum. It is critical to assess students in the middle school setting on a regular basis to determine reading instruction. A task for all teachers is sustaining a positive climate and culture for student growth and achievement in learning to read.

Myth 3 was that adolescent students do not need decoding skills. Calhoon (2006) reported that the 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) revealed 34% of adolescent boys and 24% of adolescent girls read below the basic level. The report revealed also that 67% of adolescents with learning disabilities read below the basic level. Lyon, in a longitudinal study of students with learning disabilities, reported

that the primary deficit of 80-85% of these students was in decoding skills, specifically in phonemic awareness and phonics (NICHD,2000b).

A descriptive study of high school freshmen by Hock, Brasseur, Deshler, Catts and Marquis (2005) outlined a profile of reading skills that adolescents had and had not mastered. The study indicated 57% of the 346 adolescents in the sample had reading abilities at or below the 40th percentile and needed intensive word-level intervention in addition to comprehension work. The students scored significantly below expectations in decoding, word recognition, vocabulary, fluency, and reading comprehension on multiple measures of reading skills (Hock et al., 2005).

Torgeson (2007b) acknowledged that a small number of middle and high school students struggled with simple phonemic decoding strategies; however, a large number of students struggle with complex decoding strategies for multi-syllabic words. This impacts the ability of students to learn new words and often has a negative effect in advanced content area classes where the focus is on comprehension.

Torgesen (2007a) raised awareness of the inter-relatedness of the five components of the reading process. Poor skills in reading accuracy and fluency can seriously disrupt comprehension. However, it is not known precisely how strong the skills of students in these areas need to be before they are no longer a matter of concern for comprehension.

Stanovich (1984) pointed out that strong vocabulary, thinking skills, and motivation can often compensate for poor reading accuracy and fluency. However, students who are weaker in content knowledge, vocabulary, and reasoning ability may

need to read text more accurately and fluently in order to achieve similar levels of reading comprehension as students with strong skills in these areas.

The myth that adolescent students do not need decoding skills was predicated on the following information about the reading process. Reading is a complex task requiring the coordination and procedural sequencing of a multitude of sub-skills (Fuchs, Fuchs, Hops, & Jenkins, 2001). A breakdown in mastery of any of the sub-skills that comprise the reading process can have a direct impact on reading fluency (Wolf, Bowers, & Biddle, 2000) and comprehension. It has been determined that these sub-skills are hierarchical in nature, and theory suggests automaticity of the lower level sub-skills (consonants, vowels, syllables, grammatical endings, meaningful parts, and the spelling units that represent them) allows attention to be allocated to the acquisition of higher-level sub-skills (fluency and comprehension) (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974).

Broaddus and Ivey (2002) affirmed that adolescent literacy is a complex issue with multi-faceted concerns. Broaddus and Ivey identified common beliefs held by teachers about the challenges faced by struggling adolescent readers. Teachers listed challenges of lack of motivation, limited vocabulary and knowledge about the world, weak comprehension skills, and/or limited decoding skills. They warned against attributing reading difficulties of students to a single causal factor as not accurate or helpful in responding to struggling readers.

Moje, Overby, Tyscvaer and Morris (2008) reported findings that questioned some existing ideas about reading and adolescents. The youth in the community where their study was conducted did read and write out of school. The out-of-school reading

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served the purpose for the youth in this study of enhancing communication with peers and family, supporting cultural beliefs and practices, and helping to develop identities and life skills for their community. The youth in this study read some in-school materials. The only in-school texts they read were ones that related to their social condition or out-of-school settings. The findings indicated that the out-of-school reading was not sufficient to impact school achievement. The researchers observed that teachers, if they want to connect with students and impact achievement, needed to explore how to bring the out-of-school and in-school literacies together.

Broaddus and Ivey (2002) affirmed the need to determine the personal interests of students in out-of-school reading with the intent of incorporating various literacy sources into the classroom. The result of a student survey of 1,700 sixth graders revealed that good, relevant reading materials were the greatest factors in the motivation of student to read in school. However, what the students read in their language arts classrooms differed drastically from what they reported that they preferred to read and what they said they read outside of school. The results of the survey also affirmed there are tremendous differences between students as readers in the middle grades. The developmental needs and levels of adolescent students are complex.

Teacher perceptions and beliefs and values about adolescent literacy affect how students learn to read or demonstrate reading in the middle school setting. Mallette, Henk, Waggoner and DeLaney (2005) reported the results of a survey of 90 teachers working in middle schools. The specific research questions were: "(a) Do middle-grade educators recognize and value multiple literacies?; (b) How do these educators define

their roles in teaching literacy?; and (c) What aspects of literacy do they value most?" (p. 34).

Several issues prompted the development and administration of this survey. The first concern was a perceived assumption about the process of reading and responsibility to teach reading in the middle grades. "In most cases, the instructional emphasis in earlier grades on the processes of reading gives way in the middle grades to a pronounced emphasis on subject matter acquisition" (Mallette, et al., 2005, p. 33). The belief of the researchers was that if the "processes of reading" were not developed by the time students enter middle school, then many teachers held the language arts teachers responsible for teaching reading.

The second issue concerned a change of terminology from secondary reading to adolescent literacy when referring to middle school and high school reading. The change in terminology occurred in the late 1990s. Mallette et al. (2005) suggested the change in terminology created a new focus on the social and political nature of adolescent literacy compared to an emphasis on basic skill development. The new terminology distinguished between "Basic Literacies" (comprehension, word identification, fluency, and writing) and "New Literacies" (media, Internet, computers, instant messenger and out-of-school reading materials) (Mallette et al., p. 33).

The third concern was that little research existed that explored what middle school teachers and administrators believed and valued about literacy instruction from this newer and broader re-conceptualization of secondary reading. These three concerns led to the development of the survey and the study.

The findings of the study strongly supported the teaching of basic literacies in all core subject classes. While the belief was strongly held that basic literacies should be taught, the study did not identify how or when reading strategies were taught in core subject classes (Mallette et al., 2005). The findings also revealed that teachers placed less value on out-of-school literacies (visual, computer, graphic, instant messages, chat rooms) when compared with basic literacies and traditional texts used in the classroom. There was little support for finding ways of using out-of-school literacies in the classroom, even though the teachers expressed the desire to connect with students (Mallette et al., 2005).

Mallette et al. (2005) made several observations about the discrepancy between teachers wanting to connect with students and not acknowledging the significance of out-of-school literacies. The first observation concerned the pressure felt by teachers in a standards-driven, intense assessment curriculum to teach the basics so students performed at the appropriate levels on standardized assessments. The second observation involved the perceived role of teachers to prepare students to be ready for life experiences and survival in the real world. The inclusion of out-of-school literacies into the standardized curriculum would not enhance the purpose of teaching as defined by the teachers who participated in this survey.

Bintz (1993) participated in a collaborative research project that examined the home and school contexts of students in grades 6-11 to determine why students struggled with reading in these grades. Bintz reported seven findings from the study:

1. From students who participated in this study, it is accurate to assume that students lose interest in school reading as they progress through school but do not lose interest in reading per se.

2. Students reported assigned readings in school as not meaningful or relevant to their personal lives. Teachers thought students valued the readings.

3. Students used shortcut strategies with in-school readings just to isolate facts, bits of information which would enable them to score high on reading tests.

4. The shortcut strategies served as a form of active resistance on the part of the students.

5. The labels given to struggling readers did not have a positive benefit.

6. Reading instruction must build on the strengths of students and include what is relevant to them.

7. We need to start looking for insights about the complexity of the reading problems in pedagogy, curriculum school and classroom organization, reading materials, reading instruction and teacher-student relationships. (p. 613-416)

In 1997 Bintz interviewed middle school and high school teachers about their understanding of why students struggled with reading. The problem was presented as "students can't read, won't read, or will read but fail to comprehend most important information from text" (Bintz, 1997, p. 20). Four general responses were given by teachers. First, it is a student issue, meaning the students were not motivated, did not find any meaning to school based literacy, and with lack of success early in school they remain unengaged. Second, it is a teacher issue, meaning that a specialist in the building should deal with the problem or the language arts teachers should assume the responsibility. Third, it is a textbook issue, meaning the texts are just too difficult so the

companies that produce them should change the format, or more than a single text should be provided for the students. The fourth concern was that the teaching of reading was the responsibility of somebody else, meaning the elementary grade teachers did not do the work of teaching and motivating students and secondary teachers do not have the time or training to assume responsibility for teaching reading.

Reeves's (2004) study depicted the perceptions of teachers about adolescent literacy similar to those expressed in Bintz's 1997 study. The teachers in the Reeves study expressed concern about their qualifications and lack of training to teach reading in a secondary setting. The teachers also confirmed school content-driven texts were too difficult for most students and turned them off to school (Lenters, 2006). Teachers also expressed the need to limit the literature of students to the "respected" genre accepted in school. Upper grade teachers clearly defined that responsibility for teaching students to read rested with the lower grade teachers. The responsibility of middle and high school teachers was to teach content area subjects.

<center>Teacher Interventions</center>

Jacobs (2008) outlined the historical sequence of the shift, started in the 1970s, from reading as teaching skill-based practices to reading as a meaning-based process. This change in the understanding of the reading process impacted the middle school setting. The responsibility for teaching reading in the middle school setting shifted from the reading specialist to the content-area teacher. However, middle school teachers raised concerns about how and when to teaching reading, to which students, and the issue of adequate training (Jacobs, 2008).

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Ivey and Broaddus (2001) identified three practices that, when used by middle school teachers, resulted in good experiences in reading for middle school students. First, responsive teachers had a positive influence on students who otherwise became disengaged with reading in school. When teachers allowed students to have a voice in choosing literature for school and made the curriculum meaningful in the lives of students, the students remained engaged in reading and school literacy. The third practice was that teachers would encourage students to connect school reading to real life, out-of-school issues, and personal situations.

Broaddus and Ivey (2002) identified three basic principles all teachers could use to support all types of readers in the middle grades. First, teachers recognized each student as an individual with different needs and levels of reading. This included exploring personal interests, background schema, and level of understanding through assessment and observation. Second, based on the assessment of students in the classroom, a wide range of texts, independent and instructional materials, and a variety of resources for obtaining information should be available in the classroom. Third, time should be allowed in the classroom for reading of content area information and development of basic skills, especially word knowledge and fluency. The guided reading of vocabulary is content specific and fluency is practiced with core content materials.

Deshler and Hock (2006) listed several intervention initiatives aimed at support for struggling adolescent readers. The strategies promoted through the model of reciprocal teaching required minimal training in reading but were classroom instruction strategies used in any setting. Reciprocal teaching, developed by Palinscar and Brown

(1984), emphasized four strategies used to teach comprehension. The strategies are predicting, clarifying, summarizing, and questioning. These strategies are applied in any core subject through modeling by the teacher with gradual release of expectancy to each student to practice and use in the learning process. The four strategies are applied to any core subject class through classroom management and instructional strategies. The use of reciprocal teaching strategies was not dependent on training as a reading teacher.

McEwan (2007) recognized the three strategies of clarifying, questioning, and summarizing that any core classroom teacher uses to enhance student comprehension. Four additional strategies were suggested for use by the core teachers in the classroom. The four additional strategies included first activating prior knowledge and experiences; second, making inferences by connecting spoken (written) passages, unspoken (unwritten) and prior knowledge; the third strategy was searching a variety of sources to determine answers, define vocabulary, and solve problems; and the fourth strategy added was visualizing. Core subject teachers help students to increase comprehension through creating mental images and drawing personal connections with text.

Torgesen (2007b) identified five areas of instruction that impacted academic adolescent literacy. The five areas were based on common themes recognized through a review of current research and literature. These five areas affected practices in every content-area classroom. First, core subject classroom teachers provided explicit instruction and supportive practice in the use of effective comprehension strategies throughout the day. Second, an increased amount and quality of open, sustained discussion of each content area was needed. The techniques of teacher modeling, small

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groups, cooperative learning, open dialogue, and student-led activities had a positive effect on student comprehension.

The third area of instructional improvement included attention to the purpose for reading and maintaining high standards for text, conversation, questions, and vocabulary. Classroom teachers maintain high expectations for student performance in aligned curriculum goals and reading outcomes. The fourth improvement was to increase the motivation and engagement of students with reading. This area included clear content goals for reading, enhanced student choice of reading materials, and provision of a variety of texts and classroom activities that promote student interaction and learning from each other. The fifth recommendation was to teach essential content knowledge so that all students master critical concepts. The content material in a core subject class is based on life experiences and is used for preparation of students for future events in high school and the balance of their lives.

Teacher intervention for Lenters (2006) was based on a balanced approach of different and appropriate genres used in the classroom with teaching basic skills. The balanced approach demands student voices are heard about their needs and purposes for literacy. The complexity of the developing adolescent student requires attention to the affective domain and social issues while engaging students in learning to read.

Shanahan and Shanahan (2008) reported findings from a qualitative study where they worked with three content teachers (math, science, and social studies) to identify specific literacy needs of adolescents in their discipline. It was discovered that the content area teachers read texts differently, required different comprehension strategies from

students, and required students to read for different purposes and draw on previous background information for different reasons. Shanahan and Shanahan concluded that if teachers were interested in assisting adolescents to read, they must first clarify a defined purpose for reading, present instructional strategies that are specific to their defined purpose of reading, and outline a curriculum that reflects the goals for reading. These findings were supported by additional research (Alvermann, 2002; 2003).

Summary

The topics in the review of literature included components, specifically vocabulary and comprehension, of the reading process, adolescent literacy, and teacher interventions. The first section of the chapter defined knowledge and information about vocabulary and comprehension. These two components of the reading process were the primary focus of the training for teachers learning to teach reading in the middle school setting in this study. Teachers were trained in strategies for students to learn vocabulary and comprehension in a reading class taught for one hour a day.

The focus of the second part of this chapter was on adolescent literacy. The 2007 NAEP reported a significant number of middle school students read at the basic or below basic level (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2007). The percentage had changed very little – less than three points – between 1992 and 2007. The information and knowledge about the reading process and what skills students need in order to learn to read is readily accessible. The question raised is what impedes adolescents who are struggling readers from learning to read and/or demonstrating the ability to read.

The issues included in adolescent literacy were student motivation, out-of-school literacies, cultural and social aspects of the lives of students, basic literacy skills and strategies not developed, teacher perception of teaching reading, and use of literacies in the classroom, and teacher knowledge of the reading process.

The focus of the section on teacher interventions was not on reading programs but on approaches to incorporating reading strategies and understanding of adolescent literacy into the core subject classroom and how to teach reading in core subjects. The task of teaching adolescents to read and/or demonstrate reading ability in the middle school setting is complex.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress reading test scores for the nation's 8th graders showed that 69% of the students read at the basic or below basic levels (NCES, 2007). The STAR and Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) tests showed that 60% of the middle school students at Eastside Middle School read at the basic or below basic levels. Though the reported 60% percent of 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students at Eastside Middle School reading below grade level was lower than the national average, it was determined this percentage was unacceptable to stakeholders in the school district. The data suggested there were significant numbers, 370 adolescent middle school students, 11-14 years of age, who struggled to read or failed to demonstrate reading skills at Eastside Middle School.

A brief history of teaching reading at Eastside Middle School discussed in Chapter One outlined different structures and teaching methodologies used over a three-year period to address the high percentage of students failing to demonstrate grade level reading. No significant changes in test scores (comprehension and academic achievement) were reported during this time period. The Success For All reading program was recommended as the reading curriculum for the 2007-2008 school year. Core subject teachers were required to teach a one-hour reading class daily in addition to regular classes.

The underpinning issues for this study were: 1) components of the reading process, specifically vocabulary and comprehension; 2) adolescent literacy; and 3) teacher interventions. The focus for vocabulary and comprehension was on the definition of terms, significance in the reading process, and instructional strategies used in core subject classrooms. To read better, defined by increasing vocabulary and applying all levels of comprehension strategies, a student must achieve a sufficient skill performance level in phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency. Instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency was supplemental to teaching vocabulary and comprehension in the Success For All reading program (Slavin & Madelen, 2004).

The issue of adolescent literacy included the characteristics of adolescents that impact learning to read, student motivation, myths, basic literacy versus new literacies, and perceptions of teachers teaching reading at the middle school level. There were divergent views expressed in the literature review regarding significant factors that impacted adolescent students reading or not reading or not demonstrating their ability to read. Factors to consider in addressing the issue of struggling readers include student motivation, lack of basic skills by students, lack of teacher training, lack of vocabulary and comprehension strategies, irrelevant curriculum and texts, social and cultural beliefs, out of school use of literacies and the conflicted perceptions of teachers regarding teaching basic skills or content objectives.

Teacher interventions did not address specific reading programs but rather general principles and guidelines for teaching reading in the core subject curriculum. A list of interventions was identified that, if utilized in the core-subject classroom, may enable

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students to read better or demonstrate their ability to read. The interventions were geared to increase the ability of students to learn and apply vocabulary and comprehension skills but did not address interventions for students who lacked basic decoding skills.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this case study was to examine perceptions of core subject teachers about teaching reading to adolescent students at Eastside Middle School. This case study was grounded in a thesis that perceptions of teachers impacted the ability and motivation of middle school students to learn to read better or demonstrate reading in the middle school setting.

For the researcher, the focus of this study was to evaluate the perceptions of teachers about teaching reading to adolescent students to determine why a high percentage of students at Eastside Middle School struggled with reading or demonstrating their ability to read. The ultimate concern was to develop a plan about how to address the issue that a high percentage of middle school students were not reading or not demonstrating their ability to read at the appropriate level.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What were the perceptions of core subject teachers engaged in teaching reading to adolescents in a middle school setting?

2. To what extent had teachers integrated components of the reading process in core subject curriculum and instructional strategies?

3. What professional development experience would enable teachers to better teach reading in a middle school setting?

Rationale for Qualitative Case Study Design

This study is grounded theoretically and pragmatically in the research methodology of a qualitative case study. The ontology of qualitative research is identified in the definition and list of characteristics outlined by Merriam (1998). "Qualitative research is an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena in a specific context" (Merriam, p. 5). The five characteristics common to qualitative research listed by Merriam include:

> understanding of the phenomenon of interest from the perspective of the participants, not the researcher's, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, the research usually involves fieldwork, primarily employs an inductive research strategy, and the end product is richly descriptive. (p. 7)

For Bogdan and Biklen (1998), qualitative research is based on descriptions of people, places, and conversations with the intended purpose of exploring events or issues in a particular setting. Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) suggested the focus of qualitative research is placed on "the quality of relationships, activities, situations, or materials and not on comparing the effects of a particular treatment or describing behaviors" (p. 430).

Merriam (1998) suggested a case study design is useful when the researcher is interested in process. "The first meaning of process is monitoring: describing the context and population of the study, discovering the extent to which the treatment or program has been implemented, providing immediate feedback of a formative type, and the like" (p. 33).

A case study approach for this study is appropriate because the purpose was to identify, by examining perceptions of teachers, why some adolescent students in a middle school setting struggle with reading and how that issue could be addressed. Adolescent students struggling with reading is a historical and contemporary phenomenon. The researcher explored the phenomenon focused on the perceptions of the middle school teachers required to teach one-hour reading classes in addition to core subject classes.

This study meets the specific criteria of a "descriptive case study" outlined by Merriam (1998). "A descriptive case study in education is one that presents a detailed account of the phenomenon under study" (Merriam, p.38) A descriptive case study is not based on general hypotheses but tries to identify a problem or area of education where little research exists but could be used for future database comparisons. The data for this descriptive case study were used to examine the perceptions of teachers about why a large percentage of adolescent students struggled with reading. The analysis of data included how the issue(s) could be addressed in this particular setting. The archived data used in this case study were retrieved from surveys, and the researcher's journal of written records of team meetings, classroom observation notes, and conversations with teachers made during the 2007-2008 school year.

<center>Validity and Reliability</center>

Qualitative research in an educational setting requires the same confidence in the conduct of the study and results produced from that study as in any other form or setting for research. For any type of research, the questions of validity and reliability are addressed through the conceptualization of the study, the means of gathering data, how

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the data were analyzed and interpreted, and how the findings were presented (Merriam, 1998). For Merriam, "internal validity deals with the question of how research findings match reality" (p. 201). Merriam suggested that reliability in qualitative research is concerned with the consistency and dependability between the data gathered and the reported results or findings.

In this case study, validity and reliability issues were addressed through triangulation, ongoing involvement of participants, long-term observations, and the identification of the biases of the researcher. Since the focus of this study was the perceptions of teachers, the participating teachers were engaged through multiple data gathering methods that included surveys, team meetings, classroom observations, and informal interviews and conversations. The researcher recorded journal notes from the team meetings, classroom observations, and informal interviews and conversations. There was ongoing dialogue among the participating teachers, researcher, and teaching/learning coach. The researcher identified potential biases based on the role and position of the researcher in the school.

"External validity is concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations" (Merriam, 1998, p. 207). The findings of this study may not be generalizable to other middle school settings where teachers are engaged in the process of addressing the issue of adolescents who struggle with reading. However, the process of addressing the issues of adolescent literacy by involving stakeholders in the school community may be generalized to other middle school settings.

Herr and Anderson (2005) expressed concern that since research was grounded in process and not absolute findings or results, the validity of the research may be questioned. The findings of research for Herr and Anderson "lead to a deepened understanding of the questions posed as well as to more sophisticated questions" (p. 86). Coghlan and Brannick (2005) affirmed that "research projects are situation specific and do not aim to create universal knowledge" (p. 132). However, it is important to find connections with other individuals or organizations in similar situations to the one studied in the research project (Coghlan & Brannick).

Mills (2003) challenged the view that the only credible research is that which can be generalized to a larger population. The significance of research for Mills is that the findings are relevant to the researcher or the stakeholders of the research. The outcomes or findings of this study are evaluated in relationship to the benefits experienced by the stakeholders in a middle school setting.

Participants

The participants in this case study were 35 core subject teachers in a 6th, 7th, and 8th grade middle school. The teachers were mandated to teach a separate reading class daily for one hour. The 35 teachers participated in the case study through completion of surveys, team meetings, classroom observations, and informal discussions. They shared their perceptions continuously throughout the 2007-2008 school year about teaching reading to middle school adolescents.

The teachers were mandated to teach a separate reading class during the 2007-2008 school year. The 35 teachers included eight core subject teachers at each of the

three grade levels, 6th, 7th and 8th, three Special Education teachers, one at each grade level, and eight exploratory teachers. The exploratory teachers taught in all three grade levels. Twenty teachers (57 %) were subject and middle school certified by the State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Fifteen teachers (43 %) had certification only in a specific subject.

The requirements for middle school certification included a minimum of five semester hours of reading and three courses in core subject areas. Two middle school certified teachers had taken reading classes or achieved degrees beyond the requirements for middle school certification. Two teachers, not middle school certified, had engaged in some education in the reading process and teaching reading. All teachers at Eastside Middle School had participated in a four-hour district initiated professional development workshop on reading across the disciplines (RAD) prior to the 2007-2008 school year.

<div align="center">Role of the Researcher</div>

Merriam (1998) identified "a characteristic of all forms of qualitative research is that the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis" (p. 7). The researcher in the role of data collection and analysis "can respond to the situation by maximizing opportunities for collecting and producing meaningful information" (Merriam, p. 20). For Bogdan and Biklen (1998), the role of the researcher is to have continual interaction with the participants in their normal places and time such as "classrooms, cafeterias, teachers' lounges, dormitories, street corners" (p. 2). Qualitative researchers structure interaction with participants so the experience is understood from

the perspective of the participants through "ongoing dialogue or interplay between researchers and their subjects" (Bogdan & Biklen, p. 7).

The interaction between researcher and participants raises the question of bias in a qualitative study. The researcher, through awareness of his own opinions, prejudices or other biases, can work to minimize the effect on the research (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Merriam, 1998; Mills, 2003). Bias of the researcher can never completely be eliminated. "The data must bear the weight of any interpretation, so the researcher must constantly confront his or her own opinions and prejudices with the data" (Bogdan & Biklen, p. 34).

The researcher in this qualitative case study was involved in continual dialogue and interactive participation with the teacher participants. The researcher was an assistant principal at Eastside Middle School during the 2007-2008 school year. The researcher, due to assigned administrative responsibilities, attended team meetings, made classroom observations, recorded notes and observations, and dialogued daily with teachers about teaching reading to adolescent students. The multiple sources of data and the high frequency of interaction helped to address the issue of bias and strengthen the integrity of this study.

<div align="center">Data Collection</div>

The methods used to collect data and examine perceptions of teachers teaching reading included surveys, team meetings with individual and group reflections, classroom observations, and multiple conversations with teachers.

Two surveys were administered during the 2007-2008 school year. The surveys were developed by the researcher and distributed with the assistance of other

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administrators in the middle school. The first survey, entitled *Teacher Perception,* was completed at the end of the first eight weeks of the 2007-2008 school year. Teachers shared their perceptions about how they perceived themselves as a reading teacher, strengths and needs in teaching reading, effect on students in the core subject classroom, and identification of what blocks students from learning to read better or demonstrating reading ability (see Appendix D).

Teachers responded to the second survey, entitled *Summative Survey,* at the end of the same school year (see Appendix E). In the second survey, teachers shared their perceptions about changes in their knowledge of the reading process, application of reading strategies in the classroom, what blocks students from learning to read or demonstrating reading ability, role as a reading teacher, who bears responsibility for teaching reading, reading instructional strategies used in core-subject classrooms, and adolescent literacy.

The second survey included a portion of a survey developed by Dr. Marla H. Mallette and colleagues from Southern Illinois University-Carbondale. The survey developed by Dr. Mallette was entitled *Middle Level Literacy Survey* (see Appendix F). Permission was granted by Dr. Mallette to include portions of the Middle Level Literacy Survey in the Summative Survey of this study.

The researcher and building teaching/learning coach met frequently with grade level core subject teachers during the school year. The focus of these meetings included training, sharing information and ideas about the reading class, sharing ideas and processes of incorporating reading strategies in the core subject classrooms, and

evaluating the process of teaching reading in the middle school setting. Notes of the meetings were recorded and maintained by the researcher.

Both the researcher and building teaching/learning coach observed teachers in the reading classes and core subject classrooms throughout the school year. The observations were a combination of planned and drop-in visits. The purpose of the observations was to determine to what extent the reading process was being applied in the reading classes and core subject classes.

Informal conversations regarding perceptions of teachers about teaching reading to adolescent students occurred frequently during the 2007-2008 school year. The informal conversations were unscheduled encounters between the researcher and teacher participants. The encounters occurred after drop-in and planned classroom observations, before and after subject grade level meetings, during teacher team meetings, or in interactions during the course of the regular school day. The researcher kept a written journal of teacher observations and perceptions shared regarding teaching reading.

<center>Data Analysis</center>

Data gathered were analyzed by the following procedures:

1. Surveys were coded using an open system to categorize and classify the data to determine understanding and perceptions of the teachers about the process of teaching reading. Data were used for future planning and reflection.

2. Data from teacher meetings, observations, and informal conversations were coded through an open coding system to determine key perceptions of teachers about teaching reading in the middle school setting.

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3.   The researcher used journaling to record personal reflections and perceptions of the case study project.

Triangulation occurred through the collection and analysis of data multiple times throughout the term of the case study. The collection and analysis of data were completed with teachers who participated in the entirety of the research project.

Summary

The purpose of this case study was to examine perceptions of teachers teaching reading to adolescents at Eastside Middle School. The central focus of the study was the perceptions of the teachers about teaching reading. The methodology used to conduct the study was based on qualitative descriptive case study principles and procedures. The project design was outlined, and a variety of data gathering methods were identified. The process used for data analysis and evaluation was discussed.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the perceptions of teachers teaching reading to adolescent students in a middle school setting. Data were collected regarding the perceptions of teachers related to the responsibility to teach reading, causes for why some adolescent students struggle with reading, ideas about how to address the issue of adolescent students reading at basic or below basic levels, use of reading strategies in core subject classrooms, and what training was needed to teach reading to adolescents in a middle school setting.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What were the perceptions of core subject teachers engaged in teaching reading to adolescents in a middle school setting?

2. To what extent had teachers integrated components of the reading process into core subject curriculum and instructional strategies?

3. What professional development experience would enable teachers to better teach reading in a middle school setting?

Review of Methodology and Research Design

This descriptive case study utilized a variety of means to identify and evaluate teachers' perceptions about teaching reading in a middle school setting. The participating teachers responded to two surveys constructed specifically to solicit their perceptions.

The completed survey results provided evidence of teachers' perceptions regarding teaching reading and adolescent literacy issues.

Perceptions of teachers were also determined from an analysis of recorded notes from meetings and informal conversations with teachers. The meetings and informal conversations occurred frequently during the 2007-2008 school year. Informal observations in teachers' classrooms provided evidence of reading strategies incorporated in core subject instruction.

Participants

Thirty-five teachers were designated to teach a reading class, in addition to regular assigned responsibilities, for the 2007-2008 school year at Eastside Middle School (see Table 1). The group of 35 teachers was comprised of eight 6th grade teachers ($n = 8$), eight 7th grade teachers ($n = 8$), eight 8th grade teachers ($n = 8$), eight exploratory teachers ($n = 8$), and one Special Services Teacher (SPED) from each of the three grade levels ($n = 3$). The grade level teachers included two math, two science, two social studies, and two communication arts teachers at each grade level. The exploratory teachers group included one teacher each from the areas of art, Spanish, industrial technology, music, speech and drama, life skills, and computer technology, as well as a designated literacy teacher. The exploratory teachers taught their specific subject area for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade levels.

For this study, the Special Services Teachers (SPED) were included in the evaluation and analysis of data with their respective grade level. The SPED teachers taught reading classes comprised of students grouped by reading levels based on STAR

test scores. The grade level teachers and the grade level SPED teacher met in the team meetings with the researcher and teaching/learning coach during the 2007-2008 school year.

Table 1

Designated Teacher Participants (n=35)

Grade level	Count
6th grade teachers	9 (2 Math, 2 Science, 2 Social Studies, 2 Communication Arts, and 1 SPED)
7th grade teachers	9 (2 Math, 2 Science, 2 Social Studies, 2 Communication Arts, and 1 SPED)
8th grade teachers	9 (2 Math, 2 Science, 2 Social Studies, 2 Communication Arts, and 1 SPED)
Exploratory teachers	8

The exploratory teachers were treated as a separate group for the evaluation and analysis of data. The assignment of teaching reading classes varied during the school year for the exploratory teachers, as they only taught two quarters of reading classes during the school year. These teachers met as a teacher team separate from the grade level teams. The students in the gifted program at Eastside were assigned to the reading classes taught by the exploratory teachers.

Demographics

The demographics for each group of teachers included information regarding the number of years in a middle school setting, number of years in teaching, middle school certification achieved, and highest educational degree earned. The 6th grade teachers had a mean average of 11 years in a middle school setting and 16 years mean average for total number of years in teaching. Three teachers were middle school certified, and six were not middle school certified. Three teachers had a Bachelor's degree, and six teachers had a Master's degree (see Table 2).

Table 2

Teacher Demographics (*n*=9)

	6th grade	7th grade	8th grade	Exploratory
Average years in middle school	11	8	5	13
Average total years in teaching	16	8	7	14
Middle school certified	3	8	8	5
Not middle school certified	6	1	1	3
Bachelor's degree	3	3	1	4
Master's degree	6	6	8	4

The 7th grade teachers had a mean of eight years teaching experience at the middle school level. The total years of teaching mean equaled eight. Eight teachers were middle school certified, and one teacher was not middle school certified. Three teachers held a Bachelor's degree, and six teachers had earned a Master's degree (see Table 2).

The 8th grade teachers had five years mean average of combined teaching experience at the middle school level. The mean number of years of teaching experience equaled seven. Eight teachers were middle school certified, and one teacher was not middle school certified. One teacher held a Bachelor's degree, and eight teachers had earned a Master's degree.

The exploratory teachers had a mean average of 13 years teaching experience at the middle school level. The mean for years of teaching experience equaled 14. Five teachers were middle school certified, and three were not middle school certified. Four teachers held a Bachelor's degree, and four teachers had earned a Master's degree.

Analysis of Data

Two primary methods of collecting data were used for this study. The first method used two surveys given to all teachers who taught a separate reading class in addition to their regularly assigned responsibilities. The surveys included closed and open-ended response items. The second method used the researcher's written notes collected from teacher meetings, informal conversations, and observations. All data analyzed in this study were retrieved as archived data from the 2007-2008 school year.

The data from Survey #1 entitled *Teacher Perception Survey*, Survey #2 entitled *Summative Survey – 2007-2008*, meetings with team teachers, informal conversations, and observations were reported by grade level designation. The data from exploratory teachers were reported as a separate group.

The analysis of data from the surveys and written notes was based on an open coding system to identify themes and common issues. Data were reported in a

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comparative chart form and utilized descriptive statistics by reporting responses to questions and the number of responses.

Results of Teacher Perception Survey

Survey #1, the Teacher Perception Survey, was given to teachers at the end of the first eight weeks of the 2007-2008 school year. This time frame was also the end of the first cycle in the Success For All reading program. In each grade level, there were nine teachers who had taught the first cycle of independent reading classes. At each grade level, all nine teachers completed and returned the survey. The first cycle required only two exploratory teachers to teach a reading class. The two exploratory teachers completed and returned the survey. Therefore, a total of 29 teachers completed the survey.

Teacher Perception Survey – Question #1

The first question regarding perceptions of teachers of themselves as teachers of reading invited the teachers to rank their perception on a scale of 1 to 5. A response of "1" represented a very weak or low perception, and "5" represented a very strong or high perception of themselves as teachers of reading. The 6th grade teachers reported an average self-perception rating of 3.75. The average rating of 7th grade teachers was 3.55, and the 8th grade teachers reported an average rating of 2.77. The two exploratory teachers had an average self-perception rating as reading teachers of 3.5 (see Table 3).

Teacher Perception Survey – Question #2

The second question asked teachers their perception of their greatest strength as reading teachers. This was an open-ended question. Twenty-two of the teachers from

across all three grade levels perceived their greatest strength their "passion and love of reading." The other terms that described their greatest strength were "organization skills" and "ability to model and apply cooperative learning strategies." The researcher noted the absence of any strengths related to reading process strategies, especially knowledge of and use of strategies for teaching vocabulary and comprehension.

Teacher Perception Survey – Question #3

The third question on the survey asked the teachers what they needed to improve

Table 3

Responses to Question #1: Self Perception Rating of Teaching Reading (n=29)

Teacher group	Number	Average
6th grade teachers	9	3.75
7th grade teachers	9	3.55
8th grade teachers	9	2.77
Exploratory teachers	2	3.5

on in teaching reading. Seven of the 6th grade teachers stated they needed to improve on "grading" and "pacing of activities" related to the Success For All reading program. The 7th and 8th grade teachers noted their "knowledge about specific strategies" to teach reading was their greatest area needing improvement, with 12 of the teachers noting this weakness. The three additional responses from 7th and 8th grade teachers included needing to know about "assessments, pacing, and time organization." The two

exploratory teachers agreed with the 6th grade teachers that they needed to "improve group work" and "grading."

Teacher Perception Survey – Question #4

Question #4 asked the teachers what effect teaching reading had on their core subject teaching. The 6th grade teachers identified two strategies incorporated into their core subject classes: think-pair-share and cooperative learning groups. However, only one 7th grade teacher listed cooperative groups, and two 8th grade teachers included think-pair-share as strategies now included in their core subject classes. Four of the 7th grade teachers and four of the 8th grade teachers agreed that teaching reading had no effect or influence in their core subject classes. Three of the 7th grade teachers and three of the 8th grade teachers expressed that teaching reading had a negative effect on their core subject teaching because they had less time to prepare for the core subject classes. The two exploratory teachers reported "no noticeable effect" on their teaching in their core subject classes.

Teacher Perception Survey – Question #5

In response to question # 5, the common perception among all teachers responding to the survey was that teaching reading had a minimal effect on students in their core subject classes. A total of 14 teachers reported that teaching reading had no effect on students' performance in core subject classes at the end of the first eight weeks. The 14 included three 6th grade, six 7th grade, three 8th grade, and the two exploratory teachers. Thirteen teachers reported that some students were more effectively using

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clarifying, questioning, writing constructed responses, and participation in read alouds in their core subject classes (see Table 4).

Teacher Perception Survey – Question #6

In Question #6 teachers were asked to identify what blocks students from learning to read or increase their reading skills. They focused on three responses. The most common response, chosen by 20 teachers, focused on the lack of motivation by the students. The teachers believed the students were not interested and did not have any desire to improve their reading skills. The second most common response from five of the teachers indicated they believed a lack of support from parents and home setting blocked students from learning to read. Four teachers identified inability or lack of

Table 4

Teacher Perception Survey: The Effect of Teaching Reading after the First Eight Weeks

Content	6th	7th	8th	Exploratory
Number of teachers who perceived no effect from teaching reading in core subject after first eight weeks	3	6	3	2
Number of teachers who perceived increased use by students of reading strategies in core subject classes after first eight weeks				
Clarifying	1	1	1	
Questioning	2	1	1	
Constructed responses	1	2	2	1
Real alouds	1	1		

basic skills of reading as the block for students learning to read or increase their reading skills at the middle school level.

Teacher Perception Survey – Question #7

In response to question #7 regarding an effective professional development experience, 23 of the 24 teachers who responded identified two common elements. The professional development experience must be practical and present ideas or activities used in classroom instruction. One teacher appreciated professional development experiences that presented theory with time for discussion.

Summative Survey

The summative survey was given to teachers in the last two weeks of the 2007-2008 school year. The total number of surveys distributed to teachers who taught a separate reading class was 35. The surveys were distributed as follows: nine to 6th grade teachers, nine to 7th grade teachers, nine to 8th grade teachers, and eight to exploratory teachers. Of the total 35 surveys distributed to teachers, 29 were completed and returned (see Table 5). The total number of surveys returned by grade level were six from the 6th grade, eight from the 7th grade, eight from the 8th grade, and seven from the exploratory teachers.

Summative Survey – Question #1

Question #1 of the summative survey asked the teachers in their opinion what percent of students struggled with reading in their classes. The 6th grade teachers responded to question #1 that in their opinion 28 percent of students on average struggled

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Table 5

Summative Surveys Distributed and Returned

Content area	Distributed	Returned	Return Rate
6th grade teachers	9	6	67%
7th grade teachers	9	8	89%
8th grade teachers	9	8	89%
Exploratory teachers	8	7	88%

with reading in their classes. The perception of 7th grade teachers regarding question #1 was that an average of 44 percent of students in their classes struggled with reading. The 8th grade teachers responded to question #1 by identifying the average number of students that struggled with reading in their classes as 41 percent.

The perception of exploratory teachers were that 33 percent of their students struggled with reading in their classes. A comparison of the teachers' perceptions of the number of students that struggled with reading in their core classes is outlined in Table 6.

Summative Survey – Question #2

The second survey question asked what keeps struggling readers from learning to read better. Sixth grade teachers identified that "lack of ability or skills" and "motivation" keep struggling readers from learning to read, with five teachers choosing each of those options. Two other 6th grade teachers identified additional issues as "lack of parent support" and "textbooks were above the reading capabilities" for struggling readers. The 7th grade teachers ranked motivation as the most important issue that kept struggling

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readers from learning to read. "Lack of ability or skills" was ranked the second most important issue by 7th grade teachers. To overcome the lack of ability or skills, three teachers suggested the students needed to practice their reading and would benefit if there were more support at home.

The highest response by 8th grade teachers to question #2 was "motivation," with seven responses. "Lack of ability or skills" and "materials not relevant to their life situation" had an equal number of responses (five) as the second reason for what keeps struggling readers from learning to read. There was one response that indicated reading was not a part of the students' home life.

For the exploratory teachers, an equal number of responses (four) supported the "lack of ability or skills" and "motivation" as the reasons that kept struggling readers from learning to read better. "Materials not relevant to their life situation" ranked third as an identifying factor. One respondent suggested "lack of parent support" as a factor that kept struggling readers from learning to read better.

Summative Survey – Question #3

The third question on the summative survey asked the teachers to share ideas or thoughts about how to assist struggling readers. The ideas suggested by 6th grade teachers included providing more opportunity for students to practice, individual tutoring, more intensive instructional time in small groups, and more opportunity to practice reading with materials they liked to read. The 7th grade teachers listed the ideas of providing materials for reading matched to the reading levels of students, motivation rewards, more

Table 6

Responses to Question #1: There are Middle School Students who Struggle with Reading. In your Opinion what Percent of Students Struggle with Reading in Your Classes?

Responses to question #1	Range (%)	Frequency	Grade level mean
6th grade (n=6)	10-19	1	28%
	20-29	3	
	30-39	1	
	60-69	1	
7th grade (n=8)	10-19	1	44%
	20-29	1	
	30-39	2	
	60-69	3	
	70-79	1	
8th grade (n=7)	20-29	1	41%
	30-39	2	
	40-49	3	
	70-79	1	
Exploratory (n=7)	0-9	1	33%
	10-19	1	
	20-29	2	
	30-39	1	
	40-49	1	
	100	1	

practice in content area subject classes, and additional training needed for teachers in specific instructional strategies.

The 8th grade teachers suggested providing reading classes taught by teachers with a degree in reading, adding time to core classes to practice reading strategies, and providing remediation classes for some students. The responses of exploratory teachers

focused on two suggestions: students be allowed to read materials that interested them, and some students need individual tutoring.

Summative Survey – Question #4

The fourth question on the summative survey asked teachers to identify what factors contributed to the success of students who showed progress in reading. The 6th, 7th, and 8th grade and exploratory teachers all ranked teaching reading strategies as the first reason, and classroom organization (cooperative learning, other techniques) as the second reason for students showing progress in reading during the 2007-2008 school year.

Summative Survey – Question #5

Summative survey question #5 asked teachers to give their opinions regarding the structure of the reading classes. The 6th grade teachers focused on two options. Four wanted all students to be enrolled in a separate reading class and to receive reading instruction in the core classes. Two teachers marked that students reading below grade level should have a separate class, and students reading at or above grade level should have reading taught only in core classes. Of the eight 7th grade teachers who returned the surveys, two did not answer this question, whereas six of the 7th grade teachers shared the perception that all students should be taught reading in a separate class and in the core classes.

The 8th grade teachers expressed various viewpoints regarding the structure of the reading classes. Six teachers checked that students reading below grade level should have separate reading classes. The same six teachers checked that students reading at or above

grade level should participate in reading instruction only in core classes. One teacher believed all students needed separate reading classes and reading instruction in the core classes. One teacher marked that reading instruction for all students should occur only in core classes, with no separate reading classes.

The majority of the exploratory teachers indicated that students reading below grade level should have separate reading classes and reading strategies taught in core classes. They recorded that it was sufficient for students reading at or above grade level to receive reading instruction only in core classes.

Summative Survey – Question #6

In response to question #6, if literacy instruction should be part of their teaching responsibility, five of the 6th grade teachers responded "yes" and one indicated "no." The comments shared by the teachers included "all students need it, for any subject area"; "strategies learned in literacy are used for all subjects and with all texts"; and "if they can't read, you can't teach anything, literacy is the top priority."

All eight of the 7th grade teachers responded "yes" to this question. The comments from 7th grade teachers were, "if you don't read, you don't learn"; "majority of students can benefit from literacy instruction and we can increase demands of tasks if students can read better"; "we teach life skills and reading is a life skill, we can foster excitement about literacy"; "in every field of life reading is vital"; "literacy is fundamental to all subjects and learning, we must reinforce it every hour."

The responses to question #6, regarding literacy instruction, from the 8th grade teachers included five teachers who responded "yes," two who indicated "no," and one

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who did not respond. The comments from the teachers who responded "yes" to the question were: "literacy is a requisite skill, if students come unable to read, they have to learn this first before learning content"; and "must integrate reading into all classes, most important component is learning how to read non-fiction." The teachers who responded "no" to this question indicated they did so because their teaching responsibility "was only in the content areas" and "there is already too much too focus on just with teaching the GLEs." All seven of the exploratory teachers responded "yes" to this question. The comments included "reading is the foundation for all learning"; "best way to get information"; "reading is the most important skill for success in class and life, it is a responsibility for all"; "yes, because we were told to do it."

Summative Survey – Question #7

The seventh question on the summative survey asked the teachers to mark which strategies were used in their classrooms: clarifying, summarizing, questioning, predicting, visualizing, content vocabulary, main idea, fix-up strategies, and connections (self, text, world). All 6th grade teachers responded affirmatively to using all the reading strategies listed on the survey, with the exception of fix-up strategies and main idea.

The 7th grade teachers indicated the use of most of the reading strategies in their classes. The strategies identified by three teachers not utilized in their classes were fix-up, visualizing, and main idea. The 8th grade teachers confirmed their use of all the strategies with the exception of two teachers who indicated that visualizing and fix-up strategies were not used. Two exploratory teachers indicated they used all the strategies

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in their classes. Strategies used by other exploratory teachers were limited to summarizing, predicting, content vocabulary, and connections.

Summative Survey – Question #8

The eighth summative survey question asked at the middle school level, which should have the greatest emphasis: teaching content Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) or teaching basic skill development. Teaching GLEs was most important for four 6th grade teachers. They realized the importance of teaching basic skills but believed the basic skills should be taught in conjunction with the GLEs. The two teachers who chose teaching basic skills as most important reasoned GLEs could be accomplished only with basic skills in place for students. Two teachers did not designate one more important than the other, but commented, "both should be given equal value."

For two 7th grade teachers, basic skill development at the middle school level should have the greatest emphasis. Teaching content Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) was most important for six of the 7th grade teachers. However, they also realized that GLEs were difficult for students who could not apply basic skills. Teaching content GLEs, if effective, would have basic skills included in the instruction if students needed the strategies. The 7th grade teachers recognized the demands of teaching the district curriculum and preparing students for the benchmark and state assessments.

The 8th grade teachers, with the exception of one, marked teaching content Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) as the greatest emphasis at the middle school level. These 8th grade teachers emphasized that basic skills were taught in elementary school and were the responsibility of elementary teachers, and students should have learned basic skills

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before coming to middle school. However, they realized many students at the middle school level had not mastered basic skills. These 8th grade teachers felt pressure for students to perform on the benchmark and state assessments, and this was the priority for their teaching. One exploratory teacher suggested teaching basic skills in conjunction with content GLEs should have the greatest emphasis. Four exploratory teachers marked teaching basic skills should be the greatest emphasis, and one indicated the emphasis is based on individual needs of students.

Summative Survey – Question #9

The ninth question on the summative survey was a two-part open-ended question. The first part of the question asked the teachers to identify ways "students use literacy in their own lives," and the second part requested a response from teachers about "how students' use of literacy should influence the nature of literacy instruction for middle grade students" (Mallette et al., 2005). The 6th grade teachers listed a variety of ways they perceived their students using literacy in their own lives. The list included homework, magazines, texts, novels, directions, reading daily print, newspapers, Facebook, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), and enjoyment. In response to the second part of this question, only two responses were written in. The responses were that "the literacy instruction for middle grade students should be more meaningful" and "the literacy instruction for middle grade students see real life application."

The 7th grade teachers identified ways students use literacy in their own lives by listing videos, magazines, information, enjoyment, read directions, and school assignments. In response to the second part of this question, their comments were:

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"should support what they are interested in, comics, games, text to self and world";
"reading material should be at their interest level"; "they must be encouraged to transfer skill use"; "this should be the starting point, but we (educators) should encourage growth and a broadening of horizons. Students don't have the wealth of life knowledge to improve their literacy without additional practice and exposure" and "student use should be incorporated as part of the instruction."

The 8th grade teachers identified student use of literacy in their own lives as "some read books," "magazines," "personal interest," "for instruction" and "entertainment." The use of literacy by students mentioned by four teachers was the internet. The ideas of teachers of how the use of literacy by students should influence the nature of literacy instruction included "the use of more multi-media resources," "relate more current events in core classes," "use these resources to initially motivate low functioning readers to engage in the process," and "core subject instruction should be tailored to how students use literacies, otherwise it is not worthwhile."

The exploratory teachers identified student use of literacy to include the internet, computers, pleasure, e-mails, texting, and magazines. The most frequent response of use of literacy identified by exploratory teachers was the internet and texting. These teachers acknowledged that the use of literacy by students "should be used to motivate them," "direct instruction in all classes," "serve as a basis for choosing own materials of high interest in reading class," and "the greatest influence in teaching middle school students."

Summative Survey – Question #10

The tenth question on the summative survey asked teachers to respond to the statement "Every teacher is a teacher of literacy" (Mallette et al., 2005). The 6th grade teachers unanimously responded "yes," indicating agreement with the statement. The comments of the teachers included: "we all do it differently and at different levels but it is our responsibility" and "teaching kids how to learn is just as important as learning facts." The 7th grade teachers all responded affirmatively to the statement as well. There were two qualifying statements issued that "while we are all teachers of literacy the primary focus should be in our core subject classes" and "literacy classes should be taught by teachers who have an interest and are certified."

The 8th grade teachers all responded affirmatively to the statement that every teacher is a teacher of literacy. They further agreed with this statement through written comments which included: "only in the core subject area"; "some do not know how to do it"; "more content area teachers need to pay attention to teaching literacy, my students fail because they have poor reading skills"; and "teaching literacy forms the foundation of classroom learning."

The exploratory teachers agreed that all teachers should teach literacy. Their written comments included: "basis for every class, need to be incorporated to improve skills"; "absolutely necessary for all subjects, all teachers should be"; and "teaching literacy should be dictated by the interests of the students."

Summative Survey – Question #14

The teachers were presented with ten elements of literacy and were asked to indicate the importance of each in the literacy instruction of middle grade students by marking either "Not at All Important," "Somewhat Important," "Very Important," or "Essential" (see Table 7). The ten elements of literacy were: Visual literacy, Internet Literacy, Global Communication, Media Literacy, Pop Culture, In School Literacies (text, assigned reading), Developmentally Responsive Teaching, Cultural and Linguistic Diversity, Engagement/Motivation, and Out-of-School Student Interest Literacies (Mallette et al., 2005). The analysis of data for this question identified the top six elements for each teacher group. The first three elements were of "essential" importance, and the next three elements were "very important" as designated for this study.

The 6th grade teachers ranked Engagement/Motivation, In School Literacies (texts, assigned reading) and Out of School Student Interest Literacies as the three most "essential" elements. Culturally and Linguistic Diversity, Media Literacy, and Developmentally Responsive Teaching received a "very important" mark as the next three highest elements.

Engagement/Motivation, Internet Literacy, and Media Literacy were ranked by the 7th grade teachers as "essential" elements in the literacy instruction of middle school students. In School Literacies (texts, assigned reading), Developmentally Responsive Teaching, and Cultural and Linguistic Diversity were given a rating of "very important" elements.

Table 7

Summative Survey Responses to Question #14: Rate Extent to which each of the following should be Integrated into the Literacy Instruction of Middle Grade Students

Topic	6th	7th	8th	Exploratory
Visual literacy	1.4	1.4	2.0	1.4
Internet literacy	1.6	2.0	2.1	1.9
Global communication	1.6	1.6	2.3	1.3
Media literacy	1.8	2.1	2.4	1.8
Pop culture	1.2	1.4	1.5	1.3
In school literacies (texts, assigned reading)	2.8	1.8	2.3	2.4
Developmentally responsive teaching	1.8	1.8	2.4	2.1
Cultural and linguistic diversity	2.0	1.8	2.8	2.4
Engagement/motivation	3.0	2.6	2.8	2.4
Out of school student interest literacies	2.6	1.6	2.3	2.4

Note. Average of Likert scale ratings of: 0 = not at all important; 1 = Somewhat important; 2 = Very important; 3 = Essential

The 8th grade teachers ranked Engagement/Motivation, Cultural and Linguistic Diversity, Media Literacy, and Developmentally Responsive Teaching as the top four elements needed in the literacy instruction of middle school students. Global Communication, In School Literacies (texts, assigned reading), and Out of School Student Interest Literacies received equal responses as the next three "very important" elements.

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Engagement/Motivation, In School Literacies (texts, assigned reading), Cultural and Linguistic Diversity, and Out of School Student Interest Literacies were marked the top four responses by the exploratory teachers. Developmentally Responsive Teaching and Internet Literacy were designated as "very important" elements for teaching literacy to middle school students.

Summative Survey – Question #15

Teachers were asked to rate the extent to which a variety of topics should be included in the preparation of middle grade teachers in all subject areas. These topics were "Variety of text structures and genres in reading," "Understanding Reader Response Theory," "Strategies for teaching and assessing reading comprehension," "Strategies for teaching and assessing vocabulary," "Strategies for teaching and assessing word recognition and analysis," "Strategies for teaching and assessing reading fluency," "Learning strategies students can use to become independent, strategic readers (fixing-up meaning, reciprocal teaching, etc.)," "Understanding how assessment informs instruction," "Strategies for working with at-risk, struggling readers," "Instruction and assessment of literacy integration in the content area," and "Literature in the content area" (Mallette, et al., 2005).

Teachers were directed to give each topic a response of either "0 = Not at all important," "1 = Somewhat Important," "2 = Very Important," or "3 = Essential." The data were reported for this question by indicating the average number of responses for each topic by teacher group. The top three responses were designated "essential" and the

next three responses "very important" for the purposes of this study. The topics are ranked by the rate of response in Table 8.

The topics entitled "Strategies for teaching and assessing reading comprehension," "Strategies for teaching and assessing word recognition and analysis," and "Learning strategies students can use to become independent," were the top three topics picked by the 6th grade teachers. The next three topics for the 6th grade teachers included "Strategies for teaching and assessing vocabulary," "Strategies for working with at-risk, struggling readers," and "Literature in content area."

The two topics that received the highest rankings for the 7th grade teachers were "Strategies for teaching and assessing vocabulary" and "Strategies for working with at-risk, struggling readers." The next five topics, which each received an equal number of responses from the 7th grade teachers, were: "Strategies for teaching and assessing comprehension," "Strategies for teaching and assessing word recognition and analysis," "Strategies for teaching and assessing reading fluency," "Learning strategies students can use to become independent, strategic readers," and "Understanding how assessment informs instruction." "Literature in content area," "Instruction and assessment of literacy – integration in the content areas," "Understanding how assessment informs instruction," and "Strategies for working with at-risk, struggling readers" were ranked "essential" for the 8th grade teachers. The four topics that received a "very important" designation included "Strategies for teaching and assessing comprehension," "Strategies for teaching and assessing vocabulary," and "Strategies for teaching and assessing word recognition."

Table 8

Summative Survey Responses to Question #15: Rate the Extent to which each of the Following Topics Ought to be Included in the Preparation of Middle Grade Teachers in All Subject Areas

Topic	6th	7th	8th	Exploratory
Variety of text structures and genres in reading	2.0	1.9	1.8	2.3
Understanding reader response theory	1.2	1.4	2.1	1.4
Strategies for teaching and assessing comprehension	3.0	2.1	2.3	2.9
Strategies for teaching and assessing vocabulary	2.4	2.5	2.3	2.6
Strategies for teaching and assessing word recognition and analysis	2.6	2.1	2.3	2.6
Strategies for teaching and assessing reading fluency	2.0	2.1	2.3	2.4
Learning strategies students can use to become independent, strategic readers (fixing-up, reciprocal)	2.6	2.1	2.1	2.3
Understanding how assessment informs instruction	1.8	2.1	2.4	2.1
Strategies for working with at-risk, struggling readers	2.4	2.5	2.4	2.9
Instruction and assessment of literacy – integration in the content areas	2.0	1.9	2.5	2.8
Literature in content area	2.2	1.6	2.6	2.9

Note. Average of Likert scale ratings: 0 = not at all important; 1 = Somewhat important; 2 = Very important; 3 = Essential

The exploratory teachers designated the two topics entitled "Strategies for

working with at-risk, struggling readers" and "Literature in the content area" as the two

most "essential" elements in preparation of middle grade teachers. The third most "essential" topic in training was "Strategies for teaching and assessing comprehension." The next three "very important" topics were: "Instruction and assessment of literacy – integration in the content areas," "Strategies for teaching and assessing vocabulary," and "Strategies for teaching and assessing word recognition and analysis."

<p align="center">Journal Reflections</p>

The researcher recorded personal observations and reflections regarding the perception of teachers throughout the 2007-2008 school year. The observations and reflections resulted from the interaction of the researcher with the teachers who taught separate reading classes. Journal reflections were entered regarding team meetings, informal conversations, and classroom observations. The data from team meetings and informal conversations related to the first research question regarding the perceptions of teachers engaged in teaching reading. The classroom observations provided data related to the second research question regarding integration of reading components into core subject curriculum.

The central focus of team meetings and informal conversations was the implementation of the Success For All reading program. The discussion in both settings was driven by questions about materials, procedures, organization of the classrooms, and structure of the program. The journal notes reflected the observations and concerns of the researcher that the focus of the interaction with participants stayed at the level of logistics, organization, and doing activities. The discussions rarely centered on

understanding the inter-relatedness of the components of the reading process and how students learn to read or improve their reading ability.

The teachers generally maintained a positive and polite demeanor in the team meetings. However, the notes from the journal indicated several themes that emerged in the team meeting discussions that would result in a high level of frustration. The themes centered around the lack of training in how to implement the program and the increased amount of time in preparation and administration (grading, running records, organization of materials) that was required. It was noted that in informal conversations with teachers, these themes were constant sources of irritation and frustration.

The comments of the teachers in the informal conversations also focused on the amount of change that was implemented in the 2007-2008 school year. In addition to the new reading program, all faculty were introduced to a new computer program for attendance, grading, and reporting. All faculty were required to teach/supervise a half-hour student activity period to schedule time for the new reading program. The curriculum for this activity period was determined by individual teachers or grade level teams.

A new curriculum in math for all grade levels was also implemented. The one comment noted in the journal that reflected the general climate and perceptions of the teachers was:

> . . . nothing has been taken off the plate; you (administration) just added
> more stuff, we have the new computer program, new curriculum, new
> procedures, we are still responsible for the GLEs, all the assessments, the
> kids are not ready for high school and no extra time is provided.

Two additional perceptions were clearly identified through the meetings and informal conversations. First, concerns were expressed that teaching reading had been done for the last several years through the core subject classes, and if this setting for teaching reading was not successful, why were the teachers not trained better and why not try to improve on that process? The researcher noted the perceptions of teachers as having failed as reading teachers or being perceived by administration as not taking seriously their responsibility to teach reading in their core classes. Second, the perception was expressed that the teachers would do the reading program and assume the added responsibilities only because they had to and there was no choice.

Classroom observations yielded information that the teachers were integrating components of the reading process into their core subjects. Posters were displayed in every classroom that listed the strategies for teaching vocabulary and comprehension components of the reading process. There were separate posters and examples visible that reflected the questions to ask and steps to follow to implement these reading components. It was also obvious in listening to class instruction that the language used and directions given often focused on these two components of the reading process.

The writing process, especially constructed responses, reflected the increased use of comprehension strategies. Reading component terms and strategies were listed daily as part of the instructional objective in the classroom. The daily two-minute class warm-up activity in most classrooms was focused on a specific reading strategy.

It was noted that the most obvious integration of the reading process was demonstrated in the organization of the classrooms. Classroom observations made during

the last month of school revealed that 80 percent of the core subject classrooms had desks reconfigured in cooperative learning centers. The desks were clustered in groups of four or five, representing the learning group centers. Instruction strategies and activities were centered around student participation, projects, and shared responsibility for learning.

Summary

Data from two surveys and the researcher's journal were presented in this chapter. The first survey was entitled *Teacher Perception Survey,* and the second survey was entitled *Summative Survey.* The surveys were given to 6th, 7th, and 8th grade teachers and exploratory teachers who had taught a separate reading class. The surveys included both closed and open-ended questions. The responses of the teachers to the surveys were evaluated and data were presented by grade level teacher group. Exploratory teachers were treated as a separate group.

Teachers responded to the first survey during the eighth week of the 2007-2008 school. This survey consisted of seven questions asking teachers their perceptions regarding their role as a reading teacher, greatest strength in teaching reading, effect of teaching reading in their core subject classroom, what blocks students from reading, and characteristics of an effective professional development experience.

The second survey was given to the teachers during the last month of the same school year. This survey presented the teachers with closed and open-ended questions. The questions asked for their perceptions regarding the percentage of students that struggle with reading, ideas or thoughts on how to assist these students, what works for students, structure for teaching reading, use of literacy by students and impact on

teaching literacy, what elements should be included in teaching literacy, and what did they need to better teach reading.

The notes from the journal of the researcher were recorded information from team meetings, informal conversations, and classroom observations. The notes were evaluated in relation to the three research questions to determine perceptions of the teachers.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the perceptions of teachers teaching reading to adolescent students in a middle school setting. The primary issue presented was that 370 (60%) of the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students at Eastside Middle School were reading at a basic or below basic level or were not demonstrating their ability to read in the middle school setting. The teachers and administrators in the middle school setting of this study had endeavored for three years, with limited success, to address these issues.

The findings of this study based on the perceptions of the teachers provided ideas and insights for addressing the issues embedded in adolescent literacy at Eastside Middle School. The findings were presented based on the analysis of the teacher perception responses to the survey questions and the observations and notes of the researcher. The presentation of the findings included a discussion of related information from the review of literature and implications for the middle school setting of this study.

The findings are directly related to the three research questions. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What were the perceptions of core subject teachers engaged in teaching reading to adolescents in a middle school setting?

2. To what extent had teachers integrated components of the reading process into core subject curriculum and instructional strategies?

3. What professional development experience would enable teachers to better teach reading in a middle school setting?

Perceptions of Teachers Teaching Reading

The findings related to the first research question regarding the perception of teachers engaged in teaching reading to adolescents will be presented. These findings include the perception of teachers being reading teachers, the extent of the reading problem, perceived blocks to student reading success, assisting students to read or demonstrate reading ability, various settings for teaching reading, and professional development needs of teachers.

Perceptions of Teachers Being Reading Teachers

One finding of the study was that 6th grade teachers had the highest self-perception rating as reading teachers. Conversely, the 8th grade teachers had the lowest self-perception rating as reading teachers. This finding was supported by the perceptions of 6th grade teachers of how they incorporated reading strategies into the core subject classes. In addition, the 6th grade teachers reported the smallest percent of students that struggle with reading and the highest ranked perception that teaching basic skills was more important than teaching Grade Level Expectations. The 6th grade teachers also responded with the greatest recognition of responsibility and desire to teach reading. In addition, they acknowledged the need for additional training.

Five of the 6th grade teachers came from an elementary setting when Eastside Middle School became a middle school with 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students. The 6th grade teachers had the fewest number of teachers with a middle school certification. They embraced the reading program with more intensity and adopted more reading strategies in

the core subject classes when compared to the 7th and 8th grade. This may be related to specific training in the reading process through classes for elementary certification.

The 7th and 8th grade teachers recorded a lower perception rating of being reading teachers than the 6th grade teachers. They gave themselves a lower rating even though as a group they had highest number of middle school certified teachers. This may be due in part to their perception that teaching Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) should have a greater emphasis in middle school than teaching basic skills. However, the 7th grade teachers did indicate that teaching basic skills was important and should be included with teaching GLEs.

Based on the data retrieved in this study, the responsibility for teaching basic reading skills may be assimilated easily by the 6th grade teachers. Their interest level and previous training bodes well for the flexibility of separate reading classes, tutoring, and embedding teaching of reading in the core classes. The assessment of students entering the middle school experience through the 6th grade would provide ample time to address individual reading needs of students and ensure that basic skill development is prominent.

Extent of the Reading Problem

Data received from all teachers identified the percentage of students in their classes that they perceived struggled with reading. The range was from 30 percent identified by 6th grade teachers to 44 percent by 7th grade teachers. The 8th grade teachers perceived that 42 percent and exploratory teachers 33 percent of their students struggled with reading. The average percent of students perceived to struggle with reading by all teacher groups was 37 percent.

The greatest range within a single teacher group – the exploratory teachers – was 3 percent to 100 percent. When the extreme of this range at the high end was excluded from consideration, the range changed from 3 percent to 40 percent. The average then for the exploratory teachers would be 22 percent.

The percentage of students identified by all groups of teachers as struggling with reading was lower than reported by the National Association for Education Assessment (NEAP) in 2007. The percentage of 8th grade students labeled at basic or below basic reported by the NAEP (NCES, 2007) was approximately 70 percent. The percentage of students identified by teachers in this study was also lower than Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) and STAR scores had indicated for Eastside Middle School for previous years (DESE, 2006). The average percentage from these two instruments of students at basic or below basic was 60 percent. The discrepancy between perceptions of teachers regarding the percentage of struggling readers in their classes and the reported percentage from the MAP and STAR assessments of students at the basic or below basic levels was approximately 28 percent.

What accounts for the discrepancy between test scores and teachers' perceptions regarding the number of students who struggle with reading? Factors to consider include poor test-taking skills, taking a battery of tests in a short amount of time, or that classes are more meaningful than taking assessments. Additional factors may be that in both settings of classroom participation and test taking, the students are unmotivated but have basic skills in place or students demonstrate skills in classes to get better grades and meet

incentive requirements, or that students perform based on the relationship with the teacher.

The identification by the teachers of the percentage of students that struggle with reading was an open-ended question. There were no definitions offered about what defines the term "struggling readers." The perceptions of teachers were governed by their own definitions and considerations of what was meant by a struggling reader. The teachers' perceptions about students who struggled with reading were guided by observing students at various tasks, settings, and subjects. In addition, teachers had access to specific, authentic assessments that reflected the ability of students to read and/or apply reading strategies in the classroom.

Regardless of the reason or reasons for the discrepancy, approximately 37 percent of the students in this middle school setting, those identified by teachers, struggle with reading. Lyon (1999) reported that learning to read is a challenge for 60% of the children in the nation, and for at least 20% to 30% of these children, learning to read may be one of the greatest issues they will ever face in school. If basic skills are not developed at an early age, students find it very difficult to catch up at a later age (Moats, 2001; Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 1996).

The existence of the discrepancy raises the need for this middle school setting to determine a definition of struggling readers and potential reasons for why students perform at a basic or below basic level. The resolution to this issue would include appropriate assessments to determine basic reading skill needs of students and their motivation/interest levels.

Further consideration should be given to the low percentage of students identified by exploratory teachers. Reasons for the low percentage of students who struggle with reading as perceived by exploratory teachers may be that these classes are chosen by students and they have greater motivation to succeed based on higher levels of interest and relevance to their lives. The technical reading required in these classes may provide a basis for assessing and teaching basic reading skills.

Blocks to Student Reading Success

Data retrieved from the Teacher Perception Survey completed at the beginning of the school year revealed that the highest rated response by 20 teachers was lack of motivation as the primary block for students reading. Five teachers from two grade levels pointed out that lack of support from parents was a primary block to students reading. Five teachers from three grade levels also indicated that lack of reading ability or lack of skills was a block. These three indicators received the most number of responses to this open-ended question.

The data evaluated from the Summative Survey administered at the end of the school year indicated the same issues as recorded from the earlier survey. The issue of "lack of motivation" was determined to be the leading block that hinders struggling readers. The number of responses increased from 20 teachers on the first survey to 23 teachers on the second survey, thus affirming that "motivation" was perceived to be the greatest reason for students not reading better. However, the issue of "lack of ability or skills" skyrocketed from a response by 5 teachers on the first survey to 20 responses on the summative survey as a primary factor that keeps students from reading better. This

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sharp increase may be due to the respondents having taught reading as a separate class. The ideas that "materials were not relevant" and the "lack of parent support" were also factors for some teachers.

The consistency in responses by the teachers regarding the issue of "motivation" and "lack of ability or skills" was also supported by responses of teachers to the summative survey questions related to what should be integrated into literacy instruction and what topics ought to be included in the preparation of middle grade teachers in all subject areas. Teachers recognized the need to include a greater variety of literacies in their instruction. They also realized that additional training was needed in the area of strategies for working with at-risk, struggling readers, and in teaching and assessing specific components of the reading process.

The "lack of motivation" and "lack of ability" as blocks to reading may be a lack of interest or connectedness with in-school texts, reading materials, and curriculum. The school climate and perception of teachers of adolescent readers may be a contributing factor to the lack of motivation and demonstrated lack of ability to read for some students (Alvermann, 2002; Hall, 2006; Moak et al., 2006; Moje, 2006).

These factors, which are controlled by teachers and school community – relevant text, positive atmosphere in classroom and building, and providing a purpose for reading with real-life application – could have a positive influence on adolescent students reading in school (Elish-Piper & Tatum 2006; Moje, 2006). Teachers taking an interest in a student and maintaining a positive relationship with him affects the motivation of a student to read in school (Hall, 2006).

Students may need extra attention to learn basic reading skills. Vocabulary and comprehension were the two reading components emphasized in the reading classes and in core classes in this middle school setting. Teaching phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency was minimal. Moak and colleagues (2008) designated Myth 3 as adolescents do not need decoding instruction. The most prevalent block to students reading or reading better may be the lack of assessment of students to determine their unique literacy needs and motivation stimulus. The results of the assessments provide data to create the appropriate setting and instruction to meet the literacy needs of the students.

Assisting Students to Read or Demonstrate Reading Ability

Four suggestions were consistent in all teachers in response to the question of how to assist students. The suggestions, in order of the number of responses, were to: "provide reading materials the students like," "intensive work or tutoring with students," "increase teaching of reading skills in core classes," and "provide time to practice reading." In response to the question that in the opinion of the teachers what factors contributed to the progress shown by students in reading during the year, all teachers ranked teaching reading strategies as the number one factor and classroom organization as the second most important factor.

The responses to ways that students use literacy in their own lives were numerous. The ideas and suggestions of how use of literacy by students should influence the nature of literacy instruction were very insightful and student-centered. In addressing the needs of struggling readers in a middle school setting, Pitcher et al. (2007) suggested asking the students what is important to them out of school, validating many forms of reading as

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legitimate, and making available age and interest leveled books. Because teachers at all grade levels control the instructional strategies and climate of learning in their classrooms, they could include out-of-school literacies in their instruction.

The actual use of the ideas appeared limited when classroom observations were conducted. The most observed application came when students were engaged in individual or cooperative learning projects. Teachers experienced pressure to teach the aligned curriculum, which resulted in minimal use of additional materials and other literacies. Mallette et al. (2005) reported similar findings that teachers recognized a responsibility to teach literacy and were aware of out-of-school literacy interests of students but hesitated to include the new literacies for fear students would not be properly prepared to be successful in society if the standards-driven curriculum were not taught.

It was a finding of both Lyon (1999) and Shaywitz and Shaywitz (2002) that students do not outgrow reading difficulties but need specific interventions provided to develop reading skills and read better. The interventions should include instruction and strategies students can use related to all five components of the reading process (Deshler, et al., 2006; Fuchs et al., 2001; Hock et al., 2005; LaBerge & Samuels, 1974; Stanovich, 1984; Torgesen, 2007a; Torgesen, 2007b; Wolf et al., 2000).

Broaddus and Ivey (2002) affirmed that determining the appropriate interventions and addressing adolescent literacy is a complex issue with multi-faceted concerns. When addressing the issues of adolescent literacy, consideration should be given to out-of-school literacies used by students and their interests (Broaddus & Ivey, 2002; Chandler-Olcott & Mahar, 2003; Leander & Loworn, 2006; Lewis & Fabos, 2005; Moje et al.,

2008), perceptions of teachers and their beliefs (Bintz, 1997; Mallette et al., 2005; Reeves, 2004) and perceptions of students regarding reading and adolescent literacy issues (Hall, 2006; Pitcher et al. 2007).

The teachers in the middle school setting in this study perceived their responsibility to teach reading and expressed knowledge about the use of out-of-school literacies by students. It would seem prudent for the school community to talk about student assessments to determine needs and what blocks teachers from utilizing their understanding of student literacies as motivation for learning.

Setting for Teaching Reading

The 6th and 7th grade teachers agreed that all students, regardless of reading ability or level, should have reading taught in a separate reading class and incorporated into core subject classes. Some indicated it would be sufficient for students at or above grade level to have reading taught only in the core subject classes. The majority of 8th grade and exploratory teachers recorded that only students designated at basic or below basic should have a separate reading class. Students reading at or above grade level would receive sufficient teaching and support in reading through the core subject classes. Only one 8th grade teacher indicated all students should have a separate reading class in addition to reading in the core subject classes.

The most striking contrast in responses between 6th and 7th grade teachers, when compared to 8th grade teachers, was centered around two issues: the emphasis in a middle school as content Grade Level Expectations or basic skill development, and the setting for teaching reading. The complexity of the issues involved with adolescent literacy

(Broaddus & Ivey, 2002; Moak et al., 2006) may affect the decision that all teachers must teach basic skill development of reading in separate reading classes. Moak et al. (2006) addressed this issue in their Myth 2, suggesting that all teachers should be reading teachers.

The Eastside teachers agreed that reading strategies should be a part of teaching in all core subject classes. They indicated their priorities for training and desire to include a variety of genres and student interest materials in all classroom settings. The complexity of the reading process would dictate clear, precise, ongoing assessments to determine the specific needs of the students and how to address those needs in core classes or in separate reading classes.

<center>Integration of Reading Components in Core Classes</center>

The findings related to the second research question regarding teachers integrating reading components in core classes was presented based on data from the two surveys and the observations and notes of the researcher. Data received from the initial survey after eight weeks of school indicated little effect from teaching reading on core subject teaching/instruction. Additionally, teachers perceived little impact on students in the core subject classes.

The 6th grade teachers as a grade level team decided to implement the think-pair-share strategy and cooperative learning groups. Only three 7th grade teachers indicated implementing any reading strategies or changes in their core subject classes. Eight teachers responded that teaching reading had no effect on core classes. The greatest

number of teachers (9) shared their perception that teaching reading had a negative effect due to the amount of time taken away from core subject class preparation.

By the end of the school year there appeared to be a change in perception by teachers regarding the impact on teaching reading in the core classes. In response to the summative survey question regarding use of reading strategies in the core classes, all teachers indicated they used most, if not all, of the reading strategies. The observations of the researcher in classrooms and in conversation with teachers affirmed the use of reading strategies and classroom organization that engaged students in learning reading skills.

The change in perception and use of reading strategies reflected in the end-of-year survey and observations may be due in part to having had a year to experience the reading program, frequent meetings and discussions to deal with feelings and issues about reading, and teachers observing students more engaged in classes and the learning process.

The resistance at the beginning of the year from 7th and 8th grade teachers may have been related to their perceptions of teaching reading in core classes and not as a separate class. The 8th grade teachers identified their need to focus on content Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) so students would be successful on standardized assessments and would be prepared to go on to high school. The 8th grade teachers historically were the only teachers to give benchmark and MAP assessments. The issue is unresolved as to the most appropriate/successful place to teach reading in a middle school setting, either embedded in core classes or as a separate class, or some combination of the two.

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The literature and research were replete with suggestions and interventions for classroom teachers to use in working with struggling readers or to enhance development of reading skills. Interventions for any classroom setting (Broaddus & Ivey, 2002; Deshler & Hock, 2006; Ivey & Broaddus, 2001; Lenters, 2006; McEwan, 2007; Torgesen, 2007a) and for specific core subject classes (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008) are readily available for teacher scrutiny and implementation. In the setting of this study, the review of teacher interventions could be a primary focus of professional development.

<div align="center">Professional Development Needs</div>

The teachers and administrators at Eastside Middle School identified the persistent problem that a significant number of 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students read at the basic or below basic reading levels. The data used to identify this problem were gathered from assessments and the perceptions of teachers who observed students in their classrooms. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the perceptions of teachers to determine how to address this ongoing problem. A professional development experience could be developed using the data generated from the perceptions of teachers regarding the issues embedded in adolescent literacy for this middle school setting.

The two most common perceptions shared by teachers regarding what blocks students from learning to read or read better were "lack of motivation" and "lack of ability or skills." The teachers readily listed the use of literacies and out-of-school literacies engaged in by students. However, the teachers were reluctant to change the core subject curriculum to include these literacies. A professional development experience would include addressing the issue of lack of motivation by exploring how to restructure

classes to include relevant texts, by using meaningful literacies, and by enhancing teacher support of students who struggle with reading (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; Bintz, 1997; Broaddus & Ivey, 2002; Jacobs, 2008; Kamil, 2003; Lenters, 2006; Moje, 2006; Pitcher, 2007; Snow, 2002).

The issue of "lack of ability or skills" for students that struggle with reading is directly related to the five components of the reading process: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The five components of the reading process are clearly defined and provide the basis for a comprehensive reading program (Hock et al., 2005; Torgesen, 2007a, 2007b).

Teaching and learning these five components is essential to any professional development experience for teachers teaching reading. The relationship of the components of the reading process (NICHD, 2000a) to the Grade Level Expectations (DESE, 2007) is outlined for K-12 grade levels. The instructional strategies for teachers and reading skills necessary for students to be successful readers are also clearly defined (Kamil, 2003; NICHD, 2000a; NICHD, 2002; Snow, 2002).

The participating teachers, with a few exceptions, reported the use of all the reading strategies in their classrooms as listed on the summative survey. Since there is familiarity with the strategies, the focus of professional development experiences could be on how to model the strategies more effectively, how to assist students when errors are made, and how to assess student learning of the strategies (Calhoon, 2006; Deshler et al., 2006).

On the Summative Survey, teachers ranked specific topics related to teaching reading that should be in the preparation of all middle school teachers. The topic picked as most "essential" in preparation of middle grade teachers was "Strategies for working with at-risk struggling readers." This topic was chosen most "essential" by three of the four teacher groups (7th and 8th grade and exploratory teachers). The 6th grade teachers selected this strategy as "essential" but not the highest priority. The 6th grade teachers selected "Strategies for teaching and assessing reading comprehension" as the highest "essential" topic for preparation of middle grade teachers. The 7th and 8th grade teachers and exploratory teachers chose as second their "essential" choice the elements related to learning to teach and assess the five components of the reading process.

This data provide a basis for establishing a priority of professional development experiences related to reading and struggling readers. Four of the top six choices of what should be included in the preparation of middle grade teachers involved learning to teach and assess. Learning to assess reading ability and needs of students is essential to teaching reading.

The survey responses revealed that all teachers acknowledged their responsibility to teach literacy. This positive response allows the school community to focus on questions regarding teaching reading that include setting (separate class, in core classes, or some combination of the two), administering and interpreting assessments to determine reading needs of students, determining skills or strategies to focus on in the classroom, and how to motivate students. These issues can be addressed through professional development experiences.

On the Teacher Perception Survey, teachers suggested that an effective professional development experience was based on practical ideas and activities that were immediately applicable in a classroom setting. Only one teacher on this survey indicated professional development should include some theory and discussion.

Recommendations for Practice

Findings from this study have generated several recommendations for practice in Eastside Middle School, as well as possible implications for other middle schools. Those recommendations are presented next.

First, educators should determine the reading needs of adolescent students and what they perceive about adolescent literacy issues. This information could have an impact on the setting for teaching reading and teacher professional development. This could be accomplished by conducting surveys with students and more in-depth assessments of students who initially score below grade level or do not demonstrate good reading skills.

Second, identify tests or assessment instruments, both standardized and/or authentic, to be used specifically for middle school students. The reading difficulties and needs of students that struggle with reading in the middle school setting may require unique assessment instruments.

Next, administrators should dialogue with teachers regarding the best means to teach reading. The "best means" includes a discussion about the setting to teach reading in separate reading class, embedded instruction in core subject classes, special small group classes or tutoring, and professional development experiences based on students'

identified reading needs. The goal of the professional development training is to develop expertise in some teachers to address all components of the reading process. This training would involve teachers understanding how learning to read occurs, responding to errors, and the interaction of all reading components. Teaching reading and students learning to read is more than just doing activities and using a text.

Finally, the entire school community should be engaged in discussions and planning for the changes that impact the community in teaching reading. The discussions could include defining expectations, program evaluation, and how success of teaching reading is measured.

There were several limitations that should be considered in this study. First, the study was conducted in only one middle school in a district where there were two additional middle schools. During the 2007-2008 school year that the data were generated, several significant changes were taking place that may have influenced the perceptions of teachers. The demographics of this school community, including students, parents, faculty, and staff, were unique to this particular setting. The dynamics and history of this setting potentially impede the generalization of knowledge and duplication of this study. In addition, the Success For All program was mandated to the teachers, not chosen by them.

Time constraints did not permit the opportunity to ask additional questions or discuss survey responses from teachers. The next level of addressing the issues in this setting would be to gather more data about the needs of students, assessments, role of teachers in teaching reading, and the setting for teaching reading.

Recommendations for Future Research

The current study was a case study of the perceptions of teachers at one middle school. Additional studies could provide further information on the process of teaching reading to adolescents. Recommendations for future research include the following suggestions.

A study of various delivery models for teaching reading in the middle school setting might focus specifically on the effects of teaching reading as a separate class or embedded in the core subject classes, or some combination of the two methods. A quantitative study could be conducted by identifying students with similar reading difficulties and then randomly assigning them to either a separate reading class or core subject class where identified reading strategies are taught. A comparison could be made of the two groups regarding student performance on the same assessments administered at the beginning of the classes.

Middle school teachers come from a variety of backgrounds and have a variety of teaching qualifications. A study of the potential impact of teacher qualifications on their ability to teach reading may compare middle school certified teachers with elementary certified teachers specifically trained in reading, using the same reading program. The evaluation could be student achievement based on standardized or state assessments.

The research may include quantitative experimental studies comparing reading programs designed for the middle school level. The results could be evaluated with a variety of instruments including standardized tests, teacher evaluations, and student

performance in classes. In the Eastside School District, this could be achieved by having a different reading program taught at each of the three middle schools.

Future research may focus on determining effective and appropriate assessment instruments for all five components of the reading process, to be used specifically with adolescent students. There are assessments used at the elementary level that may be adapted for use in the middle school setting.

A qualitative study of student motivation could provide valuable information about how to help students become better readers and learners. This could be done by conducting student surveys regarding out-of-school literacies and then using that data for either motivation incentives or by directly relating it to the teaching curriculum. Student outcomes could be measured by comparison to previous assessment scores or other middle schools using the same assessment.

There is extensive research regarding the significance of comprehension and vocabulary and strategies about how to teach these two components at the middle school level. However, research is warranted on how to teach and increase the skills of phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency in adolescent students.

Finally, the teachers in this study were mandated to teach a separate reading class in addition to regularly assigned responsibilities. A qualitative study could be conducted, including the two other middle schools in the district, on change or leadership theory as related to the field of education and specifically the middle school setting.

Summary

The purpose of this study was identified as evaluating the perceptions of teachers teaching reading to adolescent students in a middle school setting. The primary issue presented in this study was the high number of students who were reading or demonstrating their reading ability at the basic or below basic level. The faculty and administration at Eastside Middle School for several years had tried a variety of ways to address the problem with little success.

A descriptive case study methodology provided the framework for this study. The teachers at Eastside Middle School shared their perceptions about teaching reading, adolescent literacy, blocks to students reading, ideas to address the problem of students that struggle with reading, and teacher training. The teachers shared their perceptions and focused their endeavors on working with students to increase their learning.

The data realized from the perceptions of teachers were gathered from two surveys completed by the teachers and the observations and notes of the researcher. The findings were reported by teacher group and were directly related to the three research questions that guided this study.

Findings related to the first research question included topics of perceptions by the teachers related to being reading teachers, extent of the problem, blocks to students reading, how to assist students to read or demonstrate reading ability, settings for teaching reading, and professional development needs. The findings of this study based on the perceptions of teachers provided ideas for addressing the issues embedded in adolescent literacy in this middle school setting.

The findings related to the second research question were based primarily on observations and notes of the researcher. The general topics of discussion included resistance by teachers to teach reading, evidence at the end of the school year that strategies for teaching reading were a part of the core classes, and recommendations for further inclusion of reading strategies.

In recommendations for practice, several topics were discussed in reference to the middle school in this study. The topics included identification of the reading needs of students, use of appropriate assessment instruments, the setting for teaching reading, professional development for teachers, and encouraging the school community to talk about the process of change.

Recommendations were made for future research studies. The studies could focus on the comparison of delivery models for teaching reading in a middle school setting, teacher experience and qualifications for teaching reading, and comparison of reading programs designated for middle schools. Studies could focus on how to teach basic components of the reading process, motivation and out-of-school literacies, and the use of change and learning theory in the middle school setting.

Adolescent literacy is a complex and challenging issue in the middle school setting. The response to this complex and challenging issue is to continue to find ways to assess and teach reading skills that ensure that all students learn to read to the best of their ability.

APPENDIX A

COMMUNICATION ARTS (READING) GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS

Communication Arts
Grade-Level Expectations

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
October 18, 2004

1 Develop and apply skills and strategies to the reading process

	GRADE K	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	GRADE 6	GRADE 7	GRADE 8
A Print Concepts	Demonstrate basic concepts of print • directionality • print tells story • word by word matching	Demonstrate concepts of print • upper- and lower-case letters • first and last letters in words • spaces between words • letter and word order • punctuation has meaning							
ST	CA 2, 3 1.5, 1.6	CA 2, 3 1.5, 1.6							
FR	I 1a, K-4	I 1a, K-4							
B Phonemic Awareness	Develop ability to hear and say separate sounds (phonemes) in words (phonemic awareness) • produce rhyming words • isolate consonant sounds • blend onset and rime • blend spoken phonemes	Demonstrate ability to hear and say separate sounds in words • separate and say sounds in words • blend sounds to form words • replace beginning and ending sounds to form new words							
ST	CA 2, 3 1.5, 1.6	CA 2, 3 1.5, 1.6							
FR	I 1b, K-4	I 1b, K-4							
C Phonics	Develop alphabet and phonics knowledge • by demonstrating an awareness that letters represent sounds (phonics) and a string of letters represent words • name most letters • say sounds associated with most letters • write letter that goes with spoken sound	Develop and apply decoding strategies to "problem-solve" regularly spelled one- or two-syllable words when reading	Develop and apply decoding strategies to "problem-solve" unknown words when reading	Apply decoding strategies to independently "problem-solve" unknown words when reading	Apply decoding strategies to "problem-solve" unknown words when reading	Apply decoding strategies to "problem-solve" unknown words when reading	Apply decoding strategies to "problem-solve" unknown words when reading	Apply decoding strategies to "problem-solve" unknown words when reading	Apply decoding strategies to "problem-solve" unknown words when reading
ST	CA 2, 3 1.6	CA 2, 3 1.6	CA 2, 3 1.6	CA 2, 3 1.6	CA 2, 3 1.6	CA 2, 3 1.6	CA 2, 3 1.6	CA 2, 3 1.6	CA 2, 3 1.6
FR	I 1a & e, II 2h, K-4	I 1a & e, II 2h, K-4	I 1a & e, II 2h, K-4	I 1a & e, II 2h, K-4	I 1a & e, II 2h, K-4	I 6b, 5-8	I 6b, 5-8	I 6b, 5-8	I 6b, 5-8

1 Develop and apply skills and strategies to the reading process - - - continued

	GRADE K	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	GRADE 6	GRADE 7	GRADE 8
D (Fluency)	Read simple text • containing a small bank of **high-frequency words** • consisting of **environmental print**	Read grade-level instructional text • by developing **automaticity** of an increasing core of high-frequency words • with appropriate phrasing and expression	Read grade-level instructional text with **fluency**, accuracy and expression	Read grade-level instructional text • with fluency, accuracy and expression • adjusting **reading rate** to difficulty and type of text	Read grade-level instructional text • with fluency, accuracy and expression • adjusting reading rate to difficulty and type of text	Read grade-level instructional text • with fluency, accuracy and expression • adjusting reading rate to difficulty and type of text	Read grade-level instructional text • with fluency, accuracy and appropriate expression • adjusting reading rate to difficulty and type of text	Read grade-level instructional text • with fluency, accuracy and appropriate expression • adjusting reading rate to difficulty and type of text	Read grade-level instructional text • with fluency, accuracy and appropriate expression • adjusting reading rate to difficulty and type of text
ST	CA 2, 3, 1.5	CA 2, 3, 1.5	CA 2, 3, 1.5	CA 2, 3, 1.5	CA 2, 3, 1.5	CA 2, 3, 1.5	CA 2, 3, 1.5	CA 2, 3, 1.5	CA 2, 3, 1.5
FR	I 1c, & e, 6d, K-4	I 1c, & e, 6d, K-4	I 1c, & e, 6d, K-4	I 1c, & e, 6d, K-4	I 1c, & e, 6d, K-4	I 5a, 5-8	I 5a, 5-8	I 5a, 5-8	I 5a, 5-8
E (Vocabulary)	Develop **vocabulary** by listening to and discussing unknown words in stories	Develop vocabulary through text, using • **base words** • **classroom resources**	Develop vocabulary through text, using • base words • classroom resources • **context clues**	Develop vocabulary through text, using • base words • synonyms and antonyms • context clues • glossary • dictionary, with assistance	Develop vocabulary through text, using • root words and **affixes** • synonyms and antonyms • context clues • glossary and dictionary	Develop vocabulary through text, using • roots and affixes • context clues • glossary and dictionary	Develop vocabulary through text, using • roots and affixes • context clues • glossary, dictionary and thesaurus	Develop vocabulary through text, using • roots and affixes • context clues • glossary, dictionary and thesaurus	Develop vocabulary through text, using • roots and affixes • context clues • glossary, dictionary and thesaurus
ST	CA 2, 3 1.5, 1.6	CA 2, 3 1.5, 1.6	CA 2, 3 1.5, 1.6	CA 2, 3 1.5, 1.6	CA 2, 3 1.5, 1.6	CA 2, 3 1.5, 1.6	CA 2, 3 1.5, 1.6	CA 2, 3 1.5, 1.6	CA 2, 3 1.5, 1.6
FR	I 6d, 1e, K-4	I 1e, 6d, K-4	I 1e, 6d, K-4	I 1e, 6d, K-4	I 1e, 6d, K-4	I 6b, d, 5-8	I 6b, d, 5-8	I 6b, d, 5-8	I 6b, d, 5-8

1 Develop and apply skills and strategies to the reading process - - - continued

		GRADE K	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	GRADE 6	GRADE 7	GRADE 8
Pre-Reading	**F**	Develop and apply, with assistance, **pre-reading strategies** to aid comprehension • access prior knowledge • preview text and picture • make general prediction	Develop and apply, with assistance, pre-reading strategies to aid comprehension • access prior knowledge • preview • predict with evidence • set a purpose for reading, with assistance	Develop and apply pre-reading strategies to aid comprehension • access prior knowledge • preview • predict and confirm or reject • set a purpose for reading	Apply pre-reading strategies to aid comprehension • access prior knowledge • preview • predict • set a purpose for reading	Apply pre-reading strategies to aid comprehension • access prior knowledge • preview • predict • set a purpose for reading	Apply pre-reading strategies to aid comprehension • access prior knowledge • preview • predict • set a purpose and rate for reading	Apply pre-reading strategies to aid comprehension • access prior knowledge • preview • predict • set a purpose and rate for reading	Apply pre-reading strategies to aid comprehension • access prior knowledge • preview • predict • set a purpose and rate for reading	Apply pre-reading strategies to aid comprehension • access prior knowledge • preview • predict • set a purpose and rate for reading
	ST	CA 2,3 1.5 & 1.6	CA 2,3 1.5 & 1.6	CA 2,3 1.5 & 1.6	CA 2,3 1.5 & 1.6	CA 2,3 1.5 & 1.6	CA 2,3 1.5 & 1.6	CA 2,3 1.5 & 1.6	CA 2,3 1.5 & 1.6	CA 2,3 1.5 & 1.6
	FR	I 1e & h, 4a & g, 6g, II 2d, K-4	I 1e & h, 4a & g, 6g, II 2d, K-4	I 1e & h, 4a & g, 6g, II 2d, K-4	I 1e & h, 4a & g, 6g, II 2d, K-4	I 1e & h, 4a & g, 6g, II 2d, K-4	I 6a, 5-8	I 6a, 5-8	I 6a, 5-8	I 6a, 5-8
During Reading	**G**	During reading or **read-alouds**, develop and utilize, with assistance, strategies to • self-question and correct • **infer** • **predict** and check using **cueing systems** > meaning > structure > visual	During reading, develop and utilize, with assistance, strategies to • self-question and correct • infer • predict and check using cueing systems > meaning > structure > visual	During reading, develop and utilize strategies to • self-question and correct • infer • predict and check using cueing systems > meaning > structure > visual	During reading, utilize strategies to • self-question and correct • infer • **visualize** • predict and check using cueing systems > meaning > structure > visual	During reading, utilize strategies to • self-question and correct • infer • visualize • predict and check using cueing systems > meaning > structure > visual	During reading, utilize strategies to • self-question and correct • infer • visualize • predict and check using cueing systems > meaning > structure > visual	During reading, utilize strategies to • self-question and correct • infer • visualize • predict and check using cueing systems > meaning > structure > visual	During reading, utilize strategies to • self-question and correct • infer • visualize • predict and check using cueing systems > meaning > structure > visual	During reading, utilize strategies to • self-question and correct • infer • visualize • predict and check using cueing systems > meaning > structure > visual
	ST	CA 2,3 1.5 & 1.6	CA 2,3 1.5 & 1.6	CA 2,3 1.5 & 1.6	CA 2,3 1.5 & 1.6	CA 2,3 1.5 & 1.6	CA 2,3 1.5 & 1.6	CA 2,3 1.5 & 1.6	CA 2,3 1.5 & 1.6	CA 2,3 1.5 & 1.6
	FR	I 1e, 6b & f, II 1i, 2d, K-4	I 1e, 6b & f, II 1i, 2d, K-4	I 1e, 6b & f, II 1i, 2d, K-4	I 1e, 6b & f, II 1i, 2d, K-4	I 1e, 6b & f, II 1i, 2d, K-4	I 6a-c, 5-8	I 6a-c, 5-8	I 6a-c, 5-8	I 6a-c, 5-8
Post-Reading	**H**	Develop and demonstrate, with assistance, **post-reading skills** after reading or read-alouds **to respond to text** • question to clarify • **retell** • **reflect** • **analyze** • **draw conclusions** • illustrate • re-enact stories	Develop and apply post-reading skills to respond to text • question to clarify • retell • **reflect** • **analyze** • **draw conclusions**	Apply post-reading skills to identify the **main idea and supporting details** • question to clarify • reflect • analyze • draw conclusions • **summarize** • **paraphrase**	Apply post-reading skills to identify and explain the relationship between the main idea and supporting details • question to clarify • reflect • analyze • draw conclusions • summarize • paraphrase	Apply post-reading skills to comprehend text • question to clarify • reflect • analyze • draw conclusions • summarize • paraphrase	Apply post-reading skills to comprehend and interpret text • question to clarify • reflect • analyze • draw conclusions • summarize • paraphrase	Apply post-reading skills to comprehend and interpret text • question to clarify • reflect • analyze • draw conclusions • summarize • paraphrase	Apply post-reading skills to comprehend and interpret text • question to clarify • reflect • analyze • draw conclusions • summarize • paraphrase	Apply post-reading skills to comprehend and interpret text • question to clarify • reflect • analyze • draw conclusions • summarize • paraphrase
	ST	CA 2,3 1.6 & 3.5	CA 2,3 1.6 & 3.5	CA 2,3 1.6 & 3.5	CA 2,3 1.6 & 3.5	CA 2,3 1.6 & 3.5	CA 2,3 1.6 & 3.5	CA 2,3 1.6 & 3.5	CA 2,3 1.6 & 3.5	CA 2,3 1.6 & 3.5
	FR	I 1e,3g,4e & f, II 1c,d,f & h, 2d K-4	I 1e,3g,4e & f, II 1c,d,f & h, 2d K-4	I 1e,3g,4e & f, II 1c,d,f & h, 2d K-4	I 1e,3g,4e & f, II 1c,d,f & h, 2d K-4	I 1e,3g,4e & f, II 1c,d,f & h, 2d K-4	I 3c,e,I 4c,I 6a, c, 5-8	I 3c, e, 4c, 6a, c, 5-8	I 3c, e, 4c, 6a, c, 5-8	I 3c, e, 4c, 6a, c, 5-8

Develop and apply skills and strategies to the reading process - - - continued

Making Connections

	GRADE K	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	GRADE 6	GRADE 7	GRADE 8
I	Identify connections, with assistance, between • text ideas --- similarities and differences in various real and make-believe works (**fiction and non-fiction**) • text ideas and own experiences	Identify connections between • text ideas ---similarities and differences in various fiction and non-fiction works, with assistance • text ideas and own experiences	Identify connections between • text ideas --- similarities and differences in information and relationships in various fiction and non-fiction works, with assistance • text ideas and own experiences • text ideas and the world, with assistance	Identify and explain connections between • text ideas --- information and relationships in various fiction and non-fiction works (**compare and contrast**) • text ideas and own experiences • text ideas and the world	Identify and explain connections between • text ideas --- information and relationships in various fiction and non-fiction works • text ideas and own experiences • text ideas and the world by demonstrating an awareness that literature reflects a **culture and historic time frame**	Compare, contrast and analyze connections between • information and relationships in various fiction and non-fiction works • text ideas and own experiences • text ideas and the world by responding to literature that reflects a culture and historic time frame	Compare, contrast and analyze connections between • information and relationships in various fiction and non-fiction works • text ideas and own experiences • text ideas and the world by identifying how literature reflects a culture and historic time frame	Compare, contrast, analyze and **evaluate** connections between • information and relationships in various fiction and non-fiction works • text ideas and own experiences • text ideas and the world by identifying and explaining how literature reflects a culture and historic time frame	Compare, contrast, analyze and evaluate connections between • information and relationships in various fiction and non-fiction works • text ideas and own experiences • text ideas and the world by analyzing the relationship between literature and its historical period and culture
ST	CA 2, 3, 7 1.5, 1.6	CA 2, 3, 7 1.5, 1.6	CA 2, 3, 7 1.5, 1.6	CA 2, 3, 7 1.5, 1.6	CA 2, 3, 7 1.5, 1.6	CA 2, 3, 7 1.5, 1.6, 1.9	CA 2, 3, 1.5, 1.6, 3.5, 1.9	CA 2, 3, 7 1.5, 1.6, 1.9	CA 2, 3, 7 1.5, 1.6, 1.9
FR	I 1d, 3a, 4c, d & h, 5a-d, 6c, II 1j, K-4	I 1d, 3a, 4c, d & h, 5a-d, 6c, II 1j, K-4	I 1d, 3a, 4c, d & h, 5a-d, 6c, II 1j, K-4	I 1d, 3a, 4c, d & h, 5a-d, 6c, II 1j, K-4	I 1d, 3a, 4c, d & h, 5a-d, 6c, II 1j, K-4	I 1b, e, 5a-c, II 1c, f, III 2d, e, IV 2b-c, 5-8	I 1b, e, 5a-c, II 1c, f, III 2d, e, IV 2b-c, 5-8	I 1b, e, 5a-c, II 1c, f, III 2d, e, IV 2b-c, 5-8	I 1b, e, **5a-c, II 1c, f, III 2d, e, IV 2b-c, 5-8**

2 Develop and apply skills and strategies to comprehend, analyze and evaluate fiction, poetry and drama from a variety of cultures and times

		GRADE K	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	GRADE 6	GRADE 7	GRADE 8
Text Features	**A**	Locate and apply information in title, pictures and names of author and illustrator, with assistance	Locate and apply information in title, pictures and names of author and illustrator	Locate and apply specific information in title, pictures and table of contents	Locate and • apply information in title, table of contents and glossary • recognize the **text features** of fiction, poetry and drama in grade-level text	Locate • interpret and apply information in title, table of contents and glossary • and recognize the text features of fiction, poetry and drama in grade-level text	Locate • interpret and apply information in title, table of contents and glossary • and recognize the text features of fiction, poetry and drama in grade-level text	Locate • interpret and apply information in title, table of contents and glossary • and recognize the text features of fiction, poetry and drama in grade-level text	Locate • interpret and apply information in title, table of contents and glossary • and recognize the format of fiction, poetry and drama in grade-level text	Locate • interpret and apply information in title, table of contents and glossary • and recognize the text features of fiction, poetry and drama in grade-level text
	ST	CA 2, 3 1.5, 1.6	CA 2, 3 1.5, 1.6	CA 2, 3 1.5, 1.6	CA 2, 3 1.5, 1.6	CA 2, 3 1.5, 1.6	CA 2, 3 1.5, 1.6	CA 2, 3 1.5, 1.6	CA 2, 3 1.5, 1.6	CA 2, 3 1.5, 1.6
	FR	I 1b, g, 2g, K-4	I 1b, g, 2g, K-4	I 1b, g, 2g, K-4	I 1b, g, 2g, K-4	I 1b, g, 2g, K-4	I 1a, 2 d, 5-8	I 1a, 2 d, 5-8	I 1a, 2 d, 5-8	I 1a, 2 d, 5-8
Literary Devices	**B**	Respond to **rhythm, rhyme and alliteration** in oral reading of poetry and prose	Read and respond to rhythm, rhyme and alliteration in poetry and prose	Identify author's use of rhythm, rhyme and alliteration in poetry and prose, with assistance	Explain examples of **sensory details** and **figurative language** within the context of poetry and prose	Explain examples of sensory details and figurative language within the context of poetry and prose	Explain examples of figurative language in poetry and prose (emphasize **simile, metaphor** and **personification**)	Identify and explain figurative language in poetry and prose (emphasize **onomatopoeia** and alliteration)	Identify and explain figurative language in poetry and prose (emphasize **hyperbole, imagery** and **symbolism**)	Identify and explain figurative language in poetry and prose (emphasize **jargon, dialect** and **slang**)
	ST	CA 2 1.5, 1.6	CA 2 1.5, 1.6	CA 2 1.5, 1.6	CA 2 1.5, 1.6	CA 2 1.5, 1.6	CA 2 1.5, 1.6	CA 2 1.5, 1.6	CA 2 1.5, 1.6	CA 2 1.5, 1.6
	FR	I 1i, 5e, K-4	I 1i, 5e, K-4	I 1i, 5e, K-4	I 1i, 5e, K-4	I 1i, 5e, K-4	I 1c & II 1d, 5-8	I 1c & II 1d, 5-8	I 1c & II 1d, 5-8	I 1c & II 1d, 5-8
Text Elements	**C**	Use details from text to identify **story elements** (main characters and problem)	Use details from text to identify • characters • problem • solutions • events in logical sequence	Use details from text to • make basic inferences about **setting,** characters and problem • predict solution • identify events in logical sequence	Use details from text to • make inferences about setting, **character traits** and problem and solution • make predictions • draw conclusions • compare and contrast characters and changes in problems and settings • identify the narrator • identify **cause and effect** • identify events from the beginning, middle and end • identify **author's purpose**	Use details from text to • make inferences about setting, character traits, problem and solution and story events • make predictions • draw conclusions • identify cause and effect • compare and contrast various elements • identify author's purpose	Use details from text to • make inferences about setting, character traits, problem and solution and story events • make predictions • draw conclusions • identify cause and effect • compare and contrast various elements • explain author's purpose	Use details from text to • analyze the influence of setting on characters, **plot** and resolution (conflict and climax) • explain cause and effect • identify **point of view** and **mood** • identify the problem-solving processes of characters and the effectiveness of solutions	Use details from text to • identify plot and **sub-plot, theme** and various types of **conflict** • analyze cause and effect • identify and explain point of view and mood • determine how an incident **foreshadows** a future event • evaluate the problem-solving processes of characters and the effectiveness of solutions	Use details from text to • analyze point of view, mood and theme • interpret actions, behaviors and motives of characters • evaluate problem-solving processes of characters, consequences of character's actions and effectiveness of solutions
	ST	CA 2 1.5, 1.6, 3.1, 3.5	CA 2 1.5, 1.6, 3.1, 3.5	CA 2 1.5, 1.6, 3.1, 3.5	CA 2 1.5, 1.6, 2.4, 3.1, 3.5	CA 2 1.5, 1.6, 2.4, 3.1, 3.5	CA 2 1.6, 2.4, 3.1, 3.4, 3.5, 3.7	CA 2 1.6, 2.4, 3.1, 3.4, 3.5, 3.7	CA 2 1.6, 2.4, 3.4, 3.5, 3.7, 3.8, 3.1	CA 2 1.6, 2.4, 3.4, 3.5, 3.7, 3.1
	FR	I 3b, II 1b & g, , III 1a, c & I, 2a-f, IV 1f-h, 2b-c, K-4	I 3b, II 1b & g, , III 1a, c & I, 2a-f, IV 1f-h, 2b-c, K-4	I 3b, II 1b & g, , III 1a, c & I, 2a-f, IV 1f-h, 2b-c, K-4	I 3b, II 1b & g, , III 1a, c & I, 2a-f, IV 1f-h, 2b-c, K-4	I 3b, II 1b & g, , III 1a, c & I, 2a-f, IV 1f-h, 2b-c, K-4	I 1d-c, 3c, II 1b, 1d, 2a, 1e, III 1a, g-h, 2a-b, IV 2b-c, 5-8	I 1d-c, 3c, II 1b, 1d, 2a, 1e, III 1a, g-h, 2a-b, IV 2b-c, 5-8	I 1d-c, 3c, II 1b, 1d, 2a, 1e, III 1a, g-h, 2a-b, IV 2b-c, 5-8	I 1d-c, 3c, II 1b, 1d, 2a, 1e, III 1a, g-h, 2a-b, IV 2b-c, 5-8

Reading

3 Develop and apply skills and strategies to comprehend, analyze and evaluate nonfiction (such as biographies, newspapers, technical manuals) from a variety of cultures and times

		GRADE K	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	GRADE 6	GRADE 7	GRADE 8
A Text Features		Develop an awareness that text and pictures provide information	Identify and explain information in text, pictures, title and charts	Locate and interpret information in illustrations, title, headings, captions, diagrams, charts and graphs	Locate and interpret key information in illustrations, title, chapter headings, table of contents, charts, diagrams, graphs, glossary, captions and maps to answer questions	Apply information in illustrations, title, chapter headings, table of contents, glossary, charts, diagrams, graphs, glossary, captions and maps to comprehend text	Apply information in format, graphics, sequence, maps, diagrams, charts and index to clarify and connect concepts to the main ideas	Analyze text features in newspapers and magazines to clarify meaning	Analyze the features of consumer texts, such as product information and instructional data to clarify meaning	Evaluate the author's use of text features to clarify meaning
	ST	CA 3 1.6	CA 3 1.6	CA 3 1.6	CA 3 1.6	CA 3 1.6	CA 3 1.6	CA 3 1.6	CA 3 1.6	CA 3 1.6, 2.4
	FR	I 2p, II 2f, K-4	I 2p, II 2f, K-4	I 2p, II 2f, K-4	I 2p, II 2f, K-4	I 2p, II 2f, K-4	I 6a, 3g, 5-8	I 6a, 3g, 5-8	I 6a, 3g, 5-8	I 6a, 3g, 5-8
B Literary Devices		Respond to rhythm, rhyme and alliteration in oral reading of nonfiction text	Read and respond to rhythm, rhyme and alliteration in nonfiction text	Identify and explain author's use of rhythm, rhyme and alliteration in nonfiction text	Explain examples of sensory details and figurative language within the context of nonfiction text	Explain examples of sensory details and figurative language within the context of nonfiction text	Identify and explain figurative language in nonfiction text (emphasize simile, metaphor and personification)	Identify and explain figurative language in nonfiction text (emphasize onomatopoeia and alliteration)	Identify and explain figurative language in nonfiction text (emphasize hyperbole, imagery and symbolism)	Identify and explain figurative language in nonfiction text (emphasize jargon, dialect and slang)
	ST	CA 3 1.5, 1.6	CA 3 1.5, 1.6	CA 3 1.5, 1.6	CA 3 1.5, 1.6	CA 3 1.5, 1.6	CA 3 1.5, 1.6	CA 3 1.5, 1.6	CA 3 1.5, 1.6	CA 3 1.5, 1.6
	FR	I 5e, IV 3c, K-4	I 5e, IV 3c, K-4	I 5e, IV 3c, K-4	I 5e, IV 3c, K-4	I 5e, IV 3c, K-4	I 1c & II 1d, 5-8	I 1c & II 1d, 5-8	I 1c & II 1d, 5-8	I 1c & II 1d, 5-8

3 Develop and apply skills and strategies to comprehend, analyze and evaluate nonfiction (such as biographies, newspapers, technical manuals) from a variety of cultures and times - - - continued

	GRADE K	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	GRADE 6	GRADE 7	GRADE 8

C / Text Elements	In response to text
	• develop questions to clarify meaning
	• answer questions and discuss text
	• recognize important information
	• identify supporting details
		Use details from text to
		• ask questions to clarify understanding
		• recognize important information in text
		• identify main ideas
		• identify supporting details
			Use details from text to
			• ask questions to clarify understanding
			• identify main ideas and provide support
			• retell sequence of events
			• make basic inferences about problems and solutions
				Use details from text to
				• answer questions
				• retell main idea and important details
				• organize a sequence of events
				• identify simple cause and effect
				• draw conclusions
				• compare and contrast texts
				• identify author's purpose for writing text
				• make inferences about problems and solutions
					Use details from text to
					• retell main ideas
					• organize a sequence of events
					• identify cause and effect
					• draw conclusions
					• compare and contrast texts
					• make predictions
					• make inferences
					• distinguish between fact and opinion
					• identify and explain author's purpose
					• make inferences about problems and solutions
						Use details from text to
						• restate main idea and supporting details
						• sequence events
						• identify and explain cause and effect
						• compare and contrast
						• make predictions
						• make inferences
						• evaluate the accuracy of the information
						• identify and interpret author's ideas and purpose
						• make inferences about problems and solutions
							Use details from text to
							• paraphrase author's stated ideas
							• make predictions
							• make inferences
							• evaluate the accuracy of the information
							• identify and interpret author's purpose, slant and bias
							• respond to two or more sources
							• sequence events
							• compare and contrast details
							• identify and explain cause and effect
							• identify problem solving processes and explain the effectiveness of solutions
								Use details from text to
								• summarize author's ideas
								• make predictions
								• make inferences
								• evaluate the accuracy of the information
								• analyze **propaganda techniques**
								• analyze two or more nonfiction texts
								• sequence events
								• compare and contrast
								• identify and explain cause and effect
								• compare author's viewpoint and provide support
								• identify problem solving processes and explain the effectiveness of solutions
									Use details from text to
									• evaluate adequacy of evidence presented by author
									• determine author's purpose based on text analysis
									• analyze the text for
									  > word choice and **connotation**
									  > selection of details
									  > organizational effectiveness
									  > accuracy of information
									• analyze multiple texts
									  > compare and contrast of information
									  > determine importance of information
									• analyze authors' viewpoints
									• identify problem solving processes and explain the effectiveness of solutions

ST	CA 3 1.6, 2.4, 3.5	CA 3 1.6, 2.4, 3.5	CA 3 1.6, 2.4, 3.5, 3.1	CA 3 1.6, 2.4, 3.5, 3.7, 3.1	CA 3 1.6, 2.4, 3.1, 3.5	CA 3 1.6, 1.7, 2.4, 3.1, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7	CA 3 1.6, 1.7, 2.4, 3.1, 3.5, 3.6	CA 3 1.6, 1.7, 2.4, 3.1, 3.5, 3.6, 3.4	CA 3 1.6, 1.7, 2.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.1, 3.4
FR	I 3c, II 1f, III 2e-f, 3a, K-4	I 3c, II 1f, III 2e-f, 3a, K-4	I 3c, II 1f, III 2e-f, 3a, K-4	I 3c, II 1f, III 2e-f, 3a, K-4	I 3c, II 1f, III 2e-f, 3a, K-4	I 1c-d, 3a-c, f, III 3e, 5-8	I 1c-d, 3a-c, f, III 3e, 5-8	I 1c-d, 3a-c, f, III 3e, 5-8	I 1c-d, 3a-c, f, III 3e, 5-8

3 **Develop and apply skills and strategies to comprehend, analyze and evaluate nonfiction (such as biographies, newspapers, technical manuals) from a variety of cultures and times - - - continued**

		GRADE K	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	GRADE 6	GRADE 7	GRADE 8
D		Follow a simple pictorial/written direction, with assistance	Read and follow a simple direction to perform a task	Read and follow simple directions to perform a task	Read and follow two- and three-step directions to complete a simple task	Read and follow three- and four-step directions to complete a task	Read and follow multi-step directions to complete a task	Read and follow multi-step directions to complete a **complex task**	Read and follow multi-step directions to a complete a complex task	Read and follow multi-step directions to complete a complex task
	Understanding Directions									
ST		CA 3 1.5, 1.6	CA 3 1.5, 1.6	CA 3 1.5, 1.6	CA 3 1.5, 1.6	CA 3 1.5, 1.6	CA 3 1.5, 1.6	CA 3 1.5, 1.6	CA 3 1.5, 1.6	CA 3 1.5, 1.6
FR		I 3e, K-4	I 3e, K-4	I 3e, K-4	I 3e, K-4	I 3e, K-4	I 6a, 5-8	I 6a, 5-8	I 6a, 5-8	I 6a, 5-8

3 Develop and apply skills and strategies to comprehend, analyze and evaluate nonfiction (such as biographies, newspapers, technical manuals) from a variety of cultures and times - - - continued

		GRADE K	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	GRADE 6	GRADE 7	GRADE 8
D	Understanding Directions	Follow a simple pictorial/written direction, with assistance	Read and follow a simple direction to perform a task	Read and follow simple directions to perform a task	Read and follow two- and three-step directions to complete a simple task	Read and follow three- and four-step directions to complete a task	Read and follow multi-step directions to complete a task	Read and follow multi-step directions to complete a **complex task**	Read and follow multi-step directions to complete a complex task	Read and follow multi-step directions to complete a complex task
	ST	CA 3 1,5, 1,6	CA 3 1,5, 1,6	CA 3 1,5, 1,6	CA 3 1,5, 1,6	CA 3 1,5, 1,6	CA 3 1,5, 1,6	CA 3 1,5, 1,6	CA 3 1,5, 1,6	CA 3 1,5, 1,6
	FR	I 3e, K-4	I 3e, K-4	I 3e, K-4	I 3e, K-4	I 3e, K-4	I 6a, 5-8	I 6a, 5-8	I 6a, 5-8	I 6a, 5-8

APPENDIX B

Middle School Reading Committee
Timeline, 2007

Action	Dates/ Person(s) Responsible
Review of STAR data in order to analyze potential literacy resource needs	October, 2006 Lori, Carol, At-risk committee
Site visit to Raytown in order to view Read 180 classrooms	November, 2006 Building Representatives/Admin.
On-going discussions (What skills are our students lacking? What do our kids need to be successful in reading? Where do we go from here?)	November – December, 2006 At-risk committee, Building principals, Dr. Hartnett, Lori
Principal meeting to discuss necessity and feasibility of potential literacy resources	January, 2007
Coordination of initial reading remediation sub-committee	January, 2007
Utilize RTI model in order to identify what literacy programs/resources are currently in use or are available in the three middle schools	January, 2007 Sub-committee representatives
Based on RTI model, identify strengths and weaknesses of current literacy program (What is working? What is still needed?)	January, 2007 Sub-committee representatives
Research – Identify what local, successful (based on current MAP data) school districts are currently utilizing for resources, Call all major textbook company representatives to express needs and analyze what resources they may have that meet our district needs, Research additional programs and resources that are in existence for middle level literacy	January, 2007 Dr. Hartnett, Building principals, Lori
Add additional stakeholders to reading committee – representatives from each middle school	January, 2007
Identify those characteristics which the committee feels are required for a program to be considered "good quality" and discuss those programs and resources which fit criteria	February, 2007 Reading Committee
Connect STAR data for upcoming middle school students (2007-2008) to RTI model – What percentage of our students are going to need various interventions?	February, 2007 Reading Committee
Meet with representatives from various resources (SFA, Read 180, AMP) and view resources sent by textbook companies	March, 2007 Reading Committee – Release Day
Site visit to Rogers Middle School(KCMo) in order to observe SFA classrooms	April, 2007

Aspects of a quality literacy resource as defined by the reading committee…

- ➢ Must include the five essential components as defined by DESE (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension)
- ➢ Must be research-based
- ➢ Quality assessment/diagnosis with accompanying strategies
- ➢ Prescriptive w/teacher flexibility
- ➢ On-going professional development that is specific to our needs
- ➢ Wide variety of high interest materials
- ➢ Relevant student activities
- ➢ Leveled (Remedial resources as well as those resources for students reading well above grade level)

APPENDIX C

CATEGORIES OF COMPREHENSION INSTRUCTION

The definitions for the following comprehension instruction strategies are

recorded in *The Literacy Dictionary: The Vocabulary of Reading and Writing* (Harris &

Hodges.

1. Comprehension Monitoring (Metacognitive Awareness): is the noting of one's

successes and failures in developing or attaining meaning, usually with reference to an

emerging conception of the meaning of the text as a whole, and adjusting one's reading

processes according (p. 39). Metacognitive awareness is knowing when one is reading

makes sense by monitoring and controlling one's own comprehension (p. 153).

2. Cooperative Learning: any pattern of classroom organization that allows

students to work together to achieve their individual goals (p. 45). Collaborative learning:

learning by working together in small groups, so as to understand new information or to

create a common product (p. 35).

3. Graphic Organizer: diagram or pictorial device that displays relationships (p.

101).

4. Listening Actively: act of understanding speech; highest grade level of material

that can be comprehended well when it is read aloud to the student; auditing, the

processes of perceiving, recognizing, interpreting, and responding to oral language

(p.140, 14).

5. Mental Imagery: a perceptual representation or ideational picture of a

perceptual experience, remembered or imagined (p. 152).

6. Mnemonic Instruction: procedures that include devices or techniques that are aimed at improving memory (p. 156).

7. Multiple Strategy Instruction: "in education, a systematic plan, consciously adapted and monitored, to improve one's performance in learning" (p. 244).

8. Prior Knowledge: "activation of relevant world knowledge" (p. 194).

9. Psycholinguistic Instruction: "the interdisciplinary field of psychology and linguistics in which language behavior is examined. Psycholinguistics includes such areas of inquiry as language acquisition, conversational analysis, and the sequencing of themes and topics in discourse" (p. 197).

10. Story Structure: "an imaginative tale shorter than a novel but with a plot, characters, and setting, as a short story. A story map is a time line showing the ordered sequence of events in a text or a semantic map showing the meaning of relationships between events or concepts in the text, regardless of their order" (p. 243).

13. Summarization: "a brief statement that contains the essential ideas of a longer passage or selection" (p. 247).

TEACHER PERCEPTION SURVEY

How do you perceive yourself teaching reading (Please circle)

Very weak   Very Strong
Low   High

1   2   3   4   5

What is your greatest strength in teaching reading?

What do you need to improve on in teaching reading?

What effect or influence has teaching reading had in your core subject teaching?

What effect, if any, have the reading classes had on your students in your core subject classes?

What blocks students from learning to read or increase their reading skills at the middle school level?

What characterizes an effective professional development experience?

SUMMATIVE SURVEY – 2007-2008 SCHOOL YEAR

Demographic Data:
Reading level taught this year   _____
Yrs. In middle school   _____
Yrs. Teaching   _____
M.S. Certified   Y N
Highest degree   _____
Subject/Grade taught this year   _____

1) There are middle school students who struggle with reading. In your opinion what percent of students struggle with reading in your classes? _____%.

2) What keeps struggling readers from learning to read?
_____ Lack of ability or skills
_____ Motivation
_____ Materials not relevant to their life situation
_____ Other:_____

3) Any ideas or thoughts on how to assist struggling readers?

4) For students that showed progress in reading what factors contributed to this success?
(Rank order at least top two reasons)
_____ Teaching reading strategies
_____ Expectations with grades given for reading
_____ Peer pressure to perform
_____ Classroom organization (cooperative learning, other techniques)
_____ Abilities were always there just need motivation to read
_____ Routine of the program
_____ Other:_____

5) Structure of reading classes

	Separate reading class	Reading in core class	Both
Students reading below grade level should have	_____	_____	____
Students reading at or above grade should have	_____	_____	____

6) Do you regard literacy instruction as a part of your teaching responsibility? _____
If yes, please explain:

7) Which reading strategies do you use in your core/elective classes?

_____clarifying   _____predicting   _____main idea
_____summarizing   _____visualizing   _____fix up strategies
_____questioning   _____content vocabulary   _____connections (self, text, world)

8) At the middle school level which should have the greatest emphasis? (please check)

_____ Teaching content GLEs or
_____ Teaching basic skill development

Why?

9) (a) In what ways do your students use literacy in their own lives?

 (b) How do you believe students' use of literacy should influence the nature of literacy instruction for middle grade students?

10) Please react to the following statement, "Every teacher is a teacher of literacy."

11) Please rank your comfort level with the SFA program.

	Extremely Uncomfortable	Comfortable			Extremely Comfortable
Beginning of the year	1	2	3	4	5
End of the year	1	2	3	4	5

12) Any concerns/issues about how the reading program was added to the curriculum or the added preparation for teaching another subject?

13) What suggestions would you have about the reading/literacy program for next year?

14) Please rate the extent to which each of the following should be integrated into the literacy instruction of middle grade students: Please circle.

	0=Not at All Important	1=Somewhat Important	2=Very Important	3= Essential
Visual Literacy	0	1	2	3
Internet Literacy	0	1	2	3
Global Communication	0	1	2	3
Media Literacy	0	1	2	3
Pop Culture	0	1	2	3
In School Literacies (texts, assigned reading)	0	1	2	3
Developmentally Responsive Teaching	0	1	2	3
Cultural and Linguistic Diversity	0	1	2	3
Engagement/Motivation	0	1	2	3
Out of School Student Interest Literacies	0	1	2	3

15) Please rate the extent to which each of the following topics ought to be included in the preparation of middle grade teachers in all subject areas. Please circle.

	0=Not at All Important	1=Somewhat Important	2=Very Important	3= Essential
Variety of text structures and genres in reading	0	1	2	3
Understanding Reader Response Theory	0	1	2	3
Strategies for teaching and assessing reading comprehension	0	1	2	3
Strategies for teaching and assessing vocabulary	0	1	2	3
Strategies for teaching and assessing word recognition and analysis	0	1	2	3
Strategies for teaching assessing reading fluency	0	1	2	3
Learning strategies students can use to become independent, strategic readers (fixing-up meaning, reciprocal teaching, etc).	0	1	2	3
Understanding how assessment informs instruction	0	1	2	3
Strategies for working with at-risk, struggling readers	0	1	2	3
Instruction and assessment of literacy integration in the content areas	0	1	2	3
Literature in the context area	0	1	2	3

MALLETTE SURVEY

Middle Level Literacy Survey

School Code_____

Primary Responsibility – Teacher Administrator

Current Grade Level(s) You Teach _____

Current Subject(s) You Teach _____

Number of years teaching at the middle level_____

Total number of years teaching_____

Grade Levels and Subject(s) previously taught _____

Certification Level – Elementary Secondary K-12 Special Education Other_____

Subject Certifications Held

Highest Level of Education

      Degree/Major   Date

Other Professional Development, including Current

Questions

1. Do you regard literacy instruction as a part of your teaching responsibility?

      If yes, please explain.

2. (a) In what ways do your students use literacy in their own lives?

   (b) How do you believe students' use of literacy should influence the nature of literacy instruction for middle grade students?

3. What knowledge of literacy processes is important in the preparation of future middle grade teachers in all content areas?

4. How would you describe the way literacy is taught in your building?

5. Please react to the following statement, "Every teacher is a teacher of literacy."

Please be sure your responses are complete. Once you click on the submit button, you will be taken to the second part of the survey and will not be able to return to these questions.

Part 2—

1. Please rate the extent to which each of the following topics ought to be included in the preparation of middle grade teachers in all subject areas.

	0=Not at all Important	1=Somewhat Important	2= Very Important	3=Essential
Writing processes (i.e., rehearsal, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing)	0	1	2	3
Variety of text structures and genres in both reading and writing	0	1	2	3
Understanding Reader Response Theory	0	1	2	3
Strategies for teaching and assessing reading comprehension	0	1	2	3
Strategies for teaching and assessing vocabulary	0	1	2	3
Strategies for teaching and assessing word recognition and analysis	0	1	2	3
Strategies for teaching and assessing reading fluency	0	1	2	3
Strategies for teaching and assessing writing (e.g., focus, organization, elaboration / support, conventions, and integration in writing	0	1	2	3
Learning strategies students can use to become independent, strategic readers and writers (e.g., monitoring and fixing-up meaning)	0	1	2	3
Understanding how assessment informs instruction	0	1	2	3
Strategies for working with at-risk, struggling readers	0	1	2	3
Strategies for working with at-risk, struggling writers				
Instruction and assessment of literacy integration in the content areas	0	1	2	3
Literature in the content area	0	1	2	3

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2. Please rate the extent to which each of the following should be integrated into the literacy instruction of middle grade students?

	0=Not at all Important	1=Somewhat Important	2= Very Important	3=Essential
Visual Literacy	0	1	2	3
Internet Literacy	0	1	2	3
Global Communication	0	1	2	3
Media Literacy	0	1	2	3
Pop Culture	0	1	2	3
In School and Out of School Literacies	0	1	2	3
Developmentally Responsive Teaching	0	1	2	3
Cultural and Linguistic Diversity	0	1	2	3
Engagement	0	1	2	3

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VITA

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Dennis was born in Sharon, Pennsylvania in 1948. He attended public schools in Pennsylvania, Missouri, and Alaska, and graduated high school in Syracuse, New York. He completed higher education degrees from Graceland University, United Theological Seminary, University of Missouri at Kansas City and the University of Missouri at Columbia.

Dennis is married with three adult children. He currently works with his wife, Terry, in an educational consultant and training company.