Opportunities Gained and Lost:
Perceptions and Experiences of Sixth Grade Students Enrolled in a Title I Reading Class

by

Kathleen Donalson

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation was to explore the perceptions and experiences of one class of sixth grade students enrolled in a Title I supplemental reading class. Qualitative research methods included observations, interviews, archived data, and Miscue Analysis. I examined the data through a Vygotsky constructivist perspective to provide insight to the manner in which readers could be supported in their literacy development. Based on the analysis of individual data collected, the curriculum was dissected to determine whether the students' unique strengths and needs were addressed within the Title I reading class. I explored the emotional and educational consequences of students enrolled in a supplemental reading program implemented for readers identified as below proficiency by the state's standardized reading assessment. I examined the contrast between the Title I instructional curriculum provided first semester and the beginning of second semester during a school year. The findings of the study revealed the negative consequences of high stakes standardized testing, educational decisions based on a single measure, a mandated scripted commercial reading program, and loss of certain educational classes. The findings disclosed the positive outcomes of a supportive curriculum through an engaging reading curriculum and the opportunity to keep certain educational classes. The implications of the study provided educators constructs for supporting readers through appropriate developmental text and supportive social contexts to help these students succeed. (contains 22 figures)

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by

Kathleen Donalson, MA

A Dissertation

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
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Approved

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For I know the plans I have for you…Plans to give
You hope and a future. Jeremiah 29:11

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ABSTRACT

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Chapter I

Introduction

Adolescence

Adolescence is a time of confusion with emotional, physical, psychological, and intellectual changes. According to the Carnegie Corporation "adolescence is one of the most fascinating and complex transitions in the life span: a time of accelerated growth and change second only to infancy; a time of expanding horizons, self-discovery, and emerging independence, a time of metamorphosis from childhood to adulthood" (p. 1). Piaget (1972) classified adolescence as the last stage of cognitive development, formal operational thought. The adolescent enters intellectual maturation which allows for cognitive thinking involving speculation and hypothesis. The Society for Adolescent Medicine (1995) claimed adolescence is a time of dramatic changes physically, intellectually, emotionally, and socially for pre-teens and teenagers. The Carnegie Corporation remarked "The events of this crucially formative phase can shape an individual's entire life course and thus the future of our society" (p. 1).

Adolescents must receive reading support. The International Reading Association (IRA) position statement proclaimed "Middle school students deserve continued and systematic instruction in reading. Young adolescents deserve quality reading instruction so they can achieve a level of reading proficiency that will serve them well for the rest of their school careers and beyond" (IRA, 2002, p. 2). The National Council for Teachers of

English (NCTE, 2004) asserted "reading is not a technical state acquired once and for all in the primary grades, but rather a developmental process" (p. 1). Developmentally appropriate reading instruction should begin in the primary grades and continue throughout a student's educational career.

Adolescents who struggle in school

Adolescents who struggle in school are at extreme risk. Many researchers warned of numerous risks associated with adolescents who struggle in reading (Beers, 2003; Goetze & Walker, 2004; Moore, Alverman & Hinchman, 2000). These risks included academic failure, sociological consequences, and emotional repercussions. Piaget (1972) suggested society and education were crucial factors in enabling adolescents to attain formal operational thought. Without societal and educational support, adolescents may remain stagnant in cognitive development, thus remaining in concrete operational development. Concrete operational development limits thinking to specific experiences or perceptions and prevents the ability to think abstractly. Struggling students often are placed in low-achievement classes. Allington and Walmsley (2007) stated children placed in low-achievement groups are "far more likely to (1) leave school before graduating, (2) fail a grade, (3) be placed in special education, (4) become a teenage parent, (5) commit a juvenile criminal offense, and (6) remain less than fully literate" (p. 2). Researchers and educators must consider the complexity of the developmental issues surrounding adolescents who struggle with reading.

Title I Reading Programs

Title I is a federal program with the purpose of improving the academic achievement of children who are qualified as disadvantaged in terms of socio-economic status. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2006), students from low socio-economic status are at an academic disadvantage. Traditionally, Title I funding has decreased as grade levels progress, 47% of those students receiving Title I services were in grades kindergarten through third, 28% were in grades four through six, 17% were in grades seven through nine and 8% were in grades ten through twelve (U.S. Department of Education National Assessment of Title I report, 2006). Students' opportunities to receive Title I reading assistance decreased drastically after elementary school; furthermore, the data trends indicated achievement in reading was less positive for students beyond the fourth grade. Some researchers claimed Title I reading intervention classes have little impact on reading achievement after third grade (Dyer & Binkney, 2007). Reading achievement decreased with each passing year as well as opportunities to participate in Title I services.

Middle school students identified as at risk readers, based on below proficiency reading scores on state mandated tests, may be placed in Title I reading classes. These Title I remedial reading programs are evaluated on students' reading performance on the state's standardized assessment (U.S. Dept. of Ed. Title I, 2006). The effects of these reading programs on the individual are not evaluated holistically, considering the affective domain as well as academic performance. Many researchers cautioned remedial

reading programs have negative academic and emotional consequences for the reader who struggles (Allington, 2007; Atwell, 1998; Pressley, 2006).

Poor readers are provided with suboptimal educational resources (Allington, 2007; Stanovich, 1986). Disadvantage children are often exposed to inferior schools and are victim of a poorer educational system (Allington, 2007). Remedial reading programs often have mandated scripted programs, watered-down curriculum and low-level skills with the aim of raising test scores (Allington, 2001; Atwell, 1998). Atwell (1998) found lower homogeneous classes received mostly low level remedial work and engaged in reading exercises which focused primarily of text based questions failing to engage in critical thinking. These remedial classes focused primarily on lower level educational goals. In Bloom's Taxonomy (1956), these skills would fall under level one (basic knowledge) and level two (comprehension). Students in these remedial classes failed to be given opportunities to engage in Bloom's higher levels: apply their knowledge to real situations, analyze relationships, synthesize material, and evaluate through value judgments. These classes had a watered down version of content, skills and fundamental work (Atwell, 1998). Researchers asserted reading intervention programs focus on raising standardized test scores through a controlled curriculum does not align with providing middle school students authentic reading experiences (Pedulla, 2003; Mastropierei, Scruggs, & Graetz, 2003).

Researchers claimed students need to be taught reading strategies explicitly through engagement with authentic texts (Daniels & Zemelman, 2004; Gunning, 2004;

Harvey & Goudvis, 2000; Langer, 2001; Lenihan, 2003; Mastropierei, Scruggs, & Graetz, 2003; Spear-Swearling, 2004; Tovani, 2000; Vacca & Vacca, 2005). However, remedial reading programs focus on isolated skills rather than teaching reading strategies in authentic contexts (Allington, 2001, 2007; Atwell, 1998). Repeatedly, struggling readers are in intervention programs that limit reading genres and focus on skills through workbooks and skill worksheets (Atwell, 1998). Researchers claimed students need a wide variety of reading genres and texts; thus, they need a "balanced reading diet" (Daniels & Zemelman, 2004; Pflaum & Bishop, 2004; Spear-Swerling, 2004). However, readers who struggle are not provided the same reading experiences as more capable peers (Klenk & Kibby, 2000).

Remedial reading classes have a negative impact in numerous ways. Some researchers found schools decreased the opportunities for students to participate to elective coursework in order to provide remedial reading instruction (Donalson & Halsey, 2007; Halsey, 2003; Pedulla, 2003; Tompkins, 2002). Struggling readers were separated from their peers to receive reading instruction resulting in negative effects on these students (Worth, 1996). McKenna and Stahl (2003) stated negative reading experiences attributed to a decrease in students' self-efficacy. Researchers cautioned readers who struggle may develop helplessness and hopelessness (Ivey, 1999; Pressley, 2006; Vacca & Vacca, 2005). Negative experiences in remedial reading classes can result in diminishing the psychological well-being of these students (McCabe, 2006) including diminishing self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Pajares, 2003; Schunk, 2003).

Exposure to reading

Readers who struggle experience a phenomenon known as the "Matthew Effect" (Stanovich, 1986). The phrase was coined after the verse Matthew 25:29 from the New Testament "for everyone who has will be given more, and he will have abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him" (New International Version). The concept behind the Matthew Effect was that poor readers continued to decline in their development while proficient (rich) readers developed further. Perhaps one explanation for this phenomenon is that proficient readers are exposed to experiences that enhance their further development, while less proficient readers do not have these same experiences (Allington & Walmsley, 2007). Stanovich claimed better readers read more often for leisure; thus these readers encounter more text, contributing to larger vocabularies and broader knowledge base. The larger the knowledge base, the greater the prospect for acquiring more knowledge. Therefore, leisure reading promotes reading proficiency creating a reciprocal effect. Poorer readers have fewer successful reading experiences; they tend to engage in reading less often which limits their literacy development. These reciprocal relationships put into motion a cycle of learning that further benefits a proficient reader while placing poor readers at a further disadvantage. The phrase "poorer-get-poorer effects may help to explain certain aspects of reading failure" (Stanovich, 1986, p. 484). Bast and Reitsma (1998) concluded good readers tend to read more frequently and these frequencies contributed to vocabulary development. The larger the child's vocabulary, the better the child was at reading comprehension. The

better a child was at reading comprehension, the larger the vocabulary resulting in a reciprocal phenomenon. Reciprocal causation occurred contributing to future successes or failures (Bast & Reitsma, 1998). Nagy and Anderson (1984) found a large discrepancy between the amounts of words skilled readers, average readers, and poor readers were exposed to in text. The volume of vocabulary exposure contributed to the "rich-get richer" and the "poor-get-poorer" philosophy. The very children who read often had larger vocabularies and the richness of their vocabulary contributed to more reading success. Children with inadequate vocabulary read slowly and had less exposure to text, thus inhibiting future growth in reading ability. Reading was hindered by a combination of lack of practice, deficient decoding skills, materials outside of the instructional level, less involvement in reading activities, and less skill. The process was reciprocal in the way reading contributed to further cognitive development, knowledge and vocabulary.

Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework provides a lens through which the researcher views and interprets data. The works of Lev Vygotsky (1978) provide such a lens to view struggling readers. Vygotsky's constructivist perspective provides insight to the manner in which struggling readers can be supported in their literacy development. Rather than concepts and learning being handed or poured into the student, the learner constructs his or her own understanding by drawing on prior experiences through "active construction rather than passive acquisition" (Dixon-Krauss, 1996, p. 18). The teacher acts as a mediator in a flexible role to share and construct understanding through social interaction

(Vygotsky, 1978). The teacher provides support through scaffolding in a process called semiotic flexibility, referring to "the adult's shifts in speech that provide responses or directives to the child" (Dixon-Krauss, 1996, p. 15). Reading instruction is conducted as a series of building blocks, each subsequent block adding to the previous block of background knowledge. The process is a dynamic interaction between assessment and instruction (Kragler, 1996). The teacher continually assesses the reader adjusting instruction to meet the developmental needs of the reader.

Vygotsky (1978) stated learning must be matched to the child's developmental level. Historically, the developmental level was defined as child's mental age as determined by standardized tests; however, Vygotsky's theory of zone of proximal development (ZPD) was more comprehensive. He identified learning as the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978). In order to be in the child's zone of proximal development, the activity must be too difficult for the child to perform independently but possible to perform with the support of an adult or capable peers (Dixon-Krauss, 1996). The zone of proximal development not only explained children's mental development but also explained the possibility of development with support and maturation. Vygotsky's philosophy was based on the presumption that "children grow into the intellectual life of those around them" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 88). Vygotsky (1978) believed learning occurred from moving from the external social to the internal.

In other words, children learn through external social interactions. After children have the opportunity to interact through learning experiences with peers or adults, they then can transfer that new concept to internal learning. Reading begins by external egocentric speech to internalized processes (Dixon-Krauss, 1996). Social interaction facilitates learning through meaningful experiences. Tudge (1990) stated "interaction with a more competent peer has been shown to be highly effective in inducing cognitive development" (p. 159). Vygotsky implied when a less competent child interacts with a more competent peer, the learning process is enhanced for the less competent child (Vygotsky, 1978); however, Tudge cautioned educators must be attentive of the "processes of interaction themselves" (p. 169). These interpersonal relationships and "our life experiences influence our learning" (Wink & Putney, 2002, p. 61).

Vygotsky and the struggling reader

The relation between learning and development in school-age children must be examined (Vygotsky, 1978). Struggling readers must have the opportunity to read in their instructional level (Allington, 2007). Kragler (1996) stressed the importance of teaching at risk students in their zone of proximal development (ZPD). The teacher needs to anticipate and plan instruction slightly above the student's instructional reading level. The Vygotskian approach "advocates responsiveness to children's current capacities yet aims to move development forward" (Berk & Winsler, 1995, p. 150). Instruction is planned at the end of the zone of proximal development in order to develop the student's reading. Reading instruction is conducted in overlapping phases: (a) phase one,

instruction is supported by a capable peer or teacher, (b) phase two, instruction is challenging but not too difficult, and (c) phase three, instruction is independent allowing for internalized speech (Lyons, 2003). The teacher guides the student through reading strategies and metacognitive thought by moving from explicit instruction to vague suggestions giving the child more control over their learning (Dixon-Krauss, 1996).

Interaction and talk are essential for the struggling reader. At risk readers need the opportunity to talk about their learning in school. Struggling readers need ample opportunities to interact with adults and peers during the learning process. According to Vygotsky (1978), cognition is a social phenomenon in which social experiences shape the ways of thinking and interpreting the world. Teachers can facilitate learning through social interactions which actively involve "children in culturally structured activities with the guidance, support, and challenge of companions who transmit a diverse array of knowledge and skills" (Berk & Winsler, 1995, p. 20). Learning precedes development; social dialogue helps to develop the at risk student's language and reading (Kragler, 1996).

The Vygotskian framework demands that readers transact with the text to create meaning. For struggling readers, reading must be taught in a manner that is meaningful, authentic, and relevant for their life. Struggling readers must have reading support and educational contexts that encourage transaction within students' zones of proximal development.

Statement of the problem

Previous research indicated students who struggle in reading were in an education system which traditionally failed to meet readers' developmental needs and resulted in a loss of educational opportunities. Traditionally, Title I reading intervention programs failed to incorporate Vygotskian perspective by supporting readers through appropriate developmental texts and supportive social contexts to enhance learning. Readers who struggled displayed signs of learned helplessness, low self-efficacy in reading, avoidance of reading behaviors, and lack of efficient use of reading strategies (Henk & Melnick, 1995; Margolis & McCabe, 2006; O'Brien, Beach, & Scharber, 2007; Pressley, 2006; Spear-Swerling, 2004; Stanovich, 1986; Vacca & Vacca, 2005). While several studies explored the perceptions of adolescents, fewer have focused specifically on middle school students who struggle with reading. Some researchers included a portion of participants who struggled with reading (Allen, 2003; Brozo, 2002; Beers, 1998; Ivey, 1998; Pflaum & Bishop, 2004; Reeves, 2004); however, their focuses were not struggling readers but rather adolescents, which included diverse representation of reading abilities among the participants. Part of the research focused on students' perceptions by capitalizing on readers' voices of a specific population such as adolescent girls (Sprague & Keeling, 2007), pre-teen and teen boys (Smith & Wilhelm, 2002; Brozo, 2002), adolescents in secondary schools (Moje, 2000), or sixth grade students in middle school (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001). One problem has been inadequate attention to the experiences and perceptions of adolescents identified as readers who struggle. Some researchers have

investigated small populations of adolescents in Title I classrooms; however, research focusing on the experiences and perceptions of this population of students are fewer (Donalson & Halsey, 2007; Halsey, 2003; McCray, 2001; O'Brien, Beach, & Scharber, 2007). Although researchers claimed that Title I programs generally have little impact after third grade, there is a lack of research analyzing individual middle school student's strengths and needs in comparison with Title I program curriculum to determine educational effectiveness in addressing students' needs. Current research on Title I program academic effectiveness focused solely on reading gains of the total school population on state standardized assessment measures. Individual class needs must be analyzed with reading curriculum to determine true program effectiveness.

Justification of study

One school in New Mexico allowed for unique research opportunities. The school consisted of all sixth grade students. Students with low reading standardized test scores were qualified and placed in a Title I reading supplemental class. The Title I class curriculum changed significantly second semester; this change allowed for a unique research opportunity to explore the affect of those changes. During first semester, adolescent readers were given the opportunity to keep their elective class, have authentic reading and writing experiences, and have choices in their reading materials. The opportunity for these adolescents to keep their elective class and still receive remedial reading help was unique in comparison to traditional middle school programs in New Mexico. Furthermore, the opportunity to participate in a remedial reading class without a

watered-down, skills based curriculum was unique in comparison to traditional Title I reading programs. The second semester, students participated in a curriculum with scripted commercially adopted reading program, no choice in reading materials, and some students lost the opportunities for elective classes. The second semester curriculum structure mirrored previous research findings. I explored the attitudes and opinions of these struggling readers in this school, in one class; in addition, I investigated through the lens of the Vygotskian perspective whether or not the reading intervention program was meeting individual student reading needs.

The results of the study provide recommendations for Title I educators to effectively address the needs of adolescent readers. Moreover, there is much to be learned from the perceptions and experiences of this group of students, particularly in identifying patterns that lead to their perceptions; such information is potentially useful in research and future intervention.

Purpose of the study

Through an instrumental case study method of investigation, I explored the opportunities gained and lost in relation to the perceptions and experiences of 15 sixth grade students enrolled in a Title I class. The students were identified for Title I reading intervention class based on their reading scores from the state's standardized reading assessment, the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment. I explored these students' perceptions and experiences through interviews, observations, surveys, and archived data. Furthermore, I analyzed the students' individual reading strengths and needs by

conducting a Miscue Analysis. Based on that analysis, I examined the curriculum to determine whether those specific learning needs were addressed, and whether Vygotskian perspective in regards to zone of proximal development and social constructivism were supported.

Two main questions guided my investigation:

1. In what ways did enrollment in a Title I program affect sixth grade students?

(a) What educational opportunities were gained and lost as a result of being placed in Title I reading and what were the students' perceptions of those opportunities?

(b) What were the students' individual strengths and weaknesses?

(c) How were students' individual strengths and weaknesses being addressed in this Title I program?

2. What experiences and perceptions did these Title I students in sixth grade have through their involvement in their classes?

(a) How did these students perceive themselves as readers?

(b) How did they perceive others as readers?

(c) How did students perceive their classes?

Assumptions/biases

As a former Title I classroom teacher, I carried some assumptions and biases going into my study. I assumed that programs that offer choice and rich literacy

opportunities were more effective. I also assumed that allowing elective programs to be taken concurrently with remedial programs increased the likelihood of student success and improved students' attitude. I was careful not to make judgments based on my assumptions but rather to rely on data collected from interviews, surveys, Miscue Analysis and observations. I used peer reviewers to read my findings and check the conclusions I had drawn.

Significance/Importance/Scope of the Study

The students in this study provided crucial voices and particular insights as to the perceptions of students in remedial Title I programs and their interpretations of their experiences within these programs. The implications from this instrumental qualitative study provide a reference of understanding to middle school teachers and schools implementing Title I reading programs and thus, may provide foundational change in the way these students are served. The insight from personnel at the school, teachers and the principal, provided understanding behind their decision making on how they implemented a Title I reading program that still allowed for choices for one semester. The data collected allowed for comparisons of the educational curriculum and students' perceptions.

Literature search procedures

Throughout the research, several terms were used synonymously. *Pre-adolescence* in some research was referred to as early adolescence. Other researchers characterized adolescents as *young adults*, *intermediate age students*, or *teens*.

Researchers used different terminology to identify these same groups. Thus, pre-adolescent was the same as an individual identified as *pre-teen* or *tween* and an adolescent may be identified as a *young adult* or *teen* (*teenager*). According to The Society for Adolescent Medicine (S.A.M., 1995) position statement, adolescence includes individuals ten to twenty-five years old. Lesesne (2003) identified adolescents as individuals ranging from ten to twenty. In other publications, Lesesne identified the stage of adolescents from grades fourth through eighth (Lesesne, 2006). Elliot and Dupuis (2002) identified a young adult as an individual in grades sixth through tenth. The consensus of these sources indicated students in sixth grade were pre-teens and in the early stages of adolescence. In this study, sixth graders attend East Middle School. Moje, Young, Readence and Moore (2000) defined a middle school student as a student in the transition between elementary and high school.

Definition of terms

Adolescents- individuals ten to twenty-five years old (S.A.M., 1995). In this study the adolescent is eleven to twelve year olds.

Basal reading program-"a collection of student texts and workbooks, teacher's manuals, and supplemental material for developmental reading" (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 18).

Independent reading-students read alone self-selected text based on their own interests.

Instrumental case study research-"research on a case to gain understanding of something else" (Stake, 1995, p. 171).

K-W-L-a strategy developed by Ogle (1986) useful for identifying purposes for reading and building background knowledge. The term derives from What I know, What I want to learn, and What I have learned.

Literature-based curriculum-"literary works, usually trade books, are the dominant materials for instruction" (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 145).

Literature circle-"part of a literature-based program in which students meet to discuss books" (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 145); in this particular classroom groups of students read books with the same title. The classroom teacher referred to literature circles as "reading buddies."

Mini-lessons-short lessons taught on literacy procedures, concepts, strategies and skills usually lasting 5-20 minutes in length (Atwell, 1998).

Miscue-a term to describe deviation from text during oral reading. "The assumption is that miscues are not random errors, but are attempts by the reader to make sense of the text. They therefore provide a rich source of information for analyzing language and reading development" (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 155).

Motivation- "the individual's personal goals, values, and beliefs with regard to the topics, processes, and outcomes of reading" (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000, p. 405).

Phonics instruction-instruction specifically focusing on phoneme-grapheme correspondence and spelling rules (Tompkins, 2006). As used in the study, phonics instruction is synonymous with decoding instruction.

Prior knowledge-"knowledge that stems from previous experience" also referred to as schema theory and background knowledge (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 194).

Reader's Theater-"a performance of literature as a story or play" (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 206), students read aloud expressively different parts.

Self-concept- refers to "the belief's about one's self" (Neill, 2005).

Self-confidence-refers to "the belief's in one's personal worth and likelihood of succeeding. Self-confidence is a combination of self-esteem and general self-efficacy" (Neill, 2005). "Confidence can be measured in terms of success and failure" (Johnson, Freedman, & Thomas, 2007).

Self efficacy-"Self-efficacy is the personal belief that students have about their ability to succeed at a particular task" (McCabe & Margolis, 2001, p. 45).

Self esteem- refers to the "general feelings of self-worth or self-value" (Neill, 2005).

Standardized test-"a test with specified tasks and procedures so that comparable measurements may be made by testers working in different geographical areas" (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 242). In this dissertation, standardized test refers to the state's assessment measure, the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment and other standardized reading assessments utilized by the school district.

Struggling reader- a reader identified by the state assessment measures as nearing proficiency or below proficiency in reading.

Title I –Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.) was amended to read as follows: "Title I-improving the academic achievement of the disadvantaged. The purpose of this title is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments".

Title I school-wide program- the school may combine funds to improve the entire educational program of a school (Title I Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, section 1113). The school is not required to identify particular children under a school wide model as long as not less than 40 percent of the children serviced in program are from low-income families.

Limitations

Critics of case study research claimed case studies do not lend themselves to generalization (Berg, 2007; Yin, 2003). The goal of this research is not to generalize about a population of students but rather to understand their perceptions and the context of the intervention programs in which they are placed. Transferability is possible when in-depth case studies provide rich enough description to enable readers to determine whether the findings can transfer to their setting or situation. Rich description is also referred to as "thick description". Thick description refers to detailed information about

the subjects, their actions, the location, methods, and the role of the researcher. The term "thick description" was described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as a necessary component in order to enable someone interested in making a transfer to reach a conclusion about whether a transfer is possible and meaningful. Lincoln and Guba claimed that one of the researcher's responsibilities is to provide "a data base to make transferable judgments and not a data index" (p. 316). Data will be provided for the consumer to determine whether or not the transfer applies.

Conclusion

Title I is a service to provide remedial reading assistance. During this class time, the classroom teacher provides guidance to assist struggling readers. In this qualitative case study, I explored the perceptions, experiences and characteristics of the students in this particular sixth grade Title I class. I investigated the effectiveness of the Title I curriculum by comparing class instruction to individual student's needs.

In chapter two, I provide a review of the literature related to the adolescent struggling reader. The study's methodology is explained in chapter three. Chapter four presents the case study of the students placed in this particular Title I class. The findings, implications of this research, recommendations and contributions to the field of literacy are discussed in chapter five of the dissertation.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

Introduction

Adolescence is a time of biological changes and intellectual maturity. According to the Carnegie Corporation (2007) adolescence can be "one of the most fascinating and complex transitions in the life span: a time of accelerated growth and change second only to infancy; a time of expanding horizons, self-discovery, and emerging independence, a time of metamorphosis from childhood to adulthood" (p. 1). Robinson (1998) claimed the human body goes through puberty and great physical changes during the ages of 11-13 and demands so much attention that the brain goes into a stage of hibernation. For the sixth grade student (typically ages 11-12), enormous changes are occurring physically, intellectually and emotionally. Sprinthall and Sprinthall (1987) stated "of all the stages of personal development, none is more radical than adolescence," the teacher must provide "real experience, genuine responsibility, and increasing amounts of independence during this time of stress and strain" (p. 147). Middle school teachers must consider the educational implications of this developmental stage.

Colvin and Schlosser (1998) claimed "adolescents are developing critical beliefs about themselves as learners at the same time they are constructing multiple dimensions of self, including their self-worth and importance as viewed through the lenses of others" (p. 274). During this stage of development, adolescents value peer opinion and these opinions can enhance or diminish an individual's self-worth. Erikson (1982) claimed

adolescents must resolve the crisis of personal identity. The definition of self evolves through how adolescents view themselves and how others view them. Students who struggle with literacy lack emotional confidence (Beers, 2003) and "literacy failures can hurt adolescents deeply" (Moore, Alverman & Hinchman, 2000, p. 3). Adolescents who struggle in school can be at extreme risk, at risk of not meeting their academic potential, at risk for reading failure (Goetze & Walker, 2004). The intermediate grades are often the last chance for struggling readers to experience reading success (Schatmeyer, 2007). Many researchers cautioned about the impact of academic failures in this stage of human development; "The events of this crucially formative phase can shape an individual's entire life course and thus the future of our society" (Carnegie Corporation, 2007, p. 1). Eccles, Lord and Midgley (1991) claimed "the early adolescent years mark the beginning of a downward spiral in school-related behaviors and motivation that often lead to academic failure" (p. 521).

The purpose of this literature review was to examine the research about early adolescents who struggle with reading. The topics explored in this literature review included the characteristics of adolescent readers, the factors that influenced the literacy identities of struggling adolescent readers, the factors that contributed to the motivation and engagement of struggling readers, the curriculum instruction for struggling readers, recommendations for curriculum instruction for struggling readers, and the perceptions of these adolescents as expressed through their voices.

Matthew Effect

One monumental study regarding struggling readers emerged from the research of Stanovich (1986). Stanovich claimed an effect occurs with reading. Poor readers continue to decline in their reading abilities while proficient readers continue to develop. He named this effect the Matthew Effect. In the Matthew Effect, the poor become poorer and the rich become richer, a concept based on a scripture verse found in the New Testament Bible. The verse, Matthew 25:29, stated "for everyone who has will be given more, and he will have abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him" (New International Version). Adolescents who are confident about their reading abilities continue to immerse themselves in literature, thus strengthening their reading skills. Adolescents who lack confidence however, avoid literacy activities. Due to avoidance behavior these students engage in reading less frequently, which leads to little practice, and skill deterioration (Brozo, 1990; Lenters, 2006). Lack of reading practice may lead to a loss of reading skill, which then brings on a disdain for reading because it is associated with incompetence and vulnerability (Brozo, 2002). Reeves (2004) found students in her case study decreased reading in middle school and this lack of exposure with text added to the students' reading complications and failures. Stanovich discovered the perception children have about themselves as a reader influenced whether they pursued or avoided literacy experiences. Children with a positive perception of themselves as a reader engaged in literacy experiences more often than children with a

negative perception of themselves as a reader which lead to avoidance of literacy experiences.

Self-efficacy

McCabe and Margolis (2001) defined self-efficacy as "the personal belief that students have about their ability to succeed at a particular task" (p. 45). Self-efficacy beliefs are "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (Bandura, 1986, p. 391). Bandura (1997) distinguished between confidence and self-efficacy by stating "confidence is a nondescript term that refers to strength of belief but does not necessarily specify what the certainty is about. Perceived self-efficacy refers to belief in one's agentive capabilities, that one can produce given levels of attainment" (p. 382). Linnenbrink and Pintrich (2003) clarify similar concepts by stating "self-efficacy concerns students' beliefs that they can do something" referring to a specific task; "self-esteem involves individuals' emotional reactions to their actual accomplishments," such as feeling good or bad about their success or failure with certain tasks; "self-concept reflects more general beliefs about competence" such as statements such as "I'm a good reader" (p. 121). Neill (2005) stated self-confidence is a "combination of self-esteem and general self-efficacy" referring to one's belief in their personal worth and the likelihood of succeeding at a task. Johnson, Freedman, and Thomas (2007) suggested four elements to the reader's self-efficacy "(1) confidence, (2) reading independence, (3) metacognitive awareness, and (4) reading stamina" (p. 4).

Research found self-efficacy predicts students' academic motivation and learning (Pajares, 1996; Schunk, 2003; Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007). Henk and Melnick (1995) characterized self-efficacy as a person's perceived judgments of their ability to perform an activity, specifically a student's ability to read. They stated children who believe they are good readers engage in reading, thus strengthening their reading; the higher the self-efficacy of the reader, the more reading success (Henk & Melnick, 1995). Efficacy is the conviction that one can successfully perform the activity required to produce the outcome needed. Bandura (1977) "hypothesized that expectations of personal efficacy determine whether coping behavior will be initiated, how much effort will be expended, and how long it will be sustained in the face of obstacles and aversive experience" (p. 191). Bandura claimed people fear and avoid situations that present challenges which exceed their coping skills. When applied to academic challenges, Jinks and Lorsbach (2003) argued "self-efficacy belief is antecedent to academic success" (p. 113). Schunk (2003) claimed "self-efficacy affects choice of tasks, effort, persistence, and achievement" (p. 159). Ruddell and Unrau (1997) claimed a student with high self-efficacy will demonstrate higher motivation, work longer, and work harder than a student with low self-efficacy. Therefore, higher self-efficacy is reciprocal to reading success (Gambrell, 1998; Henk & Melnick, 1995; Ruddell & Unrau, 1997). Johnson, Freedman, and Thomas (2007) asserted that a student with positive self-efficacy will demonstrate stamina in the literacy process; in other words, the student will demonstrate perseverance and pacing when the task becomes difficult or last longer than expected.

Teachers have the challenge of improving the academic learning and confidence of their students (Pajares, 2002). Walker (2003) claimed "teachers can lead students to experience positive self-efficacy" during tasks and that self-efficacy enhancement can increase "motivation and achievement" (p. 173). Colvin and Schlosser (1998) urged teachers to incorporate outside literacy into the classroom to support literacy development while assisting students to construct their self-efficacy as readers and writers. Some researchers focused on the lack of validation of students in schools due to the devaluation of students' literacy discourses in school (Cavazos-Kottke, 2005; Jackson & Cooper, 2007; Williams, 2004). Jackson and Cooper (2007) claimed too often adolescents have lost their self-efficacy because their experiences and literacies were not valued in the school. Cavazos-Kottke (2005) found many boys engaged in reading they referred to as *real reading* outside of school; however, that type of reading genre was not embraced in the typical classroom. Williams (2004) stated schools overreact by avoiding popular reading and writing choices that are violent and action oriented. Smith and Wilhelm (2002) addressed the topic of literacy discourse in their text *Reading don't fix no chevys. Literacy in the lives of young men.* They claimed the type of literacy these boys preferred, nonfiction texts such as automotive manuals, were usually not supported in school and therefore, these students were often disengaged. Reeves' (2004) also found students' interests were often not supported in school and this lack of support was directly related to resistance to reading and this resistance had a reciprocal negative effect on students' reading self-efficacies. Walker (2003) claimed allowing choice helps

students "develop a sense of competence and, in turn, self-efficacy;" furthermore, allowing choice in literacy increases "motivation and engagement" (p. 177). Johnson, Freedman and Thomas (2007) stated choice was a thread which ran through all four self-efficacy elements including confidence, independence, stamina and metacognition.

Experiences with failure

Other researchers attributed a decrease in self-efficacy to students' experiences with failure. McKenna and Stahl (2003) stated "our attitudes towards reading are shaped by each and every reading experience" (p. 204). When students encounter a task of extreme difficulty, they often sense frustration and futility (Jinks & Lorsbach, 2003). Margolis and McCabe (2006) stated "low self-efficacy beliefs, unfortunately, impeded academic achievement and, in the long run, create self-fulfilling prophecies of failure and learning helplessness that can devastate psychological well-being" (p. 220). When students continue to experience academic failure, they can develop learned helplessness (Pressley, 2006). The consequences of a poor reader struggling with text are low achievement and learned helplessness (Vacca & Vacca, 2005). Struggling readers may become pessimist as a result of feelings of helplessness and hopelessness (Ivey, 1999). O'Brien (2007) claimed "by middle school, students who struggle in reading have already experienced years of failure, which has reinforced their low perceptions about ability" (p. 52).When struggling readers perceive little or no improvement despite sincere effort, they may draw the conclusion their difficulties exist due to a "basic lack of innate ability"; which may lead them to feel even more incompetent (Bempechat, 2008, p. 79).

Based on the principle that encounters with failure can decrease self-efficacy, one can presume that encounters with success can raise a person's self-efficacy. Research has indicated particular contexts and relationships helped to construct students' literacy identities (Bandura, 1997; Triplett, 2004). Taboada, Guthrie and McRae (2008) asserted a high self-efficacy is built from successful encounters with learning. Researchers have addressed the curricular components necessary for struggling readers to experience success including but not limited to: student choice, peer tutoring, appropriate reading material, and social interactions (Allington, 2002; Atwell, 1998; Calhoon, 2005; Gambrell, 1998, Guthrie & Davis, 2003; Ivey, 1999; Johnson, Freedman, & Thomas, 2007; Kragler, 1996; Margolis & McCabe, 2006; Stickland, Ganske & Moore, 2002; Vygotsky, 1978). Successful learning experiences increase the likelihood of enhancing a positive sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Pajares, 2003; Schunk, 2003). Although these researchers do not represent a comprehensive list, they do represent a sampling of authors who have identified crucial curriculum components for struggling readers to experience academic success which can contribute to the development of positive self-efficacy.

Bandura (1977) asserted successes are more likely to enhance self-efficacy when the individual attributes that success to one's personal skill but self-efficacy decreases when the individual perceives that success to external factors. Failures lower self-efficacy when attributed to personal skill or lack of skill than when attributed to unusual circumstance. In other words, self-efficacy increases when the individual feels

responsible for the success and decreases when the individual feels responsible for the failure. Failure is received more positively when it can be attributed to external factors.

Colvin and Schlosser (1998) suggested teachers must understand the relationship between student literacy beliefs and their reading behaviors. Teachers need to be aware of the self-efficacy of their students because self-efficacy is a powerful force that can influence students' academic success or failure (Jinks & Lorsbach, 2003). McCabe and Margolis (2001) claimed students will low self-efficacy will resist reading while those with a high self-efficacy work longer and harder at tasks. They proposed teachers must work to help change student attitudes, especially the attitudes of adolescents who have struggled for years with reading. Improvement of self-efficacy helps to improve and assist struggling readers to succeed academically (McCabe & Margolis, 2006).

Assessing how children feel about themselves as readers

Three research studies (Gambrell, 1995; Henk & Melnick, 1995; McKenna & Kear, 1990) produced self-efficacy instruments that may provide useful information to teachers. Data generated from these instruments can assist teachers to "gain a sense of how the general classroom climate affects children's self-efficacy judgments in reading" (Henk & Melnick, 1995, p. 474). Henk and Melnick (1995) suggested the data can inform teacher decisions in regards to (a) more meaningful communication between teacher and students about students' reading progress, (b) reading material choices, (c) the indirect signals they send to children regarding performance, (d) providing constructive feedback

to both parents and the class, and (e) creating a more comfortable environment for children to support children during reading.

Reader's Self-Perception Scale

Henk and Melnick (1995) developed the Reader's Self-Perception Scale (RSPS). The instrument was administered to 1,479 fourth, fifth, and sixth grade children. Sample statements from the self-perception scale were "I think I am a good reader", "I can tell that my teacher likes to listen to me read", "My teacher thinks my reading is fine", and "I read faster than other children." Students indicate their feelings towards each statement by marking on a Likert scale. The scoring is: 5=strongly agree (SA), 4=agree (A), 3=undecided (U), 2=disagree (D), and 1=strongly disagree (SD). These researchers found the mean scores and standard deviations for each scale extremely similar across grades. The researchers concluded "overall, these scores indicate that children tended to think of themselves as capable readers" (Henk & Melnick, 1995, p. 482).

Halsey (2003) used the scale to measure students' reading self-efficacy in eighth grade; although the instrument was designed for fourth through sixth grade. The scale was used to compare the self-efficacy of students in reading improvement classes with self-efficacy of students in regular language arts classes. In this case study, students generally had low self-efficacies; "low self-efficacy appears to be a universal trait among the young adolescents in this study" (Halsey, 2003, p. 46).

The RSPS used four scales, progress, observational comparison, social feedback and physiological state to measure intermediate students' perceptions of themselves as

readers. The Progress Scale measures whether or not students believe they are improving in reading. The Observational Comparison Scales measures students' perception of their reading ability as compared to their perception of the abilities of their peers. The Social Feedback Scales measures students' perception of what they feel others, teachers, parents and peers think about their reading ability. The Physiological States Scale measures the way reading makes students feel physically. The RSPS instrument assists in identifying children who are at risk due to lack of confidence in their reading ability. The instrument was not designed to be implemented below the fourth grade. Interpretation of the instrument gives teachers feedback on whether that child fell within the average range indicating the child's reading perceptions were in the normal range or outside of the range, which would cause concern.

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

McKenna & Kear (1990) developed the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERA) to measure reading attitudes in children first through sixth grades. They distributed the survey to 18,185 students in grades kindergarten through sixth. The ERA consists of 20 questions. Students respond by circling an image of Garfield the cat that represents how they felt about the item. Each item on the survey is given a score 1 through 4: the highest score represented by the happiest Garfield on the far left (4), to a slightly smiling Garfield (3), to a mildly upset Garfield (2), to a very upset Garfield (1) on the far right. Example questions are "How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?", "How do you feel about spending free time reading?", and "How do

you feel when it's time for reading class?" The first half of the survey relates to recreational reading and the second half of the survey relates to academic reading. Data from the scale can be used to determine students' attitude towards reading and to track reading attitude changes over time.

McKenna & Kear (1990) discovered recreational and academic reading attitudes on an average were positive in first grade and relatively indifferent in sixth grade. Recreational reading appeared to be related to ability with negative scores in recreational reading for less proficient readers. Academic reading appeared to decline for proficient and less proficient readers. Girls typically had more positive attitudes than boys. Ethnicity was not a contributing factor to attitude results. The use of basal readers did not appear to have an influence on attitudes.

Motivation for Reading Questionnaire

As cited in McKenna & Stahl (2003), Gambrell (1995) designed the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ) to identify how students felt about reading. The MRQ consists of 54 items and is intended for third grade and above. Students respond by circling the number that corresponded to how they felt about the statement. Choices ranged from 1 (very different from the student's opinions) to 4 (a lot like the student's opinions). Example questions are "I like hard, challenging books," "I read because I have to," and "I don't like vocabulary questions." The subscales on the MRQ are as follows: reading efficacy, reading challenge, reading curiosity, aesthetic enjoyment of reading, importance of reading, compliance, reading recognition, reading for grades,

social reasons for reading, reading competition, and reading work avoidance. The MRQ can serve as a barometer to determine how positive or negative the reading attitudes may be for each student on each of the subscales.

These three self-efficacy instruments may be used to provide data to teachers about the self-efficacy of their students. The information obtained can guide teachers to make curriculum decisions that support students in their development of positive self-efficacies in regards to reading. Positive self-efficacies may enhance reading and motivation, while low self-efficacy may hinder reading progress and cause motivational problems (Margolis & McCabe, 2006).

Motivation

Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) defined reading motivation as "the individual's personal goals, values, and beliefs with regard to the topics, processes, and outcomes of reading" (p. 405). Motivation is distinct from attitudes, interests and reader's beliefs. Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) stated low self-efficacy may be related to motivational problems however, motivation in itself is not attitude. A student may report a positive attitude towards reading and still fail to be motivated to engage in reading behavior. Motivation activates behavior. Students' motivation predicted their level of reading comprehension (Guthrie, Wigfield, Humenick, Perencevich, Taboada, & Barbosa, 2006).

Social contexts influence motivation. Reeves (2004) found family transition during the adolescent years was correlated with adolescent resistance in reading and disengagement with text. A common theme emerged that all of these adolescents were

going through some type of family change. The family had moved, parents divorced, or some other type of family unrest had occurred. These teens displayed reading resistance and lack of motivation to attend to tasks at school. Smith and Wilhelm (2002) discovered friendships and family had a powerful influence on the literate behavior of young men. These social relationships were crucial in fostering these boys' intrinsic motivation. Guthrie and Davis (2003) found lower achievers were less engaged socially; they referred to this lack of engagement as *socially marginalized*. Triplett (2004) stated social contexts and relationships contribute to an individual's interpretation of their abilities.

Guthrie and Davis (2003) concluded motivation is a factor that declines as children progress through school. They compared reading motivation of students in grades three, five and eight in social studies classes in the state of Maryland. The majority of fifth graders responded positively, however, by grade eight the majority of responses were negative. The questionnaire assessed attitude towards engagement in reading, autonomy support, reading instruction, and interesting texts. These numbers indicated a declining trend of motivation as students' progressed through school.

Extrinsic motivation

Extrinsic reading motivation is "the desire to receive external recognition, rewards, or incentives" (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000, p. 407). Cunningham (2005) claimed extrinsic rewards diminish intrinsic motivation in regards to reading. Although controversial, some researchers claimed extrinsic rewards have beneficial effects for struggling readers (Guthrie & Davis, 2003; Gambrell, 1998; Strickland, Ganske &

Monroe, 2002). Addressing motivation issues of reluctant readers and writers, Strickland, Ganske and Monroe (2002) claimed for unmotivated readers, a "jump" start may be necessary for situational interest. In other words, for the unmotivated reader, extrinsic rewards may be necessary to entice interest. Struggling readers tend to be more extrinsically motivated (Guthrie & Davis, 2003). Gambrell (1998) conducted research in first grade classrooms and found children desired rewards and incentives did not negatively impact intrinsic motivation with respect to attitude, time on task, and performance. Gambrell stated for children without these literacy-rich experiences extrinsic rewards, such as bookmarks and teacher praise, can be used as means of motivation and increase intrinsic motivation.

Intrinsic motivation

Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) defined intrinsic motivation as the "individual's enjoyment of reading activities that are performed for their own sake" (p. 407). Proficient readers are more intrinsically motivated (Guthrie & Davis, 2003); thus, intrinsic motivation is closely related to reading competence and students who struggle in reading have difficulty with motivation (Allington, 2001). In order to have motivation, students must have autonomy (a sense of self and ownership) and appropriate levels of support and challenge (Lyons, 2003). Several researchers emphasized the necessity of choice in the classroom for intrinsic motivation to occur (Cunningham, 2005; Guthrie & Davis, 2003; Lenters, 2006; Margolis & McCabe, 2006). Furthermore, researchers found motivation for middle school students decreases when materials were not matched to

reading ability (Allington, 2001; Guthrie & Davis, 2003). For the struggling reader, there are many educational factors that can hinder the development of intrinsic motivation.

Problems with instruction for struggling readers

Remedial reading programs

Remedial reading programs offer too little assistance to struggling readers. Allington (2007) found remedial reading programs offered 30-60 minutes of daily instruction to students at their appropriate reading level. The average school day was six hours; therefore, students received appropriate reading assistance for a maximum of one tenth of their school day. Allington (2002) claimed students can't learn from books they can't read. Textbooks are often in the students' frustration level and loaded with technical vocabulary that minimizes the students' comprehension (Jackson & Cooper, 2007). Struggling readers typically read less sophisticated text and have command over fewer words (Furr, 2003). Ivey and Broaddus (2000) commented "we fear that struggling readers in particular may never have opportunities in school to practice reading in books they can actually read" (p. 70). In one case study of struggling readers, Allington found 90% of the texts provided were too hard (Allington, 2007). Dyer and Binkney (2007) claimed Chapter I programs (synonymous with Title I Reading programs) generally have little impact on reading achievement after the third grade and there is not sufficient data to support continuing remedial reading programs after the primary grades. Furthermore, students participating in Title I programs did not show sufficient academic growth and

stayed in the Title I program an average of five years or until the program was no longer available in the student's grade level (Dyer & Binkney, 2007).

Researchers claimed students in remedial classes get "watered-down curriculum" and skill instruction often through workbooks (Atwell, 1998; Johannessen, 2004; Pressley, 2006), adding to a further disadvantage for these struggling students due to lack of instruction involving high level thinking (Klenk & Kibby, 2000). Instruction in remedial classes was based primarily on lower level thinking skills in Bloom's taxonomy. Ivey and Baker (2004) emphasized "no evidence suggests that focusing on sound-level, letter-level, or word-level instruction will make older struggling readers read more" (p. 36). Allington and Walmsley (2007) found remedial reading programs emphasized isolated reading in comprehension, vocabulary, and word attack skills, such an emphasis on skill instruction made struggling readers read less. Allington and Walmsley stated

> Poor readers have historically experienced a curriculum quite different from that experienced by better readers. Low-achieving readers are more likely to be asked to read aloud than silently, to have their attention focused on word recognition rather than comprehension, to spend more time working alone on low-level work sheets than on reading authentic texts, and to experience more fragmentation in their instructional activities (p. 29).

Many teachers resort to commercial phonics programs for struggling readers. No adopted program or prescriptive curriculum can meet the needs of the wide range of developmental needs in the middle school classroom (Ivey & Broaddus, 2000). Allington (2007) stated too many struggling readers "spend their days in classrooms using one-size-fits-all curriculum plans" (p. 9). Fletcher and Portalupi (2001) claimed "when curriculum comes straight out of a textbook, we have the assurance that we've covered the necessary material. But this assurance is misleading, if not false" (p. 90). Often the reading curriculum and instruction are not designed to meet the individual needs of students (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001). Allington (2002) found in a study with exemplary teachers that these teachers tailored instruction to individual student's needs and spent less time on whole group recitation activities. None of these exemplary teachers used a scripted program; they concentrated less on state-mandated tests and focused more on engaging students in reading and writing in content areas.

Remedial reading classes have a negative impact in numerous ways. These segregated settings have a negative impact on the self-efficacy of students (Worthy, 1996). Worthy (1996) stated struggling readers should not be separated from their peers to receive remedial reading instruction. These types of school practices have negative effects on these students and many of these students develop an aversion to reading that may be life long. Dyer and Binkney (2007) claimed children who participate in Title I programs actually have a loss of total reading instruction time as compared to students not placed in the intervention programs. Allington (2007) felt intervention for struggling

readers should occur throughout the school day by supporting students within the context of regular content area classes. Regretfully, there is overwhelming pressure on teachers and students to perform for high-stakes testing and many middle school teachers are reluctant to teach reading because they feel inadequately trained or think it is someone else's responsibility (Ivey & Broaddus, 2000; Tovani, 2004). Allington stated "We need to reconceptualize intervention for struggling readers as something that must occur all day long" (p. 13).

Loss of opportunities

Teachers comment they have little time to teach anything that is not on the test due to the pressure for high scores on state-mandated test (Pedulla, 2003). The purpose of federally funding remedial reading programs is to achieve proficiency on the state's proficiency exams (U.S. Dept. of Ed., Title I Federal Programs Purpose Statement, 2006). Unfortunately the Title I purpose statement has guided remedial reading teachers to emphasize skills to pass proficiency exams instead of emphasizing learning to read for comprehension. Pressley (2006) claimed "by sixth grade, the boredom can be so great that the challenge is for students to put up with test preparation,…test preparation is not reading but has the potential for decreasing interest in reading" (pp. 379-380).

Due to high stakes testing, students who score below proficiency on state standardized tests often loose the opportunity to participate in elective classes. Halsey (2003) found eighth grade students were "devastated" when they discovered they lost their elective class and would be taking a reading improvement class. Donalson and

Halsey (2007) found students in remedial reading classes lost opportunities to participate in elective classes and extra curricular activities. These opportunities were often in the students' strengths which could contribute to success in school; however, these struggling students experienced constant failure in school with limited opportunities for success. Students who lost their elective class due to their low scores on the state's standardized exam begin the year feeling angry (Tompkins, 2002).

The problems with the current curriculum for struggling readers are numerous. The manner in which reading intervention is implemented has a negative impact on students and an outcome of little reading achievement. The reading materials used are often above the reading level of the students. The curriculum for struggling readers traditionally has emphasized skill-based, test preparation instruction. Numerous researchers have made recommendations about the type of instruction necessary for struggling readers. These instructional components must be implemented in order to have a positive impact.

Recommended Instruction for struggling readers

Several researchers have recommended instructional practices for the struggling reader (Allington, 2002, 2001; Allington & Walmsley, 2007; Atwell, 1998; Baker, 2002; Cavazos-Kottke, 2005; Duke & Pressley, 2005; Flood & Lapp, 1990; Gambrell, 1998, Gaskins, 2008; Graves & Philippot, 2002; Guthrie & Davis, 2003; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Ivey, 1999; Ivey & Baker, 2004; Ivey & Broaddus, 2001,2000; Jackson & Cooper, 2007; Johannessen, 2004; Johnson, Freedman & Thomas, 2007; Klenk & Kibby, 2000;

Klingner, Artiles & Mendez-Barletta, 2006; Lee & Neal, 1992; Lenters, 2006; Lewis, 2007; Lesesne, 2006, 2003; Lowery-Moore, 1998; Margolis & McCabe, 2006, 2001; McCray, 2001; Moje, Young, Readence & Moore, 2000; Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw & Rycik, 1999; Plaum & Bishop, 2004; Pressley, 2006; Reeves, 2004; Schatmeyer, 2007; Schunk & Rice, 1993; Spear-Swerling, 2004; Sprague & Keeling, 2007; Stickland, Ganske & Moore, 2002; Toboada, Guthrie & McRae, 2008; Tovani, 2004, 2000; Vacca & Vacca, 2005; and Worthy, 1996). Triplett (2004) suggested contexts that give students the right to make choices, participate in personally relevant activities, work within their instructional level, and have opportunities to experience success. Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) stated instructional practices should include learning and knowledge goals, real-world interactions, autonomy support, interesting texts, strategy instruction, praise and rewards, evaluation, teacher involvement, and coherence of instructional processes. Gambrell (1998) claimed crucial elements for struggling readers include the teacher as an explicit reading model, a book-rich classroom environment, opportunities for choice, opportunities to interact socially with others, opportunities to become familiar with lots of books, and appropriate reading-related incentives. The literature supports giving struggling students: meaningful questions involving inquiry, embedding basic skills in the context of authentic tasks, making connections with students' background knowledge and culture, modeling thinking strategies and providing scaffolding, using dialogue, and teaching strategies in reading and writing through multiple approaches (Johannessen,

2004). All of these recommendations have the potential to positively impact the reader who struggles.

Choice

Among the most frequent research recommendation was the topic of choice. Researchers indicated struggling readers will engage in reading when choice is present and the reading activities are perceived by the struggling reader as *real reading* or authentic reading (Gaskins, 2008; Guthrie & Davis, 2003; Ivey, 1999). Researchers stated when choice is removed from the middle school classroom, readers who struggle become disengaged (Guthrie & Davis, 2003; Lenters, 2006). Adolescents must have some control over their reading; choosing their own reading is important in adolescents' stage of development as they seek independence (Atwell, 1998; Johnson, Freedman, & Thomas, 2007; Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw, & Rycik, 1999). Student choice is a crucial component of successful reading instruction (Daniels & Zemelman, 2004; Spear-Swerling, 2004). Many researchers stated students will devote effort, attention, and persistence to reading about topics they find intriguing and personally significant (Flood & Lapp, 1990; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Gambrell, 1998; Toboada, Guthrie & McRae, 2008). Atwell (1998) found her middle school class considered *real reading* as reading that occurred when they chose their reading materials. During a typical week, Atwell would teach literature through her English textbooks or teacher chosen materials. On Fridays, students were allowed to choose their reading materials. Atwell found students referenced Fridays as "the day they got to read". The students were reading everyday; however, in the

students' view point, only Fridays were *real reading*. Atwell found even her reluctant readers became engaged and when reluctant readers found a good book, they "turned around in their attitude" towards reading and their ability as a reader.

Reading text needs to be situated in real-world stimulating activities. Smith and Wilhelm (2002) found boys engaged in literacy outside the classroom; however, these same boys resisted reading at school if they were not permitted choice in their reading and most often that choice was expository text. Cavozos-Kottke (2005) explored the types of reading boys engaged in reading, they refer to as *real reading*; however, this type of reading was not embraced in the typical classroom. Lenters (2006) claimed to engage resistant readers, students must have choice and opportunities to bring out-of-school literacies into the classroom.

Peer tutoring

Some researchers suggested peer tutoring as a means to assist struggling readers. Calhoon (2005) conducted a study with middle school students with reading disabilities. Findings in the study indicated growth in peer tutoring vs. whole class instruction in reading was significant in word identification, word attack and passage comprehension. The findings suggested peer mediated instruction improved reading comprehension and improved phonological skills in middle school students with reading disabilities. Mastropierei, Scruggs, & Graetz (2003) found peer tutoring contributed positively to the success of struggling readers in the ability to comprehend unfamiliar text. These

researchers further stated deliberate interaction with text concepts and explicit teaching of strategies were deemed to be successful with students who have learning disabilities.

Appropriate reading materials

Struggling readers must have appropriate reading materials. Schatmeyer (2007) asserted "one of the keys to helping struggling readers is to provide them with books that they can and want to read" (p. 7). Margolis and McCabe (2006) stated tasks should be planned moderately challenging in order to enhance students' self-efficacy and motivation. Johnson, Freedman, & Thomas (2007) stated when students feel confident in their reading it directly relates to their self-efficacy in reading. Students need exposure to reading materials in which they can experience competence and thus confidence. Kragler (1996) stressed the importance of teaching at risk students in their zone of proximal development (ZPD). Kragler explained the Vygotskian perspective stating the teacher needs to anticipate and plan instruction slightly above the student's instructional reading level which leads to developing the student's reading further. Spear-Swerling (2004) emphasized struggling readers must be exposed to independent reading materials at their appropriate reading level. Students should be able to recognize 90-95% of words and comprehend 70-89% of the text (Applegate, Quinn & Applegate, 2004; Ivey, 1999; Margolis & McCabe, 2006; Rubin & Opitz, 2007; Tompkins, 2006). The struggling reader must have material demanding enough to keep attention but not so demanding that success is unattainable (Strickland, Ganske, & Moore, 2002). Factors which influence the difficulty of material are vocabulary, sentence structure, length, elaboration, coherence,

text structure, background knowledge, audience, quality of writing and interests (Graves & Philippot, 2002). High-interest, easy readers play a significant role for those students who find reading a challenge. Graves and Philippot (2002) claimed "the longer the book, the less likely the struggling students will choose to read it" (p. 180). Readers must be given texts in their appropriate level (Allington, 2007; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000).

Explicit Strategy instruction

Explicit strategy instruction is necessary for struggling readers. Kragler (1996) stated the teacher needs to act as a facilitator guiding the students through reading strategies. Vacca and Vacca (2005) commented struggling readers often lack strategies necessary to learn effectively with text. Teachers must teach the struggling reader by scaffolding instruction so that the reader becomes confident and competent in the application of strategies within text (Tompkins, 2006). Guthrie and Davis (2003) claimed struggling readers must have strategy instruction that is contextualized in interesting text. Vacca and Vacca (2005) stressed explicit instruction must be used in the teaching of strategies through strategy instruction in which the reader is aware of learning strategies and understands how to apply strategies in various texts. As students learn and apply strategies effectively, they gain confidence in their abilities and therefore increase their view of themselves as competent in reading. Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) stated appropriate strategy instruction can increase self-efficacy. As they begin to feel competent, they increase reading which increases competence (Guthrie & Davis, 2003, Stanovich, 1986); the process becomes reciprocal. According to Spear-Swerling (2004)

strategy instruction is important for all readers but especially crucial for the delayed reader. Spear-Swerling stated readers must have the ability to use reading comprehension strategies such as self-regulating techniques to compensate for comprehension failure.

Neufeld (2005) suggested comprehension strategies be taught explicitly. Pflaum and Bishop (2004) claimed instructional reading strategies for comprehension are crucial. Strategies such as questioning, self-monitoring, application of prior knowledge, summarizing, interpreting, predicting and visualizing provide crucial skills for middle school age readers for comprehending text with increasing complexity and a variety of text structures (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Lewis, 2007; Pflaum & Bishop, 2004). Along with strategy instruction, researchers commented strategy practice time was necessary for application (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). Students must have the opportunity to practice strategy use through engaging reading activities (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Harvey & Goudvis, 2000; Pflaum & Bishop, 2004). Tovani (2004) stated "but teaching strategies for the sake of teaching strategies isn't the goal. The only reason to teach kids how to be strategic readers is to help them become more thoughtful about reading" (p. 9).

Teachers make their own thinking visible to students by explicit verbalization of their own thoughts when reading orally. Comprehension strategies are taught using the think aloud technique to model the process (Gunning, 2004; Tovani, 2000). Harvey and Goudvis (2000) stated "Explicit reading instruction means that we show learners how we think when we read" (p. 12). Daniels and Zemelman (2004) stated teachers must teach strategies explicitly to students, modeling thinking strategies that help them understand

the material they read. Tovani (2000) stressed children must be taught what good readers do in order to meet the demands of reading tasks. Good readers use a variety of strategies and in order to become better at reading, struggling readers need to imitate what good readers do when they read.

Adolescent readers need sustained experiences with diverse texts in a variety of reading genres, authentic conversations around text, thinking critically about text, personal connections, and authentic engagement with text (NCTE, 2004). These students need whole language literature activities with social interactions revolving around the books (Pressley, 2006). Comprehension must be taught explicitly through high school (Pflaum & Bishop, 2004).

Appropriate skill instruction

Effective reading instruction for struggling readers requires appropriate skill instruction. Nagy and Anderson (1984) stated the least able middle grade students might read 100,000 words a year, the average middle grade students read 1,000,000, the advanced reader at the middle level might read 10,000,000 or even 50,000,000 words a year. The gap between least able middle school readers and advance middle school readers is huge; thus, teachers must engage in vocabulary instruction. Vocabulary instruction must teach skills and strategies that help children become independent at learning words. Students must be taught strategies to decode and derive word meanings (Block & Pressley, 2007). Researchers claimed "many struggling readers understand the rules of basic decoding but are not as familiar with rules of decoding multisyllabic

words" (Deshler, Sullivan Palincsar, Biancarosa & Nair, 2007, p. 21). Students need to have instruction on decoding multisyllabic words.

Students must have instruction on text features. Students must be shown how to size up the text (Block & Pressley, 2007; Duke & Pressley, 2007). Text features serve as a road map for students while reading. Graves & Philippot (2002) stated "the way the text is laid out provides a road map, so to speak, so that the reader can navigate his or her way through it" (p. 181). Different reading genres have different text structures. Students must be taught features of text in order to become more efficient in navigating different genres of text.

Teacher read aloud

Teacher read aloud is a necessary component in the classroom. Cunningham (2005) suggested reluctant readers must have exposure in read-aloud to different genres. Teacher read aloud can develop important skills such as listening comprehension and can provide a model for fluency (Lesesne, 2006). Strickland, Ganske, and Monroe (2002) claimed read aloud should be used to engage struggling students and to make the reading experience meaningful and enjoyable. Traditionally, teacher read aloud decreases as children progress through school; however, many researchers are advocates for teachers continuing to exposure students to quality literature through read aloud (Atwell, 1998; Lesesne, 2006).

Social interactions

Atwell (1998) claimed adolescence is a very social time. Many researchers proposed letting students learn together through social interactions (Atwell, 1998; Gambrell, 1998; Guthrie & Wigfield; Hill, 1998; Lewis, 2007; McCabe & Margoilis, 2001; Pressley, 2006). Social interaction facilitates learning through meaningful experiences. When students are interacting cooperatively with peers, the learning processes can become internalized and then become part of the adolescents' independent development (Vygotsky, 1978). The need for social encounters becomes more prevalent during the developmental stage of adolescents. Researchers found peers played a major role in the lives of adolescents (Erikson, 1982; Reeves, 2004; Smith & Wilhelm, 2002).

Proper assessment

Assessment should encompass informal and formal procedures that teachers use to inform their teaching (Flippo, 2003). Flippo (2003) stated assessment is an ongoing process and should involve multiple sources, which may include observations, work samples, "information about a child's interests, motivations, feelings, attitudes, strategies, skills, and special cultural or sociocultural considerations" (Flippo, 2003, p. 5); furthermore, teachers continually assess and reflect in order to plan instruction. Several researchers have warned educators about relying on a single measure to make educational decisions (Shephard, 2000; Valencia & Buly, 2004). Block (2003) cautioned educators not to "interpret any single test score as a sole indicator of literacy" (p. 144). Test information should not determine a student's knowledge by looking at performance on

one test (Rubin & Opitz, 2007). However, reading is a complex behavior that must have multiple assessment measures. Effective assessment identifies students' learning needs through several measurements (Lee & Neal, 1992). Graves (2002) stated "current testing approaches do not tell us whether students are capable of using information to express ideas of their own" (p. 2) furthermore, the "principal means for assessing reading ability are multiple-choice tests", this type of assessment examines "convergent thinking" (p. 1). Assessment needs to be authentic and representative of students' strengths and well as their needs (Moore, Bean, Birdshaw & Rycik, 1999).

Proper assessment is necessary in order to cater instruction to individual student's needs. Different children benefit from skill instruction to differentiated degrees (Fink, 2006). Teachers need to determine the source of the reading difficulties and whether those difficulties lie in word recognition, vocabulary, comprehension problems or all three areas (Balajthy & Lipa-Wade, 2003). Beers (2003) stated "Not being able to read can mean a range of things; depending on the student's strengths and weaknesses" (p. 24). In order to understand individual adolescent needs, the source of the struggle needs to be identified (Deshler, Sullivan Palincsar, Biancarosa & Nair, 2007).

Appropriate instruction is intensive and prescriptive based on student's needs and stage of literacy development; the planned instruction is responsive or diagnostic in the teaching (Klenk & Kibby, 2000). Slow learners have the potential to learn if they receive developmentally appropriate instruction (Morris, Ervin, & Conrad, 1996); in order for appropriate instruction to occur, instruction must be matched to students' needs. Similar

to Vygotskian theory, an effective reading teacher knows what skills their students need, knows their students' developmental reading level, and knows what skills their students need next (Reutzel & Cooter, 2007). Teachers must identify students' need through classroom assessment and then plan instruction to support those needs (Flippo, 2003; Ruetzel & Cooter, 2007). Some researchers refer to assessment that is realistic or natural as authentic assessment (Gillet, Temple, & Crawford, 2004).

Miscue Analysis

One method of authentic assessment is Miscue Analysis. Wilde claimed "Miscue Analysis is the best single tool that teachers can use to understand readers and support their further learning" (Wilde, 2000, p. 1). In Miscue Analysis both the student's strengths and weaknesses are noted. The analysis allows for interpretation of the cueing systems used by the reader by assessing the student's use of semantic, syntax and graphophonics (visual similarity) in reading (Goodman, Watson & Burke, 2005; Wilde, 2000). Wilde (2000) explained the philosophy behind miscues by stating

> Why do we call them miscues rather than errors? For two reasons: First, although the dictionary defines *miscue* as mistake or slip, it has more neutral connotations than those two synonyms. The teaching of reading in particular has a long history of assuming that mistakes and errors should be avoided, but a central idea of Miscue Analysis is that miscues vary in quality; some are actually signs of a

> strong reader. Second, the term *miscue* recognizes that readers are using the multiple cueing systems of written language as they read (p. 2).

The purpose of Miscue Analysis is to allow insight into the reading process (Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 2005). Miscue is an important tool especially for understanding those individuals who are less successful in reading with constructing meaning from text (Wilde, 2000). Everyone makes *glitches* when reading aloud; the focus of Miscue Analysis is not the fact that the individual makes miscues but rather the type of miscues made by an individual (Wilde, 2000). The analysis of student's oral reading provides specific information about a student's reading ability, linguistic knowledge and strategy use (Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 2005). Miscue Analysis provides a window into the student's reading process.

Teachers are able to make data driven curriculum decisions to meet student needs by analyzing the student's Miscue Analysis. Instruction is planned beginning on student's strengths and continues by building on those strengths. Teachers plan instructional strategy lessons by utilizing the information obtained through Miscue Analysis. Students' weaknesses are addressed by capitalizing on reading strengths as more reading strategies are added to the students' reading repertoire.

Students' voices

Students' perceptions are a crucial element in understanding the readers who struggle. Lowery-Moore (1998) stated "I was convinced listening to their voice is

mandatory if we want to understand how to connect the middle school student to reading" (p. 26). Pflaum and Bishop (2004) examined the ways middle school students perceived their school reading experience by gathering information about times of engagement or lack of engagement and how those experiences related to students whether they were a great reader or a struggling reader. Common themes were students felt engaged when there was choice, personal preferences were considered, reading time was quiet, and when students did not have to write about their reading. Furthermore, Pflaum and Bishop indicated oral reading hindered comprehension for these middle school readers due to the inability of readers to comprehend at their pace. For some students oral reading was too quick for them to comprehend, for others oral reading was too slow, and in other cases oral reading was difficult to understanding due to a reader struggling with pronunciation causing comprehension break down for those students following along. For the struggling readers, oral reading only contributed to their comprehension failure.

Ivey and Broaddus (2001) surveyed sixth-grade students to identify what motivated them to read in middle school classrooms. The findings from the surveys concluded students valued independent reading, teacher read aloud, reading for personal reasons, and reading materials of quality and diversity. The Ivey and Broaddus study contradicted the popular belief that only elementary students enjoy teacher reading aloud by reporting 62% of middle school students enjoy teacher read aloud. The majority of the students (77%) did not enjoy having to read out loud in class. Most students identified magazines directly related to their interest (77%) as their preference of reading material.

A majority of students (63%) indicated they preferred silent reading time, just time to read. Students' responses indicated a wide range of informational topics in their reading preferences, including nonfiction texts such as aviation, sports, and cooking.

Beers (1998) found uncommitted and unmotivated readers wanted to "choose their own books from a narrowed choice, have teachers read aloud an entire book, compare movie to book, read illustrated books, do art activities based on books, and read nonfiction materials" (p. 55). These readers did not want to do reading for community projects, meet authors, go to the library, participate in book fairs, participate in book clubs, or discuss books with classmates/friends. Similar to the findings of other researchers (Ivey & Broaddus, 2000), these students wanted nonfiction genres and wanted the teacher to read to them.

McCray (2001) examined the attitudes of sixth grade middle school students with reading disabilities. Students indicated in interviews that they questioned their future and the likelihood of success in employment with their limited reading ability; although, they felt their reading ability would continue to improve. The students voiced their fears with reading and felt inferior to their peers in their reading abilities.

Summary

Brozo (1990) stated students who are poor readers develop a complex repertoire of coping strategies, which include avoidance behaviors to avoid ridicule in the classroom. Due to avoidance behavior, these students engage in reading less frequently

which may lead to less reading practice and further skill decline. These students often bring a long history of reading failure to the classroom (Dyer & Binkney, 2007).

The current educational paradigm of remedial reading programs focusing on *fixing* struggling readers must be challenged. Klenk & Kibby (2000) proposed to remediate means that these readers were once on level and need to be restored. Remedial is derived from the word "remedy" meaning to "cure." In reality, these struggling readers are never "cured" and rarely come up to their reading grade level (Klenk & Kibby, 2000). These students often need continual reading support throughout the educational process (NCTE, 2004).

Readers who struggle want to improve in their reading. Ivey (1999) found six-grade "struggling middle school readers want to be good readers" (p. 379). In order to educationally support readers who struggle, instructional best practices for struggling readers must be implemented to encourage academic growth (Allington, 2001; Pressley, 2006). Traditionally, the struggling reader in Title I programs have less educational opportunities with watered-down curriculums (Allington & Walmsley, 2007; Atwell, 1998; Johannessen, 2004; Pressley, 2006). Allington (2007) stated disadvantaged children are exposed to inferior schools, are victims of a poorer educational system, and learn in instructional environments that are inferior to those of advantaged children. In order to scaffold learning for the reader who struggles, instruction must occur at their developmental level (Vygotsky, 1978). These students wish to improve in reading; however, the current educational system often hinders that reading improvement.

The way in which struggling readers perceive themselves impacts their academic achievement. Students with low self-efficacy give up easily on tasks and have lower reading motivation (Gambrell, 1998; Henk & Melnick, 1995; Johnson, Freedman, & Thomas, 2007; McKenna & Kear, 1990; Pajares, 2003; Ruddell & Unrau, 1997). Students may develop helplessness and hopelessness (Ivey, 1999; Pressley, 2006; Vacca & Vacca, 2005). Positive academic contexts can contribute to helping students to develop positive literacy identities (Triplett, 2004).

Proper reading assessment is crucial in order to cater instruction to meet the needs of struggling readers. Educational decisions should not be based on a single measurement of assessment, but rather made after thorough evaluation of students' reading strengths and weaknesses through ongoing processes (Block, 2003; Flippo, 2003; Halsey, 2003; Lee & Neal, 1992; Moore, Alvermann, & Hinchman, 1999; Rubin & Opitz, 2007). Proper assessment is necessary in order to provide high quality instruction that is intense and prescriptive (Klenk & Kibby, 2000).

Chapter III

Methodology

Introduction

Researchers must consider the complexity of issues surrounding pre-adolescents and adolescents who struggle with reading. Allington and Walmsley (2007) stated children placed in low-achievement groups are "far more likely (1) to leave school before graduating, (2) to fail a grade, (3) to be placed in special education, (4) to become a teenage parent, (5) to commit a juvenile criminal offense, and (6) to remain less than fully literate" (p. 2). According to the Carnegie Corporation (2007) the events of that occur during adolescence "can shape an individual's entire life course and thus the future of our society" (p. 1).

While several studies explored the perceptions of adolescents, not all have focused specifically on middle school students who struggle with reading. Some researchers included a portion of participants who struggled with reading (Beers, 1998; Brozo, 2002; Ivey, 1998; Pflaum & Bishop, 2004, Reeves, 2004); however, their focuses were not struggling readers but rather adolescents in general which included diverse representation of reading abilities among the participants. Part of the research focused on students' perceptions by capitalizing on readers' voices of a specific population such as adolescent girls (Sprague & Keeling, 2007), pre-teen and teen boys (Smith & Wilhelm, 2002; Brozo, 2002), adolescents in secondary schools (Moje, 2000), or sixth grade students in middle school (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001). One problem has been inadequate

attention to the experiences and perceptions of adolescents identified as readers who struggle. Some researchers have investigated small populations of adolescents in Title I classrooms; however, research focusing on the experiences and perceptions of this population of students have been fewer (Donalson & Halsey, 2007; Halsey, 2003; Hall, 2005; McCray, 2001; O'Brien et. al., 2007). Although researchers claimed Title I programs generally have little impact after third grade, there is a lack of research analyzing individual middle school student's strengths and needs in comparison with Title I program curriculum to determine educational effectiveness in addressing students' needs. Current research on Title I program academic effectiveness focused solely on reading gains of the total school population on state standardized assessment measures. Individual class needs must be analyzed with reading curriculum to determine true program effectiveness.

Purpose of the study

Through an instrumental case study method of investigation, I explored the experiences, perceptions, characteristics and education of one class of sixth grade Title I reading students; the class of fifteen students became my case. The case study provided a deeper understanding (Berg, 2007). The students were identified for Title I reading intervention class based on their scores from the state's standardized reading assessment, the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment. I explored these students' perceptions and experiences through interviews, observations, surveys, and archived data. I analyzed the students' individual reading strengths and needs by conducting a Miscue Analysis. Based

on that analysis, I examined the curriculum to determine whether those specific learning needs were addressed, and whether Vygotskian perspective in regards to zone of proximal development and social constructivism were supported within the Title I classroom context.

Research Questions

1. In what ways did enrollment in a Title I program affect sixth grade students?

(a) What opportunities were gained and lost as a result of being placed in Title I reading and what were the students' perceptions of those opportunities?

(b) What were the students' individual strengths and weaknesses?

(c) How were students' individual strengths and weaknesses being addressed in this Title I program?

2. What experiences and perceptions did these Title I students in sixth grade have through their involvement in their classes?

(a) How did these students perceive themselves as readers?

(b) How did they perceive others as readers?

(c) How did students perceive their classes?

Rationale

Qualitative Research

Why qualitative research?

Qualitative research is a naturalistic approach interpreting a phenomenon in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Merriam (1998)

defined qualitative research as "an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry" (p. 5). The intention of qualitative research is to explain the meaning in social phenomena. Merriam defined qualitative researchers as individuals "interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world" (p. 6).

The school district reported data on these adolescents about their reading skills in quantitative measures. Based on the data, school district personnel made decisions about the educational program these adolescents should receive and these students were placed in a reading intervention program (Title I reading). However, quantitative data could not explain why the students were scoring low, what were the emotional consequences of placement in intervention programs, and if their individual strengths and weaknesses were being addressed in these programs. Thus, I decided to use qualitative research to investigate the characteristics, perceptions, experiences and education of these adolescents.

Through naturalistic inquiry, I studied these adolescents. In naturalistic inquiry, the researcher studies "real-word situations as they unfold naturally in a non-manipulating" manner (Patton, 1990, p. 40). I had no predetermined constraints on the outcomes. The primary source of data was qualitative in the form of interviews, observations, and reading assessment. Quantitative data (surveys, test scores, reading assessment) were used to support qualitative findings and provide triangulation.

Methodology Over-View

Each research question was addressed by various data collection methods. Figure 3-1 provides information on how those questions were addressed and provides the points to triangulation used in this study. The case study of this sixth grade Title I/language arts supplement class was organized around three over-arching questions. In question one, I explored the ways enrollment in a Title I program affected these sixth grade students. In question two, I studied the experiences and perceptions of these students. These two over arching questions had sub-questions of the components of the overall questions. Qualitative research requires a well thought out plan of action (Berg, 2007). Figure 3-2 illustrates the data collection time frame of this study.

Over-arching Research Question:	Data collection method
1. In what ways did enrollment in a Title I class affect sixth grade students?	
(a) What opportunities were gained and lost as a result of being placed in Title I reading and what were the students' perceptions of those opportunities?	Informal conversation Title I Federal Programs Director Interview with classroom teacher Informal conversations with principal Interview science teachers, choir/guitar teacher and social studies teacher Anecdotal notes from observations Archived data-student schedules Archived data-Title I permission form Archived data-Teacher lesson plans
(b) What were the students' individual strengths and weaknesses?	Miscue Analysis Running Records Students, Interview I, III Anecdotal records, classroom observations
(c) How are the students' individual strengths and weaknesses being addressed in this Title I program?	Students, Interview III, IV Anecdotal notes from observations Miscue Analysis Archived data-teacher lesson plans Archived data-basal teacher's manual
2. What experiences and perceptions did these Title I students in sixth grade have through their involvement in their classes?	
(a) How do these students perceive themselves as readers?	Reader's Self Perception Scale survey Measuring Reading Attitudes survey Reading Motivation questionnaire Students, Interview I, II, III
(b) How did they perceive others as readers?	Students, Interview II
(c) How do students perceive their classes?	Students, Interview I, II, III

Figure 3-1 Data collection methods

Week	Tasks conducted
Weeks 1-7	Initial Meetings, informal conversations: Title I classroom teacher, federal programs director, literacy coordinator, school principal, assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction
Week 8	Officially started in public school with case group Met with children at school, hand out permission forms Administer RSPS (Readers Self Perception Scale) Conducted a parent meeting at school in the evening Gathered Archived data cumulative files in office: reading history Interviewed classroom teacher Kept anecdotal records
Week 9	Administer Measuring Attitudes (Garfield survey) and Motivation for Reading Questionnaire Interview #1 with kids Anecdotal observation collected Archived data: interest inventories
Week 10	Conducted Miscue Analysis Anecdotal observation
Week 11-14	Conducted interview #2 with kids Interviewed principal informally Kept anecdotal records/ observations Documented behavioral checklist
Week 15	Kept anecdotal records/observations Took running records from students reading out loud in class
Week 16	Conducted interview #3 with kids Anecdotal observations
Week 17-21	Collected Archived data: student schedules, student grades from first semester, AIP (academic improvement plans) for Title I service, staff roster, lesson plan from teacher for first semester, standardized test scores: NMSBA,SRI, and MAP Anecdotal observations
Week 22	Final interview with classroom teacher Interviewed food service manager Gathered Archived data: demographic data Interviewed choir and guitar teacher Anecdotal observations
Week 23	Interviewed science teacher Interviewed with social studies/history teacher Anecdotal observation
Week 24	Conducted interview #4 with kids (follow up interview) Anecdotal observation

Figure 3-2 Data collection log

Case Study

The intention of this research was to gain insight about the perceptions of students placed in reading intervention programs, specifically students placed in a Title I assistance program. In order to explore these perceptions, the research strategy chosen was the case study. Berg (2007) defined case studies as "a method involving systematically gathering enough information about a particular person, social setting, event, or group to permit the researcher to effectively understand how the subject operates or functions" (p. 283). Yin (2003) stated "the case study is used in many situations to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social, political, and related phenomena" (p. 1). The intention of the research was to understand how these students in a Title I programs perceived these interventions and how these students functioned within these contexts. The case study method is desirable when the researcher deliberately wants to cover contextual conditions-believing they might be highly pertinent to the phenomenon of study (Yin, 2003). By concentrating on this phenomenon, I hoped to uncover significant characteristics of the phenomenon (Berg, 2007). The case studies provided intensive descriptions. These intensive, holistic descriptions provide descriptions which can lead to understanding a phenomenon (Merriam, 1998).

Case Study

In this case study, several research strategies were implemented. I conducted several interviews, took field notes from observations, administered surveys, and

gathered forms of archived documentations (Berg, 2007). Stake (1995) stated "The first criterion should be to maximize what we can learn. Given our purposes, which cases are likely to lead us to understanding, to assertions, perhaps even to modifying of generations?" (p. 4). I looked at one class of seventeen students placed in a single Title I remedial reading class. I used this group (as my case) to gather overall information about their reading characteristics, reading perceptions and experiences in school. Stake (1995) defined this type of inquiry as an instrumental case study (p. 3). The use of this instrumental case study was to understand adolescents who struggle with reading. I analyzed the conditions of this one supplemental intervention reading program. In instrumental case studies, the intention is to understand something else and accomplish another goal other than understanding only this particular class (Stake, 2005). My intention was to use the information from this particular group of students to understand the conditions of pre-teen students in Title I reading programs as a whole. Although, the results from this single case may not be generalized to other groups of Title I students, the data obtained can be used to understand the general conditions and information can be transferred to similar situations.

Disadvantages to case studies

Although case studies have much strength, some researchers disdain case study strategies (Yin, 2003). According to Yin (2003) the greatest concern has been "the lack of rigor of case study research" (p. 10). For this study, I implemented triangulation. Triangulation is the use of several data points to explain the phenomenon being studied.

"By combining several lines of sight, researchers obtain a better, more substantive picture of reality; a richer, more complete array of symbols and theoretical concepts; and a means of verifying many of these elements" (Berg, 2007, p. 5). Triangulation "adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 5). I conducted triangulation through interviews, observations, and surveys (refer to Figure 3-1). Critics of case study research claim case studies do not lend themselves to generalization (Yin, 2003; Berg, 2007). The goal of my research was not to generalize about a population of students but rather to understand their perceptions and the context of the intervention programs in which they are placed.

The very nature of case study research means massive amounts of data are collected (Yin, 2003). The processing of this data can be a daunting time consuming task. The researcher must develop a data-gathering plan (Stake, 1995). The researcher must have this plan in order to be able to siphon the data and not become overwhelmed with details (Stake, 1995). The plan must include components for data-collection (refer to Figure 3-2) and data-analysis. The researcher must keep in mind the research questions and distinguish between data relevant to the questions. One criticism of case-study research is there is often a degree of bias (Berg, 2007). Yin (2003) suggested the researcher analyzes his/her own willingness to accept contradictory findings. Another method to prevent bias is to have peer reviewers analyze the findings. I used peers to review my findings and conclusions.

Case study research involves sampling. Sampling in itself can be a disadvantage to a true picture of the phenomenon. The researcher can only talk and observe people who can be contacted and conclusions have to be drawn about the phenomenon based on the sampling of people and activities (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The sampling of a few individuals and specific times can provide an unrealistic picture of the phenomenon. In order to provide a more holistic view, I conducted multiple observations, multiple surveys, and multiple interviews.

Context of the Study

Data sources

The school district had 2808 students. The school in which the case study took place had 208 sixth grade students. The district identified 137 students at this school as economically disadvantaged, 65.8 % of the student population. Economically disadvantaged was identified by totaling the number of students who qualify for free and reduced meals. At this school, 123 students out of the 208 students (59%) qualified for free meals. Fourteen of the 208 students (7%) qualified for reduced meals. The ethnicity distribution at this school was: 58% Hispanic, 40% Caucasian, 1% Native American, and 1% African-American.

The school, East Middle School, had a school-wide Title I program which offers supplemental reading intervention. In a school-wide project, all students could be served. The Title I program served 48 of the 208 sixth grade students. Students were chosen for

Title I services, supplemental reading intervention, based on their standardized test results the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment, a criterion referenced test.

The students at East Middle School had a minimum of two classes daily in language arts. Every student in sixth grade had a reading class. Every student had a writing class. Students who were identified as below proficiency had a third language arts class. The language arts class was identified as a language arts supplement, synonymous with Title I reading.

The school had three Title I classes. All three classes met in the morning. The students from Title I/ language arts supplement second period became my case study group. The students in this class had the following criteria (a) low scores on NMBSA standardized testing on the reading subtest causing placement in Title I reading, (b) current grade level sixth grade, (c) if referred for special education services in reading, the diagnostic evaluation did not identify them as having a reading disability as defined by the standard deviation score on the discrepancy model, and (d) permission by the parent was obtained for Title I placement. Out of the seventeen students in this class, fifteen participated in the study.

Based on the case study research in literacy, I decided to examine all fifteen students individually and as a group. Reeves (2004) investigated adolescents' resistance to text by conducting case studies on five individuals. Reeves spent five years gathering data. Hall (2005) spent two years examining three struggling readers in case studies as they transacted with text in the content areas. Smith and Wilhelm (2002) examined the

literacy lives of 49 young men. Patton (1990) stated there are no criteria for sample size and "in-depth information from a small number of people can be very valuable, especially if the cases are information-rich" (p. 184). Patton identified "the logic of criterion sampling is to review and study all cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance" (p. 176). The fifteen students in this case study were interviewed, observed in class, assessed using Miscue Analysis, and completed surveys.

I collected data over 24 weeks (approximately six months). My original intention was to collect data for a period of 12 weeks. However, during my duration in the field, substantial changes occurred in the classroom curriculum. In qualitative research one criterion is design flexibility "open to adapting inquiry as situation change" (Patton, 1990, p. 41).These changes warranted extending the study to investigate the effects of these changes.

I solicited participants by the cooperation of gatekeepers. Gatekeepers were people to grant or deny access to the research setting (Berg, 2007). I sought permission by the individual school district. The first meeting was held with the Title I director of the school district. At that meeting, I was asked to meet with the school principal. The school principal met with me and asked me to meet with the assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction. The Title I director then called me and asked me to meet with the district's literacy coordinator. I then met back with the school principal for a second meeting. After my meeting with the school principal, I met with the classroom teacher again. These meetings occurred over a four week period. Each meeting was required by

the district for me to obtain access into the research setting. Each of the staff members provided information about the school, the district and/or the kids. The information obtained through these numerous meetings is included in my chapter four and cited as informal conversations.

Permission was requested and obtained by the Internal Revenue Board, Human Subjects Committee of Texas Tech. University (Appendix A). When permission was granted from the IRB, parent (Appendix B) and student permission were solicited (Appendix C). After permission was granted, data collection began on the research site with the participants. I spent 15 weeks gathering data with the students. Student data was gathered by (a) surveys: Readers Self Perception Scale, Elementary Attitude Survey, and Motivations for Reading Questionnaire, (b) Interviews: Interview I, Interview II, Interview III, and Interview IV, (c) Observations: anecdotal records and behavioral checklist, (d) Authentic assessments: Miscue Analysis and running records, and (e) Archived data: cumulative records in school, report cards, interest inventories, academic improvement plans (AIP) for Title I and standardized test scores: New Mexico Standards Base Assessment (NMSBA), Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) and the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP).

I conducted staff interviews. I had formal interviews with the Title I classroom teacher, social studies teacher, science teachers, choir/guitar teacher, and the food service manager. These formal interviews provided me information about school and district decisions about how they serviced Title I students. Furthermore, these interviews

provided me additional perspectives on the characteristics and experiences of these Title I student (Figure 3-2).

The Role of the Researcher

My role as a researcher was as an onlooker (Patton, 1990). An onlooker makes "direct observations of program activities, the process of observation are separate from the processes of data collection through interviewing" (Patton, 1990, p. 206). I sat at the back corner of the classroom recording my observations. At times, I would follow students to the computer lab to research or the reading room; however, I typically tried to find a back corner to sit quietly and take notes. I usually took notes on my lap top computer and students became accustomed to seeing me type as they worked.

Although the students occasionally asked for my permission to go to the restroom or do other errands, they first went to the Title I classroom teacher if she was available. I administered reading surveys/questionnaires to the whole class. When there was a substitute in the classroom, I would start the students on their assignments, as left by the classroom teacher, or assist as needed. Once there was a day when a substitute was not available, the Title I classroom teacher became sick quickly, and I took over the class until the end of the class period. However, these circumstances were few and I tried hard to maintain my role as an onlooker and not become a participant in the classroom.

My intention was to gather information about these students and their learning environment. I tried not to become immersed in the classroom because immersion would change classroom curriculum and the dynamics of the class. I previously taught

struggling readers and worked as a Title I teacher for many years. I did not want to influence the curriculum by teaching or directing lessons.

Data Collection Methods

Interviews

An interview schedule was designed (D). My original intention was to interview 5-6 students to provide a representative group of voices of the students enrolled in this sixth grade language arts/Title I class. However, after interviewing six students, I failed to reach saturation on the types of comments surfacing in the interviews. Each student was uniquely different and at that time, I could not determine common themes or patterns present with such a small sampling size. The six students had been chosen by the classroom teacher to represent students with different reading ability levels. After contemplation, I decided to work with 15 of the students. Although the study was heavily interview driven, survey data (quantitative data) was used to support the qualitative data gathered. The survey data was used to triangulate and substantiate the findings present through interviews. Often interview responses were very short. Short answers are typical for this age of population. Researchers have often found children's answers brief during interviewing and this study was no different in that regard. Although some students were more verbal than others, the common responses to open-ended questions were fragmented short answers even upon probing from me.

Case-study interviews

I interviewed fifteen students chosen for my data collection. The study used three-interview structure (Seidman, 2006). Each interview was audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interviews followed a semi-standardized interview structure (Berg, 2007). Semi-standardized interviews are also referred to as semi-structured in some of the literature (Seidman, 2006). I used a semi-standardized interview (Berg, 2007). In a semi-standardized interview, the interviewer has a set of questions; however, the interviewer may change the wording or order of the questions. The participants may expand on the questions and the interviewer may ask questions and provide clarification. "These questions are typically asked of each interviewee in a systematic and consistent order, but the interviewers are allowed freedom to digress; that is, the interviewers are permitted (in fact, expected) to probe far beyond the answers to their prepared standardized questions" (Berg, 2007, p. 95).

Questions for the interviews were taken from several different sources (Appendix D). I used questions from *The Burke Interview Modified for Older Readers* (BIMOR) (Burke,1979) from Goodman, Watson and Burke (2005), *Sentence Completions from Yellow Brick Roads: Shared and Guided Paths to Independent Reading 4-12* by Allen (2000) and the *Fall Survey from Yellow Brick Roads: Shared and Guided Paths to Independent Reading 4-12* by Allen (2000). Additional questions were asked by the researcher based on personal curiosity or on patterns that emerged. I individually interviewed all fifteen students each time. I audio recorded and transcribed each

interview verbatim into a Microsoft word document. I then put the MS word document into NVIVO in which I later coded.

I conducted the first interview upon the initiation of the study (October, 2007). I used the first interview to gain information about the students reading histories (Seidman, 2006). The initial interview included some "throw-away" questions. Berg (2007) stated "Throw-away questions may be essential demographic questions or general questions used to develop rapport between the interviewers and subjects" (p. 101).

I conducted the second interview in November, 2007. I used the second interview to obtain details of the students' experience by inquiring about their perceptions about the reading intervention class and their experiences within that class. The interview explored their current reading perceptions and experiences.

I conducted the third interview in December, 2007. The third interview allowed the participants to reflect on the meaning of their experience and "address the intellectual and emotional connections" (Seidman, 2006, p. 18). The third interview gave the students the opportunity to self evaluate and give suggestions as to what types of things would make the reading experience better for them.

By conducting the three-interview structure, I had the opportunity to build a foundation that guided and illuminated the next interview (Seidman, 2006). Base line questions provided a semi-structured foundation for each interview; although students added comments and elaborated within the interview. Within each interview, there were four types of questions. Berg (2007) referred to these questions as essential questions,

extra questions, throw-away questions, and probing questions. Essential questions were geared to obtain desired information which centers on the focus of study. Extra questions were questions worded slightly differently to check reliability of the interviewee responses. Throw-away questions were used to ease the interviewee and develop a rapport. Probing questions were used to provide the interviewer with more information. Probing questions were used generally after an interviewee's response to provide clarification or more information such as "How come?" or "Could you tell me more?"

Although, my original intention was to conduct only the three interviews with the students, substantial curriculum changes occurred during the second semester. Therefore, I conducted a fourth interview in February, 2008. I asked students to reflect on those curricular changes and their perceptions about those changes. I also used the fourth interview to fill in gaps in the interviews; for example, although students commented on their favorite classes in the first interview they did not expand on why a certain class was their favorite. The fourth interview was an opportunity to obtain clarity to vague responses or to probe (dig deeper) into issues.

I interviewed all fifteen students four times each. Therefore, I conducted, transcribed and coded a total of 60 student interviews. I audio-taped all interviews and I transcribed verbatim. In order to keep up with the data, I transcribed interviews weekly. Data processing can become very time consuming and daunting; furthermore, crucial information may be misinterpreted if not processed in a timely manner. Therefore, each week as I conducted interviews, I transcribed and reviewed those interviews the same

week. I did not hire anyone to assist in transcribing and I found although the transcribing was massive, this process allowed me another opportunity to hear the interviews and to reflect not only on the content but also students' tone of voice and verbal expression.

School personnel informal conversations and interviews

I had informal conversations and formal interviews with various members of school personnel. I had an informal conversation with the Title I Federal Programs Director to obtain information about how decisions for placement occurred and how the program was set up in this particular school. I also held informal conversations with the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, the Food Service Manager and the district's Literacy Coordinator; these individuals provided demographic information and school policy information. I interviewed the classroom teacher on several occasions to gain insight on the curriculum materials she used, the decision making process of how she implemented Title I services in this particular school, the individual students she served, and her opinions and perceptions of those processes. I held informal conversations with the principal to obtain information as to his role and the role of his staff on the decisions behind how implementation of Title I services occurred in that particular school.

I interviewed other school personnel to provide me more insight on how decisions were made at this particular school and their perceptions of their classes; these interviews consisted of teachers from choir/guitar, social studies, and science. The interviews were open-ended and unstructured. I asked consistently a few questions of the teachers, such as "What part of the decision making process did you personally have in the way students

are serviced at your school, how did you feel about students having the option of which course to delete in order to allow for Title I services, how is this years programming different from previous years that you have observed at this school, and what affect have these changes made on children that you have observed?" Other questions were unique to the teacher and/or situation such as "What do you think of the adopted materials" and "Why do you feel students prefer your class?"

I conducted several informal conversations and formal interviews with school and district personnel. I recorded a total of ten informal conversations and five formal interviews. I took hand written notes on informal conversation and then typed them up on a daily basis. I wrote those conversations as soon as possible in order not to forget any content or crucial information. I audio recorded formal interviews and transcribed those interviews within the same week. I documented and recorded each of those conversations/ interviews in a Microsoft Word document. I then coded each document. These fifteen conversations/interviews served to provide me additional insight into the case.

Research on interviews

Yin (2003) stated interviews are essential data sources in case study research. Berg (2007) commented "interviewing may be defined simply as a conversation with a purpose" (p. 89). My purpose of interviewing in this study was to hear the stories of these pre- adolescent students. Seidman (2006) stated "the purpose of in-depth interviewing is not to get answers to questions, nor to test hypotheses, and not to

'evaluate' as the term is normally used. At the root of the in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of the people and the meaning they make of that experience" (p. 9). The adolescents in this study provided crucial voices to their perceptions of the reading intervention programs, their experiences in such programs, and their understanding of their own reading skills. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) referred to qualitative interviewing as "capturing the individual's point of view" (p. 12). Patton (1990) described the purpose of interviewing as an intent "to find out what is in and on someone else's mind… the purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective" (p. 278).

Disadvantages of interviewing

The information gained through interviewing is only as good as the researcher's questions and skills. Patton (1990) stated "the quality of the information obtained during an interview is larger dependent on the interviewer" (p. 279). Yin (2003) claimed if the researcher asked leading questions, then the purpose of the interview will not have been served. Merriam (1998) claimed "leading questions reveal a bias or an assumption that the researcher is making, which may not be held by the participant" (pp. 78-79). I was careful to structure my questions in a manner that avoided judgment and bias. I structured the questions in an open ended format so students could expand on their answers.

Even with the questions structured as open ended several students only provided brief responses. I needed a way to check the reliability of the responses since they were "self-reported" and I was unsure if students would respond honestly or respond as they

thought I wanted them to respond. I used three different surveys to obtain information on reading attitudes. I used these survey data to compare the oral responses obtained in interviews.

Survey

My purpose of the surveys was to obtain information about the pre-teen and their perceptions of themselves as a reader. The surveys were administered to the entire group. Students completed the *Reader Self-Perception Scale* (RSPS) devised by Henk and Melnick (1995), *The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey* (ERA, McKenna & Kear, 1990), and the *Motivation for Reading Questionnaire* (MRQ McKenna & Stahl, 2003) devised by Gambrell (1995). These three surveys together provided information about these students' attitudes. Furthermore, the use of three measurements provided me a method of triangulation and cross checking of the data.

The RSPS was developed to measure how intermediate children (children in grades fourth through sixth) feel about themselves as readers. The results from the RSPS were divided into categories consisting of four specific scales: progress, observational comparison, social feedback and physiological state. Students indicated their feelings towards each statement by marking on a Likert scale. Example questions were: "I think I am a good reader. I am getting better at reading. I read better than other kids in my class." The scale consisted of 33 questions. The results from the RSPS were divided into categories consisting of four specific scales: progress, observational comparison, social feedback and physiological state.

The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERA) was developed to be applicable to children in grades first through sixth. Students responded by circling the Garfield that represents how they felt about the item. Each item on the survey was given a score one through four, ranging in the happiest Garfield on the far left to a very upset Garfield on the far right. Example questions were "How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?", "How do you feel about spending free time reading?", and "How do you feel when it's time for reading class?" The ERA consisted of 20 questions. The first half of the survey related to recreational reading and the second half of the survey related to academic reading.

The Motivations for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ) was used to identify how students felt about reading. Students responded by circling the number that corresponded with how they felt. The numbers ranged from one (very different from the student's opinions) to four (a lot like the student's opinions). Example questions were "I like hard, challenging books", "I read because I have to", and "I don't like vocabulary questions." The MRQ consisted of 54 items.

Although all three surveys (instruments) were given in their entirety; I examined only certain questions. I used only questions from each survey that related to content asked during the interviews (Appendix E). I compared the written responses to oral responses given during interviews; this process allowed me to triangulate data.

Disadvantages of surveys

Data generated from the survey was only as effective as the questions themselves (Berg, 2007). The survey provided insight for me on the students' perceptions as long as they answer the questions honestly. Survey information may be ineffective if the student answers as they feel the teacher or researcher desires instead of their honest perceptions. In order to check for honesty in student responses, I compared the data generated from the surveys to the oral responses obtained through interviews.

Observation

I conducted observations over a fifteen week period. I observed the Title I/language arts class four days a week. I sat in an unobtrusive area of the classroom in order not to distract from classroom activity and instruction. Classroom observations were crucial to compare instruction received with the individual students being studied. All observations were recorded in anecdotal/observational field notes. I tried to document student responses, comments and overall classroom performance. I documented the lesson being presented and students' responses to the lessons. Merriam (1998) stated observation provides the opportunity for a holistic interpretation. The classroom observations provided another layer of data to the self-reported data obtained through interviews and surveys.

Anecdotal notes (Appendix F) were obtained through classroom observations. My purpose of the observation was to provide more depth and understanding into the contextual phenomenon and to provide further validity. I noted the type of instruction the

student received. I took notes about the curriculum, the involvement of the students, and the comments students made during class time. I used these anecdotal records to validate or compare the data obtained from the Reader Self Perception Scale, the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey and the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire. I typed anecdotal notes in Microsoft Word during the classroom observation.

I recorded observations in checklist form (Appendix G) using Allen (2000) *Observational Checklist: Independent and Commitment to Learning* (p. 285). An observational checklist was used during the observations to document student behaviors such as time on task, ability to stay focused, and completion of activities. Observations were recorded as to the setting (Glesne, 2006). These checklists signaled a need for intervention (Allen, 2000) and identified patterns among the students being studied. I used the checklist at the beginning of tasks but also near the end of reading tasks. Allen (2000) recommended recording behavior at two different times to document behaviors at the beginning as well as at active reading times.

Disadvantages of Observation

Some disadvantages to observation are not everything can be directly observed; furthermore, observations are time consuming, labor intensive, and relatively expensive (Patton, 1990). The researcher may alter the dynamics of the setting simply by observing. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) discussed adding the researcher into the environment may alter the relationships. The researchers' presence may be obtrusive simply due to the fact they are new to the setting. Miles and Huberman (1994) stated researchers are likely

"especially at the outset, to create social behavior in others that would not have occurred ordinarily" (p. 265). Observations can be sources of bias by affecting the researcher and the participants simply by changing the social dynamics (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In order to decrease bias, I tried to stay on-site as long as possible and tried to be as unobtrusive as possible (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Students were keenly aware of my presence in the first few weeks on site; however, within a month, students appeared to be less concerned with my presence. In order to keep up with the documentation of the anecdotal notes and observation, I transcribed the event immediately, often typing during the actual observation and revisiting my transcriptions immediately following class to add or subtract content as I remembered.

Records, archived data

I gathered records to provide more information. Some of the records I included (but not limited to) were worksheets used in class, analysis of the reading basal, the school schedule, students test data from standardized exams, parent permission forms for Title I placement, interest inventories, information from cumulative files (students' permanent records), teacher lesson plans and student work samples. These documents served to provide insight to me relevant to the research questions. These documents were especially crucial in understanding the reading histories of these students. Furthermore, these archived data provided me information for curriculum analysis in comparison with students' strengths and weaknesses.

Miscue Analysis

Miscue Analysis differs from other diagnostic instruments because it is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. The qualitative portion of this instrument examines the reading behaviors of the individual by looking at the "quality of the reading" (Goodman, Watson, & Burke 2005, p. 4). The quantitative portion provides the statistical information by examining the number of errors in isolation, the number of strategies used as cueing systems applied in miscues. These research techniques combined allows the researcher to gain insight into the reading process as a socio-psycholinguistic, transaction model of reading (Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 2005).

I assessed each of the fifteen students reading behavior individually using a Miscue Analysis. I used formal Miscue Analysis, classroom procedure (Goodman, Watson & Burke, 2005), to determine the cueing systems of each student and their individual strengths and weaknesses. In the classroom procedure the information gained is somewhat more general than the In-Depth Procedure, less time-consuming and the typescript is used for analyzing the sentences as well as for marking and coding the miscues (Appendix H).

I prepared a transcription for each reading passage students selected. Students read the passage. I audio recorded oral reading. After the passage reading was completed, I had the students retell the story. I scored retellings on a prepared template for each passage. I then scored each Miscue Analysis using a Miscue Analysis coding sheet (Appendix I).

Disadvantages to Miscue Analysis

Miscue Analysis must be consistently scored and may be misinterpreted. Dialectical difference on the part of student may cause faulty results. The researcher must have knowledge about miscue administration and scoring (Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 2005). Scoring miscue takes knowledge about the miscue instrument and now the instrument must be analyzed. Analysis can be time consuming. I practiced conducting and interrupting Miscue Analysis in a pilot study prior to this research study. Practice was essential in order to score consistently. I spent time with the students for several weeks prior to administering the Miscue Analysis in order to familiarize myself with dialectical differences and student pragmatics. Each Miscue Analysis was carefully scored. I listened to each audio tape several times to make sure I had noted the each miscue correctly.

Pilot Studies

Stake (1995) claimed trying out questions should be routine. Glesne (2006) stated the researcher should pilot respondents from the actual group that will be studied. A pilot site allows the researcher to try different approaches on a trial basis (Yin, 2003).
I decided to conduct two separate pilot studies.

The first pilot study

I conducted a six week pilot study spring 2006. My research questions at the time of the pilot were: (a) What are the self-efficacies of students who are struggling middle school readers? (b)What reading strategies do struggling middle school readers apply

when decoding unfamiliar text? (c) Are struggling middle school readers aware of their own reading process, thus metacognition during reading? (d) How do middle school readers feel about target assisted Title I reading programs? (e) What are the implications for middle school teachers of the struggling middle school students?

Nine eighth grade students participated. All participants were determined to be below average in reading ability based on the states standardized reading exam. These students were placed in a supplemental targeted assisted Title I program.

During the first week, all students completed a self-reported questionnaire about their personal learning styles. During the second week, students completed a self-reported scale about their feelings about reading, the *Reader Self-Perception Scale* (RSPS) devised by Henk and Melnick (1995). Weeks three through six I spent reading and interacting with the students. I took anecdotal notes about the students' comments and interactions. I recorded observational notes about the reading strategies applied. During the final week (week eight), I individually interviewed students.

I found the information gained from the multiple intelligence survey really did not fit with the information needed for my study. Best and Kahn (2006) further challenge personality inventories due to inadequate theories and lack of empirical validity outside of particular groups. I decided to eliminate the multiple intelligence survey for my dissertation study. I found the data from the RSPS useful and found the information could be triangulated with interviewing participants. I decided one interview with each student did not provide information. I found the observations were unstructured, often hard to

decipher any pertinent information. I learned my observations needed to be purpose driven so that I am attentive to those observations that relate to my research questions.

I found my research questions needed refinement and more clarification. I found my pilot was too broad and covered too many questions Bogdan and Biklen (1998) stated the researcher must narrow down the scope to make the task manageable. By having too broad of a focus, I was spreading myself too thin rather than focusing intensely on a specific phenomenon (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

Second Pilot Study

I conducted an eight week pilot study fall 2006. My research questions at the time of the pilot were: (a) What are the self-efficacies of students who are struggling pre-teen readers? (b)What reading strategies do struggling pre-teen readers apply when decoding unfamiliar text? (c) Are struggling pre-teen readers aware of their own reading process, thus metacognition during reading? (d) What are the strengths and weaknesses of these pre-teen readers?

The participants were chosen from the fourth grade and fifth grade classrooms. They both were receiving Title I services. They both had scored below proficiency on the states standardized exam in reading. One of the students was male and in fifth grade and the other student was female in fourth grade.

The students completed a survey *Measuring Attitude toward Reading: A new tool for teachers* (ERA, McKenna & Kear, 1990). I individually interviewed students using the *Burke Reading Interview* (Wilde, 2000). I took anecdotal notes from observations

twice a week for one hour for a period of eight weeks on each child. I completed a Miscue Analysis on each student. I collected artifacts from class work. I analyzed the reading basal used for instruction. I observed classroom instruction.

I found the *Reader Self Perception Scale* provided more data because it included the sub-scores. As with my previous pilot study, the *Burke Reading Interview* did not match information gained through observations in the classrooms. The Miscue Analysis provided crucial data on the students' strengths and weaknesses. Based on the Miscue Analysis, I was able to provide the student assistance team, the teachers and parents of these students recommendation for reading instruction.

Data Analysis

Glesne (2006) identified data analysis as a process of organization of what has been seen, heard, and read to make sense of what was learned. The process of analysis can occur simultaneously with data collection by continual reflection on what is being learned (Glesne, 2006; Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). The process is reflective in that the on going analysis informed my data collection, writing and further data collection (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). The process of exploring open questions is referred to qualitative research as inductive analysis. In inductive analysis, the researcher is immersed in the details and specifics of the data to discover categories, dimensions, and interrelationships (Patton, 1990). Patton (1990) claimed "The challenge is to make sense of massive amounts of data, reduce the volume of information, identify significant patterns, and

construct a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal" (pp. 371-372).

I transcribed notes into Microsoft word documents after each interview and observation. I audio-recorded interviews and transcription was verbatim. I entered the transcripts into a computerized data management program, NVivo Revision 1.3. I kept up with the data by organizing the data into categories and developing preliminary coding schemes (Glesne, 2006). The use of NVivo allowed me to code segments of data and then sort and retrieve data based on those codes (Appendix J). I analyzed the data by looking for patterns systematically (Berg, 2007). I compared data by considering information obtained from all triangulation sources and looking for similarities and differences.

I started with four categories. From those four categories, I coded segments of data. Data was grouped and then conceptualized by similar patterns or characteristics (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I coded data by similar concepts, key words, and similar sentence responses. Coding data in this method is referred to in research as open coding (Berg, 2007).

Thirteen subcategories emerged from these coded segments. The subcategories were constructed through a layering process from the specific to the general (Creswell, 1989). I added and deleted codes as the data was processed (Good, 2004). I coded interviews throughout the data collection process and I continued to reflect on the data collected. I worked systematically to focus on the particular phenomenon of interest and not to become too broad in my data collection and analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998,

Miles & Huberman, 1994). I was able to sort and retrieve data based on those codes. These thirteen subcategories became seventeen separate coded reports within the NVivo program.

Within each subcategory, further sub-division of data branched off. I searched for patterns within each category. These patterns were key words or concept that emerged within several of the subcategories and further division of those sub-categories. I compared data by considering information from all triangulation sources and looking for similarities and differences.

I analyzed the data by looking for patterns systematically (Berg, 2007). I discovered patterns that crossed data sources and categories by conducting axial coding (Berg, 2007). I noted these emerging patterns. The intent of identifying a pattern was to isolate the phenomenon (Miles & Huberman, 1994). By isolating the pattern, I determined the number of times an incident occurred and under what conditions.

In data analysis, it was important that I looked for "unpatterns" or those circumstances that are negative evidence (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The process of looking for circumstances or phenomenon that did not match the patterns emerging was important for me to test my explanations. I had to rule out spurious relations and check for rival explanations (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The advantages of checking for exceptions were the conclusions I drew were more trustworthy and provided a more realistic explanation of the phenomenon I was studying.

My final step was to write up the experiences of these adolescents into a narrative description. Creswell (1989) described this final process as the "essential structure of their experiences", a narrative account of "what they experienced and how they experienced it" (p. 223). The intention of the research was to find meaning in the characteristics, experiences, perceptions and education of these adolescents. Miles and Huberman (1994) stated people are "meaning-finders."

Data Management Plan

As discussed previously, qualitative case study research can lead to massive amounts of data (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Patton, 1990; Yin, 2003). The processing of this data can be a daunting, time consuming task. I had to have a plan in order to be able to siphon the data and not become overwhelmed with details (Stake, 1995). "Qualitative data need to be reduced and transformed in order to make them more readily accessible, understandable, and to draw out various themes and patterns" (Berg, 2007, p. 47).

In case studies, raw data can be used to write a case record (Patton, 1990). A case record includes all the information needed for analysis but is organized beyond the raw case data collected (Patton, 1990). From the case record, a case study narrative can be constructed. My case study included: (a) observations of class, (b) four interviews of the students in the case study, (c) *Readers Self Perception Scale Survey*, (d) *The Elementary Readers Attitude Survey,* (e) the *Motivations for Readers Questionnaire*, (f) Miscue Analysis of case-study students, (g) collected records, archived data (h) interviews and informal conversations with school personnel and (i) interviews and informal

conversations with school district personnel. I coded interviews and observations by emerging themes. I kept a running log of data quality issues in the margins of my observations and field notes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I continued to collect data until data saturation was reached (Bogdan & Bicklen, 1998). Data saturation referred to a stage in which the data collected became redundant.

Code-and-Retrieve programs may assist to chunk data and retrieve (Berg, 2007). I found the use of NVivo provided to be useful in assisting with classification and connections. Berg (2007) cautioned however, computers don't analyze the data. Researchers must analyze the data. Computer programs assist to chunk data into themes and categories to assist with data analysis and to make patterns more visible.

Trustworthiness, Transferability and Triangulation

For this study, I implemented triangulation. Triangulation was the use of several data points to explain the phenomenon being studied. "By combining several lines of sight, researchers obtain a better, more substantive picture of reality; a richer, more complete array of symbols and theoretical concepts; and a means of verifying many of these elements" (Berg, 2007, p. 5). Triangulation "adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 5). I conducted triangulation for this study through interviews, observations, Miscue Analysis and survey. These measures supported the finding by showing these independent data sources support one another in the findings (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Triangulation allowed for different kinds of data to capture different things and I attempted to understand these

similarities and differences (Patton, 1990). Miles and Huberman (1994) stated "the aim is to pick triangulation sources have different biases, different strengths, so they can complement each other" (p. 267).

Critics of case study research claim case studies do not lend themselves to generalization (Yin, 2003; Berg, 2007). My goal in this research was not to generalize about a population of students but rather to understand their perceptions and the context of the intervention programs in which they are placed. Transferability was possible when in-depth case studies provide rich description. Rich description was also referred to as "thick description". Thick description was detailed information about the subjects, location, methods, and the role of the researcher. The term "thick description" was described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as a necessary component in order to enable someone interested in making a transfer to reach a conclusion about whether a transfer is possible. Lincoln and Guba claimed it is the researcher's responsibility to provide "a data base to make transferable judgments and not a data index" (p. 316). Data is provided for the consumer (the reader) to determine whether or not the transfer applies. The reader has cognitive flexibility based on their schema to decide the extent of the transfer (Stake, 2005). Readers need as much detail as possible, missing details may lead readers to transfer the results to a situation that is not entirely similar to the original one, such as the original study may have involved participants from an urban setting and the reader may try to transfer the findings unsuccessfully to a rural setting. Eisner (1991) claimed the data (findings) serve as a guide, transferability does not anticipate the future; however,

the data can guide our attention to aspects of a situation. Thick description allows for thick interpretation (Vidich & Lyman, 2003).

Transferability is possible when in-depth case studies provide rich description. The process of transferability is performed by the readers of the research. Consumers of the research must be able to infer if the results are transferable to their needs in similar situations. Readers must take into account the differences between the description of the research study and their own setting. Readers may transfer only certain aspects of the study and not the findings of the entire study. Glaser and Strauss (1967) describe this process as the researcher and reader "sharing a joint responsibility" for establishing the value of the data. The researcher's perspective and actions are joined with the reader's perspective and actions (Patton, 1990). Cziko (1993) stated transferability allows for "temporary understanding", there are no absolutes and every individual must applied the data in a "modified" version to their own situation. Transferability gives the consumer the opportunity to sort through given methods and conclusions to decide what to apply to their own circumstance. The reader must understand the contextual setting and transfer this knowledge to another setting by understanding the contextual conditions of the new setting. The reader must understand how these settings are similar or different than the original conditions. Additionally, the reader must reflect on these findings and the consequences they have for the new setting (Greenwood & Levin, 2005).

Glesne (2006) discussed trustworthiness in terms of what was noticed in the research, why was that aspect noticed, how were they interpreted, and how were those

interpretations verified to be correct. I verified my reflections with research participants by discussing my observations and asking for clarification in interviews. I enlisted peer reviewers to "audit" my fieldwork and to look for bias in my interpretations. These peer auditors were crucial to determine if what I predicted as a consequence did appear in the data and not determined by my own assumptions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). My predictions were verified in ordered for my research to be trustworthy. One of the criticisms of qualitative research is researchers fail to explain how they drew conclusions from the massive amounts of data gathered. Miles and Huberman (1994) stated "we rarely see data displays-only the conclusions. In most cases, we don't see a procedural account of the analysis, explaining just how the researcher got from 500 pages of field notes to the main conclusion drawn" (p. 262). I was careful to provide the evidence to substantiate my claims and conclusions.

Summary

Over the course of twenty four weeks, I collected the data for this instrumental case study through informal conversations, interviews, surveys, documents, Miscue Analysis, and observations. My role of a researcher was as an onlooker. Data analysis was ongoing and recursive; thus, as data was analyzed more questions arose and were pursued in sequential interviews. Data collection stopped only after I reached a stage of saturation. I put transcripts into Microsoft Word documents, entered into NVIVO, coded and categorized and then analyzed by themes. Throughout the study, I implemented triangulation of data to assure validity and reliability.

Chapter IV

Presentation of Findings

The focus of this case study was on middle school students identified by their school as struggling readers. The purpose of this research was to explore the experiences and perceptions of sixth grade students placed in a Title I reading program. These students were identified for remedial reading intervention based on their scores from the state's standardized assessment measure in reading. The particular class chosen for study consisted of seventeen students in one sixth grade Title I reading class. Fifteen of those students participated in the study. The case study provided a deeper understanding (Berg, 2007) of the characteristics, perceptions, experiences and education of these sixth grade students in remedial reading programs. Based on the analysis of the data, the curriculum was examined to address whether students' specific learning needs were addressed within the Title I curriculum and what the affects of participation in such a program were for these students.

Research questions

1. In what ways did enrollment in a Title I program affect sixth grade students?

(a) What opportunities were gained and lost as a result of being placed in Title I reading and what were the students' perceptions of those opportunities?

(b) What were the students' individual strengths and weaknesses?

(c) How were students' individual strengths and weaknesses being addressed in this Title I program?

2. What experiences and perceptions did these Title I students in sixth grade have through their involvement in their classes?

(a) How did these students perceive themselves as readers?

(b) How did they perceive others as readers?

(c) How did students perceive their classes?

The case study of this sixth grade Title I/language arts class is presented in six sections (Figure 4-1). The first section provides the background information. Section two presents the Title I class curriculum and students' perception of the Title I class. Section three explores students' perceptions and experiences of their other classes. Section four provides a detailed description of opportunities these Title I students lost. Section five analyzes individual student's strengths and weaknesses.

All participants were given pseudonyms. The students are referred to in the chapter by first names (pseudonyms) and their teacher by her last name (pseudonym). I refer to myself within the chapter in first person.

Originally, I designed the study to be conducted over a 12 week period during the first semester of the school year. However, the Title I/language arts supplement class changed significantly during the course of this study. In the first semester, students participated in a "whole language type of classroom", according to Ms. April (the classroom teacher). In the second semester, students participated in a commercially produced basal program, the Triumph Reading Program (McGraw Hill) which was

adopted by the school district. Although this study did not continue through the entire second semester, I decided to prolong the study from 12 to 24 weeks and I returned to the school second semester to gather the perceptions and the experiences of the students due to the differences in curriculum and instruction. The data about the Title I classroom and curriculum (section two) is therefore presented in two portions, portion one focusing on the first semester of the school year, and portion two focusing on the second semester of the school.

The original study design was a case study of the Title I class with interviews and Miscue Analysis on a purposively selected population of five to six students. I began collecting the data in the Title I classroom under this intent. However, after interviewing six students, I failed to reach saturation on the types of comments surfacing in the interviews. Each student was uniquely different and at that time, I could not determine common themes or patterns; the six students had been chosen by the classroom teacher to be representative of different reading ability levels. After contemplation, I decided to work with 15 of the students. The original interview design was based on the three-interview structure (Seidman, 2006). Due to unpredictable circumstances and substantial curriculum changes, I returned to conduct a fourth interview to inquire how those changes affected students. Each student was interviewed four times; the result was 60 student interviews. I did an individual Miscue Analysis on each of the 15 students; the result was 15 individual diagnostic reports which were then used to make generalizations about this population of students. Although the study was heavily interview driven,

survey data (quantitative data) was used to support the qualitative data gathered. I used the survey data to triangulate and substantiate the findings present through interviews (sample Appendix E). Often interview responses were very short. Short answers are typical for this age of population. Researchers have often found children's answers brief during interviewing and this study was no different in that regard. Although some students were more verbal than others, the common responses to open-ended questions were fragmented short answers even upon probing from me. In order to present rich description of these students, I combined interviews, observation, and survey data.

Organizational Structure for Chapter Four

- Background
  -Description of the school, classroom, and the participants
- The Title I Class Curriculum
  -Description of the class curriculum and the students' perceptions of curriculum changes
- Students' Perception of Classes
  -Students' favorite classes, least favorite classes, elective classes, and Title I class
- Opportunities Lost as Result of Title I Placement
  -Student schedules and a description of educational opportunities missed
- Students as Readers
  -Identification of students' reading needs and whether or not those reading needs are met; students' perceptions of themselves and others as readers
- Final summary

Figure 4-1 Organizational structure

Data collection

Data collection occurred over approximately six months. Participants were solicited through the cooperation of gatekeepers. Gatekeepers were people to grant or deny access to the research setting (Berg, 2007). I sought permission through the individual school district. The first meeting was held with the Title I director of the school district. Meetings then followed with the school principal, assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction, the district's literacy coordinator and the classroom teacher. These meetings occurred over a four week period. Each meeting was required by the district for me to obtain access to the research setting. Each of the staff members provided information about the school, the district and/or the students. The information obtained through these numerous meetings is included in the chapter and cited as informal conversations.

Permission was requested and obtained by the Internal Revenue Board, Human Subjects Committee of Texas Tech. University (Appendix A). After permission was granted by the IRB, permission was sought from participants (Appendix C) and their parents (Appendix B) data collection began on the research site with the participants. I spent 15 weeks gathering data with the students. Student data was gathered by (a) surveys, (b) interviews, (c) observations, (d) authentic assessments, and (e) archived data (Figure 4-2).

Surveys	Readers Self Perception Scale Elementary Attitude Survey Motivations for Reading Questionnaire
Interviews	Interview I Students' past experiences Interview II Students' current perception and experiences Interview III Students' reflections Interview IV Students' perceptions of curriculum changes in Title I
Observations	Anecdotal Records Behavioral checklist
Archived Data	Cumulative records in school Report cards Interest inventories Academic improvement plans New Mexico Standards Base Assessment scores Scholastic Reading Inventory scores Measures of Academic Progress scores

Figure 4-2 Student data collection

I conducted staff interviews. I conducted formal interviews with the Title I classroom teacher, social studies teacher, two science teachers, choir/guitar teacher, and the food service manager. These formal interviews provided information about school and district decisions about how to service Title I students. Furthermore, these interviews provided additional perspectives on the characteristics and experiences of these Title I students.

Triangulation was used to ensure trustworthiness of the findings through the use of several data points to explain the phenomenon being studied. These multiple measures

supported the finding by showing that these independent data sources support one another in the findings (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Analysis of the Data

I transcribed all interviews and anecdotal records/observations into Microsoft Word documents. I audio-recorded interviews and I typed transcripts verbatim. I entered the transcripts into a computerized data management program, NVivo Revision 1.3. I organized the data into categories and developed coding schemes (Glesne, 2006). I had four categories (indicated throughout the chapter as section headings) developed from the research questions: Title I class, students' perception of their classes, opportunities lost as a result of placement, and students as readers. From those four categories, I coded segments of data. A sample coding sheet is included in the appendices (Appendix J). Data was coded by similar concepts, key words, and similar sentence responses; this method of coding is referred to in research as open coding (Berg, 2007). Those coded segments became subcategories, indicated by oval shapes (see Figure 4-3). Thirteen subcategories emerged from these coded segments: first semester curriculum, second semester curriculum, perceptions of curriculum changes, least favorite classes, favorite classes, elective classes, missing elective classes, missing history, cueing systems in reading, students' reading strengths and weaknesses, did curriculum address reading needs, students' perceptions of self and students' perception of others. I was able to sort and retrieve data based on those codes. These subcategories became thirteen separate coded reports within the NVivo program.

Within each category, subcategories were developed by further sub-division of data. Division within each category is indicated throughout the chapter as subheadings. These subheadings were too numerous to represent in the flow chart (Figure 4-3) or include in a short summary narrative; however, a sample of one category, branched off into subcategories, divided into further subcategories, branched off into emerging pattern with the category, is included in the Appendices (Appendix K).

I searched for patterns within each category. These patterns were key words or concepts that emerged within several of the categories and subcategories within the category. Data was compared by considering information from all triangulation sources and looking for similarities and differences. Three patterns emerged: self-confidence, student choice and motivation (indicated in the flow chart Figure 4-3 in a rectangular shape under each category). These patterns were mentioned within this chapter as assertions included in summary statements within each section.

I analyzed the data by looking for patterns systematically (Berg, 2007). Patterns were found crossing data sources and categories by conducting axial coding (Berg, 2007). These patterns were illustrated as connecting lines across categories in the flow chart (Figure 4-3). Patterns which occurred across categories are discussed in Chapter V of this dissertation.

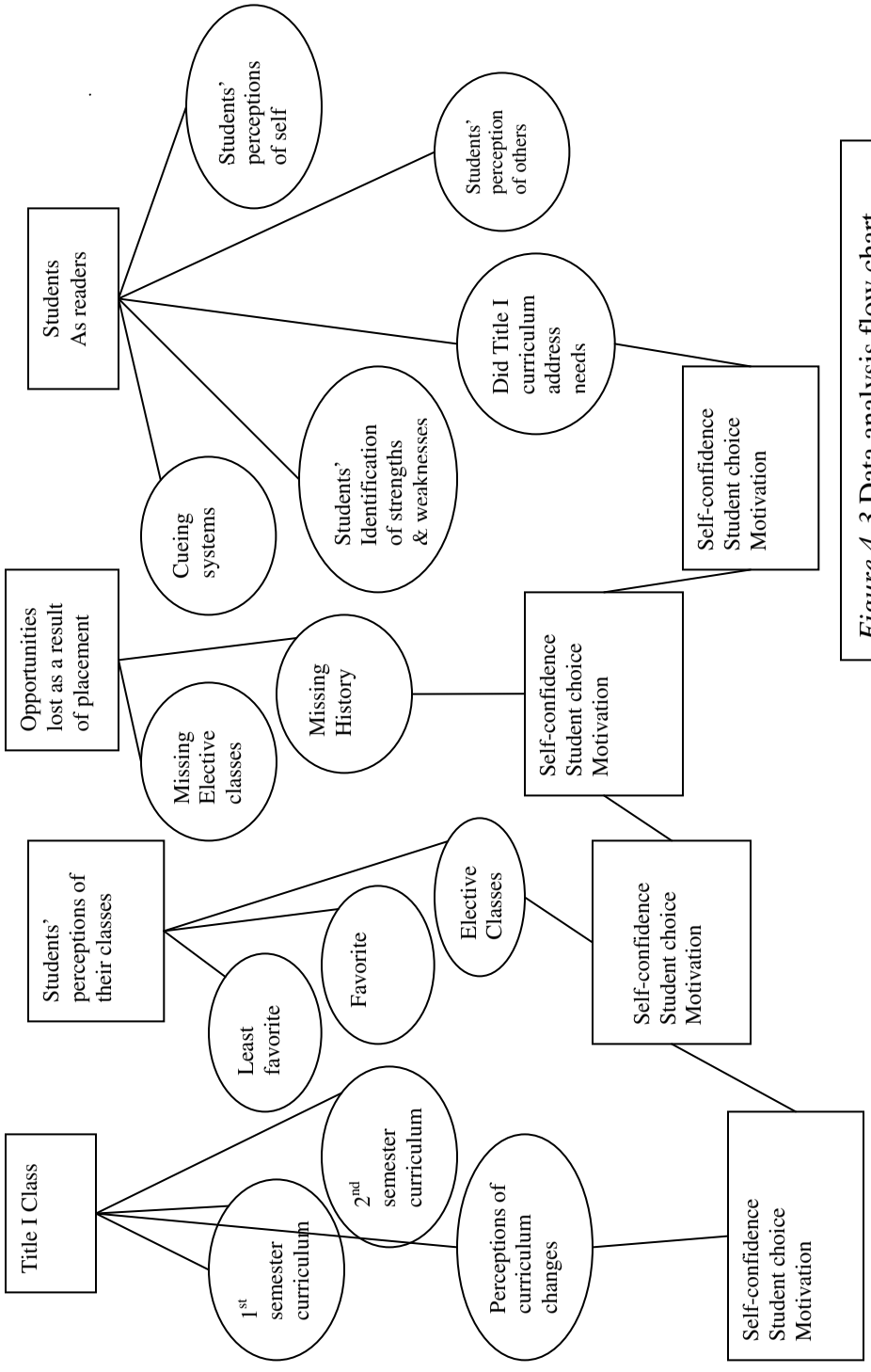

Figure 4-3 Data analysis flow chart

Audit trail coding

I recorded each piece of data with reference information. Recording specific reference information was crucial to provide an audit trail for the data. Interviews with students were recorded with the interview number, the date, and the participant's (student's) first name such as (Interview I, 10/30/07, Jody). Conversations with gate keepers (staff members) were recorded as informal conversations, the date, and the staff members position such as (Informal conversation, 8/31/07, federal programs director). Interviews with the Title I classroom teacher were recorded as a teacher interview with the date of the interview, such as (Teacher interview, 2/2/08). Interview with other school personnel were documented as staff interviews, the date, and the position of the staff such as (Staff interview, 2/8/08, choir/guitar teacher). Information for archived data was recorded Archived data, the date obtained, and the source such as (Archived data, 10/26/07, cumulative file). Data obtained from measurements such as reading surveys or questionnaires were recorded as the name of the survey, the date administered, and the item number on the survey, for example (RSPS, 10/24/07, item #4). Authentic assessments taken were recorded as the assessment name, the date, and name of the participant, as in (Miscue Analysis, 11/6/07, Elizabeth). Finally, observations were recorded as anecdotal records, the date, and the name of the participant (Anecdotal Record, 11/16/07, Judy).

Due to the multiple data sources, several acronyms are used within the chapter. Although acronyms are defined in the chapter, within citing data sources only the acronym is used. A list of acronyms is provided (Figure 4-4).

Acronym	Full name
ERA	Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (Garfield) McKenna, M. & Kear, D.,1990.
MAP	Measure of Academic Progress Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA), 2004-2008.
MRQ	Motivation for Reading Questionnaire McKenna, M. & Stahl, S., 2003.
NMSBA	New Mexico Standards Base Assessment State assessment criterion reference measure from New Mexico Public Education Department, 2006-2008.
RSPS	Reader Self-Perception Scale Henk, W.A. & Melnick, S.A., 1995.
SRI	Scholastic Reading Inventory Scholastic, 1999.

Figure 4-4 Acronyms

Background Information

School demographics

Information about the school demographics was obtained from the cafeteria food service manager (Staff Interview, 2/4/08, food service manager). Federal money is allocated to school districts based on official demographic data. Official school demographic information is maintained by the food service manager in each school district. The school district had 2808 students. The elementary schools were divided by grade level. There was one school for kindergarten, one school for first grade, one school

for second and third grade, one school for fourth and fifth grade, and one school for sixth grade. The school in which the case study took place had 208 sixth grade students. The district identified 137 students at this school as economically disadvantaged, 65.8 % of the student population. Economically disadvantaged was identified by totaling the number of students which qualify for free and reduced meals. At this school, 123 students out of the 208 students (59%) qualified for free meals. Fourteen of the 208 students (7%) qualified for reduced meals. The ethnicity distribution at this school was: 58% Hispanic, 40% Caucasian, 1% Native American, and 1% African-American.

Title I Program

The school had a school-wide Title I program which offered supplemental reading intervention. In a school-wide project, all students could be served. School-wide programs may operate in schools with 40% or more of children from low-income families (Title I, Part A, Sec. 1114). In this particular school, 65.8% of the children were qualified as low-income (Staff Interview, 2/4/08, food service manager). The Title I program served 48 of the 208 sixth grade students. Students were chosen for Title I services, supplemental reading intervention, based on their standardized test results the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment, a criterion referenced test. The purpose of Title I was to assist low-income children to meet the state's academic achievement standards (Title I, Part A, Sec. 1114). The students were placed in an additional reading class (supplemental Title I reading class) based on their ranking, determined by the scores

on the NMSBA. Those students with the lowest scores were placed first. Placement was finalized when parent permission was granted.

School schedule

In comparison to other schools in the area, this school was departmentalized; in other words, students had different classes for each subject area. The students in this case study attended a school which required them to rotate classes and teachers six times daily. Students had six different classes. Every student had a math class and a science class. Some of the students took a History class; however, not all students had a History class at the time of the study. Students had one elective class. Elective classes consisted of choices between music appreciation, guitar, band, choir, team sports or leadership. A language arts supplement class was offered. Students had a writing class and a reading class. Each class lasted approximately one hour.

The students at this school, East Middle School, had a minimum of two classes daily in language arts. Every student in sixth grade had a reading class. In the reading class, students did whole group novels and read in the adopted basal. Every student had a writing class. Students who were identified as below proficiency had a third language arts class. The language arts class, synonymous with Title I Reading was identified as a language arts supplement. The school had three supplemental Language arts classes, all three classes met in the morning. One class met from approximately 8:00 a.m.-9:00 a.m. and had fifteen students. Another class met from 9:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m. and had seventeen students. The last class from 10:00 a.m.-11:00a.m. and had fifteen students. The Title I

teacher, Ms. April, taught at East Middle School in the morning and at the local Junior High school in the afternoon. With the consultation of Ms. April (Informal conversation, 8/31/07, Title I teacher), the second class (9:00-10:00) was chosen for the research case study. The second group had a larger population (17 students instead of 15 students as in the other Title I classes). Choosing the second class prevented losing data collection time and observation time due to students arriving late at school (tardy), teaching interruptions due to morning announcements, and the rush of the beginning of the school day.

Case study class

These students from Title I/ language arts supplement class, second period, became my case study group. The students in this class had the following criteria (a) low scores on NMBSA standardized testing on the reading subtest causing placement in Title I reading, (b) current grade level sixth grade, (c) if referred for special education services in reading, the diagnostic evaluation did not identify them as having a reading disability as defined by the standard deviation score on the discrepancy model, and (d) permission by the parent was obtained for Title I placement. Out of the seventeen students, fifteen participated in the study. Their ethnic distribution consisted of: 9 of the 15 students were Hispanic, 3 of the 15 students were Anglo-Saxon, 2 of the 15 students were African American, and one student was Mexican. The gender distribution consisted of 11 females and 4 males.

Physical environment of the classroom

The classroom was located in an older school building, built in the 1930's. One wall of the classroom had windows which had vinyl blinds hanging down. Desks were arranged in groups four in the form of a square. The interior of the desk was turned inward; the teacher complained students fill the desks with trash so they were turned into the middle of square preventing students' access to the desk shelf. Each desk had a plastic chair. The side wall of the classroom was lined in a row of computers, most of which did not work. The heat for the room was controlled by the thermostat two rooms down in the teacher's lounge. One wall of the classroom had a large built in bookshelf. The teacher had hung curtains to cover the contents of the bookshelves. On the walls were inspirational posters, several with the character Ms. Engelbreit. There was a large wooden cabinet, sectioning off the room from the teacher's desk, in which a collection of magazines was stored. The bulletin boards displayed reading genres and other reading instructional materials. On the teacher's desk sat a large vase with silk flowers. The room had a country theme with the curtains made of plaid, a country mirror on the wall, fabric as backgrounds on the bulletin boards, and silk flowers arrangements throughout the room (Figure 4-5). The room was pleasantly inviting with a cozy country living room feel. Although the walls were painted a plain white and the physical construction of this older school building felt sterile in the halls; this particular classroom had a warm tone with all the country décor.

Figure 4-5 Classroom environment

Professional and Educational Background of Ms. April

Ms. April had taught for four years. She completed her Master's of Arts Degree in Pedagogy and Learning with an emphasis in Reading. She finished her Master's Degree in December, 2007. Ms. April considered herself a "whole language" teacher. She claimed she never had any phonics instruction in her undergraduate or graduate degree in college. She believed in using "authentic literature" to teach reading. At the time of Ms. April's education, the university focus was what she considered "whole language with a huge concentration on reader's workshop and writer's workshop." Ms. April had taught Title I Reading in the same school district all four years of her teaching career. This academic school year was her fifth year in the classroom.

Ms. April was a level three teacher in the state. The state of New Mexico licensed teachers in a level system. Level one represented teachers just beginning in the field of teaching. Level two teachers were teachers who had taught 3-5 years and had successfully passed a dossier process. Level three teachers were teachers who had successfully passed the dossier process from level II to level III and had a Master's degree.

Ms. April agreed to allow me access to her students. I conducted a pilot study for a period of 8 weeks with a group of her students at the Junior High the previous year. Ms. April welcomed me returning to her classroom to conduct further research on another group of students at a different site, East Middle School.

The Role of the Researcher

My role was as an onlooker (Patton, 1990). I sat at the back corner of the classroom recording my observations. At times, I would follow students to the computer lab to research or the reading room; however, I typically tried to find a back corner to sit quietly and take notes. I usually took notes on a lap top computer and students became accustomed to seeing me type as they worked.

Although the students occasionally asked for my permission to go to the restroom or do other errands, they first went to the Ms. April if she was available. I would administer reading surveys/questionnaires to the whole class. When there was a substitute in the classroom, I typically would start the students on their assignments, as left by Ms. April, or assist as needed. Once there was a day when a substitute was not available, Ms.

April became sick quickly, and I took over the class until the end of the class period. However, these circumstances were few and I tried hard to maintain my role as an observer.

Participants: Who were these students?

The class consisted of fifteen students: Alicia, Anastasha, Cally, Elizabeth, Esperanza, Hannah, Jake, Jaylin, Jody, Joe, Judy, Leann, Mireya, Peter, and Tiffany. Ms. April identified each student's reading performance based on her observations and the student's reading performance in her class (Teacher interview, 10/23/07). Eight students (53%) were identified as "low" in reading. Four students (27%) were identified as "average" in reading. Three students (20%) were identified as "high" in reading performance (Figure 4-6). Several of the students had a history of previous reading problems and had received intervention programs in the past. Information of the students past academic history was obtained by examining their cumulative school records located in the school office (Archived data, 10/26/07, cumulative file). Within the cumulative file, special services received were documented. Five of the fifteen students had received intervention services in Kindergarten or First grade. An additional student had intervention services recommended in First grade; however, the parents refused services at that time. Two of the students had repeated a grade at one time. One student was an ESL (English as a Second Language) Learner and had received Bilingual services previously.

Out of the fifteen students, eight of the students had documentation in their files of previous difficulty with reading and had received some type of reading intervention program prior to the current school year. Reading intervention programs were identified as Reading Recovery, Title I/Chapter I, Language Intervention Intensive and/or Bilingual support. For some students, there were no indications that prior struggles with reading existed. Students' grades indicated average performance or above average performance in reading and/or language arts classes. Although some students received special assistance through intervention programs, their grades in reading and/or language arts did not reflect below average performance. I was perplexed by this pattern of average reading grades identified as readers who struggled. The pattern of passing reading grades indicated elementary teachers may have been wary of assigning poor reading grades to elementary students even when these students must have been below average in class.

Several of these students had early reading intervention and/or retention during their primary years. Of the five students that had received early reading intervention services, only two were qualified by Ms. April as low and those same two students (Anastasha and Jake) were below expected proficiency on the NMSBA. In this case, early intervention may have helped three out of the five students to score proficiently on the reading assessment exam in sixth grade. One student (Peter) had a teacher who recommended intervention services in first grade; although his reading grades were satisfactory according to his records. His parents denied and Peter was struggling with reading in the sixth grade. Perhaps early reading intervention would have made a

difference for Peter. Retention did not appear to assist students to become stronger readers based on this group of students. Hannah and Jody both had been retained. Hannah was now a proficient reader; however, Jody continued to struggle with literacy.

Out of the eight students who had some type of documentation in their records of reading intervention, five were currently classified as non-proficient readers and three were classified as proficient. Previous intervention programs failed to "catch-up" five of the eight students; although research claimed that expecting reading intervention programs to "catch-up" students and for those students to need no additional support is a myth (Allington, 2007). Students who struggle with reading often need continued support throughout the educational process. I wondered if these students were aware of reading problems upon reflection and if they could identify struggling when learning to read. I decided to interview the students to inquire what their early memories were of learning to read. I was curious on whether or not these early reading experiences were enjoyable for the students.

I interviewed fifteen students. In the first interview (Interview I, 10/30/07), I asked questions about how the students learned to read. They explained how they thought they learned to read. Students commented about their memories of early reading experiences. Eight of the fifteen students recalled their mother being significant in their learning to read. One example was Peter's mom who used an educational game to assist her in teaching Peter. He stated "My mom taught me. She bought me a frog thing, it teaches you to read, you know that frog thing [Leap Frog]?" (Interview I, 10/30/07,

Peter). Out of these eight students, only one student (Cally) was qualified as a proficient reader in the sixth grade. Clearly these students came from families who were concerned about their literacy development and provided educational literacy activities; however, these students still struggled with reading.

When I asked students in the first interview to reflect on their past reading experiences, some students commented on negative experiences while others had fond memories. Joe stated, "Like how much I read? Not too much" (Interview I, 10/30/07, Joe). Leann claimed, "I really didn't like reading" (Interview I, 10/30/07, Leann). Others found their beginning reading experiences to be enjoyable. Students made statements such as "I guess I would say that I enjoyed reading when I was young" (Interview I, 10/30/07, Mireya). There was not a pattern between early reading memories and later reading proficiency in sixth grade.

The ability to complete assignments and maintain focus on a task was a challenge for many of these students. I used an observational checklist (Allen, 2000) and anecdotal notes to record student behavior. Becoming easily distracted and failing to maintain focus were themes that emerged from the records. Eight of the fifteen had difficulty completed tasks and needed constant reminders to stay on task (Observational checklist, 11/16/07-12/7/07). When these eight students (Joe, Jody, Anastasha, Mireya, Judy, Esperanza, Jake, and Alicia) went to the computer lab to do background knowledge research, they often sat and socialized with their peers or found other tasks to occupy their time (Observational checklist, 11/16/07-12/07/07). These eight students also

demonstrated difficulty staying on tasks with assigned novels until completion. These students were often off task and required constant teacher guidance (sample Observational checklist included in Appendix D).

The student who demonstrated the most difficulty in completing assignments was Jody. Jody was constantly moving and rarely sat at his desk to work. The following was an excerpt from anecdotal field notes:

> Jody is off task and under the desk. The teacher asks Jody to get out from under the desk, to get his notebook and to get busy. Jody crawls out but stays on the floor. He is wearing one black cotton glove today. He is making faces at students as they work. He continues to roll around on the floor.
> (Anecdotal records, 11/27/07)

Jody was a student who demonstrated limited attention span. Due to his lack of attention, he often has his "disciplinary notebook" signed by teachers resulting in him missing any extrinsic school wide rewards. He excelled in guitar and remained focused in the performance put on by the school. One day Jody came to his language arts/Title I class wearing a cape. Elizabeth asked if the cape was part of his literature circle presentation. Jody responded, "No, I'm just Superman today." One explanation for the less than predictable behavior with Jody might be his lack of home stability. During my duration in the school, he was in foster care. Jody did not enter this school district until

the fourth grade and that year he received a failing grade in his reading class. He was qualified by Ms. April as "low" in his reading ability; however, much of Jody's difficulty was attending to school work long enough to complete assignments.

Qualification for participation in Title I

Students qualified for Title I, at East Middle School, based on their standardized test score on the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment. Students who performed low on the NMSBA in March 2006 were placed in Title I programming for the 2007-2008 school year. Test data from the March 2007 NMSBA was not used because those scores not available until Fall 2007. By the time scores from 2007 were received at the school, students schedules were already in place for the 2007-2008. Therefore, a student who performed below reading proficiency a year and a half ago was placed in the supplemental reading program/Title I intervention class this academic year.

I collected three sets of standardized test data on each student in the class. The first test was the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI). The second test was the Measurement of Academic Progress (MAP), specifically the reading portion. Both the SRI and MAP tests were reported in Lexile scores. Data was also collected from the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment (NMSBA), specifically the reading portion of the exam. The NMSBA was a Criterion Reference Test. According to the Title I Federal Program Director for the school district, the school district used the MAP exam to "predict" whether or not students would pass the NMSBA (Informal conversation, 8/31/07, federal program director). In the fall of each year, the school received the results

from the prior March testing with the NMSBA. Those students below proficiency or nearing proficiency on the NMSBA were the population that was supposed be identified for Title I services. The Title I teacher, Ms. April used the SRI at the beginning of each school year as base line data for her Title I students and to measure reading growth over time.

Although this study was qualitative in designed, I found it important to examine the scores of the students placed in this class and their eligibility for supplemental reading services. The test data indicated a lack of consistency in some of the students' scores. Discrepancies in scores were not questioned by school personnel and students received no further testing to determine the validity of the scores to their actual knowledge or reading skills. Therefore, eligibility for the Title I program was based on a single unit of measurement instead of a holistic reading evaluation of the student; that single unit of data was the NMSBA scores from March 2006.

According to the administration (the school principal), the pressure for the school to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), drove the decision making process to determine if students needed to receive Title I services (Informal conversation, 09/12/07, principal). Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is a state and federal statute that represents the annual academic performance targets in reading and math. The pressure to make AYP forced the district to place students who fell below reading proficiency on the NMSBA in Title I classes. By the time the school received these scores, students were already placed in their classes for the 2007-2008 academic year. The NMSBA was divided up into four

intervals: advanced, proficient, nearing proficiency and beginning step. Although, fourteen of the fifteen (93%) students scored nearing proficiency on the NMSBA March 2006 exam, five of the fifteen (33%) students scored in the proficient range on the NMSBA in the March 2007 testing. These five students according to Title I guidelines should have been exited upon the receiving of their NMSBA scores; however, parents were not notified by the school that their child did not need Title I services and students remained in the Title I/language arts supplement class (Teacher Interview, 2/2/08).

The process for qualifying students for Title I was based on old testing data and in some cases not consistent with the data received more recently. Five of the fifteen (33%) no longer qualified for Title I based on their recent NMSBA scores. Four of the fifteen (27%) students in this class scored in their grade level range on all assessments taken in 2007-2008. I wondered if these four students really needed supplemental reading services. Only four students (27%) scored below proficiency and expected lexile scores on all assessments taken in 2007-2008. Eleven (73%) students scored proficient or on expected lexile scores in reading on one or more of the standardized reading assessments given in 2007-2008. Some students were missing scores on some of the assessments due to absenteeism during the testing dates. Ms. April identified seven of the fifteen (47%) students as average or high in their reading performance (Interview, 10/23/07, teacher). Many of the students demonstrated discrepancies in their scores (Figure 4-6).

Student name	Teacher Rating	SRI Sept. 2007	MAP Reading Spring 2007	NMSBA Reading March 2006	NMSBA Reading March 2007
Alicia	average	On expected lexile	not available	nearing proficiency	proficient
Anastasha	low	Below expected lexile	Below expected lexile	nearing proficiency	nearing proficiency
Cally	average	Below expected lexile	Below expected lexile	nearing proficiency	proficient
Elizabeth	high	On expected lexile	not available	not available	not available
Esperanza	low	On expected lexile	On expected lexile	nearing proficiency	nearing proficiency
Hannah	high	On expected lexile	On expected lexile	nearing proficient	proficient
Jake	low	On expected lexile	Below expected lexile	nearing proficiency	nearing proficiency
Jaylin	low	On expected lexile	Below expected lexile	nearing proficiency	nearing proficiency
Jody	low	Below expected lexile	below expected lexile	nearing proficiency	nearing proficiency
Joe	low	Below expected lexile	Below expected lexile	nearing proficiency	nearing proficiency
Judy	average	On expected lexile	On expected lexile	nearing proficiency	proficient
Leann	high	On expected lexile	On expected lexile	nearing proficiency	proficient
Mireya	low	Below expected lexile	Below expected lexile	nearing proficiency	nearing proficiency
Peter	low	On expected lexile	not available	nearing proficiency	nearing proficiency
Tiffany	average	On expected lexile	Below expected lexile	nearing proficiency	nearing proficiency

Figure 4-6 Teacher rating & standardized test scores

Since Title I guidelines indicated students who scored proficient on the NMSBA 2007 reading portion should have been exited from Title I, I inquired with Ms. April why these students were still receiving services. Ms. April explained the students were already placed for the fall 2007; therefore, exiting would only occur for second semester, January 2008. She continued to explain she gave the students the option of leaving the class and enrolling in an elective class or if they were missing their social studies course, taking

social studies. According to the teacher, the students did not want to leave the Title I/language arts supplement class (R = me, the researcher; T =teacher):

> T= So, I got the students in the class and we finally get the test data in [NMSBA March 2007 scores arrive in September 2007]. I get the stuff. I go through it and I highlight who is proficient and who is not. And…I know that this is not what I'm supposed to be doing [teacher laughs] like these students that are proficient, I tell them [in January 2008] "You've done really well and you can now leave and go to your elective class or your other class like social studies." And then, that way I could move more students in here. What happens though is that those other students didn't want to leave their other classes now and come in here and the students in here don't want to leave.
>
> R- Oh, so that is why they didn't leave after Christmas?
>
> T- Yeah, I talked to them.
>
> R- What about Elizabeth? She is so high on all of her assessment measures.
>
> T- Yeah, I talked to her and she said, "Ms. April I don't want to leave."
>
> R- That is great that she wanted to stay. How did she even get placed?
>
> T- Well, her house mom [Elizabeth was in foster care] requested that she have an extra reading class so she came in even though she didn't really qualify.
>
> R- So a parent or guardian can request that their child gets extra reading [Title I] even if they don't qualify?

> T-No, not really. I don't know how the office handles that. They just told me and then I give them my paperwork. (Teacher Interview, 2/2/08, teacher)

How are these students placed?

Students identified "at risk" were given a letter from the school. The letter was addressed to Parents/Guardians and explained their child had the opportunity to participate in an additional reading class. The letter was stated in positive language, it did not indicate that the child had qualified for assistance based on low performance on standardized exams given. The letter explained parental permission must be granted in order for their child to participate.

Placement in Title I does not require parental permission. Title I guidelines mandate parents be given a compact which discusses the program and explains the roles of all parties involved. The Principal commented he felt parental permission was absolutely necessary in order for the students and parents to "buy into the program" and for the students to be successful (Informal conversation, 09/12/07, principal). The Title I federal program director also expressed the need for parent approval, "We want parents on board, so we would never place a child without them wanting their child in the program" (Informal conversation, 08/31/07, federal program director). Therefore, parents had to grant permission at his school to receive Title I services for their child. Rationale for the program was explained by the principal in the parent letter. The letter from the principal stated:

> As an instrumental part of your child's life, we value your input and involvement in this academic endeavor. In order to proceed with providing your child with a beneficial program, we must have your signature authorizing us to begin our journey. While we understand that this means your child may have to forego social studies or an elective, we believe that the long term results will outweigh any mild inconvenience. If you wish your child not to lose an elective, your child will be removed from his/her social studies class. On the other had, if you wish your child to be in social studies, you child will lose an elective, in order to participate in this one of a kind program. Furthermore, the additional support now may mean greater independence and freedom of choice later in his/her educational career.
>
> (Title I placement letter, 2007)

The signature page of the letter included the statement "I give my child permission to participate in the challenging, research-based Triumphs reading program for the 2007-2008 school year" (Title I placement letter, 2007, p. 2).

An initial conversation with the teacher described the overall program and the process behind students being placed in the Title I class. The following is an excerpt from the initial discussion with the teacher (T=teacher and me, the researcher R):

R-What program are you using in Title I?

T-We are using Triumph, well I'm supposed to be using Triumph (McGraw Hill). Triumph is a research based program, but you know me, I think students need writers and readers workshop, so I don't use the program much.

R-I've never heard of that program.

T-We sent out letters to the parents telling them that their child had the opportunity to participate in this research based program.

R-What are you doing in class?

T-Readers and writers workshop, Read 180 (Scholastic), and Triumph (McGraw Hill).

R-What class do the students miss to participate in Title I?

T-They have a choice this year. This is the first year that they can choose to keep their electives. They had options: 1. get pulled out social studies, 2. get pulled out of their 2nd elective (they would still have one elective), or 3. the parent does not wish for placement in Title I.

R-How do students qualify?

T-They have to be nearing proficiency or below on the NMSBA CRT

R-So, you get to choose how to do the program?

T-I'm not supposed to. I'm supposed to use Triumph, but scripted programs almost make you feel stupid, like I'm the teacher and I can't decide what's best for my students. (Informal conversation, 08/31/07, Title I teacher)

Title I reading was listed on the students' schedules as LA supplemental (Language arts supplemental). In order for the students to participate, they missed either a social studies class or an elective. The principal stated the school had decided that it was important for students to keep their electives. Therefore, this particular school had given students the option of not taking social studies since that content area was not currently being assessed on the NMSBA.

During the course of the first semester, the assistant superintendent for the district informed the principal the school did not have the authority to give students and their families choices about which course to miss in order to receive Title I services. The principal was informed from November 2007 forward, students placed in Title I/language arts supplement class would miss their elective course. Due to the fact many students had already been told they could keep their elective, those students would be able to continue in their current schedule for this school year; however, they would not have the same options next year. The opportunity they had to take an elective and receive Title I reading assistance was rare and that opportunity would not be available to incoming students or to any students in the future.

The Title I/language arts supplement classroom curriculum

The Title I/language arts supplement class curriculum varied in delivery of instruction between the two semesters. Therefore, the class curriculum is described in two sections: first semester and second semester.

Classroom curriculum and instruction, first semester

I recorded classroom curriculum through anecdotal records (classroom observations occurring from Oct. 23, 2007 through Dec. 18, 2007) and analysis of the teacher's lesson plans (Sept. 9, 2007 through Dec. 18, 2007). I coded lesson plans by hand. Categories were identified and color coded. These categories were items such as: starting class, mini-lessons, literature circles/reading buddies, building background knowledge, reader's theater, independent reading, and vocabulary building. Anecdotal records were entered into NVIVO and coded within the program.

Starting class

Students entered the classroom. As students came into the class, they quickly began looking through the basket containing their spiral notebooks. These spiral notebooks were their writing journals. Ms. April would announce "Get wild about your reading!" The class would quiet down and each student would quickly take their seat and begin writing from the GOT (Get on Task) exercise.

Students began each class period with a GOT (Get on task) exercise. On the board, Ms. April wrote a writing prompt daily. Students would enter the class and write for the first ten minutes. A GOT exercise may begin with a quote and students would respond to the quote. Sometimes, GOT was an assignment for students to find 5 vocabulary words from their reading. Entries each day were written in the students' writing journal. The following is an example of a GOT writing prompt on one day:

> GOT: "No one can make you feel inferior without your consent." Eleanor Roosevelt. Explain a time when someone put you down. Describe the situation and how you handled the situation. Is there anything you could do differently? (Archived data, 9/4/07, lesson plans)

Mini-lessons

Students had a mini-lesson daily for 5-10 minutes. Mini-lessons varied based on students' needs as observed by Ms. April. On one day, Ms. April presented on reading strategies (Anecdotal record, 10/24/07). Students were given a worksheet about making connections, visualizing, asking questions, inferring, determining importance and synthesizing. On another day, students were given a rubric on how to do presentations (Anecdotal record, 11/19/07). On another day, Ms. April discussed how students were to self evaluate at the end of a project (Anecdotal record, 11/20/07). Students had mini-lessons to build background knowledge before they began a new unit in class (Anecdotal record, 11/27/07). Mini-lessons changed daily to accommodate the needs of the students.

For example, one day Ms. April used the time for mini-lessons to build background knowledge for the next unit on the *Prince and the Pauper* (Anecdotal record, 12/7/07). Ms. April interjected it is important for the *Prince and the Pauper* that people understand about the common man. She explained these people bathed once a year usually in May. All marriages occurred in June and girls held flowers to hide the body odor. If special company arrived, then they would cook meat; otherwise, they had just

pea porridge. Ms. April explained poem *Peas Porridge Hot*. She explained how baths were once a year, men first then the ladies, last the baby, the baby could be lost in the dirty water thus the idiom "don't throw the baby out with the bath water." Finally, she discussed the dirt covered floors of the poor thus the saying "dirt poor".

Literature Circles, Reading Buddies

Students were gathered in literature circle groups September through November. Groups were reading several different books. The four groups were *P. S. Longer Letters Later* (Danziger & Martin, 1999), *Daniel's Story* (Matas, 1993), *Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie: The Oregon Trial Diary of Hattie Campbell* (Gregory, 1997) and *The Star Fisher* (Yep, 1992). Each group met to read together. The groups had written their own reading schedules so the novel would be completed by the time the literature circles were to finish. At the end of the novel, groups prepared a presentation for the class.

Each group had the freedom to present their book in the modality of their choice. Two groups made shadow boxes to represent the books. *P. S. Longer Letter Later* decided to do shadow boxes with illustrations from the book. Mireya and Elizabeth had made very elaborate shadow boxes and made little details to support the text. Some of the students from *The Star Fisher* group also made shadow boxes (Figure 4-7). When sharing their shadow boxes, students commented about their illustrations and how they represented portions of the text.

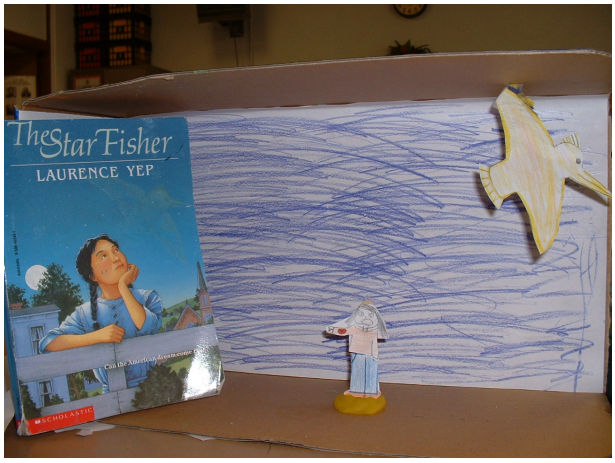

Figure 4-7 Shadow box of *The Star Fisher*

A group of boys read *Daniel's Story* (Matas, 1993). Peter, Joe, Jake and Jody all worked together on a large mural with black and white photographs printed from the internet. The boys had difficulty finishing their book on time and were still working on their mural the day of the presentations. They stood in front of the class and talked about the how the photographs represented events in the text (Anecdotal records, 11/19/07).

The group held up a large mural with black and white photographs printed from the internet. Jody began by giving summary "Daniel is a Jew….it is during Hitler's time." Jody continued "the story was rough for us because it has brutal moments, like these guys have their sisters shot; they watch them shoot them and break their backs." Joe continued the story talking about the concentrations camps "they put people in gas chambers, and this picture, they are burning them." Jody interjected "It made me cry." Jody explained

the vocabulary of "Canada", a place where all the people's items are taken, a pile of items taken away from the prisoners. He pointed to pictures of Hitler, showers, burning people, people in ditches, and the execution wall. Jody stated the author wrote the book because "it is part of our history". Jake stated "It is a failure to our society" (Anecdotal Record, 11/19/07).

A group of girls read *Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie: The Oregon Trial Diary of Hattie Campbell* (Gregory, 1997). Tiffany, Cally, and Hannah decided to present their book through song. They wrote a song and illustrated the song on an 8x11 sheet of paper. They stood before the class and sang acapella. The following were the lyrics to the song:

> Ten feet long and 4 feet wide. Everything we own inside
> dishes, lanterns, extra shoes frying pan and Gramma too…
> Load up the Prairie Schooner. We sail the trail today
> Load up the Prairie Schooner and its anchors away!
> Oregon it sounds so nice, it's a farmer's paradise. Deer
> and salmon all around, we're Willmamoth Valley Bound!
> Load up the Prairie Schooner, we sail the trail today!
> Load up the Prairie Schooner and its anchors away, anchors away!
> (Anecdotal records, 11/19/07)

Building Background Knowledge

Prior to every unit, Ms. April would take her students through assignments to build background knowledge. Before the class read their literature circle novels, *P. S. Longer Letters Later* (Danziger & Martin, 1999), *Daniel's Story* (Matas, 1993), *Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie: The Oregon Trial Diary of Hattie Campbell* (Gregory, 1997) and *The Star Fisher* (Yep, 1992), they worked with the Ms. April creating a K-W-L charts (Ogle, 1986). Each group created a K-W-L chart (Figure 4-8) about their topic (Archived data, 10/09/07, lesson plans). K-W-L stands for what I know, what I want to know, and what I learned.

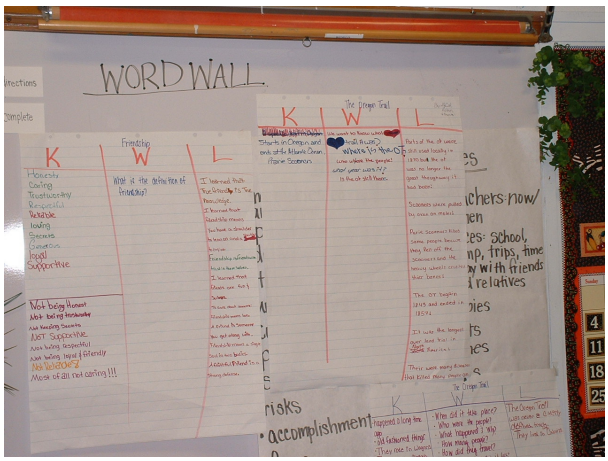

Figure 4-8 K-W-L charts

Before the students began reading a new play, an adaptation of the original version written by Mark Twain, *The Prince and The Pauper* (Drevitch, 1993) they were each given topics to research (Anecdotal record, 12/3/07). Groups were given topics of Mary Queen of Scot, the Old London Bridge, Knights and Squires, punishment, and witchcraft. Students researched their topics for a week and then presented to the whole class prior to beginning the *The Prince and The Pauper* (Drevitch, 1993).

An example of a presentation was Hannah's presentation on witchcraft (Anecdotal records, 12/10/07). Hannah explained how people were accused of witchcraft. She stated one lady was accused of witchcraft for dancing in the field at night. Hannah stated "if you were accused of witchcraft, you were hung."

Reader's Theater

Ms. April used Reader's Theater in class (Anecdotal Record, 12/12/07). Reader's Theater was an activity in which students read text that has been transposed into a play or script text. Each student was assigned parts in the class. The intent of the theater was to assist students with improvement in reading fluency. Students in Ms. April's class worked in December on an adaptation of Mark Twain's *The Prince and The Pauper* (Drevitch, 1993).

In Reader's Theater students were assigned different parts. The following is an excerpt of the reading:

Narrator 2 (Leann): And then one day, Tom's wanderings took him to Buckingham Palace. Ignoring the armed guards, Tom ran to the gate and saw the prince.

Guard (Hannah): (throwing Tom away from the gate): Mind your manners,

Prince (student in class): Guard! How dare you treat a poor boy like that! Open the gates and let him in!

Guard (Hannah): At once, your highness. (Anecdotal records, 12-12-07)

Independent Reading

Most of the reading that occurred first semester was in literature circles. However, there was one occasion when the students were taken to the reading room (Anecdotal Record, 11/26/07). The reading room was a room located down the hall. The reading room was a room shared by all the teachers. Teachers would sign up a schedule for a day and time in which they wanted to use the room. The room had several lamps with red, green, white, yellow and blue tulip shaped glass that illuminated the light. The light bulbs were low wattage and lamps were located through out the room. Several of the lamps were lava lamps. On the floor were several big bed pillows and bed rests. There was a recliner, small table with two chairs, two futons and a couch. On the floor were several throw rugs on top of the very clean carpet. Book shelves lined the room and on each shelf were book sets (each set has 4-10 copies) and the sets range in reading level from approximately second grade through high school. All the books were novel/chapter

book sets. The room was completely silent. Students entered very quietly and only spoke to one another in the lowest whisper and sign language like actions. As soon as the students entered, they got comfortable and began reading. Only a few enter the room without a book already in hand and they quietly searched through the shelves.

One set of girls spent a few moments writing to one another on paper since talking in this room was not allowed. They must already know the rules because the teacher was not yet present. Ms. April was gathering up students in the classroom and I was positioned in the corner waiting for the class to arrive. Some students used the bed pillows to stack them on top on one another making themselves a bed. They settled in with a book and began to read. Lava lamps moved serenely in colors of blue and red. The walls of the room were each painted a different color; one wall was blue, one wall was green, one wall was purple and one wall was yellow. The colors were deep and made the room dark. There were blankets available and two girls picked up blankets and covered up while reading. The room stayed silent with independent readers for the hour.

Vocabulary building

Students worked with vocabulary both in isolated exercises and in context of the novels they read. One way students worked with vocabulary is through scrambled anagrams. The following was a sample mini-lesson dealing with anagrams:

Unscramble Anagrams and tell me what they have in common.

Cheater

Earnip

Canactunto

In a neat river

(Anecdotal Records, 11/08/07)

Students were given time to work. Then the students were given hints. Ms. April stated, "They are all jobs people hold." The answers to the anagrams were given orally, "teacher, painter, accountant, and veterinarian" replied Ms. April.

On another day, students worked with vocabulary by adding words into their "reading dictionaries" (Anecdotal Records, 10/16/07). Reading dictionaries were dictionaries that each student kept in a spiral notebook in their desk. As the students read, they added unknown vocabulary to their dictionaries. For example, one day students worked on vocabulary and put words according to the alphabetic order in their reading dictionaries in their own words from reading chapters 3 & 4 in their novels.

Summary of first semester

Students operated in a classroom full of choices; they chose which books they wanted to read in literature circle groups; they chose how to demonstrate their learning through open-ended projects; they chose which peers they wanted to work with in class; they chose which topics they wanted to research. The teacher's role in this semester was as collaborative participant. Students were responsible for their own learning and the

teacher acted as a facilitator to guide the students through learning experiences. The curriculum was learning centered around a constructivist model.

Classroom curriculum and instruction, second semester

In the second semester, classroom curriculum was recorded through anecdotal records (classroom observations occurring from Jan. 7, 2008 through Feb. 15, 2008) and analysis of the teacher's lesson plans (Jan. 7, 2008 through Feb. 15, 2008) in conjunction with the Reading Triumphs (Macmillan/McGraw-Hill) Intervention Teacher's Edition. Lesson plans were coded by hand. Categories were identified and color coded. These categories were items such as: decoding, vocabulary instruction, fluency, and comprehension. Anecdotal records were entered into NVIVO and coded within the program.

The second semester the curriculum changed in the Title I Classroom. The assistant superintendent of instruction walked into Ms. April's classroom and informed her that the classrooms in the district needed to be aligned. The Literacy Coordinator for the school reminded Ms. April the district was going to be audited and she must be using the scripted Triumphs Reading Program (an intervention program published by Macmillan/McGraw-Hill). According to Ms. April, the literacy coordinator told Ms. April when they (meaning the Public Education Department from the state) come to audit; Ms. April must be able to say she uses the Triumphs Reading Program.

Decoding

Each day the lesson began with a decoding lesson, specifically a skill lesson in phonics. The lesson was given in isolation. The skill introduced on Monday was then reinforced and practiced each day of the week. The following was an excerpt from their first lesson:

> Phonics: Short Vowels and Consonant Blends
>
> Objective: Decode words with short vowels and consonant blends.
>
> Write sat. Listen as I read this word. Read the word, moving your finger under the letters and stretching the sounds: /sssaaat?. What is the word? (sat) The letter a stands for the /a/ sound.
>
> Repeat the procedure with ten, bit, sun, and top.
>
> Add the letter s to the beginning of the word top. Listen as I read the word. (stop) the two consonant sounds at the beginning of the words are blended together.
>
> What sounds do you hear at the beginning of stop? (/st/)
>
> Repeat the procedure with truck, spin, and tent.
>
> Turn to Triumphs p. 6. Point to the first word and have students read it aloud.
>
> Have partners use their Write-On boards to underline the short vowels and circle the consonant blends. (Triumphs, Teacher edition, p. 2).
>
> (Archived data, 01/08/07, lesson plans, teacher's edition)

Vocabulary instruction

Students received vocabulary words daily. The teacher would hold up word cards. As the students read the word, they were instructed to connect the sound. The students were given an oral definition, an example of the word and then asked a question. The following was an example taken from the third week of instruction:

Vocabulary Words

Objective: Read the new vocabulary words and discuss their meanings.

Hold up the word card for protect. As you read it, connect the sounds with the letters. Your turn to read (protect).

Define: To protect something is to keep it safe.

Example: Pets cannot protect themselves from hurricanes.

Ask: How might you protect yourself from a storm?

(Triumphs, Teacher edition, p. 80).

(Archived data, 01/31/08, lesson plans, teacher's edition)

Fluency

Every day there was time to practice for reading fluency. Students were practicing high frequency words (Archived data, 01/07/08-02/15/08, lesson plans, Teacher edition, pp. 1-325). Every day the students were to sit with partners with a timer and 50 high frequency word cards, such as *school, people, would, think, mother, could, know, from,*

and *house.* The direction stated "The students should time each other to see how many words they can read correctly in one minute" (Teacher edition, p. 147).

Students would echo-read to practice reading at a fluent tempo (Teacher edition, p. 205). The teacher would read a passage aloud three times at different tempos: slow, fast and at a fluent pace. Students then decided what tempo was right. The passage was written at a very primary level in order for students to practice tempo.

Students practiced increasing their reading rate. The teacher would have students do a timed reading of the passage silently. The teacher would tell the class when to stop. Students would then record their scores by counting how many words they read in the timed minute.

Comprehension

Comprehension lessons provided a strategy each day and a skill. Students read passages from their basal text. The following was a lesson on monitoring comprehension:

> Read the following to students: The archaeologist put down her shovel. "Look at this!" she shouted. "I found a spoon!" Everyone nearby came over to look. "It looks like people lived here after all," another archaeologist said. Tell students that good readers continuously check their understanding by taking notes, summarizing, or rereading. I know from what I read that the archaeologist found a spoon, and now she's excited. I'm not sure why, though. I may need to reread the

paragraph again or ask someone a question about it (Triumph, p. 147). (Archived data, 2/11/08, teacher edition)

The teacher then read a portion of one of the stories from the basal text. Students then read with a partner the rest of story. When they completed the story, they were asked to summarize the story on their write-on boards by creating a summary chart.

Summary of second semester

Second semester, the teacher's role was to transmit the curriculum. The model of the classroom was centered on curriculum. The adopted commercialized program determined the sequence and the timing of the instruction. The theoretical orientation of learning derived from behaviorism. Both the teachers and students were passive learners.

First and second semester curriculum compared

The components of reading, consisting of phonics, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary, were present in both semesters; however, the manner in which they were taught varied (Figure 4-9). Although the components of reading were the same both semesters, the delivery and instruction differed tremendously. Another distinction was the amount of student choice, student interest, and student control over the learning. The theoretical orientation differed between semesters which strongly influenced the teacher's and students' roles in the learning process.

First semester, the classroom emphasized student engagement with novels and the majority of class time centered on literature circle groups. Students were taught

vocabulary, fluency and comprehension through involvement in reading in these groups. No explicit phonics or decoding instruction was present. Classroom curriculum was designed around students' choice and interests. Students chose, collectively with their peers in small groups, the novel they wished to read. They chose how they were going to respond to the novel, whether they wanted to do shadow boxes, a poster board, or write a song. Each group had their own vocabulary lists generated from unfamiliar words within the novel they encounter. Although the class had vocabulary anagrams whole group during GOT (get on task) occasionally, the majority of vocabulary instruction occurred in literature circle groups. Phonics instruction was implicit and embedded within the contexts of reading novels. Before each new novel was started, Ms. April spent time building background knowledge with the groups. That knowledge was built through K-W-L charts, research inquiries, or group discussions. Fluency was built through engagement with novels and through Reader's Theater activities. The instructional paradigm was more of a transactional model in which students transacted with the text to create meaning. Students often directed the curriculum through active participation and learning was depended on the social interactions that occurred in class.

Second semester, the classroom emphasized skill instruction. Students were taught vocabulary, decoding, fluency and comprehension through explicit instruction with isolated tasks. Students did not read novels. Classroom curriculum was "whole-group." Students practiced fluency by reading words in isolation quickly and timing their readings. They read short passages in the basal text responding to a specific strategy or

skill emphasized. Vocabulary instruction consisted of exposure to words through flash cards and then a definition being provided by the teacher. Decoding skills were emphasized and students had short isolated lessons on vowels and consonant blends. The curriculum operated from a transmission model in which the teacher was responsible to transmit information to the students. The instruction was curriculum directed. The curriculum determined the sequence of skills and not students' needs; therefore, passages in the basal and high frequency words chosen were lower level, often several years below the students' reading abilities. However, students had to complete these primary skills in order to advance through the curriculum.

The differences in curriculum were substantial between the two semesters. I inquired with both Ms. April and the students about those curriculum changes. I hypothesized the students would prefer the curriculum in the first semester over the curriculum second semester. I thought students would prefer the type of engagement in text and choice in learning that was present in the first semester. Ms. April also had the preconception students would prefer the curriculum that first semester offered.

	first semester	second semester
instruction	-delivery whole group and small group -often student directed -students chose literature circle novels -students chose literature circle projects	-delivery whole group -teacher directed -students are given no choices in instruction
phonics	-no explicit instruction -implicit within context of reading	-explicit skill work in isolation
vocabulary	-scrambled anagrams -definition through context in novels	-words held up in class, definition and example are given
fluency	-emphasis on reading rate, expression and accuracy -sometimes taught through Reader's Theater -students sometimes follow along novels on CD	-emphasis on reading rate only -practice with high frequency words -echo-read in class
comprehension	-applied through reading novels -class discussions -reading strategies covered all together -partner reading -assessed through projects -emphasis on building background knowledge	-applied through short anthologies in basal text -each day a reading strategy and skill were provided -partner reading -assessed through completed workbook pages
writing	-journal writing -literature circle projects	-workbook pages -assignments on write-board
independent reading	-students read book of choice and interest -Sustained silent reading	-no sustained silent reading -reading is not done independently

Figure 4-9 Comparison of reading curriculum first and second semesters

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Ms. April's opinion about the changes in curriculum

Ms. April discussed her philosophy behind literature circles (synonymous with Ms. April's term *reading buddies*, R=me, the researcher; T=teacher):

T-They really like that [reading buddies], they like to read books with their friends. I let them choose their friend and I let them choose their books. I don't

really say “this is your reading level”, I don’t tell them that. I say “if there is a book you’re interested in, I want you to read it.” And, if they abandoned the book, then they abandon the book.

R-So they don’t read in their ZPD [zone of proximal development] at all?

T-No, I don’t have too. I just want them to find a book they like. They have struggled for so long. Yeah, the thought is that they will still struggle if they are not reading a book on their level; however, I have found that if they find a book on their level and they don’t enjoy it, they are not going to read it anyway. So, if they want to read it, I say “that’s fine with me and if you don’t understand something, I’ll help you read it.” I don’t want them to not like to read. (Teacher Interview, 2/02/08)

Ms. April shared her feelings with me about the commercial adopted program Triumphs (R=me, the researcher; T=teacher):

T-Literature circles are just so much fun.

R-So Triumph is a basal.

T-Yes and there are worksheets. I run them and I teach whole class. Then, they have these little white boards they write on. Like there was a story map and they do the story map on the white board. We talk about analyzing. It is probably more explicit.

R-What is the problem you have with using Triumph?

T-It is worksheet oriented. It is boring, mundane and there is not anything that is fun. Every day, day in and day out, it teaches you phonics but my goodness [she laughs], it doesn't teach you to actually read.

R-Do you see a difference with the students this semester?

T- In three weeks, in three weeks I can tell a difference with the students. I can tell a difference in their attitude.

R-Like what?

T- Like I start handing out the packets and they all groan and say, "Uuuggghhh..not this again." Then they say, "I don't want to do this again." They don't like worksheets at all.

(Teacher Interview, 2/2/08).

Ms. April commented about the planning required and the teacher's role when using the scripted Triumph program:

I'm going to tell you right now, the scripted program is ten times easier than doing my other stuff. To me, it is a teacher's way out of not having to work harder. It's boring and it's pitiful. I would rather work hard. As a teacher, I just have to read what it says. My students don't want to read it, really [she laughs] I don't want to read now. (Teacher Interview, 2-2-08).

Ms. April continued talking about the problems she had with using the scripted Triumph program:

> T-This is a lesson for a day [teacher points to a phonics lesson on digraphs]. And then it does it again. And it keeps repeating the same thing.
>
> R-For five days?
>
> T-Yes, for five days. It is very mundane.
>
> R-What is the difference between the Triumphs program and literature circles?
>
> T-It is more structured [referring to Triumphs]. The students don't like it and it is mundane. (Teacher Interview, 2-2-08)

Ms. April had conflicts using a program that was scripted when she felt she was adequately trained to meet the educational needs of her students. She remarked:

> The guidelines for a level three teacher say that she is supplementing, she is supplementing even the things she has to use. She is supplementing other things to support it [the program]. That makes me think, you know the basal is a supplement. That is the way I see it. I feel like I am the teacher and the basal is the supplement. The point of being a teacher in Title [Title I Reading] is that you have all these standards, you have to be a master teacher, you have to do this and that. If they expect you to do that, then I don't understand why they say here is

> your curriculum. Why do you have to go to school the whole time? Why do you have to go to school to follow a scripted program by? You know? Why do you need to be this great teacher? If I'm going to follow a scripted program, I can read. I could just read and say "here you are." It even tells you what to say, "Listen as I say this word." It tells you everything. Oh my gosh, it is like I didn't even go to school. No wonder these students hate to read. It tells you what to say verbatim. If I was going to do this, why did I even have to go to school? Why do I need masters? Why did I spend all my time and money if all I have to do is read it [the basal]? It just did not make any sense. I'm a whole language person. I think the aspect of whole language is important. Whole language is the process of becoming a reader. It is giving you experiences and circumstances to become a great reader. (Teacher Interview, 2-2-08)

Ms. April was frustrated by having to use the adopted commercial program, Triumphs. She commented she had sufficient training to teach the students through a *whole language* approach. Furthermore, she felt the way she was teaching second semester was more structured but also more mundane. Ms. April felt the students enjoyed literature circles more than the basal. According to Ms. April, she had observed a change in the students' attitudes second semester. She thought the students were negative about the work that was required second semester.

How did students perceive their Title I class?

Students' opinions about the changes in curriculum

I asked students about their experiences in their language arts supplemental (Title I) class in February, after substantial changes in curriculum had occurred (Interview IV, 2/14/08). Many students preferred the curriculum first semester and engagement with reading buddies in literature circles. However, contrary to my hypothesis and to Ms. April's presumption, some students commented they preferred the commercially adopted basal program. The class was divided about whether the changes in curriculum were better or worse than the first semester.

Several students commented about their dissatisfaction with the *packets* and worksheets, "we started packets….suffixes and stuff. The packets are boring" stated Hannah (Interview IV, 2/14/08, Hannah) and Elizabeth commented "I liked it better before Christmas because we didn't do as much worksheets. We had more fun. We learned without doing work" (Interview IV, 2/14/08, Elizabeth). Early in the first semester, several students had commented about their dislike for worksheets, such as Joe who stated, "make us read but don't make us do all those worksheets" (Interview I, 10/30/07, Joe). Those comments had occurred prior to the second semester curriculum changes in the language arts/Title I class. Those opinions were validated by the survey data obtained from *The Elementary Reading Survey* (ERA, 10/29/07, item #12), seven of the fifteen students marked they strongly disliked doing workbook pages and worksheets.

On the ERA, only four students commented worksheets were something they enjoyed. As indicated on the ERA, these same four students commented in Interview IV they preferred the learning that occurred second semester. Some students equated worksheets with more learning occurring such as Leann who commented "she has been teaching us a lot more stuff; we have learned a lot more, mostly just nouns" (Interview IV, 2/14/08, Leann) and Jody who stated "I like it [class] now, we are actually doing work" (Interview IV, 2/14/08, Jody). For the four students that preferred the adopted commercial basal, they seemed to prefer learning that was more structured and was curriculum directed. They also seemed to prefer material which was at such a low instructional level; the worksheets, reading passages and high frequency word drills were several levels below their instructional levels. There was not a pattern between the reading ability of these four students and their preference for the basal/worksheet curriculum.

Students' perceptions first semester

Students had been asked about their perceptions of the Language arts/Title I class in the first semester. At that time, many students said the Title I class made them think of "fun" and/or "games." Jody stated the class made him think of "fun and learning" (Interview III, 12/14/07, Jody) and Judy stated the class made her think of games (Interview III, 12/14/07, Judy). Four other students had similar perceptions. In the fifteen weeks I spent in the classroom, I never observed games being played; although, there were some board games on one shelf in the classroom. The board games focused on

different phonics skills such as suffixes, prefixes and roots; however, I never observed the games being used. Furthermore, an analysis of the lesson plans prior to my arrival did not indicate "game time." Did those comments made by six students indicate Literature Circles, Reader's Theater, and various projects were perceived by some of the students as "fun" and/or "games?"

Students believed they have to do worksheets to "work"

The considerable amount of worksheets in the packets was perceived as "a lot of work" by all the students; however, some of these students equated work as "more learning." A pattern did emerged that three of these students (Jody, Mireya and Leann) commented doing worksheets meant they did more work and as a result they believed they learned more; in addition to these three, Alicia commented she preferred literature circles and then stated "we learned without doing work." Several students (6 of the 15) viewed the first semester as "fun" and/or "games." For several of these students, they did not perceive literature circles as "work" and they thought they were "working" when they completed worksheets.

I wondered how these students perceived their other classes. What factors determined whether or not they liked classes? I inquired about their perceptions about their classes and their school.

Students' perceptions of their classes

Least favorite classes

I asked students about what their least favorite classes were in school (Interview I, 10/30/07). Fourteen out of the fifteen students mentioned a class in language arts (Title I/language arts supplement, reading, or writing) **or** math (Figure 4-10). Nine of the fifteen students mentioned a language arts class as their least favorite class. Out of those nine students, five were rated as "low" by Ms. April in regards to their reading ability. Six of the nine were qualified as "nearing proficiency" on the NMSBA 2007 exam, a qualification indicating they were below expected proficiency. One explanation could be these students found reading difficult and therefore did not enjoy classes that focused on reading. Another explanation could be the type of activities associated with the language arts classes. Students expressed they didn't like to answer questions over what they were reading (Interview I, 10/30/07). On *The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey,* five of the fifteen (33%) students marked they strongly disliked when the teacher asked them questions about what they read and an additional six students said they did not enjoy being asked questions (ERA, 10/29/07, item # 11). In other words, 73% did not enjoy having to answer questions about the book they were reading. Students commented they needed more time to complete assigned books for class (Interview I, 10/30/07). For Jody and Peter, they disliked classes because they needed more time to complete assigned books and felt too rushed (Interview I, 10/30/07). For other students, they disliked reading classes because they had to read out loud. Twelve of the fifteen (80%) students

marked they did felt negatively about reading out loud in class (ERA, 10/29/07, item #18).

Student name	Class/ Grade
Alicia	reading/ C , writing/ B, and language arts/B
Anastasha	science/D and writing/C
Cally	math/moved at Christmas break, no grade recorded
Elizabeth	math/B and social studies (history)/A
Esperanza	math/C and reading/C
Hannah	reading/B
Jake	math/C
Jaylin	I don't have one
Jody	reading/B and math/D
Joe	math/C
Judy	math/ C
Leann	reading/B
Mireya	math/D and reading/B
Peter	math/C and language arts/B
Tiffany	reading/D and language arts/B

Figure 4-10 Grades in least favorite class/classes 1st semester of sixth grade

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What determines if students dislike a class?

I wondered if the grades the students received in classes influenced their perceptions of why they disliked a class. I obtained their semester grades. There was not a pattern between courses they disliked and poor grades; on the contrary, many of the students did extremely well in courses they indicated they disliked (Figure 4-9). The determining factors on whether they disliked a class appeared to be related to the type of activities which occurred in the class and how those activities made them feel. If the students felt unsuccessful, then they indicated they disliked that class. If they had to

answer questions on what they were reading, they indicated displeasure. For some students, they disliked a class because they found the content difficult. Several students indicated they disliked language arts classes and many of those same students were struggling in reading. The determining factors appeared to be related to their ability to understand the class content, the type of work/activities required, and whether they felt successful.

Favorite class/classes

When I asked students to respond about their favorite class, 9 of the 15 students responded science and 6 of the 15 students responded an elective class (Interview I, 10/30/07). They offered explanations on why they enjoyed the science class, such as "We get to do labs, we make stuff that happens in the book" (Interview IV, 2/14/08, Peter), and "I like it [science] because I get to do science experiments and science fair stuff" (Interview IV, 2/14/08, Jody). Six of the fifteen students mentioned an elective class as their favorite. The leadership class was very popular with 4 of the 15 students. Jake defined the leadership class as a class that "deals with technology, art and technology" (Interview I, 10/30/07, Jake). Hands-on activities appeared to contribute to these students' positive feelings about these classes.

Student name	Class/ Grade
Alicia	math/B, science/B and leadership/A
Anastasha	reading/C and math/C
Cally	language arts and reading-unable to obtained grades-moved before grades were issued
Elizabeth	reading/A and writing/B
Esperanza	language arts/B
Hannah	science/B, writing/B and math/B
Jake	science/C and leadership/A
Jaylin	leadership/B and language arts/A
Jody	science/C
Joe	social studies(history)/C and science/C
Judy	science/C and social studies (history)/A
Leann	science/A
Mireya	science/C and choir/A
Peter	science/B and music appreciation/A
Tiffany	math/F and leadership/C

Figure 4-11 Grade in favorite class/classes 1st semester of sixth grade

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The majority of the students, 60%, commented science was their favorite class (Figure 4-11). I decided to schedule an interview with the science teachers to inquire why they thought students enjoyed her class so much. Typically, science text books have vast amounts of vocabulary and are difficult to read and comprehend. These students, all placed in Title I/language arts supplement class, commented they enjoyed science. East Middle School had two science teachers. The science teachers had some insight (R=me, the researcher, T=science teacher #1):

R-The reason I wanted to meet with you is that 60% of the students I have interviewed in Title I have commented that science is their favorite class.

T-Wow!

R-Do you think that is odd that so many students thought their favorite class was science? Usually, students that struggle with reading like their elective class such as music since they don't have to read as much.

T-I don't think it is odd.

R-Why?

T-Because we do a lot more hands on. Even though they have to read, they get to see it in a different form, not just from a textbook. It is easier for them to read even though they are struggling with reading because they have a lot more visuals in science; like posters for instances, right now we are studying animal cells. They read it, they draw it, they label it, they see the poster, then they read it again, and sometimes we actually make the concept we are studying. They don't just read it and then that's it. They like it because it is not a regular class, I would say.

R-Don't they struggle with the textbook?

T-I actually give them the page number of where they can find the answers so that they don't have to read as much for the students struggling to lower the amount that they have to read to find that answer. They get overwhelmed like any other student and if they have to read ten pages they are going to be there all night. So, this way they just have to read the page. I also do leveled readers in science. We have four groups. They are put in groups based on their MAP scores. The lowest group has a lower leveled science book and I sit with the groups. It is the same

concept but on a lower reading level. We use those leveled readers almost with every chapter. We listen to the chapter first; then, we break up in groups and read in leveled readers. It breaks the vocabulary words in simpler terms. We have leveled readers for science in English and Spanish. I also use graphic organizers to teach vocabulary, I got the ideas at a reading conference.

R-You went to a reading conference?

T-Yeah, the whole school staff went so that we could learn how to incorporate reading strategies into our content areas. I don't mind going, I have a language arts minor and took lots of reading classes but I think it bugs the math teachers. (Staff interview, 2/11/08, science teacher #1)

The second science teacher added the adopted program also had an on-line component. Science teacher #2 also had minor in language arts. She commented the computer program read the text to the students (R=me, the researcher, T=science teacher #2):

R-Is there anything you might attribute to science being so popular with the Title I students?

T-I have five computers in here and there is an on-line component to our book and the leveled readers can be read to our students. I have several special education students that are on first and second grade, so I'm able to pick leveled

> readers at their level, at a second grade level and it will read it to them. If I want them to do the sixth grade text, I just have it on auditory and they can hear it as well. They get more of it than trying to read it themselves.
> (Staff interview, 2/12/08, science teacher #2)

The science teachers were using reading strategies, texts on different reading levels, and teaching through several different learning styles/modalities. The class did hands-on activities. Assignments were adjusted for students based on their reading levels and reading was scaffold. Although the school did not have a science laboratory, mini-lab projects occurred in class. The students participated collaboratively with the teachers in an inquiry environment. Learning depended on the social interactions that occurred in class through experimentation.

What determined if a class was a student's favorite class?

A favorite class was defined in terms other than extrinsic grades. Interesting to note, only one of the nine students had a grade of an "A" in science at semester (Figure 4-10). Tiffany chose math as one of her favorite classes; however, Tiffany failed first semester in math (Archived data, 01/07/08, Tiffany). Grades did not determine whether a class was a favorite class or not for these students. Although students felt grades were indicators of how they were doing in a class, those grades did not determine if they enjoyed a class. On the Motivations for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ, 10/29/07, item #37), eleven of the fifteen students strongly felt grades were a good way to see how they

were doing in reading; however, students could fail a class as in the case of Tiffany in math and still choose that class as their favorite.

One factor that determined whether a class was liked by the students was the amount of hands-on learning that occurred. The nine students that chose science all mentioned the science experiments, projects and the labs. The science teachers commented one reason students enjoyed their classes was the hands-on learning. The students who chose the leadership class commented on the art and technology projects and the organizing and conducting of school parties. Actually getting to "make stuff" as Peter mentioned seemed to influence whether or not students enjoyed a class.

Another factor appeared to be whether or not the teacher was "nice." Tiffany said math was her favorite class because "The math teacher is my favorite teacher. She's nice" (Interview IV, 2/14/08, Tiffany). Tiffany could be failing math but still enjoy going to class because she felt the teacher was nice to her. Students needed to feel that the teacher liked them in order to choose a class as their favorite.

Students' perceptions of their elective classes

I asked students about their elective classes in the first interview (Interview I, 10/30/07). Students talked about their elective classes. For many students, their elective class involved music. Music classes at East Middle School consisted of classes in guitar, choir, band, or music appreciation.

During the time I spent in the school, many of the students in this particular Title I class had an evening performance. The school had a performance night in which students

enrolled in music or band classes performed for the parents and the community. When I asked students in the third interview to talk about performing, these students mentioned this event (Interview III, 12/14/07).

Mireya participated in choir at the school. Mireya was a shy, quiet student. She rarely spoke in class and preferred to work alone rather than in groups. In the Title I/language arts supplement class, she often sat alone even when they were participating in group work. She was reserved and lacked confidence. Mireya stated previously in interviews she considered herself a bad reader. Mireya succeeded in choir. She talked about her performance:

> "I didn't know teachers would be there, there was [sic] a lot of people." She grinned as she spoke, "Everyone was staring at me." Although, Mireya was shy, she felt successful performing and mentioned "I got a good grade. I got an A for going. It was fun!" (Interview III, 12/14/07, Mireya)

Leann talked about her experiences at the performance singing with the choir. Leann commented "It was fun! This is my first year. This was my fourth concert. We performed at the Junior High, the Veterans' Day Program, and here at the school twice. Choir is my favorite class." Leann demonstrated confidence both in and out of her Title I/language arts supplement class. The choir performance gave Leann even more opportunities to develop her self-efficacy (Interview III, 12/14/07, Leann).

Jody was living in foster care. He often complained to me in class "kids didn't like him." He mentioned his parents "were trying to get better and when they got better he was leaving foster care and they were all moving to another state" (Anecdotal record, 12/7/07). Jody had extreme difficulty staying on task in his Title I class. He often was up roaming the room. Jody missed school incentive programs such as motivational rewarding movies because he had too many school infractions. He performed at the school playing the guitar. The opportunity to perform gave Jody a chance to participate in a positive activity (R=me, the researcher, S=student, Jody):

R-Were you in the performance Thursday night?

S-Yes [Jody smiles very broadly]

R-You were? What did you do?

S-Guitar

R-Oh my gosh! How did that go? What was that like?

S-It was fun!

R-What did you play?

S-Aura Lee, It's a song from France and We Wish you a Merry Christmas.

R-How did you get the guitar?

S-The school gives it to me and I get to take it home.

(Interview III, 12/14/07, Jody)

At Christmas time, a family from Jody's church purchased him a guitar. Jody returned after Christmas break with his own guitar and returned the one the school loaned him. He was so proud of his guitar.

Anastasha participated in the band for the first time this year. Anastasha was extremely shy and often avoided eye contact with the teachers or her peers. In interviews, Anastasha commented she considered herself a slow reader. She often responded in class in a whisper and was difficult to hear when called upon. Anastasha talked about her experience at the school performance (R=me, the researcher, S=student, Anastasha):

> R-Were you in the school performance Thursday night?
>
> S-I was in the band. I played the clarinet. This is my first year. I think it is cool! It is my favorite class. I practice at home 30 minutes a day. We went and bought my clarinet from Walmart. It was my sister's old clarinet. My sister plays but she is going to quit and I started playing. (Interview III, 12/14/07, Anastasha)

Anastasha spoke clearly when she described her experiences in band. She smiled broadly and looked up making eye contact with the researcher as she spoke. She spoke with excitement. Her mannerisms were very different than those observed in her Title I reading class. She displayed confidence and excitement.

Cally spoke about her experiences also playing the clarinet. For Cally, this was her first year participating in the band. Cally proudly talked about her performance. She commented (R=me, the researcher, S=student, Cally):

R-What instrument do you play?

S-I play the clarinet. I had to pay the school. The companies were at school and we rented the clarinet from them.

R-Tell me about the performance.

S- I wasn't nervous at the performance. I played Christmas Lullaby, Chopsticks, and Christmas favorites. I practiced at home every day for an hour.

(Interview III, 12/14/07, Cally)

Hannah spoke about how she played the flute for the school performance. She explained how her cousin had played the flute before her and her younger cousin also planned to play the flute (R=me, the researcher, S=student, Hannah):

R-Were you in the school performance?

S-Yeah, I played the flute since the beginning of this year. It was our first concert.

R-How did you get your flute?

S- These people came from out of town to our school

selling instruments and my parents bought the flute from them.
I want to take band every year. It is sort of like a tradition.
My cousin played the flute when she was at school here, I'm doing it,
and when my next cousin comes here, she'll play it.
(Interview III, 12/14/07, Hannah)

Students who participated in the music performances displayed confidence and pride. Although Mireya was usually very shy in her language arts/Title I class, she grinned widely as she exclaimed "it was fun" even though people were "staring" at her. Leann demonstrated confidence as she spoke about all her choir performances. Anastasha often avoided eye contact but spoke confidently describing her performance with the school band. Cally expressed how she wasn't nervous, again expressing confidence about her performance with the clarinet. Jody was so proud of his guitar and described the songs he played; he expressed confidence in his ability to play Aura Lee. Hannah was proud that playing the flute had now become a family "tradition." The performances appeared to influence their self-efficacy about themselves as a performer.

Students commented the elective classes were fun. Mireya and Leann both commented on how fun it was to sing in the performance with the choir. Other students spoke about their performances grinning, such as Jody. The experiences in the elective classes were perceived as fun.

Opportunities lost as a result of being placed in Title I reading

Students' schedules

The majority of students, and/or their parents chose for students, to miss a social studies class in order to receive Title I services. Only three students had enrolled in social studies/history. Joe had remained in the history class and forfeited his elective. Joe was very discouraged by the fact he did not have an elective. He loved to play the guitar. Joe's parents had decided for him to miss an elective. Joe stated "At first I didn't know that there was guitar and then I was in language arts supplement. I wanted to join at semester but they said you had to be in it first semester" (Interview III, 12/14/07, Joe). Elizabeth's house parent had decided she would receive the extra reading class, Title I/language arts supplement class. Elizabeth stated "I only have regular classes, no band, no sports, not like that, only regular classes" (Interview III, 12/14/07, Elizabeth).

Some of the students chose band for their elective class (Archived data, 01/07/08, student schedules). Three of the fifteen students were currently in band. The principal explained how this year was the first time students had the option to remain in elective courses. He further explained how the children who qualify for Title I services are typically the same students who are low Socio Economic Status (SES); therefore, offering band still presents problems. These students typically couldn't participate in band because they couldn't afford to rent the instruments. The principal worked to acquire instruments for children in case they couldn't afford them. Therefore, band became an option for everyone. The school provided guitars for those students enrolled in

the music guitar class. These students were permitted to take the guitars home each day in order to practice. For students who were not vocally inclined or were not interested in playing an instrument, they could still participate in music through a music appreciation class. Only three students forfeited their elective classes and were in enrolled in a regular content area class, history (Figure 4-12).

name	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
Alicia	math	LA supp.	leadership	reading	science	writing
Leann	science	LA supp.	reading	writing	math	music
Jaylin	math	LA supp.	leadership	reading	writing	science
Hannah	math	LA supp.	reading	writing	band	science
Cally	band	LA supp.	math	science	writing	reading
Anastasha	band	LA supp.	reading	writing	science	math
Jake	science	LA supp.	leadership	reading	writing	math
Esperanza	writing	LA supp.	music	math	reading	science
Elizabeth	history	LA supp.	reading	writing	math	science
Tiffany	science	LA supp.	leadership	math	reading	writing
Mireya	math	LA supp.	writing	reading	music	science
Judy	history	LA supp.	writing	reading	science	math
Jody	math	LA supp.	writing	music	science	reading
Peter	math	LA supp.	music	science	writing	reading
Joe	writing	LA supp.	reading	math	science	history

LA supplement is what Title I was called for the 6th grade schedule at this school.

Figure 4-12 Students' class schedules

Students missing elective classes

School policy was changed back to programming as previously implemented in prior years. Students who entered the school after January 2008 did not have choice in their schedules. Next year (2008-2009), if Hannah had not reached proficient reading levels on the standardized exam, she would not have the option of continuing with band

at school. Even though her parents invested money to purchase the flute, and even though it was "tradition" in Hannah's family, Hannah would have to forfeit her elective to receive Title I services in the future. Fortunately for Hannah, her NMBSA scores from March 2007 were proficient in reading (Informal conversation, 11/14/07, principal). However, for many other students, they may lose the opportunity to receive music lessons in school.

The school had two music teachers. One teacher taught choir and guitar electives. The other teacher taught band and music appreciation electives. The choir/guitar teacher spoke about her music classes:

> A teacher in a regular education classroom thinks, well they [the students] are not tested in music so let's just pull them from there and work with them then [referring to working with students with special needs or Title I reading students]. I would rather see music teachers, and it is hard because most music teachers are not usually reading teachers but I am. I would rather see music teachers integrate reading into those classes instead of seeing students pulled out of those classes to do reading. Just like in social studies, science and math, those teachers need to know how to teach reading. I used to be an Elementary teacher where I taught reading all day long; I still taught reading when I taught science and when I taught social studies. The students get pulled from an elective class to have "reading" and then they have nothing to look forward to at school. I lost one of my students

> in January because she qualified for Ms. April's reading class now and she could not stay in elective choir. (Staff Interview, 02/08/08, choir/guitar teacher)

Students missing social studies/History classes

Ms. April spoke about the rationale behind pulling students out of their social studies classes, instead of their elective, to receive Title I services:

> I think the thought process behind taking students out of their Social studies class and not their elective was that then they were not taken out of something they excel in. 'Cause most of the students that [sic] you have excel in their elective classes, like they are getting "A", "A", "As". They are getting good grades in those classes and they feel like pride, like it is putting that back into them, into their self-esteem. (Teacher Interview, 2/4/08)

East Middle School had two social studies teachers. One teacher sat down with me to share the thinking behind scheduling and the decision that the students would miss their social studies class instead of their elective:

> I think if I remember correctly that the main push was we are being tested in math, reading and science; those are the key areas that everyone is focusing on. I

> want to say that we decided social studies because it is not being tested. So that is why we could pull from music, band, or social studies for Title I Reading. (Staff interview, 2/12/08, social studies teacher #1)

Students participating in Title I who chose to miss social studies were missing content in World History. I asked the social studies teacher what happens when they miss social studies and when do they encounter that content. The teacher responded, "They are probably behind. I don't know when they get World History again" (Staff interview, 2/12/08, social studies teacher #1). According to the social studies teacher, students receive World History again in tenth grade, the same year they take the high school competency exam for the first time. These students may be at a disadvantage since they did not have World History content in sixth grade.

Although these students may miss World History, they did not miss as much content as one might presume. From January through February, the social studies teachers taught math in preparation for the NMSBA exam. The NMSBA would be given the first week of March. In reality, the students in Title I reading that missed social studies missed World History for part of the year and math review for part of the year. The social studies teacher commented on the test preparation:

> We are doing just one day of social studies and we are focusing the rest of the days on math. When we looked at the scores, we had to make a huge jump in

> mathematics this year according to "No Child Left Behind"; they have to make a huge jump in math and not so much in reading at this school. So, we are doing math until testing the first week of March. They bring their math book and we work on any questions and homework that they might have had. We review the concepts they learned the day before. So, the math teacher teaches the concept to them and then the next day we review that concept.
>
> (Staff interview, 2/12/08, social studies teacher #1)

Summary of opportunities lost

The curriculum at East Middle School was largely shaped by the scores on the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment (NMSBA). When the student population performed low in math, extra math instruction was given even at the cost of less social studies instruction. When students performed low in reading, they were removed from either elective classes or social studies to receive extra instruction in reading.

Students lost opportunities as a result of their placement in the Title I reading class. In order to accommodate the supplemental language arts class, students had to miss either social studies (World History) or an elective class. If the student missed history, they also missed out on extra math instruction part of the year (January and February). These students lost the opportunity to be provided the same educational choices and opportunities of their peers. Students who lost elective classes were resentful. As Joe indicated, he wished he had taken guitar. Elizabeth said she would have chosen choir if

she would have had the choice. Elizabeth referred to content area classes as "regular classes." Elective classes were viewed by students as "fun."

According to the principal, often the students who qualify for Title I are the same students who are low Socio Economic Status (SES). By having music classes as an elective choice, these students from low SES backgrounds were provided instruments and music lessons at school. Removing school elective choice for these students would result in some of these students not having the financial means to purchase instruments on their own or obtain private lessons. Therefore, for some students the opportunity to learn to play an instrument or participate in a choir could be lost due to low test scores in reading on the NMSBA.

The choir/guitar teacher summarized what she thought was the opinion of the district, "what I hear in the district team meetings is that if a child needs help in reading, they don't go to music." One of her choir students qualified for Title I reading when the test scores arrived in October 2007. The school waited until first semester ended and then the student left choir to be placed in the language arts/Title I class for second semester. The choir/guitar teacher commented, "I would rather see music teachers integrate reading." The opinion of the district was that the school must make adequate yearly progress (AYP) and students must be able to read; according to their paradigm, reading could only occur in "reading or language arts classes." Therefore, electives must be forfeited by students who score low in reading on the standardized exam.

Ms. April felt students excel in elective classes. She indicated the students receive good grades in elective classes and that results in a feeling of pride. Upon analysis of the students' semester grades, ten of the eleven students in elective classes had received a grade of an "A" in their elective class. However, previous comments from the students in regards to why they preferred certain classes were not linked to the grade they received. Only, Mireya had commented choir was fun and she got an "A" for going to the performance. The comments from other students were linked to confidence and pride they felt when they performed; that pride and confidence was linked to the pieces they successfully played on their instrument or pieces they sang.

For the students who lost social studies, they were not provided the opportunity to learn the world history content that their peers received. The lack of content instruction in social studies could put these students at a disadvantage when they are given the New Mexico High School Proficiency Exam in tenth grade. They are also at a disadvantage to pass the social studies portion of the NMSBA in seventh grade. Beyond testing, some scholars argue these students should have world history as part of their knowledge.

The bottom line was once students in this district are in sixth grade and above, in order to receive supplemental reading instruction, students must lose some type of opportunity as long as schools operate from this current paradigm. The question was whether or not this supplemental reading class (Title I/language arts supplement class) assisted students to read proficiently and whether or not the opportunities lost out weighed any opportunities gained. I decided to examine the students' individual reading

strengths and weaknesses to identify if the current curriculum supported them in their developmental growth.

What are the students' individual strengths and weaknesses?

I decided to use Miscue Analysis to determine individual reading behaviors of each student by assessing his/her strengths and weaknesses (Appendix H). Wilde (2000) stated Miscue Analysis is the single best tool to inform teachers about readers and support their learning. In Miscue Analysis both the student's strengths and weaknesses are noted. The analysis allowed for interpretation of the cueing systems used by a reader. I was able to determine the students' reading abilities to apply cueing systems by analyzing their use of semantics, syntax and graphophonics (visual similarity) in reading (Appendix I).

I used interviews with the students to inquire about their perceptions of themselves as readers and what they thought their strengths and weaknesses were in reading (Appendix D). Through classroom observation, I was able to add to my understanding of the students' strengths and weaknesses. I took running records during Reader's theater (Appendix L). These observations combined with my anecdotal records gave me a holistic picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the students as a class and as individuals.

I was able to make generalizations about this population of students; however, each student had individual strengths and weaknesses identified through their Miscue Analysis, running records, and self identification. A few patterns were common enough

that a specific area could be identified as an area in which most of the students in this population could benefit from instruction. One area of weakness was the ability to navigate non-fiction text. The class as a whole could benefit from instruction in text features. Second, of over half the class had difficulty with multisyllabic words. Third, if students omitted words, most often they omitted function words. Occasionally, students omitted orthographic markers causing problems with the phrasing of sentences. Finally, when students miscued, they needed to self-correct at higher rate. Self-correction was too low for many students.

Although all of the students had individual strengths, there were some commonalities with the majority of students in this class. The majority of the students read expressively with good intonation. Most students did not violate syntactical structure when they made a miscue in their reading. The majority of the students preserved meaning in the text; they preserved semantics. A little over half of the students had high graphic similarity when they miscued in word identification. Many of the students reread to maintain meaning. Rereading text was evidence these students were metacognitively monitoring their reading. Most of the students understood they must connect with text and applied background knowledge in their retelling of passages.

Miscue Analysis

The students had several choices of text. The choices consisted of several different magazines (Appendix M). Often Miscue Analysis is taken on fictional text; however, the majority of these students had responded on an interest inventory that they

preferred magazines and non-fiction text. Therefore, nonfiction magazines were provided for choices. There were magazines on sports (boy sports, girl sports and books with both genders represented in sports), music (Hannah Montana), weather (storms) and animals (animal facts and veterinary medicine). Each student chose the magazine and chose a expository passage within the magazine they wanted to read. The average passage selected was 296 words in length. I prepared a transcription for each passage selected. Students then read the passage. I recorded the oral reading. After the passage reading was completed, students retold the story. Retellings were first unaided and then if information was lacking, an aided retelling proceeded. I scored the retellings on a prepared template for each passage. I then scored each Miscue Analysis using a coding sheet (Appendix I). I analyzed each sentence. I analyzed each substitution for graphic similarity.

Text features

Many of the students omitted crucial information when reading nonfiction text. Several students skipped the title, the beginning information, and informational text boxes located in the article. The result of omitting this information was loss of comprehension. In some cases, the title itself provided the information necessary to successfully answer the questions in the retelling (Appendix M). One example is Judy who was reading a passage about a tree climbing dog (Miscue Analysis, 11/8/07, Animal Planet, p. 39). The dog climbed trees to chase squirrels. The dog's name was Tucker.

Judy skipped the first three lines. On the fourth line, Judy was confused by the name Tucker and was not making the cognitive connection that Tucker was the name of a dog, specifically a cocker spaniel. In the retelling, Judy had difficulty recalling any information in the unaided portion. In the aided portion, Judy's comprehension was very limited.

Eight other students demonstrated a similar pattern as Judy. Tiffany and Elizabeth skipped any text boxes that provided the vitals on athletes (Miscue Analysis, 11/7/07, Tiffany, Elizabeth). At times those vitals provided crucial information on why that specific athlete was unique. Peter found the nonfiction text confusing and skipped around the page reading portions, reading out of sequential order (Miscue Analysis, 11/7/07, Peter). The students read different passages from different magazines; however, the layout of the articles had several similarities. The articles were printed in column format, included text boxes, included a title usually printed in larger font, included subheadings, and had an illustration about the text. Although these students indicated they preferred reading magazines, they were unaware how to navigate through nonfiction text features.

Syntax

When students made miscues during the analysis, 14 of the 15 students used syntax as an effective cueing system 90%-100% of the time. The substitutions made were words that kept the syntax of the sentence intact. The structural system of English that governs how words are arranged in sentences was followed by these students. They understood the rules governing grammar and how words were combined in sentences (Figure 4-13).

Student name	Syntactically acceptable	Syntactically unacceptable
Alicia	100%	0%
Anastasha	84%	16%
Cally	100%	0%
Elizabeth	100%	0%
Esperanza	100%	0%
Hannah	100%	0%
Jake	100%	0%
Jaylin	76%	24%
Jody	95%	5%
Joe	100%	0%
Judy	100%	0%
Leann	100%	0%
Mireya	100%	0%
Peter	90%	10%
Tiffany	100%	0%

Figure 4-13 Syntax

Semantics

The purpose of reading is to obtain meaning. The reader transacts with the text to make meaning. Eight of the fifteen students scored 90-100% in acceptable semantic miscues on their reading selection (Figure 4-14). Three of the fifteen (20%) students, preserved meaning in the text 80-89% of the time; they had difficulty with some of the vocabulary resulting in some meaning change of the text. Two (13%) students had semantically acceptable miscues 70-79% of the time in their reading sample. One student only had 68% of the miscues as semantically acceptable.

Student name	Semantically acceptable	Semantically unacceptable
Alicia	88%	12%
Anastasha	68%	32%
Cally	87%	13%
Elizabeth	96%	4%
Esperanza	94%	6%
Hannah	84%	14%
Jake	79%	21%
Jaylin	62%	38%
Jody	90%	10%
Joe	95%	5%
Judy	100%	0%
Leann	100%	0%
Mireya	100%	0%
Peter	77%	23%
Tiffany	92%	8%

Figure 4-14 Semantics

Graphic similarity

I analyzed the miscues for graphic similarity. If the miscue contained two or more parts the same, then the miscue was marked high in visual similarity; for example, "specialy" for "specialty" would be marked as high in graphic similarity. If the miscue had one part of the word the same, then the miscue was marked some in visual similarity; for example "regret" for "referred" would be marked as some in graphic similarity. If the miscue had no resemblance to the word in text, then the miscue was marked as none in graphic similarity. Each student's transcript was coded (Figure 4-15).

Student name	High	Some	None
Alicia	100%	0%	0%
Anastasha	90%	0%	10%
Cally	75%	0%	25%
Elizabeth	75%	0%	25%
Esperanza	94%	6%	0%
Hannah	60%	40%	0%
Jake	71%	29%	0%
Jaylin	92%	8%	0%
Jody	40%	60%	0%
Joe	50%	17%	33%
Judy	100%	0%	0%
Leann	100%	0%	0%
Mireya	100%	0%	0%
Peter	90%	5%	5%
Tiffany	100%	0%	0%

Figure 4-15 Graphic/visual similarity

Nine of the fifteen students scored within 90-100% on high graphic similarity on the miscue substitutions made in their reading. Three of the fifteen students

demonstrated high graphic similarity on their miscue substitutions 70-80% of the time. Three of the fifteen students demonstrated 40-60% of their miscue substitutions as high in visual similarity.

Nine of the fifteen made miscues directly related to suffixes on words. Those students made 24% of their miscues based on ignoring or incorrectly substituting suffixes. Although this type of substitution was high in graphic similarity, the resulting miscues often compromised meaning partially. Peter had several instances where he made suffix substitutions. He read "special" for "specialty" and "technic" for "technician." These substitutions compromised meaning in the text for Peter (Miscue Analysis, 11/7/07, Peter). Jake read about a football player and read "old" for "older" when comparing the football player to other players on the team (Miscue Analysis, 11/6/07, Jake). The player was not old, but compared to his teammates he was older. Meaning of the text was partially compromised. These students would benefit from explicit word work focusing on suffixes.

For some students, word length proved to be difficult and added to their substitution miscues. Eight of the fifteen (53%) students had difficulty with breaking the words into syllables and pronouncing each syllable. Those eight students left off a syllable in the word 27% of the time. Cally read a passage in which a cat had so many stitches in its head that the author said it resembled Frankenstein (Miscue Analysis, 11/8/07, Cally). Therefore, the cat was referred to by the medical team as "Frankenkitty." Cally skipped the medial syllable and said the cat was "Frankitty", this

miscue caused Cally to miss the metaphor the author was trying to make about the cat's appearance. Some students like Jody would abandon the word after the first syllable. These eight students would benefit from explicit word work focusing on syllabication.

Omissions and insertions

The most common omissions that occurred were in the areas of orthographic markers and function words. Orthographic markers are marks such as periods and commas that reflect phrase, clause, and sentence boundaries (Goodman, Watson & Burke, 2005). Students in this class omitted periods most commonly. For most of the students, the omission of periods was occasional.

At times, students made insertions in the text when they read. Often, insertions were made to retain meaning in the sentence. Students would add function words such as "and", "a", "to" and "the" most frequently. At times, students would add pronouns such as "he" or "she." When Hannah read the sentence, "A cat had been hit by a car and flew over a fence into a cemetery", she read "A cat had been hit by a car and ***he*** flew over a fence into a cemetery." Hannah inserted the word "he" to provide clarity that it was the cat that flew over the fence (Miscue Analysis, 11/6/07, Hannah). Insertions in many cases were evidence students were reading for meaning and adjusting text to make sense.

Self-correction rate

One important characteristic evident in good readers is they are aware of when meaning breaks down and therefore they reread or self-correct to restore meaning within text. Often, the sixth grade students in this class self-corrected during the Miscue Analysis (Figure 4-16), two students self-corrected their errors 100% of the time, four of the fifteen students self-corrected 50% of the time, four of the fifteen students self-corrected 33% of the time, four of the fifteen students self-corrected 25% of the time and one student (Peter) only self-corrected 14% of the time. In order to become efficient at comprehending text, these students must self-correct when meaning is compromised.

Student name	Self correction rate
Alicia	1:2
Anastasha	1:4
Cally	1:3
Elizabeth	1:2
Esperanza	1:3
Hannah	1:4
Jake	1:2
Jaylin	1:4
Jody	1:4
Joe	1:2
Judy	1:1
Leann	1:3
Mireya	1:1
Peter	1:7
Tiffany	1:3

Figure 4-16 Self-correction ratio

Rereading

Fourteen of the fifteen students went back and reread for portions of the text for understanding. Goodman, Watson, and Burke (2005) referred to this rereading process as disconfirming text. When a student reads and they realize what they read does not sound like English nor does it make sense, they disconfirm their prediction about what they think the text should say. Therefore, they go back and reread that portion of text to restore meaning. Judy was the only student who never went back and reread. Although her comprehension was breaking down, Judy focused on speed and continued to read rapidly (Miscue Analysis, 11/8/07, Judy). Rereading text when meaning breaks down was evidence the students were able to metacognitively think about their reading.

Retelling

Students read expository text. I then asked the students to retell the passage. I listened for specific information from each retelling that included facts, events, details, and incidents. After the student provided the unaided retelling, I asked specific questions to inquire if students could recall information not mentioned in the unaided retelling. I asked questions to obtain what information from the expository text did the student remember and understand, and to inquire the students' ability to draw inferences and generalizations based on what they read.

Five students combined their background knowledge with the text in order to retell. Consider the following dialogue from Joe who chose and article from the National Football League Superstars 2007 magazine (S=student and me, the researcher R):

R- Close the book and tell me everything you remember about the article. That information was new to me, I'd never heard of Brian Urlacher.

S-Oh…I know him. My dad went to the University of New Mexico and my dad's friend was good friends with Brian. I got to meet him. He's tall. He's almost up to the ceiling.

R-Really! Well, tell me what you think the article was about.

S-About how he accomplished, the NFL? That, like tell you facts?

R-Yes, anything you remember.

S-He went to the University of New Mexico and grew up in Lovington. He was signed rookie of the year in 2000. He got, 2005 was his best season and he once got a Super Bowl ring. That's all I remember.

(Miscue Analysis, 11/6/08, Joe)

In the retelling, Joe combined information from the article with the prior knowledge he had from his encounter with Brian Urlacher and the information he had heard from his dad. Personal experiences aided some students in their ability to comprehend text, while for others the personal experiences caused them to make erroneous conclusions about the text.

Students' perceptions about their reading weaknesses

While the Miscue Analysis did provide extensive data about the student's weaknesses, I sought additional data. I wanted to know the students perceptions

(Interview III, 12/14/07) and combine observational data to obtain a holistic picture of the students. I asked students what they thought their weaknesses were as a reader. Patterns emerged from their perceived weaknesses.

Students commented about what they thought their biggest problem was in reading. Four students mentioned they were poor decoders (Mireya, Peter, Anastasha & Jaylin). An example was Mireya statement, "my biggest problem is that I get stuck on a word" (Interview III, 12/14/07, Mireya). All four of these students were classified as "low" readers by Ms. April and scored below expected proficiency level on the NMSBA 2007. Four other students felt they had trouble paying attention to the text they were reading and needed to slow down (Jody, Judy, Elizabeth & Cally). Consider Jody's comment "my biggest problem is paying attention to the book" (Interview III, 12/14/07, Jody). These four students were from different reading abilities levels and represented "low", "average" and "high" readers in the class. Students from all reading ability levels felt paying attention would improve their reading. Three students commented they needed more practice time reading (Jake, Anastasha & Alicia). Jake stated "I think that what would make me a better reader is practicing" (Interview III, 12/14/07, Jake). Out of these three students, Jake and Anastasha both struggled with reading, and Alicia was classified as an average reader and test scores indicated she was ready to exit Title I services.

Observational notes about weaknesses

Anecdotal records through classroom observations showed students rarely had the opportunity to apply self-regulating reading strategies when reading orally in class. Throughout the five months in the classroom (Anecdotal Records, 10/23/07-2/15/08), students often read text aloud. Students read a reader's theater adaptation from Mark Twain's *Prince and the Pauper* (Drevitch, 1993), they read aloud power point presentations, they read aloud short stories, and they read aloud poster presentations. On every occasion when a student paused at a word, the teacher immediately pronounced the word aloud. There was no wait time evident. The students had received a list of reading strategies from the teacher in a lesson one day (Anecdotal Records, 10/24/07); they had created a reading strategies flip book. The students then gave their comprehension strategy book to their parents on a parent open house night; however, the self-regulating comprehension strategies were never modeled or practiced during my time in the classroom. When a student did not know a word, they were immediately told the word and then the student continued reading. I felt this method of instruction hindered the students' opportunities to apply and practice reading strategies.

Did Title I meet the reading needs of the students?

The Title I curriculum was substantially different first semester than second semester. First semester, the curriculum focused on teaching the students to read with expression, inquire about various topics, and to think critically about the book. Second semester, the curriculum focused on teaching the students explicit phonics, high

frequency words, improving reading rate and isolated comprehension strategies. First semester, students benefited from a literature based curriculum; however, students did not receive explicit phonic instruction. Second semester, students benefited from explicit phonic instruction; however, they did not receive the opportunity to think critically or be exposed to authentic literature.

The questioned remained, did the Title I curriculum address the general reading strengths and weaknesses of this particular group of students? Neither the first semester curriculum nor the second semester curriculum addressed all the needs identified (Figure 4-17). Non-fiction text features were not covered in the twenty four weeks (Lesson plans Aug.2007-Feb.2008). Reading comprehension strategies were taught in isolation in both semesters; however, students were never given the opportunity to practice applying the self-regulating strategies explicitly in different reading contexts to add to their repertoire. Although the students could name several different comprehension reading strategies, they applied very few of them in context. When encountering unknown text, students tried to sound out or asked the teacher for help. Vocabulary instruction occurred in context first semester and in isolation second semester. The Miscue Analysis indicated some students needed vocabulary development with multi-meaning words in context; this type of instruction was only present in the first semester. Some students demonstrated difficulty with sounding out multi-syllabic words; this type of instruction was only present in the second semester. Several students needed assistance with suffixes; this type of instruction was only present in second semester. At one time or another all the

students' weaknesses were addressed except for non-fiction text features. The ideal curriculum would integrate all of these areas identified and continue to support students' developmental growth the entire year.

Identified weaknesses	First semester	Second semester
Decoding multi-syllabic words		X
Suffixes		X
Reading accuracy, self-correction	X	X
Non-fiction (expository) features of text		
Multi-meaning vocabulary in context	X	
Comprehension strategies	X	X
Using background knowledge, schema	X	

Figure 4-17 Reading weaknesses addressed in the Title I curriculum

Did the Title I promote the reading strengths of the students?

The philosophy behind Miscue Analysis is to identify reading strengths and build on those strengths all the while scaffolding learning for the students' weaknesses. These students were strong in rereading portions of text for understanding (14 out of 15) and the majority of these students (11 out of 15) preserved semantics 80%-100% of the time. All but one student produced syntactically acceptable sentences 80%-100% of the time.

During observations (Anecdotal Records, 10/23/07-2/15/08), students often read text aloud. Students read a reader's theater adaptation from Mark Twain's *Prince and the Pauper* (Drevitch, 1993); they read with great prosody and even added physical jesters as they engaged in reading their lines. They read aloud power point presentations which

they researched and produced through peer collaborative inquiry. They read aloud short stories and novels in literature circle groups, assisting one another with peer support.

Students' perceptions about their reading strengths

Eleven students were unable to verbalize their reading strengths. Students were able to verbalize their reading weaknesses but were far less concrete in identifying their reading strengths. Only four students could identify a reading strength they possessed. Elizabeth was one of the exceptions, she was able to identify her strength as "trying to pronounce words" and commented that she didn't "have any problems [in regards to reading]" (Interview III, 12/14/07, Elizabeth). Elizabeth was correct, she was a fluent reader and classified as "high" by Ms. April and she did not struggle with reading.

Identified strengths	First semester	Second semester
Prosody	X	
Reading rate		X
Narrative features of text	X	X
Making personal connections	X	
Learning through inquiry	X	
Reading with assistance above independent level (zpd)	X	

Figure 4-18 Reading strengths addressed in the Title I curriculum

The educational opportunities gained in this Title I/language arts supplement class first semester were numerous; however, these opportunities did not outweigh the opportunities lost due to the second semester curriculum when students received instruction under the adopted commercial program. In the second semester, the

curriculum was far below the instructional strengths and weaknesses of the students; therefore, the curriculum was detrimental to student growth in reading.

Reading self-concept

Students were asked how they perceived themselves as a reader (Interview III, 12/17/07). Four students made comments that indicated low reading self-concept and all four of these students were struggling with reading. An example of the types of comments is illustrated in Mireya statement "I think I'm a bad reader" (Interview III, 12/17/07, Mireya). These students perceived themselves as inadequate in reading. All of these students were classified as "low" in reading by Ms. April and all of these scored below expected proficiency in the "nearing proficiency" range on the NMSBA reading portion for both years 2006 and 2007.

Four of the students perceived themselves as average in reading. They made comments such as "normal" (Interview III, 12/17/07, Joe) and "sometimes a bad reader and sometimes a good reader" (Interview III, 12/17/07, Peter). These four students mentioned reading rate as a criteria for judging themselves as a reader. For these students who perceived themselves as average in reading skill, two of the four had extreme deficits in reading and were below proficiency on several measures.

Only three students (Leann, Cally and Elizabeth) considered themselves above average when compared with their peers (Interview II, 12/17/07). Elizabeth responded "I think I'm good" (Interview III, 12/17/07, Elizabeth). Hannah, Cally and Elizabeth all did

not belong in a Title I classroom and were proficient in reading as indicated by the standardized test scores and their teacher rating.

The majority of these students felt they did not read as well as their peers. On the *Reader's Self-Perception Scale* (Henk & Melnick, 1995), many of these students scored in the low and low average range (RSPS, 10/24/07). Twelve of the fifteen students felt their reading was not as proficient as their peers (RSPS, 10/24/07, subscale observational comparison). These twelve students disagreed with statements such as "I read faster than other students" (RSPS, 10/24/07, item #4) and "when I read, I can figure out words better than other students" (RSPS, 10/24/07, item #8). There was not a pattern between actual reading ability and the perception these students had of themselves through observational comparison. The majority of these students (12 out of 15) lacked self-confidence they could read as well as their peers.

Reading self-concept determined by ability to "word call" quickly

Most of the students judged themselves as a "good" or "bad" reader based on their ability to "word call" quickly. Decoding quickly and the ability to read at a fast reading rate appeared to be the factors that influenced these students as to what type of reader they were. A pattern was especially evident in the students who were classified as "low" or "average" by Ms. April in their reading ability; they identified themselves in terms of their ability of their word identification skills. Students were questioned in the second interview (Interview II, 11/12/08) "when you are reading and you come to something that gives you trouble, what do you do?" Anecdotal notes were kept by the researcher along

with running records to compare the self-reported data of the students and actual practice. Students mentioned skipping words, sounding out words, asking teachers for help, asking peers for help and relying on context clues. The most common self-reported practice was to try to sound out words and then ask for help. Anecdotal records and running records confirmed the students' self-reports. Students stated "I ask the teacher or [long pause] tell one of the student's to try to help me" (Interview II, 11/12/07, Peter), or "I ask somebody what the word is pronounced and how it is and stuff" (Interview II, 11/12/07, Cally). Ten of the fifteen students interviewed mentioned sounding out words or asking for help.

If the majority of these students thought they were not a good reader, then what were their perceptions of good readers? How did they qualify people as a good reader? Why did they feel their peers read better than they did?

Perceptions of Good Readers

Five students judged whether or not a person was a good reader on the perceptions that good readers are able to figure out unknown words or to read quickly. For these five students, the definition of good readers was based on the skill level instead of focusing on the ability to comprehend text. I asked students in the second interview why an individual was a good reader (Interview II, 11/12/07). A sample of the types of statements comes from Peter definition in which he states a good reader "could read fast and figure out the words quickly" (Interview II, 11/12/07, Peter).

Other student responses varied. Three students attributed good readers as those individuals who were "smart" (Tiffany, Mireya, & Alicia). Other students felt good

readers must practice reading and practice was directly linked to reading proficiency (Hannah, & Elizabeth). These two students felt good readers were people who spent time reading books. Both Hannah and Elizabeth were good readers themselves and were classified as "high" in reading ability; they also spent time reading books. A few students identified good readers as someone who was older and displayed helpful behavior or assistance to them (Esperanza & Judy). Being able to help younger siblings with homework appeared to be a factor identified in some students' definition of a good reader. Only one student associated good reading with reading with prosody. Jaylin stated the teacher was a good reader "just the way she reads 'cause she reads with excitement" (Interview II, 11/12/07, Jaylin). No other student mentioned expression, intonation or phrasing as factors associated with good reading. None of the students mentioned comprehension strategies as factors contributing to people being good readers. None of the students identified a good reader as someone who understood the text or someone who could connect with text. These students defined good readers as individuals who possessed a set of observable sub-skills.

Fourteen of the fifteen students agreed good readers encounter something which gives them difficulty when reading. When asked what a good reader would do about something which gave them trouble, the students typically responded a good reader probably sounded out the word or asked someone for help. Peter said "he probably asks the teacher or asks another student the word in class" (Interview II, 11/12/07, Peter) and Leann said "she tries to sound it out" (Interview II, 11/12/07, Leann). The students'

perceptions of what good readers do when they are reading matched the responses they gave on what they do when they are stuck on a word or confused by text. There was no indication from the responses these students understood good readers perhaps have the ability and knowledge to apply more reading strategies. Alicia was the only to mention perhaps these readers, good readers, had a larger vocabulary (Interview II, 11/12/07, Alicia).

Good readers identified by their word identification skills and reading rate

The majority of responses from the students on the reasons some people are good readers were based on the skill level of reading. Students focused on word identification and reading rate. If someone could "sound out unknown words" and "do it quickly" then these students perceived that person as a good reader. Unfortunately, these students missed the main purpose of reading. The goal of reading is to obtain understanding and meaning. However, for these students, they implicitly identified the goal of reading as the ability to say words quickly and accurately and this pattern was of grave concern to me. If these students did not understand the purpose of reading, then reading was truly meaningless to them. I decided to ask students in an interview if reading and writing would be necessary in their futures.

Reading for "real purposes"

Ten of the fifteen students were aware reading and writing would be necessary in their future plans for a career (Interview III, 12/17/07). For example, Peter stated he had plans to join the Navy and reading and writing would be "important 'cause on the

machine there is writing and to know what kind of machine it is" (Interview III, 12/17/07, Peter). Jaylin wanted to be a chef, specifically a pastry chef, "reading and writing will help me be a chef because you have to read the ingredients in the food" (Interview III, 12/17/07, Jaylin). Other students had not determined what they wanted to do as a career when they grew up and just stated reading and writing would have a role in their lives by comments such as "reading and writing will help out" (Interview III, 12/17/07, Jody). Even when students were unsure what they would do in the future, they did have awareness reading and writing would be important for them to be successful.

The students (10 out of 15) indicated in interviews they had awareness reading and writing played significant roles in careers. The puzzling phenomenon that surfaced was though these readers could verbalize reading had a "real purpose" in future jobs they did not make the connection reading was for meaning when they described their own reading abilities and their perceptions of good readers. In those conversations, these same students viewed reading as a subset of skills and not purposeful. Good reading was defined implicitly by these students as the ability to recognize words quickly. However, in a career, reading would be necessary to be successful as Peter verbalized he would need to read writing on machines in the Navy or the comments of Jaylin needing to read recipes as a chef. The students appeared to be missing the link between reading comprehension (reading for meaning) and being a good reader.

For some students, they viewed reading as a vague construct and could not verbalize explicitly the role reading plays in society. Even Elizabeth, a very proficient

reader, had difficulty stating the role reading plays in a career as a teacher "maybe I would use reading" (Interview III, 12/17/07, Elizabeth). These students needed concrete examples of reading for authentic purposes.

Final summary

Over the course of a twenty four week period, the students in Ms. April's Title I/language arts class enlightened me about their perceptions and experiences in the school setting. My analysis of their strengths and weaknesses revealed whether or not the educational system, specifically the Title I/language arts supplement class curriculum addressed their specific needs and built on their strengths. The students' voices portrayed their experiences in their classes, their successes, and their struggles.

Chapter V

Discussion and Implications

Introduction

Title I is a federal program with the purpose of improving the academic achievement of children who are qualified as disadvantaged in terms of socio-economic status. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2006) students from low socio-economic status are at an academic disadvantage. The effects of Title I reading programs on the individual are not evaluated holistically, considering the affective domain as well as academic performance. Many researchers cautioned remedial reading programs have negative academic and emotional consequences for the reader who struggles (Allington, 2007; Atwell, 1998; Pressley, 2006). Researchers asserted reading intervention programs focus on raising standardized test scores through a controlled curriculum which do not align with providing middle school students authentic reading experiences (Pedulla, 2003; Mastropierei, Scruggs, & Graetz, 2003). Readers who struggle are often not provided the same reading experiences as more capable peers (Klenk & Kibby, 2000). Traditionally, remedial reading classes have negatively impacted students in numerous ways. Negative experiences in remedial reading classes can result in diminishing the psychological well-being of these students (McCabe, 2006).

Statement of the Problem

While several studies explored the perceptions of adolescents, fewer have focused specifically on middle school students who struggle with reading. I explored the attitudes

and opinions of these struggling readers in this school, in one class; in addition, I investigated through the lens of the Vygotskian perspective whether or not the reading intervention program was meeting their individual reading needs.

Two main questions guided my investigation:

1. In what ways did enrollment in a Title I program affect sixth grade students?

(a) What opportunities were gained and lost as a result of being placed in Title I reading and what were the students' perceptions of those opportunities?

(b) What were the students' individual strengths and weaknesses?

(c) How were students' individual strengths and weaknesses being addressed in this Title I program?

2. What experiences and perceptions did these Title I students in sixth grade have through their involvement in their classes?

(a) How did these students perceive themselves as readers?

(b) How did they perceive others as readers?

(c) How did students perceive their classes?

Procedures

Through an instrumental case study method of investigation, I explored the experiences and perceptions of one class of sixth grade Title I reading students through interviews, observations, and archived data. I analyzed the students' individual reading strengths and needs by conducting a Miscue Analysis (Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 2005). Based on that analysis, I dissected the curriculum to determine whether students'

unique reading strengths and needs were addressed, and to determine whether Vygotskian perspective in regards to zone of proximal development and social constructivism were supported.

Interpretation of Findings

I organized the data into categories and developed coding schemes (Glesne, 2006). I had four categories: Title I class, students' perception of their classes, opportunities lost as a result of placement, and students as readers. From those four categories, I coded segments of data by similar concepts, key words, and similar sentence responses through open coding (Berg, 2007). Thirteen subcategories emerged from these coded segments: first semester curriculum, second semester curriculum, perceptions of curriculum changes, least favorite classes, favorite classes, elective classes, missing elective classes, missing history, cueing systems in reading, students' reading strengths and weaknesses, ability of curriculum to address reading needs, students' perceptions of self, and students' perception of others. I searched for patterns within each category. Three patterns crossed all categories: self-confidence, motivation and choice.

Findings

The terms self-confidence, motivation and choice are often referenced in the literature related to adolescent reading instruction and development. For the purposes of this study, which focused on sixth grade readers enrolled in a Title I classroom, these terms were defined in order to identify patterns that emerged from the collected data. Self-confidence was defined as "the belief's in one's personal worth and likelihood of

succeeding. Self-confidence was a combination of self-esteem and general self-efficacy" (Neill, 2005) and measured in this study in "terms of success and failure" (Johnson, Freedman, & Thomas, 2007). Motivation was defined as "the individual's personal goals, values, and beliefs with regard to the topics, processes, and outcomes of reading" (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000, p. 405) and I included a subcomponent of engagement as "the emotional involvement of the reader in the process…as occurs in a total absorption" (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 73). Finally, student choice was defined as having ownership over the kinds of material reads (Atwell, 1998) and some control over the instructional curriculum (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001).

Self-confidence

These students in this class displayed confidence in activities and classes in which they were successful. Furthermore, they displayed a lack of confidence in activities in which they struggled or perceived failure. McCray (2001) stated students, who lack confidence that reading will be beneficial to them, continue to decrease in self-concept. Confidence is a subcomponent of self-efficacy (Johnson, Freedman, & Thomas, 2007). Yudowitch, Henry and Guthrie (2008) asserted confidence is built from success; therefore, if a student can not read the words on a page, he loses confidence. In addition, "he doubts his capacity, which is the definition of low self-efficacy" (p. 66). Taboada, Guthrie, & McRae (2008) claimed a high self-efficacy is built from successful encounters with learning. Bandura (1977) asserted successes enhance self-efficacy. Mireya was one student who demonstrated this phenomenon, she was reader who struggled in reading;

however, she felt successful performing in the choir. Successful encounters with choir appeared to contribute positively to Mireya's self-confidence in choir and thus, resulted in a positive self-efficacy in her perceived capacity in choir. Margolis and McCabe (2006) stated "low self-efficacy beliefs, unfortunately, impeded academic achievement and, in the long run, create self-fulfilling prophecies of failure and learning helplessness that can devastate psychological well-being" (p. 220). Mireya felt unsuccessful in reading, illustrated by her comment "I think I'm a bad reader;" thus she demonstrated a low self-concept. Neill (2005) identified self-concept as "the beliefs about one's self" (Neill, 2005). As a result of a low self-concept, Mireya was not confident about her reading abilities and therefore, she questioned her ability to be successful in reading tasks, demonstrating a low self-efficacy. Students in the Title I/language arts supplement class revealed their self-confidence, and thus their self-efficacy, varied for different content areas. They may have felt defeated in reading and successful in their elective class. Many students illustrated this pattern as in the case of Jake, who struggled with reading and math and commented on the difficulty of those classes; however, he commented he felt successful in his elective class.

Successful reading encounters can enhance literacy development. Many researchers addressed the curricular components necessary for struggling readers to experience literacy development and thus contribute to a positive self-efficacy for those students (Allington, 2002; Guthrie, 2008; Ivey & Broaddus, 2001; Johnson, Freedman, &; Strickland, Ganske, & Monroe, 2002; Thomas, 2007). In order for students to

experience successful literacy encounters, instruction must be at the appropriate developmental level, the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotskian perspective advocates for scaffolding student learning through gradual release of responsibility. As learning is scaffolded through social interactions, students become more confident and supportive learning is transformed to independence (Vygotsky, 1978). These successful encounters contribute to the reader's confidence as they acquire independence.

Motivation

Students in this case study were motivated to participate in content areas and activities they classified as "fun." Whether the activity was in reading, science, or their elective classes, if the activity had a high concentration of interactive experiences, these students were motivated and the class was viewed by the students as "fun." Even when these students did not have high letter grades in those courses, they still had "fun" as long as there was interactive learning. Furthermore, activities which involved projects were not viewed by the students as "work." These students identified "work" solely as paper and pencil types of activities. Projects and experiments were viewed by these students as "not working." In fact, the majority of these students claimed they were having "fun" and "games" in these interactive classes and several students did not view these classes as "learning."

Students demonstrated stamina to remain on tasks in activities which required active participant involvement. For those students with a low self-efficacy in reading,

they were off task much more frequently in classes that were academically challenging. Bandura (1977) claimed that people avoid situations that present challenges which exceed their coping skills. Jody was a prime example of off task behavior in some areas and total focus in other classes. He was often under the table and roaming the room in his Title I/language arts supplement class, especially if he was supposed to be reading quietly or listening to the teacher. However, he sat attentive and kept focus the entire hour in his guitar class. Guthrie (2008) claimed motivation can be contextual and situational. In contexts which elicit students' engagement and success, students' motivation increases; however, in contexts which reduces student interests and engagement, students' motivation spirals downward. Furthermore, a student with situational motivation may demonstrate more motivation and a higher self-efficacy in situations in which they have interest. Stanovich (1986) found the perception children have about themselves as a reader influenced whether they pursued or avoided literacy experiences. Jody had a low self-efficacy in regards to reading and he avoided literacy experiences. He had a positive view of himself as a guitarist and proudly displayed his new guitar and spoke energetically about the music pieces he could play. His view of himself and the amount of interactive learning contributed enormously to his engagement on tasks. Jody was extrinsically motivated by the social interaction which occurred in his music class. Social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978) views motivation as both extrinsic and intrinsic; extrinsic motivation occurs from social interactions while motivation transfers to intrinsic as students internalize the learning. For readers who struggle, Ganske and Monroe (2002)

claimed these students may need extrinsic rewards to entice interest. Vygotskian perspective (1978) supports students through extrinsic motivation to scaffold learning while moving students to more intrinsic motivation as independence is achieved.

Choice

Choice was a pattern that surfaced across all categories. These students wanted choice in their schedules/classes, choice in their reading, and choice in the projects they completed in classes. Johnson, Freedman, and Thomas (2007) claimed students want choice of reading material. As the Carnegie Corporation (2007) stated adolescence is a time of self-discovery and emerging independence. Many researchers stated students will devote effort, attention and persistence to reading about topics they find personally significant (Flood & Lapp, 1990; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Gambrell, 1998; Taboada, Guthrie, & McRae, 2008). These students wanted "voice" in the curriculum. Furthermore, they wanted opportunities to pursue their interests.

Student choice is a "most excellent thing because it moves our students towards independence…what we need is an intelligent balance…between shared and independent reading, a constant dialectic between guidance, preparation, and opportunities to fly on one's own" (Wilhelm, 1997). Helping students to develop their ability to choose their own reading supports social constructivism (Broz, 2003). Vygotskian perspective advocates assisting students as they move from guidance to independence (Vygotsky, 1978). As students internalize learning, they make more choices.

Conclusions

Question 1: In what ways did enrollment in a Title I program affect sixth grade students?

What opportunities were gained and lost?

Throughout the case study, there were opportunities gained and lost. While students gained the opportunities to participate in the Title I/language arts supplement class, they lost other opportunities such as elective classes or social studies/history. Previous research indicated students lost opportunities to participate in elective classes (Donalson & Halsey, 2007; Halsey 2003; Pedulla, 2003; Tompkins, 2002). The students in this case study lost either an elective class or a social studies class. These students lost the opportunity to be provided with the same educational choices and opportunities as their peers. Allington and Walmsley (2007) claimed that poor readers experience a curriculum quite different than more capable peers. These opportunities linked to students' confidence, their motivation, and their ability to make choices.

Although these students gained the opportunity to participate in the Title I/language arts supplement class, the curriculum missed many of the components recommended for students who struggle in reading (Figure 5-1). Several researchers have recommended instructional practices for struggling readers (Allington, 2002; Johannessen, 2004; Johnson, Freedman, & Thomas, 2007; Strickland, Ganske, & Monroe, 2002). Some of the essential components included: choice, peer tutoring, appropriate reading materials, explicit strategy instruction, appropriate skill instruction, teacher read aloud, social interactions, and proper assessment with instruction matched to

students' strengths and needs (Goodman, Watson & Burke, 2005; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Kragler, 1996; Wilde, 2000). Researchers claimed remedial reading programs offer "watered-down" curriculums with lower level skills (Allington & Walmsley, 2007; Atwell, 1998). The students participating in this case study received many instructional curriculum components recommended by researchers for the first semester; however, these students received a lower-level skill based curriculum second semester (Figure 5-1). The classroom teacher exercised more flexibility in the curriculum first semester and structured instruction around a literature based, student inquiry model; however, due to an administrative directive, the classroom teacher followed an adopted commercial program second semester.

As represented in Figure 5-1, first semester was much more aligned with the reading research in regards to the instructional recommendations for readers who struggle. The second semester curriculum was lacking the majority of the recommended components. The only benefit to the commercially adopted program was the emphasis on grammar, spelling and decoding skills; however, even this benefit was marginal since skills were taught in isolation and not in an authentic context.

Recommended instruction from reading research	First semester in the Title I /language arts supplement class. Literature based	Second semester in Title I /language arts supplement class. Adopted commercial basal
appropriate reading materials	X	X
small group tutorial sessions		
managed choice	X	
language arts curriculum not separate from content areas		
making connections, personal relevance	X	
Mini-lessons	X	
Grammar, spelling and decoding skills taught to individual needs		X
Confirm or change predictions	X	X
Stop to reread	X	X
Teaching text features		
Reflection on text to personal use	X	
Incorporation of background knowledge	X	
Summarizing & Evaluating	X	X
Metacognition strategies	X	
Setting purpose for reading	X	
Reading for a "real reasons"	X	
Writing for "real reasons"	X	
Incorporation of reading and writing	X	
Peer tutoring		
Learning through social interaction with peers	X	
Engagement through literature, literature circles	X	
Teacher read-aloud	X	X
Fluency: reading rate, accuracy and prosody	X	
Independent reading, sustained silent reading	X	
Higher level thinking, critical thinking	X	
Incorporation of different learning styles	X	

Figure 5-1 Recommended instructional components compared with actual instruction

Vygotsky's philosophy presumed "children grow into the intellectual life of those around them" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 88). First semester, students had rich social activities. The teacher operated in a sociocultural model as a collaborative participant with the students. Students' learning depended highly on the peer interactions that occurred in the classroom. Reading materials were often challenging and required the teacher to scaffold the learning. Instruction was frequently slightly above the students' independent level of development (Vygotsky, 1978) which allowed for literacy growth. Second semester, students operated in a curriculum-centered classroom in which the teacher's role was to transmit the curriculum. The curriculum determined the sequence and timing of the instruction. Instruction was several levels below the students' instructional level of development, often at the students' mastery level; therefore, literacy development was stagnant. Vygotsky proposed the instruction in the zone of proximal development "awakens a variety of internal developmental processes" however, when the learning instruction is below the students' developmental level and potential learning level, learning lags severely behind the students' potentials (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 90).

What were students' unique reading strengths and weaknesses and how were these addressed in the Title I curriculum?

Students' unique reading strengths and needs were identified by Miscue Analysis (Goodman, Watson & Burke, 2005). Students varied in their individual strengths and weaknesses. However, there were patterns in which several students demonstrated strength and/or weaknesses. Students could benefit from instruction regarding multi-

syllable words (8 out of 15 students), suffixes (9 out of 15 students), reading accuracy (13 out of 15 students), comprehension strategies (all of the students) and non-fiction features of text (9 out of 15 students). Several researchers emphasized the need to build on students' strengths (Goodman, Watson & Burke, 2005; Wilde, 2000). The students in this class were strong in prosody (14 out of 15 students), reading rate (14 out of 15 students), narrative features of text (all of the students), making personal connections (all of the students) and utilizing background knowledge (5 of the 15 students). Both semesters addressed some of the students' strengths and needs (Figure 5-2). Vygotsky (1978) emphasized the need to scaffold learning within the zone of proximal development to match the individual learner. The first semester did a better job addressing the literacy strengths and weaknesses of the students. There were limited benefits to the curriculum second semester, specifically in the areas of decoding (multi-syllabic words and suffixes) and reading rate. First semester, the curriculum focused on teaching the students to read with expression, inquire about various topics, and to think critically about the book. Second semester, the curriculum focused on teaching the students explicit phonics, high frequency words, improving reading rate and isolated comprehension strategies. First semester, students benefited from a literature based curriculum; however, students did not receive explicit phonic instruction. Second semester, students benefited from explicit phonic instruction; however, they did not receive the opportunity to think critically or be exposed to authentic literature.

The ideal curriculum would consider the identified strengths and weaknesses and plan instruction to address add of those areas.

Identified weaknesses and strengths	First semester	Second semester
Decoding multi-syllabic words (weakness)		X
Suffixes (weakness)		X
Reading accuracy, self-correction rate (weakness)	X	X
Non-fiction (expository) features of text (weakness)		
Multi-meaning vocabulary in context (weakness)	X	
Comprehension strategies (weakness)	X	X
Using background knowledge, schema (strength)	X	
Prosody (strength)	X	
Reading rate (strength)		X
Narrative features of text (strength)	X	
Making personal connections (strength)	X	
Learning through inquiry (strength)	X	
Reading with assistance above independent level (zpd)	X	

Figure 5-2 Reading weaknesses and strengths addressed in the Title I curriculum

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2. What experiences and perceptions did these students have through their involvement in their classes?

How did these students perceive themselves as reader and how did they perceive others?

Students based their perceptions of themselves as readers and their perceptions of others as readers on the ability to "word call" quickly and on a fast "reading rate." If they felt they could read quickly and figure out unknown words, then they stated they were a "good" reader. If their peers could read quickly and figure out unknown words, then their peers were "good" readers. The perception of good reading was based primarily on these

two characteristics. Pressley (2006) cautioned about an overemphasis on reading rate and skill based instruction negating reading for comprehension and meaning.

The self-confidence of these students contributed to their literacy self-concepts and thus their success or failure in reading (Gambrell, 1998; Henk & Melnick, 1995; Ruddell & Unrau, 1997). Students who considered themselves "good" readers demonstrated positive self-concepts. These readers were three of the five students incorrectly placed in the remedial reading class and they were proficient readers. Self-concept in reading was illustrated by comments such as Elizabeth stating, "I think I'm a good reader." Students indicating the lowest self-concept and the least amount of confidence were students classified as "low" by Ms. April and the least proficient students on the NMSBA in reading. Jake demonstrated his lack of a positive self-concept in the statement, "I'm not a very good reader." Students who identified themselves as average readers were students who were diverse in their reading abilities, classified by Ms. April as "low", "average," and "high" readers. These self-concepts directly contributed to these readers' self-confidence which correlated with their self-efficacy in reading.

How did students' perceive their classes, opportunities gained and opportunities lost?

Students were aware they lost the opportunity to participate in classes taken by their peers. As Elizabeth had stated, "I only have regular classes, no band, no sports, not like that, only regular classes." Previous research found students become angry when

they lost elective choice (Donalson & Halsey, 2007; Halsey, 2003; Tompkins, 2002). Some of the students in this case study were resentful. Students perceived elective classes as "fun." The interactive activities in elective courses were motivating for the students and contributed to their self-confidence. These students were aware their class schedules were different than many of their peers and they knew low test scores on the NMBSA were associated with loss of choice.

The students in this case study based their perceptions of their classes on the types of activities in the curriculum. Students perceived classes with hands-on activities as "fun" and "games." They categorized the first semester of the Title I class, elective classes, and the science class as "fun" classes. Peter verbalized the reason science was his favorite class by stating "we get to do labs. We make stuff that happens in the book." Guthrie et al. (2006) found stimulating tasks, such as hands-on science, appeared to be a contributing variable to the acquisition of intrinsic motivation for reading. All of the classes identified had a large majority of interactive learning and projects implemented in class. These classes were identified by students as "favorite" classes. Students categorized "hard" classes and classes in which they had difficulty understanding the content as their "least" favorites. Hard classes were identified as math, reading, and second semester of the Title I class. Jake stated math was his least favorite because he didn't "really understand the problems" and Joe said math was "hard." Researchers claimed when struggling readers perceive little or no improvement despite effort, they

may feel even more incompetent (Bempechat, 2008). Success contributed to positive self-efficacy.

Students perceived classes in two categories as: "work" and those with "no work." When asked about the first semester curriculum in the Title I/language arts supplement class, Elizabeth commented "we learned without doing work." Hands-on classes were perceived by several students as not working and that perception was linked to "not learning as much." Jody stated, "I like it [class] better now, we are actually doing work" when reflecting on second semester in the Title I class. Students believed classes which required workbooks and large amounts of reading and writing were classes which they were learning more. Students did not view cooperative learning, projects, higher level thinking and hands-on activities as "work." They identified "work" specifically as activities linked to worksheets, textbooks, and written responses to questions. For some reason, these students as a whole did not view Vygotsky's constructivist model (1978) as learning. When they were constructing learning through inquiry and engagement, they viewed the activity as fun; however, they equated learning with a transmission model.

Implications

The findings from this case study serve as sampling of the opportunities gained and lost through participation in a Title I program. From the findings, several implications were revealed. I believe these implications could positively influence the way readers who struggle are educated.

1. Students who struggle in reading need the same educational opportunities as their peers.

The school principal clearly pointed out students placed in remedial reading classes are often the same students who come from low socio economic backgrounds and can not afford musical instruments. By removing elective choice, students are losing opportunities that may not have any financial means to gain. If students in this class did not lose their elective, then they lost the opportunity to receive a course in world history, a content not covered again for several years in their education. Schools must explore options of supporting readers who struggle without robbing them of the same educational opportunities as their peers.

Although these students gained an extra reading class (Title I/language arts supplement class), second semester they lost the opportunity to participate in a literature rich environment. They received watered-down skill instruction through a transmission model of learning. These students needed rich literacy activities and the opportunities to learn through a Vygotsky perspective of social constructivism.

2. Students must have their reading strengths and weaknesses identified through authentic assessment and then curriculum must be designed to meet those needs.

These students qualified for placement in Title I Reading on a single measurement. Several researchers have warned educators not to use a single measure to make educational decisions (Block, 2003; Lee & Neal, 1992; Shepard, 2000; Valencia & Buly, 2004). Donalson and Halsey (2007) commented a single measure of reading ability

provided only a picture of what the students could accomplish. These students were placed in the Title I/ language arts supplement class based on a single unit of measurement, their scores on the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment in reading from two years ago. Due to this method of placement, five of the fifteen students (33%) were incorrectly qualified for the Title I program and should not have been placed in the class.

Teachers must avoid scripted programs and focus more on meeting the individual needs of students. Allington (2007) stated too many struggling readers are in classroom with a one-size-fits-all curriculum. Skill instruction must be catered to student's individual needs. Not all children need the same instruction and different children benefit from skill instruction to differentiated degrees (Fink, 2006). The source of reading difficulty must be identified and directly approached through data driven instruction (Deshler, Sullivan Palinscar, Biancarosa, & Nair 2007). Students must be supported in their zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). An analysis of individual student's strengths and weaknesses through Miscue Analysis indicated several of the reading needs of the group were not being addressed throughout the school year (Figure 5-3). At times the curriculum addressed some of the needs of the population of students in this particular class; however, the curriculum did not support those needs the entire year. Curriculum changes second semester in the Title I/language arts supplement class resulted in meeting even fewer of the students' needs.

3. In order to enhance motivation, students must be allowed reading choice and ownership over their own learning process.

Taboada, Guthrie, & McRae (2008) stated students must have choice and control over their reading. Researchers found in studies of exemplary classrooms, choice was important (Allington, 2002). Adolescence is a stage of preoccupations with peers and the development of self (Atwell, 1998). Students must be allowed the opportunities to make decisions during this stage of development. Students need choice over their learning process and the flexibility to choose the type of activities that would enhance their learning. Students in this case study demonstrated in interviews and on surveys that they wanted choice over their reading materials and curricular decisions. Fillman and Guthrie (2008) stated students do not read because they feel "incapable of understand the text, it is not relevant to their lives, and there are no apparent rewards" (p. 33). Johnson, Freedman, & Thomas (2007) asserted "teachers clearly need to listen to students' pleas for choice" (p. 57). Helping students to develop their ability to choose their own reading supports the Vygotskian perspective of assisting students to gain independence (Broz, 2003).

Directions for Further Research

The findings from this case study presented information on the experiences, perceptions and characteristics of adolescents who struggle with reading. Throughout the study, several areas surfaced as possibilities for further research. First, although the students in this case demonstrated a low self-efficacy in reading in regards to

observational comparison, the study did not analyze whether these students had lower self-efficacies due to placement in the Title I/language arts supplement class or entered the class with those attitudes. Further research could explore if students placed in Title I programs have dispositions leaning towards a low self-efficacy or if those programs themselves contribute to forming a low self-efficacy. Second, this case study did not follow the students the entire second semester. Although, I followed the students the first semester, second semester I was in the classroom only two months. Further research could extend the length of time and explore whether student attitudes change when scripted reading programs are in effect a longer period of time. The students in this case study had only participated in a scripted reading program in this particular class for six weeks. Third, this case study was unique in its ability to explore the perceptions of remedial students permitted to still be involved in elective classes. All across New Mexico, schools are removing choice for enrollment in elective classes based on low reading test scores. Further research could be beneficial in studying the effects of allowing choice in students schedule if research sites could be located. Fourth, I investigated the information provided to parents about their child's reading ability. However, I did not interview parents or inquire what the perceptions were of the parents. Further research could explore the perceptions of parents who have children placed in remedial/Title I reading programs.

Concluding Thoughts

Lowery-Moore (1998) stated "I was convinced listening to their voice is mandatory if we want to understand how to connect the middle school student to reading" (p. 26). First, the purpose of this instrumental case study was to explore the experiences and perceptions of one class of sixth grade Title I reading students. Second, these students were placed in a Title I class based on a single unit of measurement, the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment in Reading. Third, placement in the Title I class resulted in a loss of educational opportunities. Fourth, the Title I class curriculum failed to address all the students' strengths and needs. Fifth, successful learning opportunities increased confidence and motivation for these students.

I too felt listening to the voices of middle school students who struggled with reading was crucial for understanding. These students lost educational opportunities based on school district decisions made from the results on a single measurement, the NMSBA. The school district made those decisions based on pressure from the New Mexico Public Education Department in regards to meeting Annual Yearly Progress. New Mexico based it's criteria on the regulations from the United States Department of Education as defined by the No Child Left Behind policies. The results of these decisions proved to be academic and affectively detrimental to this group of students.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A
IRB Permission

TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
Research Services

October 19, 2007

Patricia Watson
Curriculum & Instruction
Mail Stop: 1071

Regarding: 501049 Sixth Grade Readers' Experiences and Perceptions on one Title I Remedial Reading Class

Dr. Patricia Watson:

The Texas Tech University Protection of Human Subjects Committee has approved your proposal referenced above. The approval is effective from October 19, 2007 through September 30, 2008. This expiration date must appear on all of your consent documents.

You will be reminded of the pending expiration approximately eight weeks prior to September 30, 2008 and asked to give updated information about the project. If you request an extension, the proposal on file and the information you provide will be routed for continuing review.

Sincerely,

Rosemary Cogan

Rosemary Cogan, Ph.D., ABPP
Protection of Human Subjects Committee

203 Holden Hall | Box 41035 | Lubbock, Texas 79409-1035 | T 806.742.3884 | F 806.742.3892

Appendix B
Parent Permission

Authorization Form

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Please read the following information. Then complete, sign, and return it to your child's teacher (Mrs. Padgett) as soon as possible.

I am working on my doctoral dissertation through Texas Tech. University. I am studying students in Title I programs. [redacted] I spent 14 years as a classroom teacher with much of my career in Title I classrooms. My specialty area is working with students with reading difficulties. The information gathered from this study will benefit other teachers by providing them insight about middle school students that attend supplemental reading programs. Your child can assist me to complete my dissertation and to provide necessary information to assist other educators to be more effective in their practice. Please consider letting your child participate in this study.

I will be working in your child's classroom with [redacted] from October 2007 through January 2008. I will be gathering information. I may be gathering samples of student work for learning analysis purposes. Some of those samples may include some of your child's work. I will be interviewing students to find out their perceptions of their reading and the Title I program. I will be analyzing the strategies they use as readers. I will also be gathering a survey about how they feel about themselves as readers. No student's name will appear on any materials that are submitted for publication. Information about your child and the work they submit will be kept confidential between me and your child's teacher. The final report will include a "fake" name for your child, the school and the city in which they live. The results of this study will provide insight to educators about middle school students that struggling in reading. I sincerely appreciate the cooperation of your child and your permission as a parent.

All interactions with your child will be conducted during the regular school day. Should you have questions, Please contact me at [redacted] You may also ask questions by contacting your child's teacher ([redacted] or the Principal ([redacted] at [redacted] by calling ([redacted]. Finally, you may contact the Texas Tech University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects by writing them in care of the Office of Research Services, Texas Tech. University, Lubbock, Texas 79409 or calling them at 806-742-3884.

For my project, I will be doing the following:

- Gather samples of some of your child's work.
- Look at your child's test scores on the NMSBA (New Mexico Standards Based Assessment), STAR Reading, Scholastic Reading Assessment, and MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) testing. I will also look at any informal quizzes and tests that the reading teachers have given your child.
- Look at your child's records in your cumulative file located in the office. These records are crucial to look at your child's grades in reading over a period of time and look for trends.
- Audio tape three different interviews with your child. The interviews will be about reading activities your child has done and their feelings about reading.
- Photocopy some of your child's work.
- Gather information from a survey. The survey has questions about how reading makes you child feel. Your child will pick the sentence that matches how they feel about reading topics.
- Audio tape your child reading for 15-30 minutes. This audio tape will be used to analyze your child's strengths and weaknesses and to provide recommendations to the Title I reading teacher and the school.
- Observe your child in classes. These observations are to investigate the reading strategies your child applies when they are reading and the manner in which they interact with other children when reading in class.

Appendix C
Student Assent Form

Assent Form

Dear Student:

I work as a teacher Eastern New Mexico University. My job is to teach students how to teach children how to read. I am also a student at Texas Tech. University. I am studying students and the way they read. I'm also studying how students feel about reading. I will be working in your classroom. I would appreciate your help on my project. I will be writing about the things you share with me and your experiences in school. The information you give me will help teachers become better teachers.

If you choose not to participate, your grade will not be affected in any way. I will still be in your classroom during class time; however, I will not interview you, take samples of your work, look at your tests or ask you to read for me.

For my project, I will be doing the following:

- Gather samples of some of your work.
- Look at your test scores on the NMSBA (New Mexico Standards Base Assessment), STAR Reading, Scholastic Reading Assessment, and MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) testing. I will also look at any informal quizzes and tests that your reading teachers have given you.
- Look at your records in your cumulative file located in the office.
- Audio tape three different interviews with you. The interviews will be about reading activities you have done and your feelings about reading.
- Photocopy some of your work.
- Gather information from a survey. The survey has questions about how reading makes you feel. You will pick the sentence that matches how you feel.
- Audio tape you reading for 15-30 minutes.
- Observe you in reading classes and other classes through out your day.

No one will see your answers except me and your teacher. Your forms will be locked up in a filing cabinet in my home. You will get to choose a fake name and you will put your fake name on all the work you give me. I will write a paper based on what I learn from you; however, your real name will not be used.

If you have questions about the project, you can talk to me, your teacher, or the principal. You can also have your parents contact Texas Tech. University to answer questions by writing or calling TTU Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, Office of Research Services at Texas Tech. University, Lubbock, Texas 79409 or call 806-742-3884.

If you sign this sheet, it means that you read this form and that all your questions were answered. The consent form is only good for this school year, until May 1, 2008. The project permission expires in September 2008.

Sincerely,

KDonalson doctoral student, Kathleen Donalson

Student's name printed: [redacted]

☑ Yes, I give my permission. ☐ No, I do not give my permission.

[redacted] 10/23/07

Signature of student Date

Appendix D
Interview Schedule/Questions

First Interview	Questions:
Throw away	Who is your best friend?
Throw away	What is favorite thing to do?
Essential	What are your favorite classes in school? (3)
Essential	What are your least favorite classes? (3)
Essential	How did you learn to read? (1)
Essential	Can you remember any special book or the most memorable thing you have ever read? (1)
Essential	Finish the sentence: If I were asked to summarize my past reading experiences, I would say_____.(2)
Extra	What books have you read in the past few years? (1)
Essential	What have you disliked about previous reading classes? What could have made the class better? (3)
Essential	What have you enjoyed about previous reading classes? (3)
Second Interview	Questions:
Essential	When you are reading and you come to something that gives you trouble, what do you do? Do you ever do anything else? (1)
Essential	Who is a good reader you know? (1)
Essential	What makes _____a good reader? (1)
Essential	Do you think_____ever come to something that gives him/her trouble when he/she is reading? (1)
Extra	When _____does come to something that gives him/her trouble, what do you think he/she does about it? (1)
Essential	How would you help someone who was having difficulty reading? (1)
Extra	What would a teacher do to help that person? (1)
Extra	What do you read routinely, like every day or every week? (1)
Probing	What do you like most of all to read? (1)

Extra	What is your favorite book? What make this book special? (3)
Probing	What is the most difficult thing you have to read? (1)
Extra	Finish the sentence: When someone assigns a book for me to read, I _____. (2)
Essential	Finish the sentence: The way I choose a book to read for independent reading is_____. (2).
Third Interview	Questions:
Probing	Is there anything you would like to change about your reading? (1)
Essential	Describe yourself as a reader. What kind of reader are you? (1)
Essential	Finish the sentence: When I think of school, I think of_____. When I think of my Title I class, I think of _____.(2)
Extra	Finish the sentence: the things I think I do well as a reader are_____.(2)
Extra	Finish the sentence: If someone asked if I were a good reader, my response would be_____.(2)
Probing	Finish the sentence: The biggest problem for me when I try to read is_____.(2)
Essential	Finish the sentence: Given my future plans, I feel that reading and writing _____(2).
Essential	Finish the sentence: I think that what would make me a better reader is _____(2).
Fourth Interview	Questions:
Essential	Tell me why a class is your favorite?
Essential	How did your Title I/language arts class change since Christmas?
Essential	Do you like your language arts class better, worse or the same? Why?

1. The Burke Interview Modified for older readers (BIMOR) (Burke,1979) Taken from Goodman, Watson, & Burke (2005).
2. Sentence Completions from Yellow Brick Roads: Shared and Guided Paths to Independent Reading 4-12 by Janet Allen (2000).
3. Fall Survey from Yellow Brick Roads: Shared and Guided Paths to Independent Reading 4-12 by Janet Allen (2000).

Appendix E
Survey Item Analysis

Motivations for Reading

1. Alicia
2. Leann
3. Jaylin
4. Hannah
5. Cally
6. Anastasha
7. Jake
8. Esperanza
9. not study participant
10. not study participant
11.Elizabeth
12. Tiffany
13. Judy
14. Mireya
15. Jody
16. Peter
17. Joe

Key:
1= very different from you,
2= a little different from you,
3=a little like you,
4=a lot like you

1. I visit the library often with my family.

(1) 2,3, 5, 11, 13	(2) 1,4, 7, 8, 17	(3) 6, 12, 14, 15, 16	(4)

2. I like hard, challenging books.

(1) 1,2,3, 5, 6, 8, 12, 14, 15	(2) 7, 11, 13, 16, 17	(3) 4	(4)

3. I know that I will do well in reading next year.

(1) 1, 15	(2) 4, 7, 17	(3) 6, 8, 12, 13, 14, 16	(4)2,3, 5, 11

4. I do as little schoolwork as possible in reading.

(1)	(2) 1,3, 7, 12, 15, 16, 17	(3) 2, 4, 8, 11, 13	(4) 5, 6, 14

5. If the teacher discusses something interesting, I might read more about it.

(1)	(2)	(3) 4, 7, 11, 12, 14, 16, 13	(4)1,2,3, 5, 6, 8, 15, 17

Appendix F
Anecdotal Record Sample

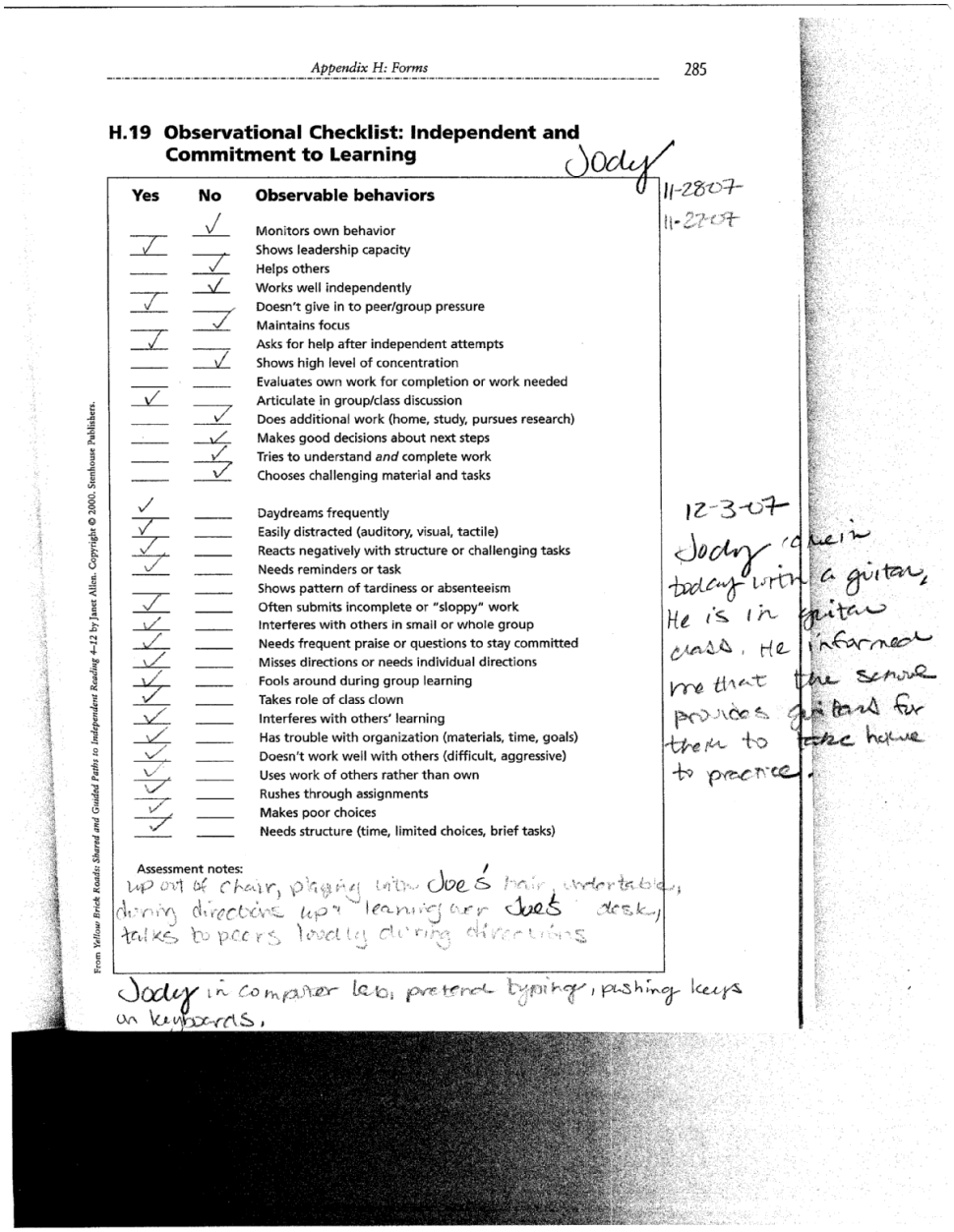
November 26, 2007

Anecdotal record

The students are taken to the reading room. The reading room is a room located down the hall. The room has several lamps with red, green, white, yellow and blue tulip shaped glass that illuminates the light. The light bulbs are low watts and lamps are located through out the room. Several of the lamps are lava lamps. On the floor are several big bed pillows and bed rests. There is a recliner, small table with two chairs, two futons and a couch. On the floor are several throw rugs on top of the very clean carpet. Book shelves line the room and on each shelf are book sets (each set has 4-10 copies) and the sets range in reading level from approximately 2rd grade through high school. All the books are novel/chapter book sets. The room is completely silent. Students enter very quietly and only speak to one another in the lowest whisper and sign language like actions. As soon as students enter, they get comfortable and begin reading. Only a few enter the room without a book already in hand and they quietly search through the shelves. One set of girls spend a few moments writing to one another on paper since talking in this room is not allowed. They must already know the rules because the teacher is not yet present. She is still gathering up students in the classroom and I am positioned in the corner waiting for the class to arrive. Some students use the bed pillows to stack them on top on one another making themselves a bed. They settle in with a book and begin to read. Lava lamps move serenely in colors of blue and red. The walls of the room are each painted a different color; one wall is blue, one wall is green, one wall is purple and one wall yellow. The colors are deep making the room dark. There are blankets available and two girls pick one up to cover up while reading.

Jake walks up (as usual) and hugs me as he enters. He quietly whispers, "How are you doing?" He then jumps into a pile of bed pillows with a crash. I encourage him to get his book and begin reading. He gets up to greet the teacher when she enters and then runs to jump into his pile high bed pillows (6 to be exact). Then he proceeds to arrange his pillows once again to make a bed.

Appendix G
Observation Checklist



H.19 Observational Checklist: Independent and Commitment to Learning

Jody

11-28-07
11-27-07

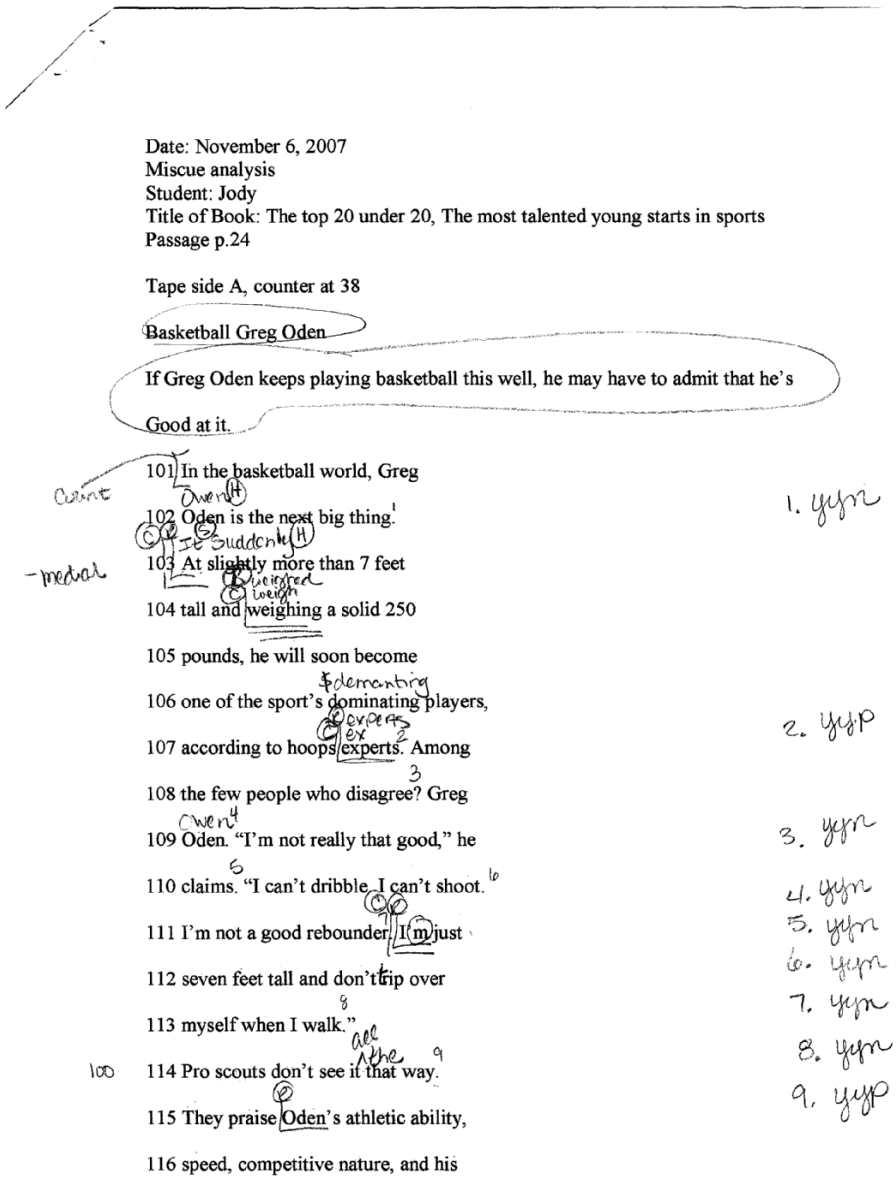
Yes	No	Observable behaviors
	✓	Monitors own behavior
✓		Shows leadership capacity
	✓	Helps others
	✓	Works well independently
✓		Doesn't give in to peer/group pressure
	✓	Maintains focus
✓		Asks for help after independent attempts
	✓	Shows high level of concentration
		Evaluates own work for completion or work needed
✓		Articulate in group/class discussion
	✓	Does additional work (home, study, pursues research)
	✓	Makes good decisions about next steps
	✓	Tries to understand *and* complete work
	✓	Chooses challenging material and tasks
✓		Daydreams frequently
✓		Easily distracted (auditory, visual, tactile)
✓		Reacts negatively with structure or challenging tasks
✓		Needs reminders or task
		Shows pattern of tardiness or absenteeism
✓		Often submits incomplete or "sloppy" work
✓		Interferes with others in small or whole group
✓		Needs frequent praise or questions to stay committed
✓		Misses directions or needs individual directions
✓		Fools around during group learning
✓		Takes role of class clown
✓		Interferes with others' learning
✓		Has trouble with organization (materials, time, goals)
✓		Doesn't work well with others (difficult, aggressive)
✓		Uses work of others rather than own
✓		Rushes through assignments
✓		Makes poor choices
		Needs structure (time, limited choices, brief tasks)

Assessment notes:
up out of chair, playing with Joe's hair, under table, during directions up + leaning over Joe's desk, talks to peers loudly during directions

12-3-07
Jody came in today with a guitar. He is in guitar class. He informed me that the school provides guitars for them to take home to practice.

Jody in computer lab, pretend typing, pushing keys on keyboards.

Appendix H
Miscue Analysis



Date: November 6, 2007
Miscue analysis
Student: Jody
Title of Book: The top 20 under 20, The most talented young starts in sports
Passage p.24

Tape side A, counter at 38

Basketball Greg Oden

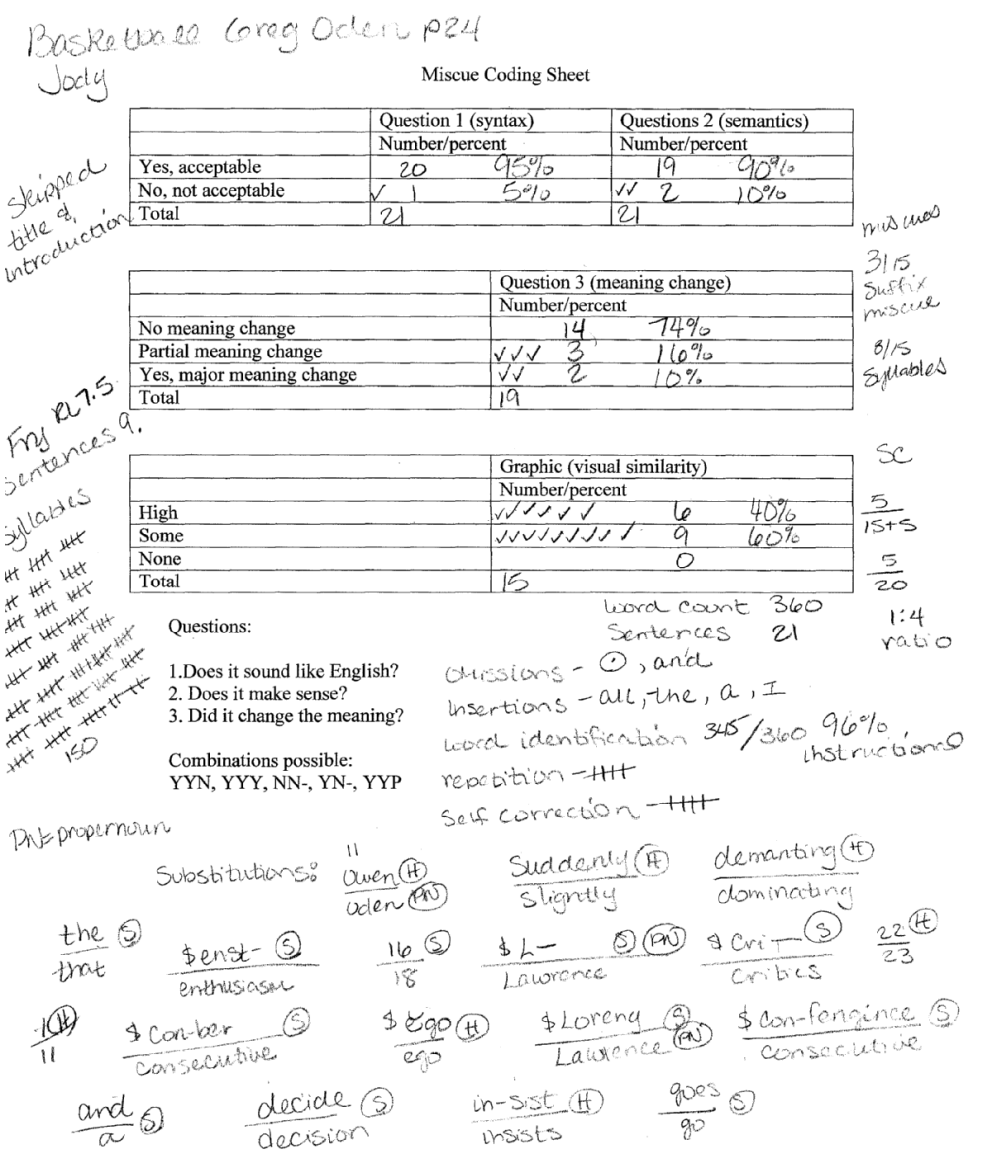
If Greg Oden keeps playing basketball this well, he may have to admit that he's

Good at it.

101 In the basketball world, Greg
102 Oden is the next big thing.
103 At slightly more than 7 feet
104 tall and weighing a solid 250
105 pounds, he will soon become
106 one of the sport's dominating players,
107 according to hoops experts. Among
108 the few people who disagree? Greg
109 Oden. "I'm not really that good," he
110 claims. "I can't dribble, I can't shoot.
111 I'm not a good rebounder, I'm just
112 seven feet tall and don't trip over
113 myself when I walk."
114 Pro scouts don't see it that way.
115 They praise Oden's athletic ability,
116 speed, competitive nature, and his

1. yyn
2. yyp
3. yyn
4. yyn
5. yyn
6. yyn
7. yyn
8. yyn
9. yyp

Appendix I
Miscue Analysis Coding Sheet



Basketweed Greg Oden p24
Jody

Miscue Coding Sheet

	Question 1 (syntax)		Questions 2 (semantics)	
	Number/percent		Number/percent	
Yes, acceptable	20	95%	19	90%
No, not acceptable	✓ 1	5%	✓✓ 2	10%
Total	21		21	

skipped title & introduction

miscues 3/15 suffix miscue 8/15 syllables

	Question 3 (meaning change)		
	Number/percent		
No meaning change	14	74%	
Partial meaning change	✓✓✓ 3	16%	
Yes, major meaning change	✓✓ 2	10%	
Total	19		

Fry RL 7.5
sentences 9.
syllables

SC 5/15+5 5/20

	Graphic (visual similarity)		
	Number/percent		
High	✓✓✓✓✓✓	6	40%
Some	✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓	9	60%
None		0	
Total	15		

150

Questions:

1.Does it sound like English?
2. Does it make sense?
3. Did it change the meaning?

Combinations possible:
YYN, YYY, NN-, YN-, YYP

word count 360
Sentences 21
1:4 ratio

Omissions - ⊙, and
Insertions - all, the, a, I
word identification 345/360 96% instructions
repetition - ++++
Self correction - ++++

PN=proper noun

Substitutions: 11

Owen (H) oden (PN)
Suddenly (H) Slightly
demanting (H) dominating
the (S) that
$enst- (S) enthusiasm
16 (S) 18
$L— (S) (PN) Lawrence
$Cri— (S) critics
22 (H) 23
10 (H) 11
$Con-ber (S) consecutive
$ego (H) ego
$Lorenq (S) (PN) Lawrence
$Con-fongince (S) consecutive
and (S) a
decide (S) decision
in-sist (H) insists
goes (S) go

Appendix J
NVivo Coding Sample

Section 0, Paragraphs 1252-1254, 103 characters.

Mireya
R-Describe yourself as a reader. What kind of reader are you?
S-ummm.. I think I'm a bad reader

Section 0, Paragraphs 1258-1268, 636 characters.

Mireya
R-Finish the sentence: the things I think I do well as a reader are_____.
S-read out loud , and read the way it has it on the book
R-Finish the sentence: If someone asked if I were a good reader, my response would be_____.
S-not really
R-Finish the sentence: The biggest problem for me when I try to read is_____.
S-I get stuck on a word
R-Finish the sentence: Given my future plans, I feel that reading and writing _____
S-might help me with College so that I can get a job and become a nurse
R-Finish the sentence: I think that what would make me a better reader is _____
S-to take extra credit stuff in reading

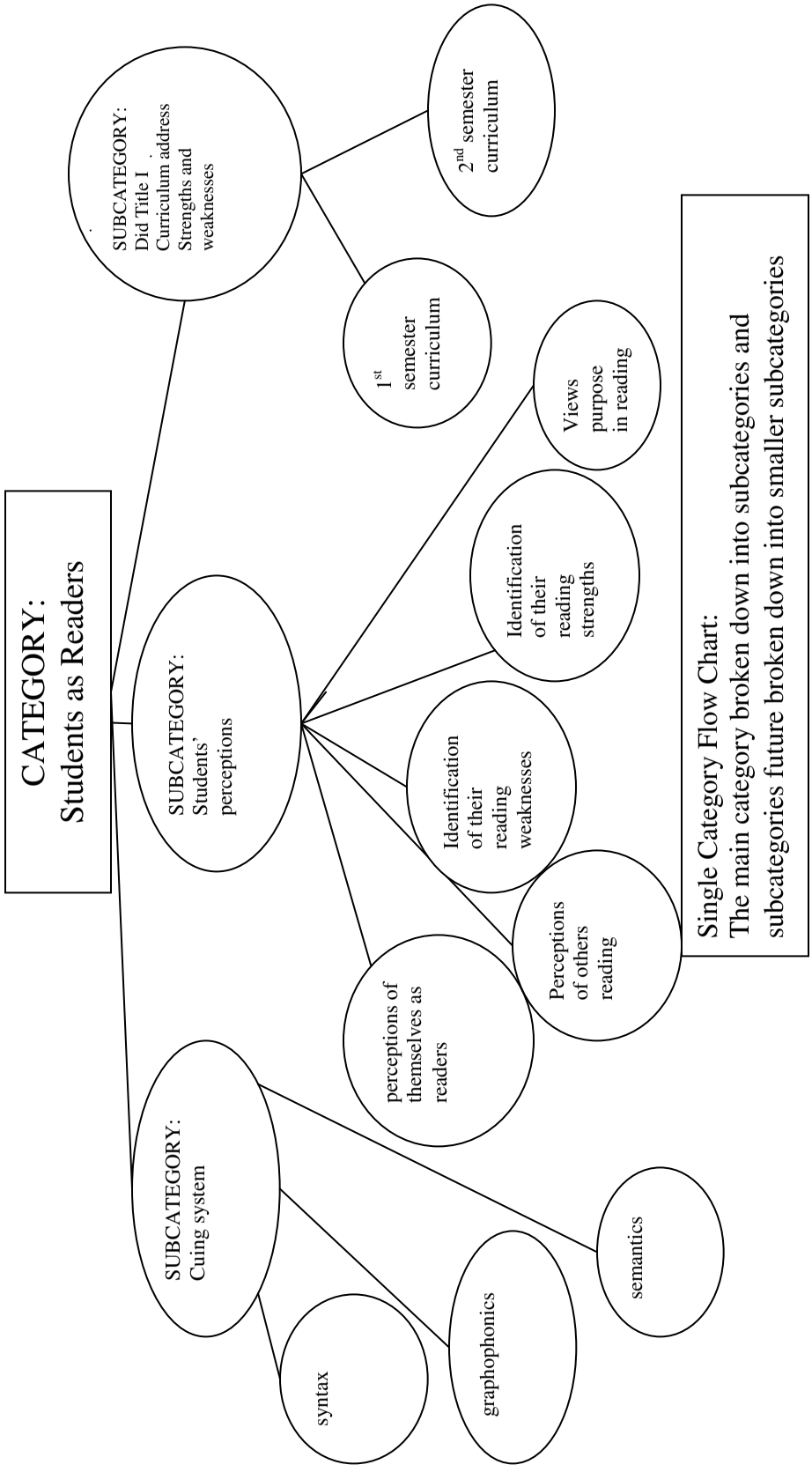
Section 0, Paragraphs 1275-1279, 300 characters.

Jody
R-Is there anything you would like to change about your reading?
S-I would like to have more time to read
R-Describe yourself as a reader. What kind of reader are you?
S-Not a really good one, I don't stop to think, I just read and don't remember anything, I just want to get the book over with

Section 0, Paragraphs 1283-1293, 586 characters.

Jody
R-Finish the sentence: the things I think I do well as a reader are_____.
S-If there is a good book I actually pay attention to the book
R-Finish the sentence: If someone asked if I were a good reader, my response would be_____.
S-sometimes
R-Finish the sentence: The biggest problem for me when I try to read is_____.
S-paying attention to the book
R-Finish the sentence: Given my future plans, I feel that reading and writing _____
S-will help me out
R-Finish the sentence: I think that what would make me a better reader is _____

Appendix K
Single Category Flow Chart



Appendix L
Running Records

HENRY: Then retrieve it from the prince.
HERTFORD: I tried. But the prince claims not to know what the Royal Seal is.
HENRY: Will the boy never get well? Postpone Norfolk's hanging until I have the Seal.

SCENE 5

NARRATOR 1: Meanwhile, John Canty dragged the prince to his house.
PRINCE: I've told you: I am Edward, Prince of Wales! I do not know any of you!
MRS. CANTY: Not even your own mother?
PRINCE: I've never seen you like this before.
CANTY: *(sarcastically)*: What a show this is! Nan, Bet, have you no manners, sitting in the presence of the Prince of Wales?
NAN: Father, Tom is worn out. He is not himself. I'm sure he'll be well tomorrow and will beg with great energy.
PRINCE: I will *not beg*. I'm not a pauper!
NARRATOR 2: Canty hit the prince and threw him to the floor.
CANTY: I'm tired of this! Boy, you'll beg tomorrow, and you'll not come home empty-handed, if you want to walk again!
NARRATOR 1: Later that night, one of Canty's neighbors knocked on his door.
NEIGHBOR: Do you know who that man was that you knocked out last night?
CANTY: No, and I don't care.
NEIGHBOR: It was old Father Andrew, and he's died of his wounds! The royal police are on their way here!
CANTY: Everyone, wake up! We've got to run away! If we get separated, we'll meet at London Bridge.

Reprinted from *Scholastic Scope* Magazine, Sept 3, 1993.

Page 6

SCHOLASTIC

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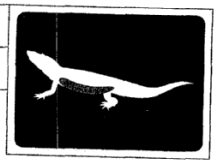
Appendix M
Text Features

Animal Planet Vet Emergencies 24/7 (2007)

ALBERT & SPIKE

An Alligator with a Taste For Hot Dogs



EMERGENCY VET: Dr. Kevin Fitzgerald

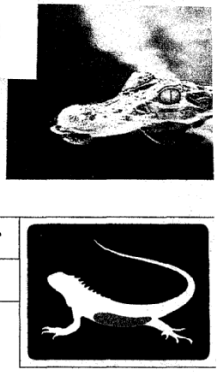
PATIENT: Albert, an alligator

DIAGNOSIS: Tim brings his alligator Albert to Alameda East after feeding him a hot dog. The hot dog made Albert bloated, so Tim wants him checked. Baby Albert weighs only 1 pound. He has a lot of growing to do to reach the 200 pounds he'll weigh in about five years. Like any other animal, he enjoys being petted and scratched behind the neck. He even enjoys walking on a leash. And like other pets he shouldn't be fed table scraps.

TREATMENT: Dr. Fitzgerald uses a syringe of medicine that will clean out his insides.

FOLLOW-UP: Albert's bloating is gone, and there won't be any more hot dogs in his diet!

Moneymaking Iguana



EMERGENCY VETS: Dr. Kevin Fitzgerald & Dr. Robert Taylor

PATIENT: Spike, an iguana

DIAGNOSIS: Spike was vomiting a lot the night before. Spike's owner Ann thinks her iguana climbed onto the kitchen counter and ate some dry cat food.

Dr. Fitzgerald takes X-rays, but not easily! Spike is one feisty iguana with a powerful tail. Iguanas are territorial and Spike is no exception. Spike and Dr. Fitzgerald have a brief wrestling match; Dr. Fitzgerald wins.

TREATMENT: The X-rays show Spike ate several coins. New pennies have zinc, which is toxic, so this worries the owner and the vets. Dr. Fitzgerald and Dr. Taylor operate on Spike to remove two dimes and five pennies. They were corroded, which means that they have been inside Spike for a while. The toxic coins were making Spike sick.

FOLLOW-UP: Twenty-four hours after surgery the spirited iguana is giving the doctors a run for their money.