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Teachers' Perceptions of the Use of Read 180 with Secondary Remedial Reading Students

Melanie McLaughlin Cleveland
Walden University

Walden University

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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Melanie Cleveland

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Dr. Suzy Harney, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty
Dr. Kathleen Bushman, Committee Member, Education Faculty
Dr. John Hendricks, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
2014

Abstract

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MA, University of South Florida, 2003

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Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Read 180 is a research-based reading intervention program. One local district implemented the program to improve student performance on the state assessment, and after a year of implementation, nearly half of the students in the district studied still did not make adequate progress in reading. The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions of and experiences with the use of Read 180 in secondary reading classrooms. Guided by Carroll's framework on the critical aspects of implementation, the study examined teachers' perceptions of (a) availability of resources necessary to adhere to the program's design, (b) ample class time to ensure adequate dosage, (c) preparedness to deliver the curriculum, and (d) benefits for student achievement. From a list of 22 Read 180 teachers, 10 teachers were chosen through simple random sampling and invited to participate in this qualitative case study. All 10 teachers agreed to be interviewed. Triangulation of interview interpretations was accomplished using field notes and member checking. Open coding and its subsequent refinement revealed that teachers had positive perceptions about Read 180 and its potential to improve student achievement, but identified a variety of areas for improvement: access to all materials and computers, ample class time, on-going training, and appropriate placement of students in the program. These findings suggest that a more robust execution of Read 180 could lead to positive social change by improving students' literacy skills, reducing the dropout rate, and preparing students for college and careers.

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Dedication

As the first member of my family to graduate from college, I dedicate this doctoral study to my capable and hardworking parents and grandparents who are no longer on this earth. My heart and head continue to respond to their loving expectations.

Acknowledgments

This project study would not have been possible without the guidance of my committee members, the cooperation of the local school district and teachers, and the support of my family, friends, and mentors. Without the daily, consistent, positive encouragement of my best friend, I would have given up. Because of him, our 32-year marriage survived.

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Introduction

Among the educational challenges in the 21st century, students are expected to graduate from our high schools prepared to compete globally. Careers are more specialized, and the few jobs available to high school graduates require higher levels of education and training than ever before. Colleges demand higher scores for admission, (ACT, 2013). The number of students requiring remediation upon entering college is increasing (ACT, 2013). Increasing numbers of students graduating from high school without the necessary college and career readiness skills puts an entire generation at risk.

A study on college and career readiness was conducted by the ACT in response to low levels of academic success as measured by standardized test scores among U.S. students. The ACT report (2013) defined college and career readiness as the level of proficiency a student must have in order to participate in credit-bearing college level courses or perform successfully in a career with a salary above the poverty line. Unless U.S. students are able to compete globally, the current generation risks facing a decline in economic status as compared to their parents and grandparents (ACT, 2013). Without basic literacy skills, students have little or no hope of providing a living for themselves, much less their families. The combination of high expectations for college and career readiness and the increase in post-secondary illiteracy generates enormous economical and societal concerns (Cassidy, Valadez, Garrett, & Barrera 2010).

Definition of the Problem

This doctoral project study focused on the needs of high school remedial readers and their teachers in District A, specifically the district's relaunched reading program, Read 180, in ninth grade intensive reading classrooms. Read 180 is an evidence-based reading intervention program proven to improve the literacy skills of struggling readers (Scholastic, 2014). School districts surrounding District A along with school districts across the nation have experienced successful implementation of Read 180 in reading classrooms serving both general education and special education students (Scholastic, 2014).

The Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) used to measure grade level reading proficiency is a criterion-referenced test. The test provides student growth data, specifically their progress toward meeting state benchmarks in the English Language Arts standards (Florida Department of Education, 2013). Test results include vertically scaled Developmental Scale Scores that range from 0-3000. Student progress is tracked over time. Students in Read 180 classrooms in a district bordering District A exceeded expected yearly growth on the FCAT in reading (Florida Department of Education, 2013). The study conducted in the bordering district examined growth for 1,333 secondary students who had 2009 and 2010 FCAT scores. Students in the same group surpassed the state and district growth on the FCAT (see Figure 1).

FCAT Reading Gains Experienced by Read 180 Students
as compared to all Students in Grades 6-10
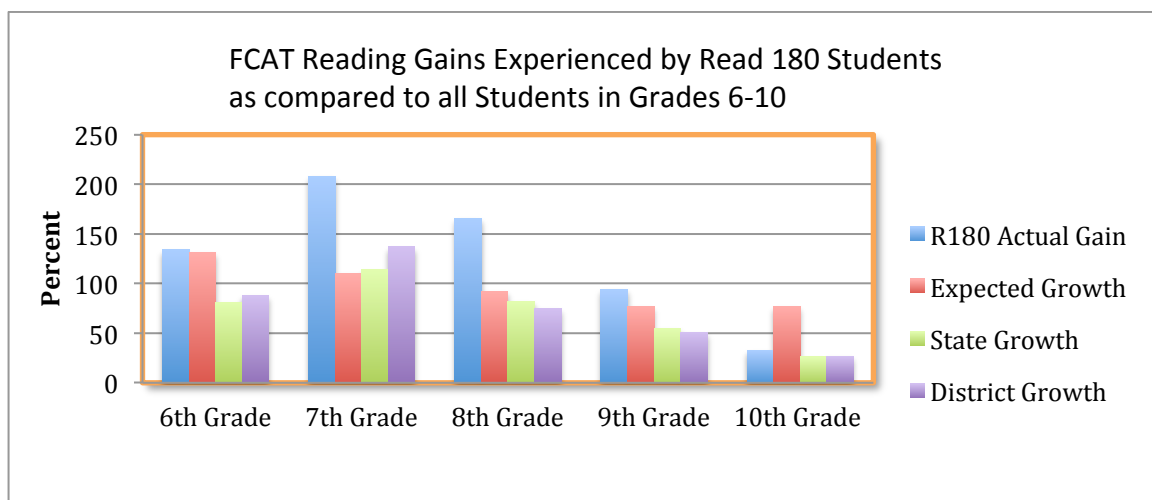
Source: Scholastic, 2012

Figure 1. FCAT Reading gains experienced by Read 180 students as compared to all students in Grades 6–10.

School District A sought to emulate these results. In recent years, District A's FCAT reading scores have been stagnant, with about 50% of students scoring *proficient*. According to the 2013 test results, 48% of District A's ninth grade students scored below *proficiency* in reading as measured by the FCAT (Florida Department of Education, 2013). Florida legislation requires all students scoring below *proficiency* in reading to be placed in remedial reading classes in order to improve their literacy skills, and to score at a proficient level in reading prior to graduation (Florida Department of Education, 2013).

In response, District A purchased curriculum materials for all secondary schools, and required ninth grade teachers to implement, Read 180 as the primary literacy intervention program serving struggling readers. Read 180 was created in 1985 in Orange County, Florida as part the Orange County Literacy Project. Dr. Ted Hasselbring worked with groups of teachers to develop a reading intervention software program that uses

student data to differentiate digital instruction. At the time, Hasselbring was conducting research on the use of technology for enhancing student learning, specifically with students experiencing lagging academic growth associated with mild to moderate disabilities. Hasselbring and his team created the prototype for what is now Read 180. The prototype was used with 10,000 struggling students and produced impressive results. The program has undergone two major revisions; the most recent version is Next Generation Read 180. District A has recently relaunched Read 180, and school and district leaders expect to see results similar to the data shown in Figure 1 above.

In spite of implementing a variety of reading intervention programs, extending class time for underperforming students, and requiring teachers in all reading intervention classrooms to obtain either a reading certification or a reading endorsement, nearly half of the students in the District A are not making adequate progress in reading as measured by the state assessment. There are three possible factors behind this problem: (a) lack of fidelity when implementing the program, (b) lack of professional development or support for the teachers, and (c) lack of leaderships' understanding of the implementation. The most common factor found in the literature involves the appropriate use of the program as prescribed by the creators. The critical elements of implementation are (a) adherence, (b) dosage, (c) quality of delivery, and (d) participant responsiveness (Carroll, Patterson, Wood, Booth, Rick, & Balain, 2007). Participant responsiveness to the program involves both teacher and student. The teacher's perception of a program may affect the manner in which the program is implemented (Carroll et al, 2007).

This study explored the perceptions of teachers currently implementing Read180 in intensive reading classrooms in the local high schools in order to understand the teachers' perceptions as they relate to the availability of necessary materials, professional development, and the perceived level of success the program is having on student achievement. The study identified teachers' perceived challenges when implementing Read 180 in high school reading classrooms and subsequently led to the development of a project.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

District A has experienced stagnant reading scores over the past three years. The percentage of ninth grade students scoring at the *proficient* level in reading as measured by the state assessment is as follows: in 2011, 49%; in 2012, 48%; and in 2013, 53% (Florida Department of Education, 2013). These data indicate that 47% or 6,285 ninth grade students are not able to read grade-level text proficiently.

In addition to the low percentage of ninth grade students scoring at the *proficient* level on the state assessment, the local graduation rate of 79% (Florida Department of Education, 2013) indicates that 21% of students entering ninth grade are not graduating from high school. Among the challenges students face in meeting Florida graduation requirements, the inability to demonstrate evidence of sufficient literacy skills proves to be the most problematic. Tenth grade is a benchmark year in the State of Florida. Students are required to obtain a predetermined proficiency score on the state assessment

as a graduation requirements. When students do not score at the *proficient* level in 10th grade, the students are required to retake the state assessment each semester until the required score is obtained. The FCAT 2013 results showed that only 21% of local twelfth grade students were successful in a final attempt to demonstrate proficiency in reading (Florida Department of Education, 2013). Students who do not demonstrate proficiency will not graduate. Students' failure to perform at a proficient level results in the district not meeting the requirements of the U.S. Department of Education's No Child Left Behind Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2013).

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

The lack of literacy skills is the primary contributor to the dropout rate nationwide (Perin, 2013). Nearly six million U.S. high school students read below grade level, and 3,000 students drop out of high schools every day (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). These staggering statistics create a sense of urgency and demand that educators to respond in a responsible way. Students entering secondary education without the literacy skills necessary to be successful in their academic courses have little chance of becoming college and career ready (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006).

Literacy concerns reach far beyond high school. A review of studies conducted since the 1970s produced evidence that there has been a steady increase in the percentage of underprepared postsecondary students. In 1987, Johnson and Packer determined that 15% of people over the age of 18 could not properly write a check or understand written instructions for operating machinery. In 1988, the Secretary of Labor expressed concern

that some 20% of high school graduates could not read their own diplomas (Johnson &

Packer, 1987). ACT, Inc. (2013) described even more troubling trends by reporting that

only 25% of students who took the ACT demonstrated college readiness in all four

subjects: English, Reading, Mathematics, and Science (ACT, 2013). Figure 2 shows the

percentage of students scoring below the bar of college readiness as measured by ACT
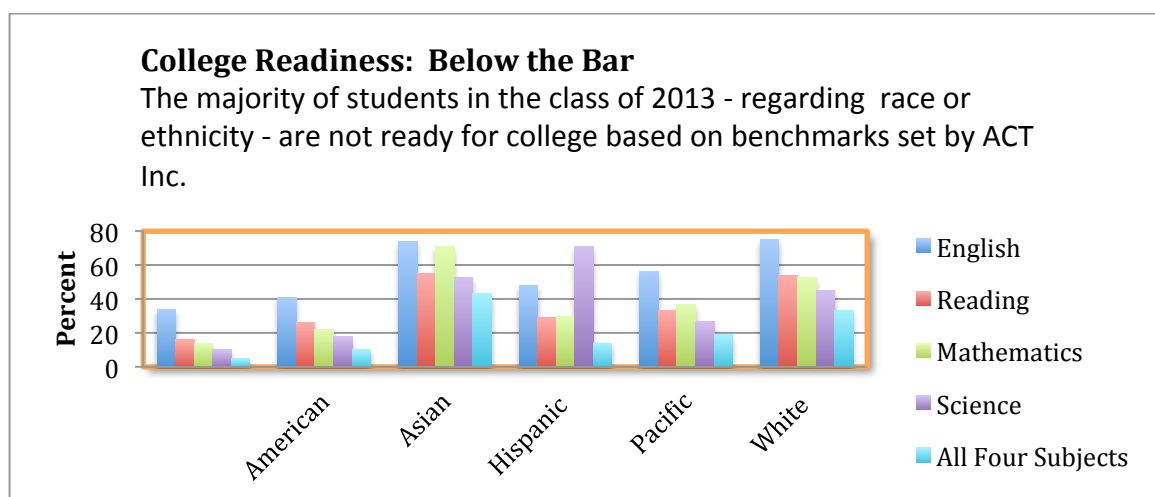
Inc. (2013).

Source: (ACT Inc., 2013).

Figure 2. College readiness: below the bar

According to the Center for Community College Student Engagement (2010),

27% of community college students are required to take remedial reading courses (ACT

Inc., 2013). Obviously, students are graduating from high school without the skills and

knowledge for collegiate success. Jenkins, Boswell, and Education Commission of the

States (2002) declared that for decades community colleges have acted as open door

institutions, allowing remediation courses to be offered to students who are not prepared

for college-level work. Students enroll in developmental level courses at community colleges, pay the regular tuition, and do not receive credit for the courses. Each year this number increases, and fewer and fewer of these students continue on to complete a post-secondary degree. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 62% of twelfth graders scored below proficiency in reading (National Assessment Governing Board, 2013). Wang (2012) declared illiteracy a national epidemic.

Definitions

The following terms are defined according to the way they are used in this study.

Implementation Fidelity: Implementation fidelity is the act of executing a program according to how the curriculum developers intended (Durlak & U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2013).

No Child Left Behind: No Child Left Behind is the reissuance of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and was signed as an Act of Congress in 2001. The act is based on four pillars: (a) stronger accountability for results, (b) more freedom for states and communities, (c) proven education methods, and (d) more choices for parents (U.S. Department of Education, 2013).

Reading Proficiency: Reading proficiency is the ability to demonstrate comprehension of grade level text as measured on a standardized test Florida Department of Education, 2013).

Reading Intervention: A reading intervention is one or more techniques, strategies, programs, and supports intended to prevent or remediate reading difficulties (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006).

Struggling Readers: Struggling readers exhibit difficulty meeting grade level expectations in reading (Melekoglu, 2011).

Significance

This study focused on teachers' perceptions of Read 180 in order to lead to an understanding of the strengths and weakness of the program in local high schools. The findings have the potential to (a) meet the needs of struggling readers by developing the literacy skills necessary to be successful in all course work, (b) increase the percentage of students meeting graduation requirements and thus increasing the graduation rate, and (c) prepare students for college and careers.

Teachers using Read 180 in their classrooms will benefit from this study by having their perceptions addressed and articulated to district leadership via the position paper. The position paper has the potential to assist teachers in the proper use of the program in the secondary reading classrooms and thus improve literacy instruction. School and district leaders will be able to use the results of the study to address the needs and concerns of teachers implementing Read 180. In addition, the study has the potential to address the lagging literacy progress of high school students and thus assist the district in meeting achievement mandates of the No Child Left behind Act of 2001. Additionally,

the study has the potential to contribute to the scholarly literature on implementating

evidence-based, reading-intervention programs.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research question and sub-questions:

Question: What are the teachers' perceptions regarding the use of Read 180?

1. What are the teachers' perceptions of the availability of resources that will

   allow them to adhere to the creator's design for proper implementation (e.g.

   adherence and dosage)?

2. What are the teachers' perceptions of their preparedness to properly implement

   Read 180 (e.g. quality of delivery)?

3. What are the teachers' perceived benefits of the implementation of Read 180?

4. What suggestions or observations do teachers provide regarding the

   implementation of Read 180 in secondary classrooms?

The overarching objective of this study was to understand teachers' perceptions of

the value of Read 180 in intensive reading classrooms in local high schools and then

report the findings to all stakeholders. Objectives included the following specific

objectives: the level to which teachers perceive (a) adherence to the program, (b) use of

the program as prescribed, (c) quality of delivery, and (d) participants' responsiveness,

including both teacher and student buy-in (Carroll et al, 2007). These objectives will be

described in the following section.

Review of the Literature

Adolescent literacy proficiency has risen to the top of the list of concerns for educators, evaluators, and policy makers. Teachers' evaluations and the grading systems for schools and districts are linked to student achievement, thus creating high-stakes situations. States and districts are held to the mandates of No Child Left Behind Act. Having received a Race to the Top grant, the State of Florida and District A are also accountable for compliance with its mandates (U.S. Department of Education, 2013).

In response, educational leaders actively seek tools to help improve student achievement (National Assessment Governing Board, 2013). National data indicate that a substantial percentage of students lack age-appropriate reading proficiency and are therefore required to take remediation courses both in high school and upon entering college. The increase in the percentage of students requiring reading remediation upon entering college has become a national issue (Reed & Vaughn, 2012). Research-based solutions are available, and when they are implemented with fidelity, as intended by the curriculum developers, the results are evident (O'Donnell, 2008). To better understand the importance of proper implementation of evidence-based curriculums, a review of the literature was conducted.

The strategies used to search for literature included the Google Scholar, ERIC, Education Research Complete, Education: a SAGE full-text database, and Walden Dissertations. Searches were performed on the use of reading intervention. I completed a search of multiple electronic databases, ERIC, ProQuest, and EBSCO using the following

keywords: *remediation, remedial reading, drop-out prevention, graduation rates,*
literacy, fidelity of implementation, college readiness, and *research based reading*
remediation programs.

The Conceptual Framework

Tolman (1955), Vygotsky (1986), Piaget (1952), and James (1899) are the
influential researchers associated with the cognitive learning theory. When a person
consciously sets individualized goals, intrinsic motivation to obtain them occurs naturally
(Fox & Riconscente, 2008). Vygotsky (1986), Piaget (1952), and James (1899) are
connected to the cognitive learning theory through the concepts of metacognition and
self-regulation. Self-regulation is the process of internally checking for understanding
what one knows or does not know Metacognition is the ability of an individual to
understand and to articulate his or her own thinking and the processes used to understand
concepts (Fox & Riconscente, 2008). Teachers charged with implementing classroom
interventions must acquire conceptual knowledge including the fundamental principles of
the program, the intended implementation model, the characteristics of struggling
readers, and the rudimentary skills needed in order for students to become literate. The
teacher level of understanding and perceptions of the program play a critical role in the
success of the implementation (Fox & Riconscente, 2008).

The theory of constructivism has contributed to the development of reading
intervention programs. Constructivists contemplate experiences and recognize the need
for humans to construct their own understanding of the world in which they live (Wang,

Bruce, & Hughes, 2011). Constructivism declares that new understanding happens as a result of combining background knowledge with new information and an individual's motivation to learn. Piaget, Dewey, Vygotsky, and Bruner have all contributed to the theory of constructivism. While these theorists all contributed to constructivism, however, the theories of Dewey and Vygotsky most closely align to the study.

Piaget established his ideas of constructivism based on his understanding of child psychology and the development of understanding over time. Bruner's work suggests that students continuously interact with prior knowledge. Dewey believed in learning by doing while Vygotsky determined that individuals learn from interactions with others (Fox & Riconscente, 2008). By investigating the teachers' perceptions, the study employed both Dewey's and Vygotsky's theories that include the relationship of thought and the communication of that thought and learning by doing. Reflection is required for individuals to understand what was learned from an experience (Wang, Bruce, & Hughes, 2011). The findings of this study revealed the participants' reflections and lessons learned from the shared experience of using Read 180 in secondary reading classrooms. Sociocultural theories describe learning as occurring when the learner interacts with people, objects or events such as a teacher implementing a reading program (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky's work with adult learners framed the study as teachers were asked to articulate their perceptions of Read 180 in the secondary reading classroom.

The Problem of Illiteracy

A growing number of English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students and Exceptional Student Education (ESE) students are being mainstreamed. (Reed & Vaughn, 2012) Often times, these students struggle in all academic subjects due to their inability to comprehend grade level text. In addition, under-performing general education students are placed in reading intervention courses along with ESOL and ESE students creating a vast diversity of needs within the same classroom. Secondary schools are not prepared to assist these students in advancing literacy skills (Reed & Vaughn, 2012). Considering the increasing numbers and the vastly diverse student population entering the intervention classrooms, the challenges teachers face will continue to increase.

As students progress through grades K-12, the achievement gap widens. Students who were poor readers in grade 3 are still poor readers in high school (Nelson, Fairchild, Grosenbacher, & Landers, 2007). Research shows that the gap between good and poor readers actually widens in later grades. Nearly 70% of adolescents in the United States require some form of remedial reading instruction (Calhoon, Sandow, & Hunter, 2010). The number of students in need of literacy skill development requires an increase in the number of remedial reading courses offered in secondary schools (Calhoon, Sandow, & Hunter, 2010). These courses require curriculum materials, which need to be monitored for effectiveness and for fidelity of implementation (Lang, Torgesen, Vogel, Chanter, Lefsky, & Petscher, 2009). By understanding what works in improving literacy skills,

districts can assist schools and teachers in being better equipped to successfully educate all students.

Beyond the classroom, a critical relationship between literacy and socio-economic status exists (Hitchens-Smith, Ortlieb, & Cheek, 2011). The rapidly changing global market requires that individuals possess higher literacy skills than ever before. New graduates seeking to enter the work place are often not ready for the demands of the jobs available. In fact, of those attempting entry-level positions, 20-30 million have limited literacy skills (U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

Promising Interventions

Mandates found within No Child Left Behind include a requirement for school districts and individual schools to identify and implement effective research-based reading remediation programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). The federal budget of $15,914,666,000 for the fiscal year will be used to improve accountability systems, enhance teacher effectiveness, expand educational choice, and to strengthen teaching and learning. State and local educational agencies have been granted funds to be used to supply districts and schools with research based programs and activities to improve literacy instruction including targeted interventions for students reading below grade level (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). School districts throughout the United States have responded with attempts to serve struggling readers in their secondary schools by implementing research based reading remediation curricula. Student achievement

outcomes have been varied revealing a need for further investigation into the use of reading remediation programs (Slavin, Cheung, Groff, & Lake, 2008).

Scholastic's Read 180 is included in the U.S. Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse. Read 180 is a reading intervention program designed to address students' gaps in literacy skill development. The program incorporates student software, independent practice and teacher led, small group instruction (What Works Clearinghouse, 2009). Led by Hasselbring, the Orange County Literacy Project in Florida, and the development staff at Scholastic Inc. produced Read 180. Read 180 is currently used in 10,000 classrooms in all 50 states (What Works Clearinghouse, 2009).

Loadman, Sprague, Hamilton, Coffey, and Faddis (2010) conducted a meta-analysis of five studies of implementation of reading interventions. These studies were some of the first to address what methods should be employed in secondary reading interventions including what is required in terms of policy for implementation. The studies also provided critical contributions to the field of adolescent literacy (Loadman et al., 2010). Repeatedly through the literature review, evidence was found to support the direct correlation between fidelity of implementation and students achievement (Greenleaf, Jimenez, & Roller, 2002). Although it is challenging for educational evaluators to determine which variable contributes to the achievement outcomes, evaluators should focus on how closely the intervention is being used according to the intended model of fidelity of implementation (Century, Rudnick, & Freeman, 2010).

Implementation Fidelity

Research supports the positive relationship between fidelity of implementation of reading intervention programs and improved student achievement. Proper implementation of specific programs has the potential to improve literacy skills, to reduce the dropout rate, to prepare students for college and careers, and ultimately to create significant social change (Hattam, Brennan, Zipin, & Comber, 2009). A complete understanding of all aspects of the program is necessary in order for the implementer to adhere to the prescribed model and self-monitor for fidelity. Adherence to the model will ensure that the program full potential is realized.

The gap between how a program is implemented and how the curriculum developers intended the program to be implemented is referred to as implementation variation (Durlak & US Department of Health and Human Services, 2013). Implementation may strictly adhere to the intended protocols or may be implemented with subtle or major changes. This results in what is known as a continuum of implementation that can be categorized as poor, medium, or high quality (Durlak & U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2013).

According to Carroll et al. (2007), critical elements of implementation are (a) adherence, (b) dosage, (c) quality of delivery, and (d) participant responsiveness. Adherence to an intervention measures the level at which a classroom utilizes all components of the program. Exposure or dose measures the amount of time spent in the program as compared to the creators' intention. Quality of delivery measures the extent to

which the teachers are able to deliver the program as prescribed, specifically access to required materials will be considered. Teacher and student responsiveness measures teacher buy-in and student engagement. Teachers' perceptions or attitudes about the use of the program play an important role in implementation (Carroll et al, 2007).

Critical Aspects of Implementation Fidelity

   Adherence to an intervention. Adherence to the program is defined as whether "a program service or intervention is being delivered as it was designed or written" (Carroll et al., 2007, p. 1). Adherence to an intervention must be measured for a variety of reasons. Districts are responsible for monitoring the effect of the intervention on the students' academic progress and the degree to which intervention programs are implemented according to the creator's intent (Barnett, Hawkins, & Lentz, 2011).

   Dosage or exposure. Dosage is the amount of time a participant interacts with the prescribe intervention. It is imperative for success to implement an intervention with the frequency and duration prescribed by its designers (Carroll et al., 2007). For example, it may be that not all elements of the intervention are delivered, or are delivered less often than required (Carroll et al., 2007). Overall program effectiveness is less when participants do not receive the intended amount of exposure. Examples include when participants fail to complete a treatment for the prescribed time, or in the required intervals. Effectiveness may also be compromised when additions are made to the intervention. It is important to receive the intended number of sessions for the intended amount of time (Reyes, Brackett, Rivers, Elbertson, & Salovey, 2012).

Quality of delivery. Quality of delivery is the manner in which a teacher delivers a program (Dusenbury, Brannigan, Falco, & Hansen, 2003). This element of implementation may prove to be ambiguous and may require using instruments beyond those offered by the creator of the intervention. The teacher perceptions of the program and attitude towards implementation play critical roles in the program effect on student achievement (Dusenbury, et al. 2003).

In a study conducted by Lang et al. (2009), the evaluators paid close attention to professional development teachers received including assigning a project manager and using school based reading coaches to monitor and support teachers' implementation of a reading intervention program. Fidelity of implementation checklists was created and teachers were trained in their use. Reading gains for the students in the intervention groups were compared to each other. However, the study did not include classrooms where fidelity of implementation was lacking due to the belief that if a program is not implemented according to the researched model, the desired outcomes will not be evident in the data (Lang et al., 2009).

A key factor to successful implementation includes follow up teacher professional development. During the follow up sessions experts and coaches review the implementation rubric with the teachers and encourage their use of data to drive instructional practices. The data points focus on adherence to the researched model. (Century, Rudnick, & Freeman, 2010). Successful implementation of any new instructional strategy or curriculum material requires the following: dedicated and

focused leadership, appropriate scheduling for student placement, and ample offerings for professional development (Century, Rudnick, & Freeman, 2010).

Participant responsiveness. The Melekoglu (2011) study investigated the impact of student motivation on reading gains. Lack of motivation has proven to be a challenge worth studying. (Melekoglu, 2011). The students studied received structured research based daily instruction. The impact of motivation was analyzed and results indicated a significant correlation between improvement in reading scores and student motivation, specifically for students without disabilities. Students with lower motivation did not typically demonstrate successful completion of reading activities (Prochnow, Tunmer, & Chapman, 2013). Improved motivation to read, increased reading competency, and student motivation play a role in the effectiveness of reading interventions (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006). Logically, if a student is motivated to read, he or she will read more, and simply by reading more the student has great potential of improving his or her comprehension skills.

Further findings by Melekoglu (2011) included the Adolescent Motivation to Read Survey, which included 20 items to assess student motivation to read. The survey assessed the student self-efficacy and the value the student personally places on the ability to comprehend text. The results of the survey showed that the correlations between reading gains and motivation to read for students without disabilities were significant (Melekoglu, 2011).

Tolman's theory (2011) aligns with the cognitive learning theory in that personal goal setting results in motivation to obtain that goal. Learning happens as a result of the goal setting process and a desire to achieve the goal. Tapping the students' intrinsic motivation has proven to greatly increase engagement with texts. Common intrinsic motivators for increasing students' time in text include interest, curiosity, challenge, social connections, and self-efficacy (Cho, Xu, & Rhodes, 2010). Student motivation is often directly linked to setting goals and steadily working to achieve those goals (Cleary, 2009).

In addition to student motivation is teacher motivation. The teacher's perception or attitude toward the program being implemented may significantly impact the degree to which the program is successful. The research supports the critical role of a teacher's beliefs on successful implementation of a curriculum or a program. In addition, teacher input greatly enhances teacher buy-in (Stauffer, Heath, Coyne, & Ferrin, 2012). In order to gain teacher buy-in, teachers need to be informed of the students' needs based on data, the research supporting the use of the program or intervention, and the evidence of positive academic gains with students similar to their own. (Stauffer, Heath, Coyne, & Ferrin, 2012).

Implications

It is clear from a review of the literature that implementation fidelity is paramount to obtaining desired results. The closer an implementation adheres to the creators' design the greater the potential for change, and the more a teacher buys into the curriculum being implemented the greater the potential for reaching the desired outcomes (Stauffer, et al. 2012). Understanding what stands between a strong, research based, intervention program and student success may lead to solutions and ultimately to improved student achievement (Lang et al., 2009).

Several implications from the results of this study can be anticipated due to the dissemination of a detailed report on the teachers' perceptions of Read 180, which includes successes and challenges experienced in the classroom along with recommendations for the district, school, teachers, and publisher. The findings of the study led to the production of a position paper that will be shared with the local school board, district leadership, school and district instructional coaches, and school based leadership teams. The position paper addresses the challenges evident in the data collected during teacher interviews. The findings and project have the potential of benefiting other Read 180 teachers, increasing student achievement, and contributing to the existing literature on Read 180. Additionally, this study has the potential to promote positive social change students as district stakeholders work with coaches and teachers to improve the implementation of Read 180 with the goal of improving students' literacy skills. Improved literacy skills will inevitably improve graduation rates, the number of

students who graduate college and career ready and ultimately improve the socio-economic status of individual students.

Summary

Among the educational challenges in the 21st century, students are expected to graduate from our high schools prepared to compete globally. However, the number of students requiring remediation upon entering college is increasing (ACT, 2013). Increasing numbers of students graduating from high school without the necessary college and career readiness skills puts an entire generation at risk.

This study focused on the needs of high school remedial readers and their teachers in District A and specifically the newly relaunched reading program, Read 180, in ninth grade intensive reading classrooms. Students participating in Read 180 in nearby districts and in districts across the nation have experienced increased student academic success (Scholastic, 2014). In response, District A purchased Read 180 materials for all secondary schools.

This study focused on teachers' perceptions of Read 180 in order to lead to an understanding of the strengths and weakness of the program in local high schools. The findings have the potential to (a) meet the needs of struggling readers by developing the literacy skills necessary to be successful in all course work, (b) increase the percentage of students meeting graduation requirements and thus increasing the graduation rate, and (c) prepare students for college and careers.

Section 2 of this study describes the methodology, including the research design, population, instrumentation, data collection and analysis, and the limitations and rights of participants. The research is justified by explaining why others designs were deemed inappropriate for this study. The criterion for selecting teacher participants is explained. Instrumentation choice and use is explained along with the data analysis process.

Section 3 of this study, the project itself, provides a literature review on implementation, evaluation, and potential social change, description of the project for this research study, information revealed during data collection, and how the outcomes of the study relate to the project. Project goals and justification for the choice of a position paper are discussed.

Section 4 includes my reflections on the process and content of this study, my role as a scholar, practitioner, and researcher, along with my suggestions for future research.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to examine teachers' perceptions about the use of Read 180 in secondary classrooms in terms of availability of resources and materials, preparedness, and the benefits offered to low-performing students.

Research is the systematic inquiry or investigation of a problem or situation in order to determine facts and reach conclusions (Merriam, 2009). Research outcomes inform action. The action of this study is the development of a project to meet the needs found during data collection. This section describes the following: the features of the design, the justification for using this approach, the participants, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis. The study used a case study design to understand teachers' perceptions of Read 180 in secondary reading classrooms.

Research Design

In this study I sought to collect data to increase the understanding of teachers' perceptions of the use of Read 180 in secondary reading intervention classrooms with the intention of sharing the collected data with school and district leadership in order to assist teachers in improving the use of Read 180 to increase reading comprehension skills of secondary students. Neither a quantitative study nor a mixed method study would address the perceptions of the teachers implementing Read 180. Quantitative research methods were not a good fit for this study since they seek to produce data that is objective and measurable (Creswell, 2012). Quantitative research has the goal of

collecting, analyzing and using data to understand relationships between the population and treatment (Creswell, 2012).

In contrast, qualitative research seeks to understand a phenomenon or situation (Creswell, 2012). Among the variety of qualitative approaches to research including grounded theory, ethnography, phenomenology, and case study, the latter two were considered most appropriate for this study. Grounded theory was not appropriate for this study since a theory was not going to be developed from collected data (Creswell, 2012). The study did not include a cultural social group as done in ethnography (Creswell, 2012). Both phenomenology and case study have the ability to investigate the teachers' perceptions of the value of Read 180 in secondary reading classrooms (Creswell, 2012). However, several differences were noted to exist between a case study and a phenomenological study. Case studies have been used to explore teachers' efforts in implementing an instructional practice or curriculum program (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). Case studies focus on individuals representative of a group, for example, classrooms implementing a new curricular program. Another characteristic of a case study is the investigation of a current phenomenon within its environment (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). Case studies also provide a rich description of the setting and elements of the program being implemented with the goal of sharing lessons learned within the study (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). In contrast, phenomenology is not traditionally used in an educational setting and may require extended time (Creswell, 2012).

This study employed a case study in order to gather data from Read 180 teachers with experience teaching the program in secondary schools throughout the district. This case study focused on the common experiences of the participants and their perceptions on the subject of the study (Merriam, 2009). This study sought to understand the teachers' perceptions of the success of Read 180 in secondary intensive reading classrooms. Teacher interviews were conducted within a large urban district.

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions to Read 180 in secondary classrooms. Other qualitative approaches were not as well suited to this study due to their focus on an individual life, understanding a phenomenon or describing a group of people (Creswell, 2012). The analysis and rich description of how secondary teachers are implementing Read 180 was most suitable for a case study. For these reasons, the case study method under the qualitative research design was chosen. The study provides feedback on the teachers' perceptions of Read 180. In addition to positive perceptions and evidence of strong implementations, negative perceptions, challenges, and potential solutions added richness to the findings of the study (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010).

Participants

There were a total of 22 Read 180 teachers within 19 district high schools. All of these teachers have been assigned by the schools to teach struggling readers using Read 180 as an intervention. All 22 teachers were placed on a list, and 10 were selected through simple random sampling to participate in the study. The 10 teachers who were

selected all agreed to participate in the study. The population for this study consisted of 10 teachers from differing high schools within District A. The 10 teachers interviewed have experiences teaching Read 180 that range from 1–14 years. Read 180 is one of three district approved reading programs; each program addresses specific literacy deficiencies of students requiring a remedial reading course. Teachers in the Read 180 classroom are required to hold a State of Florida certification or endorsement in reading. While the majority of teachers have chosen this area of expertise and have earned the required certification, some are placed in reading classrooms by the school's administration prior to completion of their certification or endorsement in reading. These teachers are considered "Out of Field" in the State of Florida until requirements for the certification are completed. In addition, these teachers must show progress toward meeting the certification or endorsement requirements in order to maintain their positions. The method of assigning teachers to classrooms varies from school to school. In some cases teachers are included in the decision making process. At other schools teachers are involuntarily placed. Teachers may refuse the assignment.

Interviews were conducted with teachers who have recently taught Read 180 in a secondary intensive reading class. Interviewing teachers from this group allowed me to glean information from their experiences with and perceptions of Read 180 in the reading classroom. Merriam (2009) describes case study as a qualitative approach to inquiry about a contextualized phenomenon with specific boundaries. A case study investigates a phenomenon within specific boundaries. This study consists of multiple cases each bound

by an individual classroom. Since the population was relatively small and readily available, simple random sampling was used. Interview data was gathered from participants of a particular subgroup, secondary Read 180 teachers (Merriam, 2009). I employed a simple random sampling to target 10 teachers. A simple random sample is a subset of a larger set. Signed participant consent forms were numbered upon receipt, and the first ten teachers to respond were interviewed. The numbers recorded on the signed consent form were used to code participants during data collection.

Procedures for Gaining Access to Participants

Permission to conduct research began with obtaining permission from District A's Accountability, Research, and Assessment (ARA) Department. The director of the department was required to sign a letter of cooperation. All documents were developed according to the guidelines of Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and provided permission to interview selected participants. I worked closely with District A's Curriculum and Instruction Department to acquire a list of current Read 180 teachers. As an employee of the school district studied, I had access to the e-mail addresses of potential participants. I contacted 10 teachers on the list by e-mail and invited them to attend an informational session during which I explained the purpose of the study, the participant's role in the study, and benefits to students and teachers. Only four teachers could attend the informational session. All four teachers returned the signed consent form to me within a week. Six additional teachers responded via e-mail and met me in person

to receive their agreement forms. Ultimately 10 teachers returned signed consent forms. The e-mailed invitation can be found in Appendix D.

Ethical Protection of Participants

An IRB application was submitted containing details of the study including population, data collection, and data analysis. The IRB approval number 07-11-14-0257703 was received on July 11, 2014. As soon as approval to conduct the study was received, an e-mail invitation was sent to all potential participants to attend an informational session. Participants who could not make the initial session received the same information in a one on one meeting with the interviewer. During the informational sessions, I explained the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of the study, potential risks and benefits, confidentiality, and contact information. Participants were given consent forms for review and were asked to return signed consent forms at their earliest convenience. Benefits, risks, and confidentiality were explained again prior to each interview. I explained that participants could discontinue participation at any time during the study. I ensured participants that their privacy would be maintained and that all information gathered would remain confidential.

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Instrumentation and Materials

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Case study research is richly descriptive using anecdotes and narratives gathered from key participants during original interviews (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). Upon receipt of completed consent forms, meetings were arranged to conduct individual face-to-face interviews and follow up member checking appointments with 10 participants.

Interview questions focused the responses around the shared experiences of the teachers who have implemented Read 180 and enabled me to identify common successes and challenges. Questions were semi-structured in order to allow respondents to elaborate on their perceptions of the program and its value as related to student achievement, which portions of the program have benefited students, and which aspects of implementation have proved most challenging (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). Semi-structured interviews sought specific data, and the research questions guided the interviews (Merriam, 2009).

The Constructivist approach allowed participants to discuss and better understand their individual perceptions. The questions were designed to create an environment for listening to responses and determining the themes and commonalities. Interview questions focused on the primary research question, What are the teachers' perceptions regarding the use of Read 180 in secondary intensive reading classrooms? A series of more specific research questions and prompts led to a better understanding of the primary research question and focused on the critical aspects of program use as defined by Carroll et al. (2007), adherence, dosage, participant responsiveness, and quality of delivery.

The following research questions were addressed within the study. Corresponding interview questions are listed here. See Appendix C for a complete list of interview questions. Answers to all questions led to understanding the overarching research question: What are the teachers' perceptions regarding the use of Read 180 in secondary intensive reading classrooms? Sub-questions guided the research.
Lead question: You are currently teaching an intensive reading course using Read

180. How is the implementation going for you and your students?

Sub-questions:

1. What are the teachers' perceptions of the availability of resources that will allow

them to adhere to the creator's design for proper implementation (e.g. adherence

and dosage)?

Interview questions for sub-question 1:

Is your classroom equipped with the materials necessary for proper

implementation of Read 180? Explain.

Are supplementary materials needed in the Read 180 classroom and if so, what is

missing?

2. What are the teachers' perceptions of their preparedness to properly implement Read

180 (e.g. quality of delivery)?

Interview questions for sub-question 2:

What professional development have you received and was it useful?

What professional development do you need and why?

3. What are the teachers' perceived benefits of the implementation of Read 180?

Interview questions for sub-question 3:

How do you measure the effectiveness of Read 180 in the secondary classroom?

Describe the benefits or challenges Read 180 offers struggling readers.

4. What suggestions or observation do teachers provide regarding the implementation of

   Read 180 in secondary classrooms?

Interview questions for sub-question 4:

   If you could select the materials you would use in your reading classroom, would

   you select Read 180? Why or why not?

   What advice would you give new Read 180 teachers? Be as specific as possible.

Data Collection

The purpose of the data collection was to address the research question: What are

the teachers' perceptions of the use of Read 180 in secondary classrooms? Interview

data, field notes, and member checking were synthesized in order to strengthen the

findings (Creswell, 2012). Data collected from participant interviews included direct

quotes, lived experiences, opinions, and perceptions. An e-mail invitation to attend an

information session was sent to potential participants. Each teacher who attended the

information session was given a consent form for review. The Read 180 teachers who

were interested in participating signed and returned the consent form to me within a week

of the information session. Walters (2009) noted that it would be ideal to have a face-to-

face discussion to gather data. Interviews were conducted face to face. The following

section describes the interview protocol, steps in the interview process, and data analysis

used to ensure triangulation.

Interview protocol. Prior to beginning each interview, I introduced myself and

described the goals and potential benefits of the project study. Information gained during

the interviews will remain confidential (Dawson & Algozzine, 2011). The methods for

maintaining and the importance of confidentiality was explained to all participants to

assure them that data gathered would be used only to inform stakeholders of the teachers

perceived challenges and successes experienced during implementation of Read 180.

Interviews. The first step in the interview process was to select participants.

Participants possessed knowledge and opinions on the use of Read 180 in their secondary

classrooms and provided insight into the research questions. Interviews conducted with

individual participants were limited to 45 minutes and were conducted at the individual

teacher's convenience (Dawson & Algozzine, 2011). Participants were reminded that all

data collected would remain confidential. All personal statements were associated with

numerical identifiers specific to individual participants. The informed consent form

included information about the study, procedures for audio recordings of the interviews,

voluntary participation, and participants' right to withdraw from the study at any time

(Lodico et al., 2010). A neutral, private, and distraction-free setting put the interviewees

at ease and allowed them to focus on the questions being asked. Participants were eager

to share their experiences and several expressed appreciation for the opportunity.

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Role of the Researcher

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I approached this study from a constructivist, qualitative research standpoint and

was the primary source of data collection and analysis (Merriam, 2009). "Constructivism

relies on the participants' views of the situation being studied" (Creswell, 2003, p.8).

This approach was appropriate since the study sought to understand the teachers'

perceptions of Read 180. As a researcher, I made sure to understand my biases and defer them during communications with the participants. I realized I would bring experiences and opinions to the interviews; however, it was imperative that I allowed the information gathered during the interviews to develop themes and ultimately bring significance to the study (Creswell, 2003, p.9). My relationship with the teachers interviewed is one of support. I do not supervise nor work in the same school with any of the interviewees. I was intentional in my approach to this study and worked to ensure participants of my intent to seek understanding of their perceptions, as well as my intent to develop a plan of support in response to the data collected.

Data Analysis

According to Merriam (2009), "Data analysis is the process of making sense out of the data" (p. 175). Organized and purposeful data analysis provided answers to the research questions. This qualitative study included multiple steps for data analysis. To begin, I set aside all biases about the program being studied. My biases included my experiences with successful and non-successful implementations of Read 180. Data analysis occurred continuously and immediately following each interview. Merriam (2009) refers to this as a constant comparative method used to analyze data as it is collected. This study was conducted on a small scale and did not require a computer program for coding (Merriam, 2009). I implemented the six steps suggested by Creswell (2012) for analyzing data as follows: (a) initial exploration of data by coding, (b) coding data to develop ideas, (c) coding data to identify themes, (d) representation of findings

through rich thick description including narratives, (e) interpretation of the results, and (f) validating the findings.

Coding is the act of categorizing collected data by identifying themes, patterns, and relationships within the data. The data collected from the interviews was broken down into understandable chunks. Open coding was employed. Data was coded as it was gathered and reviewed; excerpts from the transcripts were sorted by content, theme, and participant. This approach produced rich and authentic data. Open coding required some predetermined definitions to provide consistency during the coding process (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). A list of the key ideas was derived from the critical elements of implementation found in the research of Carroll et al. (2007). These critical elements of implementation include (a) adherence, (b) dosage, (c) quality of delivery, and (d) participant responsiveness and were aligned to specific interview questions.

A transcriber produced verbatim transcripts of the interviews. The coding process began with review of the interview transcripts and field notes. I conducted this process following each individual interview. Merriam (2009) calls this within-case analysis. Upon review of the transcripts and field notes, I recorded the most valuable information as related to answering the research questions. These notes revealed the most relevant data to the study and contributed to formulation of key findings. During this first stage, I was open to all possibilities. This form of coding is open coding (Merriam, 2009). During the next step of the coding process called axial coding or analytical coding, I reviewed the notes taken during the open coding stage and began to reflect on and to interpret

them. The result was a list of ideas on how to group the collected data. As I analyzed each new transcript and corresponding field notes, I performed cross-case analysis (Merriam, 2009) by comparing each new set of data to the previously collected data. The lists of codes were merged to create a master list of categories of themes found in but separate from the data (Merriam, 2009). This process continued until all interview transcripts and field notes had been reviewed using within-case analysis of each and cross-case analysis of all.

Throughout the review of the interview transcripts and filed notes, categories were being determined. An inductive approach to the construction of categories was used, as it was anticipated that categories may change, merge, or be deleted during cross-case analysis (Merriam, 2009). The revision process continued through the final recording of the findings of the study. All transcripts and field notes were stored on my password-protected computer. As categories emerged, electronic files were created to house individual pieces of data by category. These files were named according to the determined categories. These files were used to develop a rich, thick, description of the findings through detailed narratives. Interpretation and validation of the findings followed.

Reliability and Validity

Triangulation is the use of multiple sources of information to ensure validity of the data collected during the study (Creswell, 2012). Triangulation was obtained via recorded and transcribed interviews, member checking, and reflective field notes.

Interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim. The transcriber signed a

confidentiality agreement prior to producing typed transcripts of the recordings. Member

checking confirmed the accuracy of the typed narratives produced from the transcripts,

and established credibility of the data collected (Creswell, 2012). The transcripts were

examined and coded to identify categories (Lodico et al., 2010). Reflective field notes

were considered to strengthen triangulation. Participants were assigned numerical codes

in order to protect their identity within the data collection documents. Data were stored

on my password-protected computer, and will remain there for at least five years.

To eliminate potential researcher biases and to ensure accurate data collection,

coding and member checking were employed. Each participant reviewed the typed

narratives and confirmed accuracy of recorded data. The goal of the data analysis was to

code and categorize data in order to address the research questions (Merriam, 2009).

Justification of conclusions drawn from the data collected and the sharing of lessons

learned were summarized at the end of the study. Findings determined the development

of a project to address the identified needs of the teachers.

Research Findings

The findings of this project study were gathered from interviews, transcribed

verbatim, with Read 180 teachers. Member checking was used to confirm or disconfirm

the accuracy of the typed narratives. Findings and their relationships to the research

questions are discussed below.

Research Question 1. *What are the teachers' perceptions of the availability of resources that will allow them to adhere to the creator's design for proper implementation?* Findings associated with this question include the following: All 10 participants expressed appreciation for access to all materials and resources necessary for proper implementation of Read 180. Eight of the 10 participants did not believe anything else is needed to supplement the Read 180 curriculum. However two of the 10 interviewees shared a less than perfect experience. Teacher 2 explained that one teacher received all materials and resources, and she was told by administration to just put the students on the computer software in her room. "There were two of us. The other teacher got all the stuff and they told me just to put the kids on the computers." Without daily access to the student and teacher resources, it was impossible for this teacher to use the program as the creator's intended. Teacher 9 reported a similar situation. In addition to being expected to share student and teacher resources with a teacher located in an adjoining classroom, the teacher was also expected to utilize multiple programs within the same class period. "This caused confusion for the students." In addition, the teacher had to improvise, create her own stations, and determine how to best blend multiple curriculums. Teachers 1 and 9 were both cases of improper implementation of Read 180 due to a lack of access to required materials. While teacher 9 expressed that she was pleased with her students' FCAT results, she acknowledged that teachers who received all materials and implemented Read 180 on model had greater student gains on FCAT.

Eight out of 10 participants agreed there is a need for more and reliable computers and headsets within their Read 180 classrooms. Site-based servers and general hardware issues prevented consistent use of the program for seven of the 10 teachers interviewed. Teachers expressed a need to receive updated hardware and on-site tech support. In some cases, large class size played a role. In order to implement Read 180 on model, teachers need enough computer stations for one-third of their students. If a class has 21 students, the classroom needs seven computers. In three of the 10 cases, the teachers' classrooms did not have an adequate number of computers.

Schools' master schedules should allow for at least 90 minutes of daily instruction and class size should not exceed 21 students. Teacher 3 stated, "I believe the assistant principal for instruction finds scheduling very difficult and therefore does not schedule all Read 180 students into 90 minutes of reading as requested by the district." The teacher went on to explain that she has classes of Read 180 students who receive 45-50 minutes of instruction daily as opposed to the required 90 minute. Teacher 2 shared that her assistant principal views the reading classroom as an elective course and therefore does not adhere to the State class size amendment. This participant has 30 students in one of her Read 180 classrooms; eight more than the suggested class size for Read 180. Teacher 2 said, "They put 30 students in my classroom, and we don't have enough computers. I have told them this will not work." Nearly half of the teachers did not have all Read 180 students for the suggested 90 minutes a day. Instead some students were scheduled for 90 minutes of reading daily and others were scheduled for

45 minutes daily. The 45 minutes a day schedule cuts the intervention time in half, and therefore, these students will not have the required time on the software to make the expected gains.

Research Question 2. *What are the teachers' perceptions of their preparedness to properly implement Read 180?* Findings include the following: The secondary Read 180 teachers participating in the study revealed inconsistency in the level of support and professional development they have received in order to be properly prepared to implement Read 180. Teachers interviewed have varied perceptions of their preparedness to properly implement Read 180. Nine out of 10 teachers interviewed had received initial training during a 2-day getting started workshop. Three of the teachers interviewed have attended follow up workshops on using program data to monitor student progress, to form small groups, and to plan for direct instruction. Six of the teachers have received in class side-by-side coaching but to varying degrees and with widely diverse success. Teachers who attended the two-day getting started training, prior to beginning implementation, follow-up data training, and received consistent side-by-side coaching throughout the school year expressed their gratitude for the opportunity and the helpfulness of the trainers and coaches. Seven out of 10 teachers gave credit to the training and support for their success and for student academic success.

Teachers 1, 4, and 9 did not receive training on Read 180 until after the school year had started. These teachers all stated that they were not aware they were going to be teaching Read 180 until the week prior to the students' first day. Once they received the

two-day getting started they were able to begin implementing the program properly. All teachers expressed a need for ongoing professional development, coaching, and support to ensure they continue to improve their use of all aspects of the program. Specifically, teachers are eager to learn more about the use of reports found within Read 180. Teacher 3 said, "I know the program offers excellent reports, and I have used some like the Groupinator. But I need more help so that I can use them more efficiently and effectively." Teacher 5 agreed, "More information on how to run reports, what to do with the reports afterwards, and how to use the reports to create the small groups that are necessary to move the children forward." Several teachers expressed the need to have assistance in setting up classrooms at the beginning of the school year, and in some cases" expressed the need for enough space to do so.

Teachers offered specific suggestions for ongoing support and professional development. The most common suggestions were to offer assistance in setting up classrooms at the beginning of the year and more support in reading and using reports generated within the program. "One challenge is just for teachers in general not knowing all of the intricacies of the software and what the data means." Teachers acknowledge the need for on-going support and coaching in order to implement Read 180 as prescribed. "The program offers so much more than what appears on the surface." When asked what professional development do you need and why, Teacher 6 responded, "I think constant professional development is important because there is no way you can remember everything and there is just so much about the program and the resources and

the reporting and the data so I think just constantly even digging deeper and connecting it to the things that are important."

Research Question 3. *What are the teachers' perceived benefits of the implementation of Read 180?* Findings for include the following: The participants in the study revealed their perceived benefits of the use of Read 180 as increased student engagement, structured approach to instruction, and improved comprehension skills for most students. All 10 teachers interviewed talked about their appreciation for the structure that Read 180 provided the teacher and students. Teachers specifically noted the importance of structure in maintaining classroom management and engagement. Teacher 5 said, "Behavior concerns just don't exist in this structured environment. I train my students how to move through the rotations." Other perspectives supported this statement and included the following: "The consistency within the software is reassuring to students." "The environment overall becomes less stressful allowing teachers and students to focus on teaching and learning."

Teachers' perceptions of the benefits of Read 180 included the motivational pieces built into the software and independent reading stations. "My students monitor their own progress [on Scholastic Reading Counts], and show pride in reaching the personal goals." The content on the software is engaging and the virtual facilitator, Ty, speaks to students and guides them to their next challenge. "I catch my high school students talking back to Ty. I know they think they are being funny, but it proves the level of engagement."

Research Question 4: *What suggestions or observation do teachers provide regarding the implementation of Read 180 in secondary classrooms?* Findings include the following: All 10 of the teachers expressed the need for professional development, access to all materials including ample, working computers, and a student management plan. The district and schools are responsible for supplying materials and hardware, but is the teacher's responsibility to establish policies, procedures, and expectations within each classroom.

In addition, all teachers were eager to share their perceptions of the benefits and challenges Read 180 offers struggling readers. All 10 teachers agreed that the materials, organization, and pacing of Read 180 were beneficial to struggling readers. "I think that the pace of Read180 is a good thing. It allows them to move forward but not be stagnant. Kind of at their own pace, but also moving them forward, allowing them to see the benefit of not wasting the time."

All of the teachers interviewed have experience in the use of Read 180 with secondary students, and all were willing to share the advice they would give to new Read 180 teachers. "I would say I know it's overwhelming with all of the resources and information and reporting that you have but just take it little by little. There's no way you're going to learn everything in this first year." Another teacher stated, "There are teachers who have been teaching it for ten years and they don't know everything. So just learn as you go, go to as many trainings as possible and be consistent with using the model."

Summary of Data Analysis

Data gathered from participants who agreed to participate in this study was analyzed. According to Merriam (2009), it is much more important to collect data from participants who are able to answer the research questions rather than the actual number of participants included in a case study. The 10 teachers interviewed were all experienced Read 180 teachers who have taught the program in secondary reading intervention classrooms. The teachers' years of experience in the program ranged from one to 14 years. After interviewing 10 participants, enough data was gathered to determine themes and answers for the research questions.

The research findings led to the creation of my project. Using the research questions as a guide I analyzed the data to determine themes, consequently determined that a project focused on a position paper would best serve all stakeholders. The position paper can be found in Appendix A. Once stakeholders are informed of the collected data, it is reasonable to expect actions will be taken to improve implementation of Read 180 in secondary reading classrooms. If appropriate actions are taken, there will exist the potential to reduce the problem of illiteracy in District A.

Rights of Participants

Participants' rights and confidentiality were preserved, including the right to deny participation and the right to withdraw at any time during the study. Participants were required to sign and return the consent form prior to participation in the study. Approval to conduct the study was obtained from District A where the study was conducted. Walden IRB approval was obtained prior to collecting any data. All phases of this study were managed in a professional and ethical manner and adhered to the requirements and standards of Walden University's Institutional Review Board.

Outcomes

Triangulation of the data revealed several themes. Listed below are the four outcomes that define actions District A should take to address the teachers' self-identified needs. The outcomes align to the research problem and questions and form the foundation for the position paper.

- Invest in all required materials including computers and headsets.
- Assist site administrators in limiting class size to 21, and in scheduling identified students in 90 minutes of daily reading intervention.
- Ensure that classrooms have the space, hardware, and furniture required for the Read 180 rotational model.
- Develop ongoing and targeted professional development and in class coaching for teachers to ensure that all aspects of Read 180 are utilized to their maximal potential.

Summary

This qualitative case study explored secondary reading intervention teachers' perceptions of Read 180 within District A. The participating district has struggled with obtaining reading gains for secondary students while at least one neighboring district has experiences excellent results using Read 180 in secondary reading classrooms. The study used simple random sampling. The participants had full knowledge about the purpose and nature of the study prior to beginning, and they were informed before filling out a consent form to participate. Protecting the identity and ensuring confidentially of the participants followed ethical research protocol.

Teachers were interviewed in order to better understand their perceptions of the use of Read 180 in their classrooms. Formation of themes and coding of content led to an analysis of the data. The analysis assisted in development of rich thick descriptions in narrative form. The study used interviews with high school reading teachers within the local school district and resulted in a position paper. Reliability and validity were obtained through verbatim transcriptions, field notes, and member checking (Creswell, 2003). In order to explore the teachers' perceptions of Read 180, inductive, and interpretative analysis was utilized. Data collection and data analysis methods, and ethical considerations were also described.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The purpose of this case study was to examine the perceptions of teachers implementing Read 180 in secondary reading classrooms. The project for this study is a position paper for District A. The purpose of the position paper is to provide the district with recommendations for improving the implementation of Read 180 in secondary reading classrooms in order to meet the districts goal of improving student achievement in reading. This section provides a literature review, a summary of the information revealed during data collection, and justification for and a description of the position paper found in Appendix A.

Description and Goals

The goals of the position paper reflect the findings from the research. The first goal of the position paper was to increase knowledge about the teachers' perceptions of the implementation of Read 180 in District A and of the potential Read 180 has for improving student achievement in reading. The findings of the study showed that teachers perceived successful implementation of Read 180 as a program or intervention that requires access to all necessary materials including classroom computers and headsets, proper placement of students, at least 90 minutes a day for instruction, and ample and ongoing professional development. Teachers acknowledged the research supporting the use of Read 180 in secondary classrooms and were aware of the success experienced in bordering districts. Participants relayed the need for more direct

professional development for Read 180 specifically for addressing classroom management, record keeping, and planning for teacher led, small group instruction. Data gathered in this study support the continued use of Read 180 and identify the needs of the teachers to improve its use and ultimately improve the effects of Read 180 on student academic improvement.

The second goal of the position paper was to implement the recommendations derived from the research in order to improve student achievement in reading. Read 180 is one of three selected reading intervention programs used in secondary reading classrooms in District A. Read 180 is used to serve the needs of the lowest performing students in grade nine. Research supports the positive correlation between implementation of an intervention program and student growth. The research findings support the need to improve the implementation of Read 180 in District A.

Rationale

The case study included a collection of interview data. The interview questions were aligned to the research questions that were derived from the review of the literature and focused on the critical aspects of implementation of an intervention program, adherence to the intervention, dosage of the intervention, quality of delivery, and participant responsiveness (Carroll et al., 2007). Section 2 of this study included the analysis of the data collected during the interviews and the use of member checking to validate the findings. The findings in Section 2 served as the foundation for the position paper required for this research study.

The research problem discussed in Section 1 indicates the need to increase reading proficiency for secondary students. The percentage of ninth grade students scoring at the proficient level in reading as measured by the state assessment is as follows: in 2011, 49%; in 2012, 48%; and in 2013, 53% (Florida Department of Education, 2013). This data indicates 47% or 6,285 ninth grade students are not able to read grade level text proficiently. The project should inform district leaders of what they need to know and do in order to address the identified problem.

Throughout the interviews and coding of data, I debated whether a professional development plan or a position paper would be most appropriate. The first and most recurring theme found in the data was a need for continued professional development to enhance quality of delivery, but as I continued to collect, code, and synthesize the data, multiple themes of equal importance emerged. I determined that an executive summary compiled as a position paper allows me to articulate all of the findings. I chose a position paper as the genre for this doctoral project.

 Position papers often elicit discussion on important topics and substantiate the expressed opinions or positions with evidence from the study (Powell, 2012). Position papers are used in educational settings to inform all stakeholders of solutions to a local problem. It is expected that the position paper will generate support for the problems identified (Powell, 2012). The position paper includes a description of the problem, the rationale for the position, and is based on facts that provide a solid argument. The position paper summarizes the findings of the study for all stakeholders. Teachers,

schools, and district leaders will be able to respond to the expressed needs of the teachers with specific and focused actions. The position paper is an effective way to communicate the research findings to all stakeholders because it includes a description of the problem, participants, and findings. Additionally the position paper provides recommendations to address the identified problem.

The position paper serves the purpose of this project better than a curriculum plan, evaluation report, or professional development plan. The study was not about evaluating a program or project. A curriculum plan or professional development plan would address a single aspect of the findings and would be shared with either the curriculum department or the professional development department. The findings of this study indicated a need for training and coaching teachers and for purchasing materials and additional reading teachers. The position paper includes a description of the problem and offers recommendations to address it (Powell, 2012).

Review of the Literature

The review of the literature focused on the creation and contents of the position paper. An explanation of the local problem, a summary of the data gathered, along with solutions and recommendations will be published in the position paper. Topics investigated in the literature review include the following: position papers, materials necessary for the Read 180 classroom, the importance of class size and instructional time in the Read 180 classroom, classroom space and furniture needed for the rotational model

in the Read 180 classroom, and the benefit of on-going professional development and coaching for enhanced implementation of Read 180.

Peer-reviewed articles were chosen and the following databases were used: EBSCOhost, ERIC, Education Research Complete, ProQuest Central, dissertation database, and What Works Clearing House. The following key search phrases were used: *position papers*, *The Read 180 model, materials necessary for the Read 180 classroom, the importance of class size and instructional time, and teacher training and support.* All articles were published within the last five years.

Position Paper

With the increase of immediate and electronic communication, the traditional position paper, or as technically referred the white paper, remains an excellent approach to communicating pertinent professional information (Newsom & Haynes, 2008). The white paper originated as a vehicle for communication of policy stances. The white paper must be well reasoned and well presented, and should be written to encourage support for an idea (Stelzner, 2005). A thorough position paper should include narratives of research data and examples. In the case of this position paper, it will be necessary to motivate the readers by connecting the information gathered to their subjective concerns (Kim & Grunig, 2011). The subjective concerns of my audience will include a desire to improve students' literacy skills as measured by state standardize test, and to better understand the role Read 180 can play in doing so. Instead of trying to sell an idea, the position paper will provide the readers with the teachers' firsthand perceptions of the use of Read 180

and will answer the concerns of the readers by offering recommendations.

Data gathered in this study supports the continued use of Read 180 and identifies the needs of the teachers to improve its use. Improved implementation has the potential to improve the effects of Read 180 on student academic improvement. Benefits of Read 180 and details to be included in the position paper were further investigated through a literature review.

The Read 180 Model

The Read180 instructional model is extremely structured and includes whole group, small group, independent group, and practice on the software. Whole group instruction is followed by the development of small groups based on student data collected from performance on standards based activities within the software portion of Read 180. Small groups rotate through three stations for teacher led, computer software, and independent learning. Scholastic has published decades of research to prove that Read 180 has the potential to result in significant learning gains for students (Scholastic, 2014). The newest version of Read 180 is the result of this research and the collaboration of experts in the field.

The rotational model for instruction includes 20 minutes each in whole group instruction, small group instruction, and instructional software.

1) Teachers begin the class by providing systematic instruction in reading skills and strategies, academic vocabulary, writing, and grammar to the whole class.

2) Using the *rBooks* and Resources for Differentiated Instruction, the

teacher works closely with students to meet their individual needs. The

NEW Groupinator accessible through the Teacher Dashboard recommends

groups based on data.

3) Students build fluency and reading comprehension skills through

modeled and independent reading.

4) Students use the adaptive software independently, providing them with

individualized practice in reading, spelling, vocabulary, and writing.

5) Teachers end the day with Whole-Group reflection, where students have the

opportunity to engage each other with what they have learned (Scholastic, 2014).

Materials Necessary for the Read 180 Classroom

Simply placing Read 180 in a classroom will not improve student achievement.

The teacher's perception or attitude toward implementation of the program may

significantly impact the degree to which the program is successful. Research supports the

critical role of teacher buy-in for successful implementation of a curriculum or a program

(Dusenbury, et.al. 2003). Use of data from successful implementations and from similar

student demographics strengthens teachers' belief in the program as a valuable tool in the

classroom.

Mansor et al. (2012) discussed the need for strong classroom management. It is

essential that teachers not only understand the needs of each student, but also manage

progress for each student as they work toward individual academic goals. Classroom

management goes far beyond compliance in the Read 180 classroom. Teachers must learn to manage multiple groups of students during the rotational model for instruction. While the teacher is working with a small teacher led group, there are two other groups working with little monitoring, computer software group and independent reading or practice group. Each of these groups must have accountability built in, but most importantly, students will need to be taught and practice the policies, processes, and procedures expected in the Read 180 classroom. Student training and management are critical to the success of any classroom and are critical to the success of the Read 180 classroom.

Materials necessary for a successful Read 180 implementation include computers for one-third of the class, headsets and microphones at each computer, an rBook for each student, eReads, a classroom library, and all of the teacher materials used to guide implementation. The rBook is used during whole and small group instruction and is organized into nine high-interest workshops. Teachers and students should work through the nine workshops within the school year. The rBook teacher's edition includes details on how to implement the contents of the rBook. Interactive Whiteboard lessons are included. The Read 180 eReads are online and can be accessed by students during independent reading or outside of the classroom. The collection includes 60 leveled text organized into 15 collections. In addition to the eReads, the Read 180 classroom should have a complete and varied collection of texts from which students can select a book to read during independent reading (Scholastic, 2014).

The Importance of Class Size and Instructional Time

The research design model for Read 180 stresses the need for students to be scheduled for 90 minutes of instruction a day and the optimal class size is 21 or fewer students. Academic gains are stronger for disadvantaged students including minorities and immigrants. Students are less likely to be retained and more likely to stay in school and earn better grades (Scholastic, 2014). In addition to academic gains, the *American Journal of Public Health* reported a correlation between reduced class size and reduced need for health and medical interventions. The Muenning and Woolf's article in the *American Journal of Public Health* (2007) stated that because students in smaller classes are more likely to graduate from high school, and high school graduates earn more, therefore, these students experience significantly better health than high school dropouts (Muenning and Woolf, 2007). This study provides additional evidence for the potential this study has for social change.

Teacher Training and Support

While Read 180 is proven to be an effective tool for improving the reading skills of secondary students, it is the teacher who has the greatest impact on student achievement. However, teachers do not always have a choice in the curriculum they will implement in their classrooms. Curriculum mandates usually come from the top down; this type of implementation does not include the teacher in the decision making process; it is essential that teachers have a voice in the transition (Weber, 2013). Professional development will increase teacher knowledge and as a result strengthen the

implementation (Spelman & Rohlwing, 2013). Teachers in this study expressed a desire for ongoing professional development and side-by-side coaching, and the research supports this level of support. Professional development should include theory, demonstration, practice, feedback, and side-by side coaching (Spelman & Rohlwing, 2013). Ongoing professional development, and measurements of not only student academic success but also teachers' success within the program will all work to strengthen the implementation of Read 180.

Implementation, Potential Resources and Existing Supports

Before conducting the study, I received permission from the director of Accountability Research and Assessment in District A. Because Read 180 is a district initiative and must be implemented in state mandated reading classrooms, my goal was to determine what is standing between the implementation and student success on the state standardized test. In addition to the support of the district, teachers agreed to cooperate in any way necessary to ensure their perceptions were captured and shared with leadership in order to enhance the district wide implementation of Read 180.

In order to address the four key findings outlined in the position paper, district leadership will need to be willing to invest financial and human resources. Existing resources will need to be considered and potential barriers will need to be identified. Existing resources and support include the district wide re-launch of Read 180. Some materials were purchased and professional development sessions are planned. The district Curriculum and Instruction department works to support the implementation.

Improvements can be made to the existing resources, and the Curriculum and Instruction team can work to fill the identified gaps in teacher preparation and classroom set up.

Potential Barriers

The only potential barrier is the resistance of district leadership in the distribution of the position paper to all stakeholders. District A my reject the findings of this study. The Accountability Research and Assessment department may decide to use this qualitative study to support quantitative data collected from Read 180. If the paper is shared, there is a slight risk of resistance from school administrators and teachers reluctant to implement Read 180. The study gleaned data from 10 secondary teachers. This number represents slightly less than 50% of the population of Read 180 teachers in the district's secondary schools. Therefore the findings presented in the position paper may be received as representative by some but not by all.

Proposal for Implementation

I will present my position paper to leadership including the Accountability Research and Assessment department within District A. After meeting with the audience to share my findings and answer any questions or concerns, I will distribute the position paper to all 19 traditional high schools within the school district via e-mail. The position paper will provide four specific recommendations for improving the implementation of Read 180.

Limit class size to 21. Beginning in late spring, assist site administrators in limiting class size to 21, and in scheduling identified students into 90 minutes of daily

reading intervention instruction. The research design model for Read 180 stresses the need for students to be scheduled for 90 minutes of instruction a day and the optimal class size is 21 or fewer students. There is data to support the positive correlation between class size and student academic improvement.

Provide required materials. Once schools have current student data to finalize master schedules, the resources and materials to serve all identified students should be determined and communicated to the appropriate district leadership. It is recommended that the district invest in all required materials including computers and headsets necessary to adhere to the researched Read 180 model prior to the start of school. Materials necessary for a successful Read 180 implementation include computers for one-third of the class, headsets and microphones at each computer, an rBook for each student, eReads, a classroom library, and all of the teacher materials used to guide implementation. The rBook is used during whole and small group instruction and is organized into nine high-interest workshops.

Ensure an environment to support the rotational model. Once master schedules are created and student data is confirmed, classroom assignments should be made. The Read180 classroom should include hardware stations for one-third of the students; comfortable independent reading stations, and an area for teacher led, small group instruction. The classroom requires ample space for movement and proper furniture placement. The Read180 instructional model is extremely structured and includes whole group, small group, independent group, and practice on the software.

Develop ongoing professional development. The district professional development and curriculum and instruction teams should continuously meet to develop a detailed plan for ongoing and targeted professional development and in class coaching for teachers to ensure that all aspects of Read 180 are utilized to their maximum potential. Professional development will increase teacher knowledge and as a result strengthen the implementation (Spelman & Rohlwing, 2013). Ongoing professional development, and measurements of not only student academic success but also teachers' success within the program will all work to strengthen the implementation of Read 180.

Roles and Responsibilities

The final aspect of the project description is to identify the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders who will be involved in implementation of the recommendations. The broad range of needs will require the involvement of several departments within the district. Senior leadership will be involved in all decision-making regarding expenditures.

The recommendations outlined in the position paper are broad and include the efforts of many people. School based administrators, reading coaches, teachers, students, and parents will all be intimately involved in implementation of the recommendations. District leadership will be involved in district wide decision making and purchasing of hardware, software, and materials.

Limit class size to 21. The Assistant Principal for Instruction (API) is responsible for creating the school wide master schedule for teachers and students. However, a team

of coaches, additional assistant principals, and teacher leaders may be involved in formulating the master schedule. The school Principal has the final word and approves the final master schedule for the school. Therefore, the responsibility is shared among leaders at each school

Provide required materials. Ultimately, the school Principal is responsible for ordering curricular materials, classroom furniture, and technological hardware and software for all teachers and students. The Principal may include subject specific teacher leaders in determining what needs to be purchased for the school.

Ensure an environment to support the rotational model. Again the API assigns classrooms as part of creating the master schedule for the school. Close attention should be given to the selection of classrooms for Read 180. The Read 180 classroom requires room for three rotations and movement among them. Furniture for the Read 180 classroom is uniquely different form the traditional classroom. It includes a table for small group, teacher led instruction, floor space for comfortable independent reading, and computer stations for one-third of the class to be on the computer software at a time.

Develop ongoing professional development. A professional development plan will need to be a collaborative effort among the professional development and team, the curriculum and instruction team, and the Scholastic support team. A timeline for implementation of specific trainings and coaching sessions should be created in the spring for the following school year. The plan should include a rigorous summer professional development plan to train all new Read 180 teachers and coaches.

Project Evaluation

Type of Evaluation

A goal-based evaluation will work best for this project. The goal of my position paper is to improve the critical aspects of implementation of Read 180 with emphasis on the data collected during interviews with Read 180 teachers. The process of goal-based evaluation fits perfectly into the district's existing systems for decision-making. The district's Accountability, Research and Assessment department compiles data to be analyzed in a variety of ways in order to inform the district's financial decisions including which curriculum materials should be purchased, what professional development should be provided, how many reading teachers are funded for each school, and the technological infrastructure and hardware needs at each school. The findings of my research informed the recommendations in the position paper; the recommendations in the position paper align to the superintendent's goals for student achievement; and the district's financial decisions are made in order to fulfill the student achievement goals. The stakeholders of the project will be responsible for initiating the goals and implementing plans associated with achieving them. This will include a commitment of resources and monitoring of implementation and effectiveness.

A goal-based evaluation method will be used to determine the desired outcomes of the project and compare the new outcomes to previous conditions. This evaluation method will allow all stakeholders to work in unison and monitor the extent to which the project's recommendations affect improved student achievement in the area of reading.

The evaluation process will further develop the Read 180 program in place and ultimately help the district to determine if it should continue to be implemented.

Evaluation of the implementation of the four recommendations will be conducted by measuring goals at mid-year, and at the end of the school year. Determining performance measurements and monitoring student progress will provide feedback to all stakeholders. Leadership will be able to use data collected within the program to monitor student time on task and improvement in reading comprehension. Teachers and coaches will be able to use the data to monitor students' progress toward academic goals and to plan for targeted reading interventions. Each aspect of the recommendations will be assigned to specific stakeholders who are accountable for implementing, monitoring, and maintaining the critical aspect of implementation of Read 180. Mid-year and end-of-year data will supply outcome data and will be included in the evaluation process to determine the effects of Read 180 on student academic growth (Hardy and Meyer-Griffith, 2012).

Goals of the Project

Measurable goals, expenditures, and outcomes can be created for each of the four recommendations included in the position paper. For example, the change in students' reading comprehension will be measured by formative assessments within the program. Another example would be taken from observational data and would include a checklist to be sure the classroom is will equipped with necessary materials, hardware, software, and classroom furniture. A third example is the effect of professional development on teacher performance. This data will be collected through teacher participation and

correlated to student growth data collected within the reading program. The relationship between the goals and the desired results will need to be determined.

Evaluation Goals

The goal of the position paper is to create and maintain a plan for successful implementation of Read 180 in order to best serve the needs of remedial reading students in secondary classrooms. The research problem, questions, data analysis, and literature determined the recommended actions outlined in the position paper. The ultimate goal of the project is to improve the implementation of Read 180 and potentially improve students' literacy skills. Reports within the Read 180 program can be used to monitor progress by measuring changes in students' reading comprehension skills. Therefore the project can be evaluated by the amount of student growth exhibited.

Key Stakeholders

Presentation of the position paper to administrators and other stakeholders will ensure they are all aware of the teachers' perceptions of Read 180 including the materials and support teachers need to enhance implementation and student success in the program. In addition, school board members, community partners, and parents will all gain a better understanding of what is taking place within the classrooms, along with the time and effort committed to promoting success of all students, regardless of their diversities. Stakeholders include those who implement the recommendations and make decisions about purchasing materials and also the people affected by the actions taken.

Administrators, coaches, teachers, students, parents and district leaders are all

stakeholders in this implementation.

Implications Including Social Change

The position paper addresses the challenges evident in the data collected during

teacher interviews. The position paper outlines four recommendations to improve the

implementation of Read 180. These recommendations echo the research findings. This

project provides all stakeholders with new knowledge on the successful use of Read 180.

The director of the district's Accountability Research and Assessment (ARA) department

granted approval for this study and has remained in communication with me throughout

the study. The completed study and position paper will be shared with the director of

ARA. The ARA department has agreed to assist me in dissemination of the position

paper in order to promote open communication and accessibility to the research and data

collected during the study. Offers to present the findings and the position paper in its

entirety will be extended to the district's school board, the superintendent's cabinet,

district and school leaders, instructional coaches, and teachers. Presentations may be done

face-to-face utilizing PowerPoint, via Safari Live as a webinar, or in writing. Presentation

delivery will be flexible to the needs of the audience. The ARA department anticipates

they will utilize the qualitative data collected during this study in conjunction with the

quantitative results of Read 180 gathered by the department.

The findings of the study and the position paper have the potential to influence the

district, school, and teacher level decisions on the use of Read 180. Recommendations

provided in the position paper could prove effective and consequently benefit other Read 180 teachers, increasing student achievement, and contributing to the existing literature on Read 180. Additionally, this study has the potential to promote positive social change for students as district leaders work with coaches and teachers to enhance the implementation of Read 180 with the goal of improving the literacy skills of underperforming students. Improved literacy skills will inevitably improve graduation rates, the number of students who graduate college and career ready and ultimately improve the socio-economic status of individual students.

This study has the potential to have significant implications for social change. Successful implementation of Read 180 has been proven to improve students' academic achievement in reading. Students will have increased opportunities to experience academic success and improve basic literacy skills. The findings of this study and subsequent project will have the potential of being significant in the following ways: (a) meeting the needs of struggling readers by developing the literacy skills necessary to be successful in all course work, (b) increasing the percentage of students meeting graduation requirements, thereby increasing the graduation rate, and (c) preparing students for college and careers. A college and career ready student is armed with the skills to compete in the global market and therefore has increased potential to improve his or her individual socio-economic status.

Conclusion

Read 180 is a researched and proven reading intervention program. International, national, and local research exists to support the use of Read 180 to improve the literacy skills of secondary students. All of the teachers interviewed expressed a desire to continue use of Read 180, and openly shared what they need to do a better job with implementation. A position paper will offer the perspectives of the teachers on the use of Read 180 in secondary reading classrooms. The paper will be shared with all stakeholders including the school board, administrators, and district leadership and will make public the official beliefs and recommendations of the teachers. My reflections and conclusion for this study will be detailed in Section 4.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

The purpose of this case study was to examine the perceptions of secondary reading teachers currently implementing Read 180 in ninth grade reading classrooms. Section 4 includes my reflections on the process of conducting this study along with my role as a scholar, practitioner, and researcher. Suggestions for future research are identified. Benefits of the study include the communication of a clear message to district and school leadership regarding the use of Read 180 and the need for professional development to strengthen the implementation; teachers' questions and concerns were heard and a plan to address those questions and concerns is presented in the position paper in Appendix A.

Project Limitations

Potential limitations include the financial burden to the school district and reluctant teachers who fail to change curriculum and instruction within their classrooms. Using teachers and coaches within the district for training could alleviate some of the financial burden. In addition, trainings could take place during non-student time and be considered voluntary for the teachers. Teachers could receive training during planning time and on early release Wednesdays. To encourage reluctant teachers to participate, administrators and coaches could arrange for a rotation of teachers to observe each other during instruction, a formal Professional Learning Community for reading teachers could

be established, and teachers could be provided with 24/7 on-demand professional development via podcast of prior trainings and demonstration lessons.

Scholarship

Through the development of the project study, I have not only gained a deeper understanding of Read 180 and reading instruction in general, but also I have been able to meet with individual teachers and support them by listening, recording, and following up on their questions and concerns. During the interviews, teachers were able to share their successes and their challenges with me, and in doing so, increased my understanding of the practical implications of Read 180, high school reading students, and the professional development needs of the teachers. I realize now how these teachers feel about the mandated use of Read 180, and how that alone is an obstacle to good implementation. I am hopeful that once I share the results of the study and the project, teachers will feel as if we are in this together and that they are a critical part of the solution to meet the needs of all struggling readers.

Project Development and Evaluation

My research project was selected to assist teachers in strengthening the use of Read 180 in ninth grade remedial reading classrooms, as well as to prepare District A to properly support teachers using Read 180. Developing the position paper helped me to clearly see the needs of the teachers and to articulate recommendations to meet the teachers' needs to leadership. As a result, teachers felt supported, administrators received clear direction, and the potential exist for students to experience improved academic

achievement in reading. The interviewees provided ample information to support the need for ongoing professional development for teachers, coaches, and administrators, including in-class support and regular communication among Read 180 teachers. Evaluation of the project will come in the form of feedback from teachers, coaches, and administrators. Initially, I will review responses to individual professional development sessions. In addition, I will follow up with open-ended questions for participating Read 180 teachers.

Leadership and Change

My personal scholarship began the first day of my first class with Walden University. Each course, each activity, and each discussion has prepared me for where I am today in this process. During my course work, I was challenged to become a researcher. Walden provided adequate resources to make that happen, including guidance in critical thinking, researching multiple databases including Google Scholar, writing, revising, and ultimately accepting feedback from my professors. Each course in the program offered specific knowledge of the research project and required application of that new knowledge. At the heart of this study is the knowledge and application of research designs and methodologies. One of the most difficult concepts for me to grasp was the conceptual framework for my study. When course work and application were not enough for my full understanding, my professors welcomed one-on-one chats or phone conversation until I fully understood. Data collection and analysis were new concepts for me; I have been a practitioner for years relying heavily on the research of others. Now I

am a researcher and have the potential to lend assistance to the next generation of educators.

Developing and conducting this study taught me a great deal about being a researcher. As a curriculum and instruction leader, and as someone who had witnessed the power of Read 180, I was driven to study why the district mandated program was not producing the expected and desired results for students. I discussed the possibility of this study with the director of Assessment Research and Accountability (ARA) in order to gain approval to conduct the study in District A. My association with the department had been minimal prior to the study. Since conducting the study, I am facilitating discussions on the use of data, the need for specific types of data, and end of course assessments recently mandated by the Florida Department of Education across departments and with individual school sites. ARA has recently become a major player in the lives of teachers, as end of year assessments will weigh heavily on their evaluations and pay. It is timely for curriculum and instruction to forge a strong relationship and a deeper of understanding of assessment. This high stakes testing situation creates stress for most educators and presents an opportunity for curriculum and instruction leaders to guide and support teachers toward success.

Analysis of Self as Scholar

A scholar is one who conducts an advanced study in a particular field. By definition, I am a scholar. My growth throughout the project study has proven to be life altering. I sought out this opportunity in order to grow as a scholar, and the experience

has accomplished the goal. I earned my master's degree in 2004, and I have served as a teacher leader and mentor, and district administrator since then. I love my profession. Achieving the highest degree available will allow me to be a true mentor and model for those in my profession, as well as students. In particular, I am now well equipped to guide others in their own research and discovery. Identifying gaps in education, researching what works, and helping others to implement good tools and best practices is a scholarly way of leading and creating positive change. I am ready to get started.

Analysis of Self as Practitioner and Project Developer

I am a life-long learner, and now I desire to guide others to become life-long learners too. With the new Common Core State Standards, End of Course Assessments, and new teacher evaluation models, teachers are facing unprecedented change and discomfort. In fact teachers are leaving the profession because of the stress. Many feel inadequate, criticized, and rarely supported. I have a rejuvenated desire to face the challenges head on and step in to take action to meet the needs of our teachers, coaches and administrators. In fact, I feel like I am armed to help save a few good teachers from burn out and despair. Development of the project has given me the experience and thus the confidence to believe I can research problems and deliver projects to meet the diverse and critical needs of the members of the profession I love.

Implications for Social Change

Earning the highest level of education will open doors for me, but it is the application of my new knowledge that will effect change. Among the many mandates and

legislative decision made by those outside of the profession of education, most trickle down to the classroom teacher. Many times these mandates come with little or no explanation or input on the part of the individual required to fulfill the mandates. Teachers often feel hopeless creating a less than positive environment for professional growth or student achievement. The implementation of Read 180 in the ninth grade remedial reading classes came as a mandate without teachers' choice. Teachers felt discounted and quickly became frustrated with the lack of support to implement the required program. By addressing the teachers' needs, the classroom environments are bound to improve. Improved reading classrooms will lead to improved student achievement.

Potential implications of this study are an improved understanding of the teachers' perceptions of Read 180 and identification of the challenges teachers face during implementation. Understanding what stands between a strong, research based, intervention program and student success may lead to solutions and ultimately to improved student achievement (Lang et al., 2009). The findings and subsequent project produced by this study have the potential for social change by improving instruction in remedial reading classes which in turn would increase literacy skills, graduation rates, and the number of students graduating college and career ready. A college and career ready student is armed with the skills to compete in the global market and therefore has increased potential to improve his or her individual socio-economic status.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

Read 180 is a tool used in reading classrooms to help students improve reading fluency and comprehension. The literature and data support implementation and validate success for students who complete a year in the program. Teachers are familiar with the Read 180 program, but they lack a deep understanding of the program, its potential, and portions of the rotational model for instruction required in the Read 180 classroom. While the teachers in this study have attempted to use Read 180 in their classrooms, few have experienced the desired results as measured by student achievement and classroom observations. The study's findings and resulting project may provide support for future teachers within District A and wherever Read 180 is being used. Future research may include the effectiveness of actions taken in response to the position paper.

Conclusion

Section 4 has provided an opportunity to reflect on my growth as a scholar, a practitioner, and a project developer. I have also assessed the strengths of my project, what benefits the project has to offer, and how I changed as a leader. In this section I have taken a closer look at the value of my project's effect on social change and future research. Completion of this project represents the culmination of many years of experience, study, and research and is proof that I have learned and applied the skills need to effect positive social change.

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Read 180 in the Secondary Reading Intervention Classroom

Recommendations for successful implementation

Walden Univerity

A Position Paper by Melanie Cleveland

Introduction

Among the educational challenges in the 21st Century, students are expected to graduate from our high schools prepared to compete globally. Careers are more specialized, and jobs available to high school graduates require higher levels of education and training than ever before. Colleges demand higher scores for entrance, and the number of students requiring remediation upon entering college is increasing (ACT, 2013). The increasing number of students graduating from high school without the necessary college and career readiness skills puts an entire generation at risk. Unless U.S. students are able to compete globally, the current generation risks facing a decline in economic status as compared to their parents and grandparents (ACT, 2013). Without basic literacy skills, students have little or no hope of providing a living for themselves, much less their families. The combination of high expectations for college and career readiness and the increase in post-secondary illiteracy generates enormous economical and societal concerns (Cassidy, Valadez, Garrett, & Barrera 2010).

Existing Problem

District A has experienced stagnate reading scores over the past three years. The percentage of ninth grade students scoring at the proficient level in reading as measured by the state assessment is as follows: in 2011, 49%; in 2012, 48%; 2013, 53%, and in 2014, 52% (Florida Department of Education, 2013). This data indicates 48% of or 6,285 of the current ninth grade students are not able to read grade level text proficiently.

In addition to the low percentage of ninth grade students scoring at the proficient level on the state assessment, the local graduation rate of 79% (Florida Department of Education, 2013) indicates that 21% of students entering ninth grade are not graduating on time from high school. Among the challenges students face in meeting Florida graduation requirements, the inability to demonstrate evidence of sufficient literacy skills proves to be the most problematic. Tenth grade is a benchmark year in the State of Florida. Students are required to obtain a pre-determined proficiency score on the state assessment as one of the graduation requirements. When students do not score at the proficient level in 10th grade, the students are required to retake the state assessment each semester until the required score is obtained. The FCAT 2014 results show that only 20% of local twelfth grade students were successful in a final attempt to demonstrate proficiency in reading (Florida Department of Education, 2013). Students who do not demonstrate proficiency will not graduate. The failure of these students to perform at a proficient level and their failure to graduate results in the district not meeting the requirements of the U.S. Department of Education's No Child Left Behind Act (U.S. Department of Education The lack of literacy skills is the primary contributor to the dropout rate nationwide (Perin, 2013). Nearly six million U.S. high school students read grade level, and 3,000 students drop out of high schools every day (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). These staggering statistics create a sense of urgency and demand educators to respond in a responsible way. Students entering secondary education without

the necessary literacy skills to be successful in their academic courses have little chance of becoming college and career ready (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006).

Literacy concerns reach far beyond high school. A review of studies conducted since the 1970s produced evidence that there has been a steady increase in the percentage of underprepared postsecondary students (ACT Inc., 2013). In 1987, Johnston and Packer determined that 15% of people over the age of 18 could not properly write a check or understand written instructions for operating machinery. In 1988, the Secretary of Labor expressed concern that 20% of high school graduates could not read their own diplomas (Johnston & Packer, 1987). ACT, Inc. (2013) described even more troubling trends by reporting that only 25% of students who took the ACT demonstrated college readiness in all four subjects, English, Reading, Mathematics, and Science (ACT College Readiness, 2013). Figure 1 below shows the percentage of students scoring below the bar of college readiness as measured by ACT Inc. (2013).
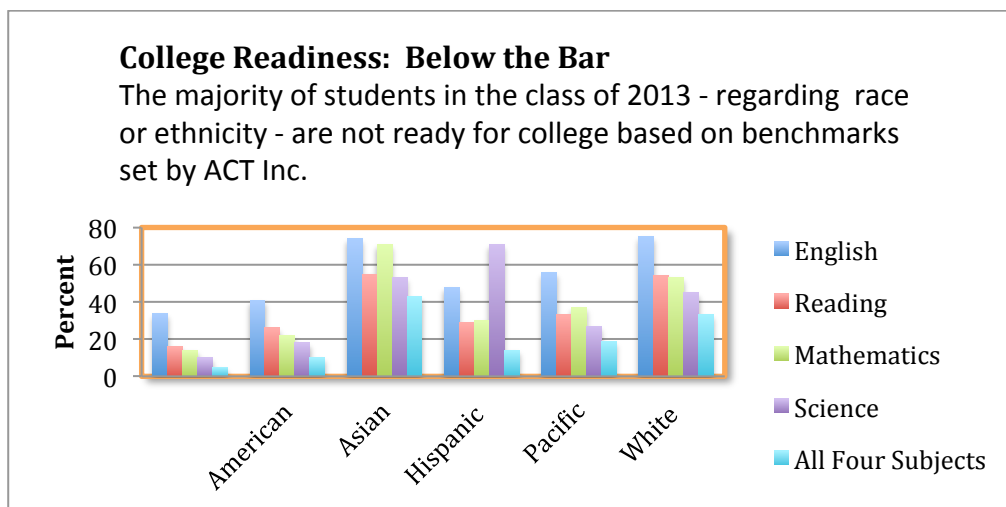
Source: ACT, Inc., 2013

Figure 1: College readiness: Below the bar

According to the Center for Community College Student Engagement (2010), 27% of community college students are receiving remedial support in reading. Students graduate from high school without the skills and knowledge for collegiate success. Jenkins, Boswell, and Education Commission of the States (2002) declared that for decades, community colleges have acted as open door institutions allowing remediation courses to be offered to students who are not prepared for college level work. Students enroll in developmental level courses at community colleges, pay the regular tuition, and do not receive credit for the courses. Each year this number increases, and fewer and fewer of these students continue to complete a post- secondary degree. Nearly half of all freshmen enrolled in public community colleges register for at least one remedial course (Attewell, Lavin, Domina, & Levey, 2006). The remedial courses are intended for students who have not proven through standardized tests to be college ready (Attewell, Lavin, Domina, & Levey, 2006). According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 62% of twelfth graders scored below proficiency in reading (National Assessment Governing Board, 2013). Wang (2012) declared illiteracy a national epidemic.

In order to address these concerns, the district has purchased three reading intervention programs. Scholastic's Read 180 is in place to serve District A's lowest performing students in ninth grade with the intent to improve the literacy skills they need to be successful on standardized tests, in core content classrooms, and ultimately in life.

Summary of Research Findings

Through simple random sampling, 10 teachers were invited to participate in the study, and all 10 agreed. The teachers interviewed have experiences teaching Read 180 that range from 1–14 years. Interviewing teachers from this group allowed me to glean information from their experiences with and perceptions of Read 180 in the reading classroom. Interviews were conducted one-on-one at a time and location convenient for the interviewees. The interview questions were aligned to the study's research questions. Member checking followed completion of the interviews and allowed time for the interviewees to confirm narratives produced from interview data. The transcriber for this study signed a confidentiality agreement and worked diligently to ensure each participant's privacy and confidentiality and provided me with verbatim transcripts from the interviews. I studied the transcripts in order to code data and identify themes. The case study findings and their relationships to the research questions led to the development of this position paper.

Research Question 1: Teachers' Perceptions of Available Resources

The majority of participating teachers expressed appreciation for access to all necessary resources, and do not believe anything else is needed to supplement the Read 180 curriculum. However 2 of the 10 interviewees shared a less than perfect experience. Two teachers were concerned about the lack of necessary materials and resources. Teacher 2 explained that one teacher received all materials and resources, and that she was told by administration to just put the students on the computer software in her room.

"There were two of us. The other teacher got all the stuff, and they told me just to put the kids on the computers. It took too long to get it on the computers, to get the headsets to do it." Without daily access to the student and teacher resources, it was impossible for this teacher to use the program with fidelity. Teacher 9 reported a similar situation. In addition to being expected to share student and teacher resources with a teacher located in an adjoining classroom, the teacher was also expected to utilize multiple programs within the same class period. "This caused confusion for the students." In addition, the teacher had to improvise, create her own stations, and determine how to best blend multiple curriculums. Teacher 2 and 9 are both cases of improper implementation of Read 180 due to a lack of access to required materials. While teacher 9 expressed that she was pleased with her students' FCAT results, she acknowledged that teachers who received all materials and implemented Read 180 on model had greater student gains on FCAT.

Most participants agreed there is a need for more and reliable computers and headsets within their Read 180 classrooms. Site based servers and older hardware prevented consistent use of the program for seven of the 10 teachers interviewed. Teachers expressed a need to receive updated hardware and access to immediate tech support. In some cases, large class size played a role. In order to implement Read 180 on model, teachers need enough computer stations for one-third of their students. If a class has 21 students, the classroom needs seven computers. In 3 of the 10 cases, the teachers' classrooms did not have an adequate number of computers.

It is necessary for the district and the schools to work together to supply the hardware, software, and materials needed for implementation of the program. Schools' master schedules should allow for at least 90 minutes of daily instruction and class size should not exceed 21 students. Teacher 8 stated, "I believe the assistant principal for instruction finds scheduling very difficult and therefore does not schedule all Level 1 students into a double block of Read 180 as requested by the district. I have classes of Read 180 students who receive 45-50 minutes of instruction daily as opposed to the required 90 minutes daily." District and school leadership must work together to determine the funding needed to support the number of highly qualified reading teachers required at each site, and then monitor the use of the funds to hire the teachers. Nearly half of the teachers interviewed reported having less than 90 minutes a day with their Read 180 students. Some students were scheduled for 45 minutes daily. The 45 minutes a day schedule cuts the intervention time in half, and therefore, these students will not have the required time on the software to make the expected gains. Adherence to the program is defined as whether "a program service or intervention is being delivered as it was designed or written" (Carroll et al., 2007, p. 1). Adherence to an intervention must be measured for a variety of reasons. The district has a fiscal responsibility, as well as a responsibility to the students in the program to monitor the effect of the intervention on the students' academic progress and the degree to which intervention programs are implemented according to the creator's intent (Carroll et al., 2007).

Research Question 2: Teachers Perceptions of Their Preparedness

The secondary Read 180 teachers participating in the study revealed inconsistency in the level of support and professional development they have received in order to be properly prepared to implement Read 180. All of the teachers interviewed have received initial training during a 2-day getting started workshop. However, 3 teachers did not receive the training until after the start of the school year due to the fact that they did not know they were teaching Read 180 until the week of pre-planning. Once they received the 2-day getting started they were able to begin implementing the program properly. All teachers expressed a need for ongoing professional development, coaching, and support to ensure they continue to improve their use of all aspects of the program. Specifically, teachers are eager to learn more about the use of reports found within Read 180. Four teachers interviewed expressed the need to have assistance in setting up classrooms at the beginning of the school year.

In a study conducted by Lang et al. (2009), the evaluators paid close attention to professional development teachers received including assigning a project manager and using school based reading coaches to monitor and support teachers' implementation of a reading intervention program. Fidelity of implementation checklists was created and teachers were trained in their use. Reading gains for the students in the intervention groups were compared to each other. However, the study did not include classrooms where fidelity of implementation was lacking due to the belief that if a program is not implemented according to the researched model, the desired outcomes will not be evident in the data (Lang et al., 2009).

A key factor to successful implementation includes follow up teacher professional development. During the follow up sessions experts and coaches review the implementation rubric with the teachers and encourage their use of data to drive instructional practices. The data points focus on adherence to the researched model. (Century, Rudnick, & Freeman, 2010). Successful implementation of any new instructional strategy or curriculum material requires the following: dedicated and focused leadership, appropriate scheduling for student placement, and ample offerings for professional development (Century, Rudnick, & Freeman, 2010).

Research Question 3: Teachers Perceptions of Student Benefits

Teachers participating in the study reveal their perceived benefits of the use of Read 180 in secondary reading classrooms include increased student engagement, and improved comprehension skills for students. The majority of the teachers interviewed talked about their appreciation for the structure Read 180 provides for the teacher and the students. Teachers specifically noted the importance of structure in maintaining classroom management and engagement. Teacher 5 said, "Behavior concerns just don't exist in this structured environment. I train my students how to move through the rotations." Other perspectives support this statement and included the following: "The consistency within the software is reassuring to students." "The environment overall becomes less stressful allowing teachers and students to focus on teaching and learning."

Teachers' perceptions on the benefits of Read 180 include the motivational pieces built into the software and independent reading stations. "My students monitor their own

progress [on Scholastic Reading Counts], and show pride in reaching the personal goals."

The content on the software is engaging and the virtual facilitator, Ty, speaks to students

and guides them to their next challenge. "I catch my high school students talking back to

Ty. I know they think they are being funny, but it proves the level of engagement."

Melekoglu (2011) investigated the impact of student motivation on reading gains.

Lack of motivation has proven to be a challenge worth studying (Melekoglu, 2011). The

students studied received structured, research-based, daily instruction. The impact of

motivation was analyzed and results indicated a significant correlation between

improvement in reading scores and student motivation. Students with lower motivation

did not typically demonstrate successful completion of reading activities (Prochnow,

Tunmer, & Chapman, 2013). Improved motivation to read, increased reading

competency, and student motivation play a role in the effectiveness of reading

interventions (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006). Logically, if a student is motivated to read, he

or she will read more, and simply by reading more the student has great potential of

improving his or her comprehension skills.

Further findings by Melekoglu (2011) included the Adolescent Motivation to

Read Survey, which included 20 items to assess student motivation to read. The survey

assessed the students' self-efficacy and the value the student personally places on the

ability to comprehend text. The results of the survey showed that the correlations between

reading gains and motivation to read for students without disabilities were significant

(Melekoglu, 2011).

In addition to student motivation is teacher motivation. The teacher's perception or attitude toward the program being implemented may significantly impact the degree to which the program is successful. The research supports the critical role of a teacher's beliefs on successful implementation of a curriculum or a program. In addition, teacher input greatly enhances teacher buy-in (Stauffer, Heath, Coyne, & Ferrin, 2012). In order to gain teacher buy-in, teachers need to be informed of the students' needs based on data, the research supporting the use of the program or intervention, and the evidence of positive academic gains with students similar to their own. (Stauffer, Heath, Coyne, & Ferrin, 2012).

Recommendations

Listed below are four recommendations for strengthening the implementation of Read 180 in the district's secondary reading classrooms:

- Invest in all required materials including computers and headsets necessary to adhere to the researched Read 180 Model.

- Assist site administrators in limiting class size to 21, and in scheduling identified students into 90 minutes of daily reading intervention instruction.

- Ensure that classrooms have the space, hardware, and furniture required for the Read 180 rotational model.

- Develop ongoing and targeted professional development and in class coaching for teachers to ensure that all aspects of Read 180 are utilized to their maximum potential.

Local Research to Support Recommendations

Students in Read 180 classrooms in a neighboring district exceeded expected

yearly growth on FCAT in reading. The study in the neighboring district examined

growth for 1,333 secondary students who had 2009 and 2010 FCAT scores. Reading

intervention students in the experimental group exceeded the expected growth on the

FCAT. Moreover, students in the same group surpassed the state and district growth on

the FCAT. The results can be seen below in figure 1. The blue bar represents the gains of

students within the district participating in a Read 180 classroom. The red bar represents

the expected growth. The green bar represents statewide average growth for all students.

The Purple bar represents district-wide average growth for all students.
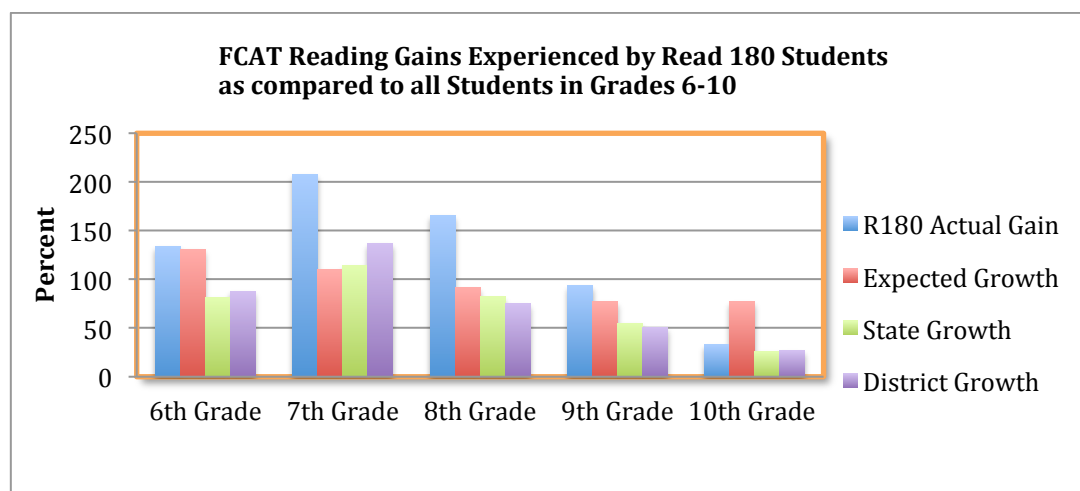

Figure2: FCAT Reading Gains Experienced by Read 180 Students (Scholastic, 2014)

Research from the Literature to Support Recommendations

Materials Necessary for the Read 180 Classroom. Materials necessary for a

successful Read 180 implementation include computers for one-third of the class,

headsets and microphones at each computer, an rBook for each student, eReads, and a classroom library. The rBook is used during whole and small group instruction and is organized into nine high-interest workshops. Teachers and students should work through the nine workshops within the school year. The rBook teacher's edition includes details on how to implement the contents of the rBook. Interactive Whiteboard lessons are included. The Read 180 eReads are online and can be access by students during independent reading or outside of the classroom. The collection includes 60 leveled text organized into 15 collections. In addition to the eReads, the Read 180 classroom should have a complete and varied collection of texts from which students can select a book to read during independent reading (Scholastic, 2014). In order to implement the program as prescribed by the creator and therefore achieve ultimate results, each teacher and student must have access to all resources and materials

The Importance of Class Size and Instructional Time. The research design model for Read 180 includes 90 minutes of instruction a day and the optimal class size is 21 or fewer students (Scholastic, 2014). In addition to academic gains, Muenning and Woolf's article in the *American Journal of Public Health* (2007) compared reduced class size to a reduced need for public health and medical interventions. The study stated that because students in smaller classes are more likely to graduate from high school, and high school graduates earn more, these students experience significantly better health than high school dropouts (Muenning and Woolf, 2007). This study provides additional evidence to the potential this study has for social change.

Teacher Training and Support. While Read 180 is proven to be an effective tool, it is the teacher who has the greatest impact on student achievement. Curriculum mandates usually come from the top down; this type of implementation does not include the teacher in the decision making process; it is essential that teachers have a voice in the transition. The teachers' voices are heard in the research findings of this study. Additionally, professional development will increase teacher knowledge and as a result strengthen the implementation. Teachers in this study expressed a desire for ongoing professional development and side-by-side coaching, and the research supports this level of support. Professional development should include theory, demonstration, practice, feedback, and side-by side coaching (Spelman & Rohlwing, 2013). Ongoing professional development and its effect on student academic growth will all work to strengthen the implementation of Read 180.

<div align="center">**Conclusion**</div>

Read 180 is a researched and proven reading intervention program. International, national, and local research exists to support the use of Read 180 to improve the literacy skills of secondary students. All of the teachers interviewed in this case study expressed a desire to continue the use of Read 180, and all participants openly shared what they need in order to maximize the potential of the program. Teachers expressed a need for access to all materials, and ample space and time to implement the program as prescribed. This means a room set up for teacher led small group instruction, independent reading, and computer stations where students engage in the Scholastic Read 180 software. The

prescribed structure requires 90 minutes of daily instruction in order to achieve maximum student academic progress. Creators of the program suggest a class size limit of 21. Additionally, teachers expressed a need for ongoing professional development and support. Attention to these critical aspects of the implementation of Read 180 in reading intervention classrooms could significantly improve teacher and program performance and therefore, has the potential to improve students' academic success as measured by state and national assessments.

The district has a practice of establishing goals and requesting funds to support the goals. This process includes research, discussions, and approvals. In most cases, such as a request to purchase hardware or curriculum materials, a formal proposal justifies the financial investment. Senior leadership approval is needed prior to making the purchase. This decision making process is always aligned to the district goals set by the superintendent and the school board. Establishing action steps for each goal will ensure that progress toward meeting the goal is purposeful and monitored for effectiveness. The district's goals are shared electronically across all departments allowing for strategic collaboration. This position paper has focused on the specific goal of increasing student achievement in reading. The goal can be obtained if the research-based recommendations for improving the district wide implementation of Read 180 are followed. The outcomes of the goal will be evaluated in order to determine the results of implemented recommendations.

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Appendix B: Sample Interview Transcript

1. How is the implementation going for you and your students?
    Initially it was challenging because there were so many materials to choose from, but once we got the hang of the program the students flowed through it quite easily. They understood the routine, there were supplemental materials for me to use for myself and for the students. It proved to be quite effective at the point where we started.

2. Is your classroom equipped with the materials necessary for proper implementation of Read 180? Explain.
    Yes. At that time I had four computer stations, we had the kit, the READ180 kit with all the books and the passages and all of the materials that we needed were there. The only challenge we faced occasionally were server problems, but other than that, yes all the materials were there.

3. Are supplementary materials needed in the Read 180 classroom and if so, what is missing?
    I think now we need a greater component of the reading tools that are there for more independent reading and more guided reading; something that would allow the children to come together on a more specific note, not so generic. So I think as the program has progressed, it's a lot more specific now than it was when I first started.

4. What professional development have you received and when did you receive it?
   During the summer, but some during the school when I initially started. I was trained during the school and then I received subsequent trainings after during the program. Not very much training in how to read the reports, but more so on the implementation of the program.

5. What professional development do you need and why?
   More information on how to run reports, what to do with the reports afterwards, and how to use the reports to create the small groups that are necessary to move the children forward. Sometimes we got the information, we had it and we used it to the best that we could, but I think it could have been utilized much better if we knew how.

6. How do you measure the effectiveness of Read 180 in your classroom?
   The computer testing component helped a lot, because the computer would test them on comprehension and spelling and different types of word parts and then it would generate that report which would give us a "grade" so-to-speak, that was equivalent to what we graded, but a lot of times it was difficult to grade them based on the program because, just getting the data from the computer initially didn't generate a grade report, it just told us where they were strong and where they were weak. Very generically. But now it's a lot more specific as to where they are, where they struggle and what we can do to fix it, as well.

7. Describe the benefits or challenges Read 180 offers struggling readers in your reading classroom.
   I think that the pace of READ180 is a good thing. It allows them to move forward but not be stagnant. Kind of at their own pace, but also moving them forward, allowing them to see the benefit of not wasting the time, the physical time now, or not wasting time on a test by just clicking because then it keeps them at a level where they don't want to be. But, you know the benefits, I will say the negative part, which may not be a negative, it's very monotonous. It's very routine, and I know a lot of the kids need that, but I know a lot of them also need something new, something different, something that's a little bit more alive, if you will. But I think overall, it's definitely a good program that helps them to move from stage to stage and even if they start high, if they are high readers but are missing some gaps in between, I think that the benefits of the program, they help to pinpoint it, and maybe not totally, but it helps to pinpoint it so that we can focus a little bit more on where they are and then move them up to where they need to be. And I also like the fact that you can exit out of it. You don't have to stay in READ180 forever. I like that.

8. If you could select the materials you would use in your reading classroom, would you select Read 180 and why or why not?
   I would select READ180 actually. It's a great program for the readers that are struggling, that are missing some foundational parts, and I like the progression of how READ180 moves the student. I would probably add some additional things to READ180, if you will, just as another component but I like where they've gone to including those readers that are lexile, that give us the range, because a lot of times as teachers, if we don't know where or what books, sometimes we just say "Go read" and it's not specific enough. We have to be more intentional about what they're reading, so I like the additional component that has the books that are labeled and lexiled so that the children know "This is your level, this is where you'll feel comfortable; if you go above it, it's challenging, but you can do that." You shouldn't really be going below it unless it's reading for pleasure of some sort. I would choose READ180, yes.

9. What advice would you give new Read 180 teachers? Be as specific as possible.
   Definitely set targets for the students before they even take the first SRI test. Encourage them to do their best on that test, because this is the groundwork for where we'll move forward. I would tell them to use the reports to their benefit. It's a huge benefit to have a computer give you what you would normally do on pen and paper. It can chart your fluency and your comprehension, it can do all of it, but use it to your advantage. Don't just take the report, use it and say "I'm going to now take this information that I've been given and select these students that are struggling, and create that group" and use the materials that are also found on READ180. They have the drop-down boxes of all of the categories of materials that you can use, lesson plans that you can use, for every area of your 60- or 90-minute block. I would also tell them to use your time wisely. Use every minute of that block that you can. Because it's critical; we often don't get a second chance with these children. So use all of the time that you can, starting off with that leveled OSI and encourage them to do well on it every time. I would also encourage them to reward those children that are being successful. Those that have met another level of reading. If we started at 700 and now you're at 750, that's a great accomplishment. Reward those students that are doing well in the program so that they will feel successful.

10. Is there anything else regarding your participation in Read 180 you would like to share?
    I think READ180 is a really great foundational program. I like the concept of having a structured program but it also allows for me as an educator to branch out. The titles of the books that they have are not just boring and non-specific, they branch out into so

many different genres and so many different people so that you can take those and extend outward so it doesn't have to be so exclusive. I'm excited about using READ180 all over again. This is going to be a great new avenue for our high-schoolers to fill in some of the gaps that they're missing and I'm hoping that they'll get it, that the program will be as meaningful and as useful as we know that it can be and that they'll use it to their advantage.

Appendix C: Interview Questions

Answers to all questions led to understanding the overarching research question;

What are the teachers' perceptions regarding the value of Read 180 in the secondary intensive reading classroom?

Lead question: You are currently teaching an intensive reading course using Read180. How is the implementation going for you and your students?

What are teachers' perceptions of the availability of resources that will allow them to adhere to the creator's design for proper implementation (e.g. adherence and dosage)?

> Is your classroom equipped with the materials necessary for proper implementation of Read 180? Explain.
> Are supplementary materials needed in the Read 180 classroom and if so, what is missing?

What are teachers' perceptions of their preparedness to properly implement Read 180 (e.g. quality of delivery)?

> What professional development have you received and when did you receive it?
> What professional development do you need and why?

What are teachers' perceived benefits of the implementation of Read 180?

How do you measure the effectiveness of Read 180 in your classroom?
Describe the benefits or challenges Read 180 offers struggling readers in your
reading classroom.

*What suggestions or observation do teacher provide regarding the implementation of
Rad 180 in secondary classrooms:*

If you could select the materials you would use in your reading classroom, would
you select Read 180 and why or why not?

What advice would you give new Read 180 teachers? Be as specific as possible.

Is there anything else regarding your participation in Read 180 you would like to
share?

Appendix D: E-mail Invitation to Potential Participants

Dear (INSERT TEACHER'S NAME),

I would like to thank you for serving the students of OCPS as a Read 180 teacher. As a
high school reading teacher, you hold what is truly one of the most critical jobs in our
district. I appreciate and can empathize with the challenges and huge rewards you
experience in this role.

As a high school reading teacher currently implementing Read 180, you are invited to
take part in a research study of teachers' perceptions of implementation of Read 180 in
secondary reading classrooms. This doctoral project study will focus on the needs of
OCPS high school remedial readers and their teachers. Specifically, the study will focus
on the use of Read 180 in secondary intensive reading classrooms. I would like to offer
you an opportunity to participate in this study.

You are invited to attend an informational session to be held at the Ronald Blocker
Educational Leadership Center on July 16, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. At the informational
meeting, attendees will receive details on the study including potential benefits for
schools, teachers, and students. Interested teachers will receive a participant consent
form. The consent forms may be taken home to review. Should you decide to participate,
you will have one week following the informational session to return your signed consent

form to me. Once I receive your consent form, we will work to arrange an agreeable time and location to conduct a one on one interview. Declining participation will not negatively impact the relationship we currently have or your access to support, resources, and services.

Sincerely,
Melanie Cleveland
Walden University Doctoral Candidate
melanie.cleveland@waldenu.edu
813-758-1557

Curriculum Vitae

Melanie M. Cleveland

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PROFESSIONAL GOAL

Leadership in Education with attention to design and implementation of curriculum and instruction

DEGREES AND CERTIFICATES

2010 Learning Focused Solutions Trainer
2008 Master District Trainer
2007 District Staff Development
2006 Reading Endorsement
2005 CRISS Trainer (Creating Independence through Student owned Strategies)
        Clinical Education ~ Intern Eligible
        Teaching Certification in ESOL K-12
2004 Gifted Endorsement
2003 M.A. English Education, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL
        National Writing Project Fellow and Teacher Consultant
2001 Intel Teach to the Future
2000 Teaching Certification in English 5-9

Teaching Certification in English 6-12
1999 B.A Liberal Arts, Pfeiffer University, Charlotte, NC

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2012- current Senior Administrator for Curriculum Services, Orange County Public Schools, Orlando, FL
2011- 2012 Supervisor of Secondary Literacy, Hillsborough County Public Schools, Tampa, FL
2008-2011 Coordinator for Secondary Education, School District of Osceola County, Kissimmee, FL

2002-2008 Middle School Language Arts, Reading and Journalism, Alternative Education, Regular, Advanced, and Gifted curriculums in grades 6, 7, and 8, School District of Hillsborough County, FL
      Lead for Community Relations Committee
      Lead for Staff/Faculty Relations Committee
      Chairperson for Literacy Leadership Team
Language Arts Subject Area Leader, Mulrennan Middle School, Valrico, FL.
Reading Coach, Mulrennan Middle School, Valrico, FL
Facilitator for the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project, University of South
      Florida, Tampa, FL
Adjunct Professor, Hillsborough Community College
Adjunct Professor, University of South Florida, College of Education

2000-2002
Teacher, Middle School Language Arts/World Geography/Religion,
      Diocese of St. Petersburg, Nativity Catholic School, Brandon, FL

1999-2000
Permanent Substitute Teacher, Grades K-5, School District of
Hillsborough County, Knights Griffin Elementary School, Plant City, FL

1997-1999
Teacher Assistant K-5, Diocese of Charlotte-Mecklenburg, St. Anne Catholic School, Charlotte, NC

PROFESSIONAL AFFLIATIONS

Association for Supervision of Curriculum Development
International Reading Association
National Council of Teachers of English

Florida Council of Teachers of English
Adolescent Literature Association
National Writing Project/Tampa Bay Area Writing Project
CRISS (Creating Independence through Student owned Strategies)
Just Read, Florida!
Phi Delta Sigma Academic Honor Society
Florida Reading Coach Association

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PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS
(Complete presentations available upon request)

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"Panama: The Canal, the People, and the Literature" Florida Council of Teachers of English (FCTE), Ft. Lauderdale, FL, May 2002.

"Building Community: Ideas for Your First Days Together" Tampa Bay Area Writing Project Invitational Summer Institute, Tampa, FL, June 2003.

"Red, Write, and Blue" Tampa Bay Area Writing Project Summer Renewal, Independent Day School, Tampa, FL, July 2004.

Florida Comprehension Assessment Test, FCAT Preparation: A four week series on reading and writing, January 2006, January-February 2007, January 2008

"The Write Way to Read: Exploring Literary Devices through Children Picture Books" Tampa Bay Area Writing Project, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL, June 2005.

"Pictures as Prompts: The Mysteries of Harris Burdick" Tampa Bay Area Writing Project, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL, June 2005.

"Soaking Up the Author Craft" Florida Council of Teachers of English, FCTE Conference, Orlando, FL. October 2005.

"A Walk in the Sunshine" Applying the new Sunshine State Reading Standards to the new Sunshine State Young Readers Award books. School District of Hillsborough County, Middle School Reading. June 2006.

Created and presented the following staff development 2006-2008:

Understanding the Florida Comprehension Assessment Test (FCAT) and the School Improvement Plan to write Individual Professional Development Plans

Trackstar: Incorporating technology into your lessons to promote higher level learning

How to Make the Sunshine State Standards Bloom in your Classroom: Develop a matrix incorporating State Standards for specific subject areas and Bloom Taxonomy

The Write Way to Read: Keys to understanding the content area texts

Differentiated Instruction: Understanding and incorporating accommodations and modifications while teaching the grade level curriculum

The Drive from Good to Great! The nitty-gritty of FCAT preparation

Graphic Organizers: Their creation and use

Where, When, Why, and How to create and use Rubrics for Assessment

Creating Lifelong Learners: Who is doing all the work, you or your students?

Reflect and Project: A guide to professional reflection and planning for improvement

CRISS Level I training, Hillsborough County, FL, Osceola County, FL

CRISS Follow-Up sessions, Faculty Workshops for Hillsborough County, FL and Osceola County, FL

"A Walk in the Sunshine II" Applying the new Sunshine State Reading Standards to the new Sunshine State Young Readers Award books

"It Says, I Say and So" Reference and Research using a variety of two column notes including Cornell Notes

Take a Walk through your Text: Writing about Reading in the content area classroom beginning with the Chapter Survey

Word Study: Molding the building blocks of vocabulary across the curriculums

Blending Best Practices for Success in the Secondary Classroom. Teacher Mentor Training, Hillsborough County, Fl. June 2008

Online Book Study via Moodle: How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms By: Carol Ann Tomlinson

Florida's Next Generation Content Area Reading Professional Development and the Comprehensive Instructional Sequence for the Common Core, Florida Department of Education, 2011

Preparing for Implementation of the Common Core State Standards, Hillsborough County and Orange County, FL, 2011-2013