

2021

## Teachers' Perceptions of Reading Instructional Strategies and Minority Middle School Students Literacy

Karen Nicole Gordon  
*Walden University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations>

---

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies Collection at ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact [ScholarWorks@waldenu.edu](mailto:ScholarWorks@waldenu.edu).

# Walden University

College of Education

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Karen N. Gordon

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,  
and that any and all revisions required by  
the review committee have been made.

## Review Committee

Dr. Colleen Paepflow, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty  
Dr. Timothy Rodriguez, Committee Member, Education Faculty  
Dr. Tammy Hoffman, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost  
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University  
2021

Abstract

Teachers' Perceptions of Reading Instructional Strategies and Minority Middle School

Students Literacy

by

Karen N. Gordon

MA, Walden University, 2010

BS, Bethel University, 2004

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

June 2021

## Abstract

Teachers' ineffectively use research-based reading instructional strategies with minority students in an urban middle school district in the Eastern United States. The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to explore teachers' perceptions, experiences, and challenges when using research-based reading instructional strategies (RRIS) that include social interaction and scaffolding with minority students. This information is essential because student achievement in reading impacts their overall academic knowledge. The social development theory by Vygotsky served as the conceptual framework for this study. The perceptions, experiences, and challenges teachers face when using RRIS that include social interaction and scaffolding were examined through the primary research questions. Data were collected through semistructured interviews and document reviews of eight language arts middle school teachers of minority students. Coding and thematic analysis were used to assess repeating ideas and themes of teachers' perceptions, experiences, and challenges. The results indicated that the teachers desired culturally responsive teaching professional development, a diverse curriculum, teacher collaboration, and more time with a reading specialist. The results were used to create a 2-day teacher training project and three follow-up collaborative sessions to support teachers with improving their knowledge and understanding of culturally responsive teaching that align with RRIS. Results and the teacher training project implementation can ensure administrators and language arts teachers understand how to better implement the RRIS with minority students in urban middle schools, creating positive social change.

Teachers' Perceptions of Reading Instructional Strategies and Minority Middle School  
Students Literacy

by

Karen N. Gordon

MA, Walden University, 2010

BS, Bethel University, 2004

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Education

Walden University

June 2021

APA 7

## Dedication

This study is dedicated to my husband for the heartfelt patience, encouragement, inspiration, and love you consistently provided during my doctoral journey. I love you. To my parents, sons, and close friends, I thank you for being team Gordon and cheering me on every step of the way. Team Gordon, you listened, encouraged, and made me laugh when I felt like giving up. I love and appreciate each of you. I also want to thank the Walden Get-out Facebook group for always responding with advice, knowledge, and encouragement. Last but not least, I want to thank my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Thank you for being my calm through the storms of this journey. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7 I can do all things through Jesus Christ who strengthens me Philippians 4:13

## Acknowledgments

“We delight in the beauty of the butterfly but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty.”

-Maya Angelou

To my doctoral chair, Dr. Colleen Paepflow, I am grateful I had the opportunity to benefit from your wealth of knowledge and reassuring spirit during my doctoral journey. The translucent and to-the-point feedback enhanced my understanding of the process and requirements needed to complete this doctoral study. At the end of every correspondence, you ended our conversation by stating, “remember persistence does pay off, just keep going,” and in my lowest moments, I heard your voice, and I kept going. Thank you for recognizing my potential and my vision of becoming a successful researcher and leader in education. Dr. Paepflow, I understand the changes one must endure to achieve the beauty of success.

It is essential to note this study could not be possible without everyone completing their assigned tasks. Therefore, I would like to thank my second committee member Dr. Timothy Rodriguez and my University Research Reviewer for providing feedback that strengthened the content of my research. I also want to thank my Walden Academic Advisor, Joshua Bass, for providing sound advice throughout my journey. Finally, I want to thank the participants for taking the time to participate in this study during a Worldwide Pandemic.

## Table of Contents

List of Tables .....	iv
Section 1: The Problem.....	1
The Local Problem.....	1
Rationale .....	3
Definition of Terms.....	4
Significance of the Study .....	6
Research Questions.....	7
Conceptual Framework.....	8
Review of the Literature .....	9
Review of the Broader Problem.....	10
Literacy Instructional Strategies .....	11
Teacher Education .....	14
Teacher Attitudes Toward Minority Students.....	17
Teachers Perceptions and Experiences .....	20
Implications.....	21
Summary .....	22
Section 2: The Methodology.....	23
Research Design and Approach .....	23
Participants.....	25
Criteria for Selecting Participants.....	26
Data Collection .....	30
Interviews.....	30



Document Reviews .....	32
Data Analysis .....	33
Evidence of Quality .....	34
Member Checking.....	35
Discrepant Cases.....	36
Data Analysis Results .....	36
Reading Strategies .....	37
<b>Adaptive Teaching</b> .....	37
Section 3: The Project.....	49
Introduction.....	49
Rationale .....	50
Review of the Literature .....	50
Project Description.....	56
Project Evaluation Plan.....	59
Project Implications .....	61
Summary .....	62
Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions.....	63
Introduction.....	63
<b>Project Strengths</b> and Limitations .....	63
Recommendations for Alternative Approaches .....	64
Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change .....	64
Reflection on Importance of the Work .....	66

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research .....	67
Conclusion .....	68
References.....	69
Appendix A: Teacher Invitation .....	91
Appendix B: Goals and Objectives.....	92
Appendix D: Pre-Assessment .....	98
Appendix E: Evaluation for 2 Day Professional Development .....	99
Appendix E: Summative Assessment of Bi-monthly Follow Up.....	100
Appendix F: Interview questions .....	102

## List of Tables

Table 1. Excerpt from Data Sources of Culturally Responsive Teaching .....	41
Table 2. Excerpt from Data Sources Related to Adaptive Teaching .....	42
Table 3. Example from Data Sources Related to Common Themes and Constraints .....	43
Table 4. Example from Data Sources Research Questions Codes and Themes .....	44

## Section 1: The Problem

### **The Local Problem**

Multiple sources call for improved teacher education of effective reading instructional strategies in middle schools to better prepare minority students for graduation, college, and careers (Lowe, 2017). Although there is extensive research on effective reading strategies for adolescents, including social interaction and scaffolding, minority students remain far behind Caucasian students in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). For example, it is known that while minority middle school students can decode words accurately, many do not demonstrate comprehension of curriculum on end-of-year assessments (Neugebauer & Blair, 2020). In contrast, there are data that indicate some progress has been made in narrowing the achievement gap using research-based effective reading instructional strategies that include social interaction and scaffolding (National Education Association, 2018). However, the National Assessment of Educational Progress reported in 2015 that 50% of minority students in fifth grade scored below the basic level and most recently in 2017 reported Caucasian students scored 26 points higher than African American students and 23 points higher than Latino students (National Center for Education Statics, 2017). The inadequate individual reading skills of struggling readers create a challenge for reading comprehension, making it difficult for them to understand academic content (Merga et al., 2020). As a result, educational leaders have focused more on early childhood interventions to improve reading rather than focusing on improving reading skills among struggling middle and high school minority students (Merga et al., 2020)

In order for teachers to be successful using research-based reading instructional strategies that include social interaction and scaffolding, they must believe in and fully understand how to implement the suggested practices with struggling readers (North & Kelly, 2019). Little is known of teacher perceptions of research-based reading instructional strategies that include social interaction and scaffolding (Merga et al., 2020). For clarity in this study, I use the terms *self-selected reading*, *read aloud*, *strategy practice*, *social interaction*, and *scaffolding* to indicate the pedagogical practice as the research-based reading instructional strategies.

In an urban school district in an Eastern state, low performance on state assessments lingers among minority students despite the use of research-based reading instructional strategies that include social interaction and scaffolding (Department of Education, 2017). Even with the implementation of programs focused on prevention, intervention, and remediation that include social interaction and scaffolding the Department of Education School Quality Profiles end-of-year report reveals minority student literacy has decreased over the past 3 years. The problem in this district is that not enough is known about teachers' experiences, perceptions, and challenges using the reading strategies with minority students. During announced classroom observations, principals in the school district have documented teachers' using the reading strategies. However, the principals have indicated they are unsure of teachers' understanding and daily experiences of the strategies because students fail to produce the intended results on state assessments, district assessments, and school benchmark assessments (School principal, July 18, 2018). Further evidence reported by Northrop & Kelly (2019) is that

teachers of struggling readers generally present worksheets and workbook lessons enforcing skill and strategy instruction instead of comprehension instruction, literature analysis, and group projects.

The local problem is that principals are unsure how teachers employ the research-based reading strategies in conjunction with the restraints because the students' end-of-year standardized test pass rates remain below the states' required 75% for the last 3 years. Therefore, the state and district assessment tools data indicate that the teachers are not applying the research-based reading strategies effectively with their minority students. Thus, the local evidence supports the existence and relevance of the problem for this project study. The problem addressed in this study is teachers' ineffectiveness when using research-based reading instructional strategies with minority students in an urban middle school district in the Eastern United States.

An analysis of research literature reveals that the problem is current and meaningful in the educational discipline. Van Rijk et al. (2018) indicated that it is essential to explore teachers' teaching strategies and their experiences to maximize efficacy. Van Rijk et al. (2018) also stated that because children have varying literacy readiness levels, their teachers' understanding and usage of research-based reading instructional strategies must be enhanced. Therefore, the literature supports the current importance of the problem in the profession.

### **Rationale**

The focus of this exploratory case study was to explore teachers' perception of research-based reading instructional strategies that include social interaction and

scaffolding, and the teachers' experiences using the strategies to improve minority middle school students' literacy skills. Increased understanding of teachers' perception of reading instructional strategies can inform future professional development efforts for teachers and serve as a model to provide the necessary support needed for student knowledge and teacher education (Revelle, 2019). Improved understanding of the phenomenon will also help educational leaders identify barriers that prevent literacy development at the study site. For teachers to be effective in literacy development, studies have shown various practices must occur frequently and consistently (Dharamshi, 2019). Hence, the purpose of this exploratory case study was to examine teachers' perceptions, experiences, and challenges when using researched-base instructional reading instructional strategies that include social interaction and scaffolding with their minority students.

### **Definition of Terms**

Definitions of significant terms are presented below to provide context for this study.

*Culturally responsive:* teaching uses students' cultural backgrounds and experiences to support classroom instruction (Thomas, 2019).

*Literacy Coach:* is an expert placed in struggling schools to support teachers by analyzing data gathered from student assessments and assist teachers with planning lessons to implement the best instructional strategies to address deficiencies (Ortmann et al., 2020).

*Minority students:* defined as students who live in cities with multiple ethnic backgrounds and generally of low socioeconomic status (Hikida, 2018)

*Read Aloud:* is a literacy strategy educators' use in the classroom to introduce literature, build relationships, and model fluent reading (Gehlot & Gehlot, 2020).

*Researched-based Literacy Instructional Strategies:* include vocabulary usage, independent reading, direct instruction, scaffolding, reinforcing pre-reading skills, practice work, and guided reading (Marlatt, 2018).

*Scaffolding:* is an instructional supportive strategy that teachers use to model, initialize and maintain interest and motivation in the classroom. Scaffolding is also rationalizing problems to a level that the student understands (Capotosto, 2019).

*Self-selected Reading:* is an approach to reading that allows the student to choose literature of interest. This approach includes children in the reading process to ensure they are engaged in authentic and purposeful learning (Gursoy & Sahin, 2019).

*Social interaction:* is the interaction between student and teacher that shapes students' interpretation of the world and advanced thought processes (Poysa et al., 2019).

*Strategy practice:* happens when the teacher provides a brief explanation or definition of the strategy to be used, such as compare and contrast, inferencing, drawing conclusions, skimming, scanning, predicting, summarizing, and connecting these strategies to the learner's background knowledge. (Marlatt, 2018)

*Teacher Experiences/Attitudes:* refer to teacher response to research-based instructional strategies, professional development, and instructional knowledge needed to deliver instruction (Hartwig & Schwabe, 2018).



### **Significance of the Study**

The results of this study may provide increased understanding of how teachers perceive the research-based reading instructional strategies to teach literacy skills and the teachers' experiences with those strategies. This study may contribute to positive social change in several ways. For example, Hikida (2018) believes teacher experiences will provide insight for educational leaders and be invaluable because literacy instruction is a high priority in improving student achievement of minority students. Students will also benefit because the findings of this study will inform the efforts of curriculum leaders, literacy coaches, and teachers to increase the successful implementation of research-based instructional strategies that include social interaction and scaffolding. As Hikida (2018) noted, low literacy levels have resulted in middle school students' inability to pass state exams continues and affects their ability to pass high school state exams needed to graduate and compete for jobs as an adult.

Furthermore, exploring teachers' perceptions of research-based reading strategies allows other administrators in struggling schools to identify specific supports needed for new and veteran teachers who teach minority middle school students. Although there is literature on how to improve literacy, there is little information on teacher perceptions of how to successfully implement those strategies with minority students. Through this study positive social change can ensue with the suggested implementation of professional development for teachers to ensure English teachers of minority students are knowledgeable and comfortable using the RRIS that aligned with the strategies noted in the results.

## **Research Questions**

Administrators from the study school and the school board have expressed concerns regarding the constant low end-of-year stated assessment data among the minority middle school students compared to the Caucasian students across the United States. In the past 3 years, the district data show that minority students in the study site have yet to achieve literacy success on end-of-year state assessments. There is significant research that supports the research-based reading instructional strategies, but little is known of teachers' perceptions of the reading strategies used with their minority middle school students in the study site. The results from the following critical research questions I developed increase the awareness administrators, and other stakeholders of the study site have regarding teachers' perceptions and experiences using research-based reading instructional strategies that include social interaction and scaffolding.

Research Question 1 (RQ1): What are teachers' perceptions of research-based reading strategies used with minority middle school students that include social interaction and scaffolding to improve literacy?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): What are teachers' experiences of research-based reading strategies used with minority middle school students that include social interaction and scaffolding to improve literacy?

Research Question 3 (RQ3): What are the challenges teachers face when using research-based reading instructional strategies used with minority middle school students that include social interaction and scaffolding to improve literacy?

## Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was Vygotsky's (1978) social development theory (SDT), which states that the social interaction a person experiences enhances their development of cognition (Eun, 2019). Guthrie and Lutz (2014) believe interaction between students and teachers empowers students to "gain literacy practice and cognitive proficiencies" (p. 389). Vygotsky (1978) believed the relevant constructs of SDT are social interaction in cognitive development (SICD), the more knowledgeable other (MKO), and the zone of proximal development (ZPD). West (2018) noted the appropriate SICD can enhance the brain's ability to analyze information and consequently, encourage learning. Vygotsky (1978) explained that the MKO is any person that has an advanced level or aptitude of knowledge as a teacher is to student, and the ZPD is the ability of the learner to complete a specific task under the direction of the more knowledgeable other, and the learner's capability to do the task autonomously. The SDT was the appropriate framework theory for this study because the research-based reading instructional strategies that I investigated utilize the MKO and ZPD for student learning. Moreover, Protacio (2019) found social interaction between peers and teachers is necessary before learning and comprehending can happen. Therefore, using the lens of these components of SDT was appropriate for this study.

I used the concepts of SICD, MKO, and ZPD to ground this study. I viewed the problem and purpose of this study through the lens of SDT. According to the theory, I examined the teachers' perceptions of the reading instructional strategies and their experiences of the instructional strategies' value. West (2018) believes scaffolding is

essential to the zone of proximal development, so I designed the research questions according to SDT to help identify the teachers' perceptions, experiences, and challenges when using the RRIS. Danielson (2013) outlined what teachers should know in a framework for teaching. Therefore, I analyzed lesson plans using the design to evaluate teachers' knowledge on effectively planning lessons that ensure social interaction and scaffolding in the classroom. Furthermore, Lui (2012) believes the Am I Teaching in The Zone of Proximal Development checklist is needed to ensure teachers use the SDT, social interaction, and scaffolding constructs to guide their practice. Therefore, I created the interview questions to evaluate SDT using the Am I Teaching in The Zone of Proximal Development checklist to ensure the SDT, social interaction, and scaffolding constructs guided the study. For that reason, I based data collection, including semistructured teacher interviews, and analysis of lesson plans, on the constructs of SDT because teachers' perceptions of the research-based reading instructional strategies are essential when they are lesson planning and reflecting on their practice. I used a priori codes based upon the social interaction and scaffolding as preexisting frameworks to analyze the data related to SDT.

### **Review of the Literature**

Administrators at the study site expect their teachers to use research-based reading instructional strategies in their practice to increase opportunities for student literacy improvement. Learning is a complicated process, so teachers must be attentive to what they teach and the methods they use to deliver instruction (Johnson & Johnson, 2017). To better understand the current literature on teacher education, experiences,

attitudes, and perceptions of instructional practices used to improve literacy among struggling readers, I read several books and conducted literature searches using online databases supplied by the Walden Library. The databases that I accessed included Education Source, Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), Sage Journals, and Google Scholar. I contacted the Walden librarians online, and they guided me in my selection of search terms. The search terms I utilized included: *teacher attitudes, teacher experiences, teacher education, minority students, literacy instructional strategies, reading comprehension, successful schools, and equity in schools, low achievement schools, social interaction, struggling readers, and urban students*. After reading numerous peer-reviewed journal articles and books, it was clear to me that prior researchers Brownsword (2019); Cekiso (2017); Darling-Hammond (2017); Hartwig and Schwabe (2018); Ladson Billings (2018); Skerrett et al. (2017); Villamizar (2017) contributed valuable information through research on teacher perceptions and teacher education needed to enhance literacy among minority students. I assessed peer-reviewed articles published 2017–2020. To reach saturation, I continued researching peer-reviewed literature until similar themes became repetitive. As a result, I organized the literature review into four topics: literacy instructional strategies, teacher education, teachers' attitudes toward struggling minority students, and teacher experiences and perceptions.

### **Review of the Broader Problem**

In the subsequent examination of the literature, I explored the studies most relevant to the issues, provided a combination of key results from these studies, and considered methodological factors developed from the research findings. Exploring the

current research on the subject of research-based reading instructional strategies used by language arts teachers of minority students disclosed numerous literature patterns. These patterns contain teachers' perceptions of reading strategies, professional development, and teacher attitudes towards minority students who lack successful literacy skills in urban schools.

### **Literacy Instructional Strategies**

The development of Common Core State Standards (CCSS; 2016) clearly defined what is expected of students to be classified as a sufficient reader. Yet, the standards are not as clear on advancing reading achievement among struggling middle school minority students. Although there is a plethora of research on reading skills, minority students lag behind Caucasian students on end-of-year state exams (National Center for Education Statics, 2017). Hong-Nam and Szabo (2017) studied content area literacy strategies. They noted teachers participating in masters of reading degree programs found it challenging to implement strategies such as vocabulary study of academic terms and detecting signal words utilized to identify text structures. These findings align with Akins et al.'s (2018) results of an analysis of the effects of silent reading and the lack of teacher knowledge of the quality and importance of children's literature. However, Spichtig et al. (2019) reported students who participated in scaffolded silent reading with their teacher performed better on end-of-year assessments than students who participated in silent reading without teacher scaffolding. Another research-based reading instructional strategy used in English classrooms that researchers Learned et al. (2019) focused on was the effects on minority students labeled deficient readers in schools. The results revealed

the deficiencies with the labeling strategy and suggested it promotes feelings of failure among students labeled as struggling readers. Consequently, language arts educators may encounter various experiences and challenges using the plethora of research-based reading instructional strategies teaching minority students. Moreover, the current research reveals the need to better understand teachers' perceptions, experiences, and challenges using research-based reading instructional strategies that include social interaction and scaffolding to improve minority middle school students' literacy.

The study school uses research-based reading instructional strategies to deliver instruction such as self-selected reading, teacher read-aloud, mini-lessons, and independent practice. Self-selected reading is an approach to reading that allows students to choose literature they are interested in (Gursoy & Sahin, 2019). Brannan et al.'s (2020) study indicated this approach is successful because it includes children in the reading process and ensures they are engaged in authentic and purposeful learning. In the middle school, administrators expect the teachers to implement 10 minutes of silent self-selected reading in their daily literacy instruction. Reading aloud to students is another reading instructional strategy used in the study site. Reading aloud to students is used to introduce literature, build relationships, and model fluent reading (Lowe, 2017). The language arts teachers in the study site use mini-lessons called strategy practice after the read-aloud. Strategy practice is group discussions, formative assessments, and teacher-made model lessons to enhance basic and higher level thinking to build reading comprehension (Murphy et al., 2018). Lekwa et al. (2019); Murphy et al.'s (2018) found students generally achieve more success when their teachers use evidence-based instructional

strategies. However, in a study to examine teacher effectiveness using evidence-based instructional strategies with minority students living in poverty, Lekwa et al. (2019) indicated a clear link between teachers' who lack quality use of evidence-based instructional strategies to students who fail to show academic growth.

Other well-known literacy instructional strategies are guided reading, small group practice opportunities, and accessing prior knowledge. These are included in the list of research-based reading instructional strategies. However, the students continue to struggle. Ming (2018) stressed the urgency teachers must realize when using the strategies with minority students reading below grade-level and maximizing the time students spend with text. However, Villamizar (2017) noted teachers should maximize the use of cultural materials to scaffold learning when teaching minority students. Similarly, Lowe (2017) noted school districts should purchase books that students want to read, reallocate funds to assist teachers with reestablishing student choice classroom libraries, reorganized school schedules to provide time for independent reading, and review curriculum to identify opportunities to align students' realities to chosen content (Brannan et al., 2020). These literacy instructional strategies are rooted in SDT as social interaction plays a vital role during reading instruction. Hence, Vygotsky (1978) found teachers and students' interaction enhances students' cognitive development as students are capable of meeting targets with scaffolding more so than from a lecture.

Teachers who are flexible and thoughtful of individual student needs in their literacy instruction are known as adaptive teachers (Vaughn, 2019). Vaughn (2019) reported results consistent with findings by Villamizar (2017) and Schipper et al. (2020)



in that teachers' adaptive instruction supports and enhances literacy. Likewise, Pitt et al. (2020) found during their investigation of explicit supports for student engagement that when students experience relevant, meaningful, and shared interactive relationships, they were eager to engage with complex text. These findings confirm the belief that the absence of personal connections and stimulating dialogic negatively impacts student and struggling reader engagement (Kennedy, 2018). Wang and Grieve (2019) suggested teachers need to share each of their student's strengths with them during reading instruction to instill self-confidence. Bedard and Fuhrken's (2019) study is consistent with this declaration because they found teachers must fully understand multicultural approaches to adhere to researched-based reading instructional strategies. Moses and Kelly (2018) found minority students developed positive attitudes when teachers frequently discussed books and included books into their social interaction time in the classroom. Consequently, Piper (2019) found that Caucasian students surpass minority students in reading because the curriculum focuses on Caucasian ideals and experiences. Piper (2019) found teachers of minority students need to focus more on their students' needs by adding curriculum and resources that allow them to see themselves.

### **Teacher Education**

It is critical to analyze how teacher education influences teacher perceptions and their experiences of reading instructional strategies to improve struggling readers' literacy. Cekiso (2017); Hartwig and Schwabe (2018) have found the absence of teacher knowledge directly relates to each learners' ability to comprehend text. Therefore, teachers must be well-trained in research-based reading instructional practices.

Researchers Cekiso (2017) and Clark (2020) have noted teachers generally feel they have not received adequate training to recognize or prevent reading deficiencies. However, Cekiso (2017) indicated that there is evidence that specific professional development helped to change some teacher attitudes positively. Yet, the teachers reported they only used a few reading strategies, and more training is needed to improve their students' reading comprehension. As a result, Clark (2020) recommended that more studies be conducted on teachers' "experiences and feelings" to effectively use research-based reading instructional strategies that include social interaction and scaffolding to help minority students acquire the literacy skills needed to improve. (p. 139)

Another form of teacher education offered to teachers in recent years is literacy coaches' addition to school districts. A literacy coach is a curriculum expert placed in struggling schools to support teachers by leading professional development, analyzing student assessment data, and assisting teachers with implementing the research-based strategies that address student deficiencies (Bean et al., 2018; Nilsson, 2020; Ortmann, 2020; Pletcher et al., 2019). Professional development, combined with literacy coaches and teacher collaboration, increases teacher knowledge and instructional skills. It allows coaches and teachers time to develop relationships and gain mutual respect for one another (Pletcher et al., 2019). By reflecting on lessons, co-teaching, demonstrating lessons, and engaging in constructive dialogue, teachers can improve literacy. Furthermore, these collaborating activities or shared experiences cause educators to gain access to their experiences working with reading instructional strategies. Finally, through reflection and social interactions, Vygotsky's (1978) SDT, coaches and teachers

collaborate and construct knowledge and skills of the research-based reading instructional strategies (Pletcher et al., 2019).

Despite administrators' efforts in school districts to augment teacher adherence, knowledge and skills through professional development, and literacy coaches, students' literacy remains a continuous struggle in low-performing schools (Prezyna et al., 2017). Promerantz and Pierce (2019) found improvements in teachers' ability to use reading strategies after specific professional development successfully. However, the researchers also reported the qualitative observational data revealed the challenges teachers faced such as the lack of "adequate resources, supportive and engaged leadership, and help in fitting all the pieces of good instruction together in their daily classroom routines" (Pomerantz & Pierce, 2019, p. 12). However, the teachers demonstrated adherence to the reading instructional strategies when administrators provided authentic reading materials and knowledge-building professional development specific to their students' needs (Pomerantz & Pierce, 2019). Lastly, the researchers suggested school leaders should participate in one particular "comprehensive model of successful coaching" so they have a clear understanding of the instructional strategies and the challenges teachers face with the successful implementation of research-based reading instructional strategies (Pomerantz & Pierce, 2019, p. 100).

Gupta and Lee (2020) conducted a mixed-methods study of a low-performing school district that partnered with a local university to provide effective professional development to enhance teacher knowledge on reading instruction. This type of study responds to Guskey's (2009) suggestion of conducting more research on effective

professional development to ensure professional development leaders design and implement strategies teachers will adhere to and value. Much like Promerantz and Pierce (2019) reported, professional development must be purposeful, thorough, and continual rather than rapidly changing and adding multiple instructional strategies (Gupta & Lee, 2020). However, Ciuffetelli (2017) conducted a study of the impact of targeted literacy professional development for teachers on how poverty affects students' literacy. The results indicated the teacher's knowledge of how poverty affects students increased their students' literacy on comprehensive pre- and post-test. However, the researchers also noted one of the teacher participants admitted through narrative data that his daily practices improved because of the professional development. The participants' understanding of his students changed when he moved to the neighborhood where the students lived. The move caused him to gain respect for the parents and students (Ciuffetelli, 2017). Although researchers (Ciuffetelli, 2017; Gupta & Lee, 2020; Promerantz & Pierce, 2019) found students improved literacy skills due to literacy coaches' collaboration and professional development, school districts must understand school environments contrast significantly. Consequently, some instructional strategies may work well in one school and not in another (Guskey, 2009). Therefore, school leaders must consider a school's context before mandating teachers implement research-based reading instructional strategies.

### **Teacher Attitudes Toward Minority Students**

Educational leaders define urban schools as schools located in low socioeconomic areas affected by past and present-day injustices such as inadequate

resources and limited and under-qualified staffing (Flory & Wylie, 2019). These injustices create challenges for educators, students, and communities to reach their full potential (Ladson Billings, 2018; Skerrett et al., 2018; Stevenson & Markowitz, 2019). Skerrett et al. (2018) noted that there are specific attributes teachers need to successfully improve the literacy skills of minority students, such as solid pedagogical understanding of reading, explicit knowledge of the needs of their students, and a variety of informed instructional practices.

Li and Hasan (2010) also found teachers who enter the classroom unprepared to teach minority students tend to teach students how they were taught regardless of research-based reading instructional strategies or best practices for that population. Some minority students living in poverty need a supportive learning environment and quality interpersonal relationships between their teachers to build their low comprehension skills (Ciuffetelli, 2017). Furthermore, Vaughn et al. (2019) noted an adaptive attitude is needed when teaching some minority students. However, Vaughn et al. (2019) found an adaptive attitude directly contrasts how literacy teachers of minority students generally teach.

Weber (2017) conducted a study to explore the preconceptions pre-service teachers have of minority students and urban schools. The researchers concluded that the teachers' attitudes toward the facilities, teaching resources, and their safety in and around the urban schools improved. Moreover, Farinde-Wu et al. (2017) noted teachers felt encouraged to take possession of the manner and technique to cultivate students' understanding of content by designing and implementing culturally responsive lessons

inviting to all students. However, Glock et al. (2019) noted that teachers feel high levels of stress when expected to ensure culturally responsive classroom lessons due to their lack of training. Ladson-Billings (2018) contends that teachers must let go of methods they love yet fail to improve the literacy skills of minority students. Donahue-Keegan et al. (2019) and Ladson-Billings (2018) agree that teachers must change their attitudes to adhere to culturally responsive teaching to integrate discussions and readings into everyday instructional strategies. Similarly, Weber (2017) and Ladson-Billings (2018) believe, when teachers value minority students' experiences and are willing to learn from them by teaching the teachers about their lives, it provides validation for minority students. Accordingly, aligning with Vygotsky's (1975) SDT in that learning and understanding is not likely to happen without social interaction.

Furthermore, Zoch (2017) and Ladson-Billings (2018) believed teacher attitudes toward understanding, knowing, and building positive relationships with their minority students are vital to improving literacy. They also indicated teachers of minority students must be resilient in their everyday practices. For example, Ladson-Billings (2018) noted teachers must know when and how to differentiate instruction, involve family members, and provide culturally responsive lessons. Additionally, Long et al. (2013) suggested a syncretism approach to white, middle class, standard English instructional practices, indicating teachers should provide opportunities for children to learn from multiple worlds, including their own. Similarly, the current research of Donahue-Keegan et al. (2019) Ladson Billings (2018) and Zoch (2017) indicated culturally responsive teaching, bonding with minority student families, changing teacher negative attitudes of minority

students, and recognizing learning can be powerful is vital. Subsequently, educational leaders must understand when students have opportunities to interact purposefully with context related to what they already know and experience literacy of minority students can improve.

### **Teachers Perceptions and Experiences**

Educational policies on literacy improvement have been standardized for the past three decades and impact teachers' instructional practices. Consequently, resulting in teachers mandated to adhere to specific instructional and monitoring practices (United States Department of Education, 2002). As a result, teacher efficacy and student achievement link to state testing results. Cook et al. (2017) noted, when teachers' experienced decreased feelings of professionalism because of lack of autonomy and training of research-based reading instructional strategies, it limits their pedagogical beliefs and effectiveness. Teachers' feelings of professionalism simultaneously decline as teacher accountability increases, causing them to engage with students unsuccessfully. Sanchez and Zuniga's (2018) findings suggested that when teachers' autonomy is ensured, they embrace instructional strategies without fear and create argentic lessons that promote hope for minority students. Subsequently, Shelton and Brooks (2019) reported similar findings in a narrative examination of challenges teachers face when teaching literacy to minority students in this high-stakes testing society. Greene (2018) contends teachers are under pressure to teach students not to read for the text's value but to read to practice reading strategies. Moreover, findings from Albright et al. (2017) and Cook et al. (2017) studies aligned as they suggested courses on teacher well-being, stress

management, and resilience are needed for teachers as they leave the profession at high rates. In summary, the researchers insist that teacher efficacy is directly affected by their autonomy over instruction in the classroom, and teachers' personal views and principles guide their work.

### **Implications**

The purpose of this exploratory case study was to explore teacher perceptions of research-based reading instructional strategies to improve minority students' literacy. Through interviews and document reviews of a representative group of teachers at a middle school in the Eastern United States, I gained insight into the teachers' attitudes, perceptions, and professionalism when using research-based reading instructional strategies with minority students. Daily teacher challenges encountered and support they use were also my focus, as I shed light on how they faced them. Another focus was the teacher's experiences of student success they observed when using research-based reading instructional strategies, specifically during student silent reading, teacher read-aloud, and strategy practice.

The results of this study will guide administrators to areas of ongoing professional development and training conferences at both the classroom teacher and pre-service teacher levels. After completing this study, I designed a project for ongoing professional development for language arts teachers that supports teachers who struggle with successfully implementing research-based reading instructional strategies that include social interaction and scaffolding with minority middle school students. Additionally, the plan will help struggling teachers with the overwhelming challenges they face when



working to improve their specific pedagogical practices with minority students. I shared the information gathered with district administrators to explain expectations and recognize the nuances of research-based reading instructional strategies when meeting with staff members in professional learning committee meetings and individual professional conversations. Finally, administrators can purchase resources aligned to support the teacher's challenges to ensure successful delivery and the quality of minority students' opportunities to become efficient readers during their middle school years.

### **Summary**

Section 1 included an examination of the local problem at the study site School District about the limited number of minority middle school students reading with efficiency on the statewide end-of-year assessments and teacher perceptions and experiences using research-based reading instructional practices. The section included the rationale for the study, a definition of terms used, the study's significance, and the research questions to pilot the study. I present the conceptual framework to guide the study with the literature review of research articles that helped determine the key concerns associated with the topic. Section 2 provides information about the processes I utilized to collect and examine the data and convey the findings.

## Section 2: The Methodology

### **Research Design and Approach**

The purpose of this exploratory case study was to investigate teachers' perceptions, experiences, and challenges using research-based reading instructional strategies that include social interaction and scaffolding with minority middle school students. Often researchers utilize qualitative inquiry when they are concerned with acquiring a richer understanding of participants' behaviors, experiences, and obedience (Creswell & Creswell, 2009). As O'Mahony (2017) noted, qualitative research centers on social experiences and giving voice to participants' beliefs and insights under study. Creswell and Poth (2016) contended that researchers use a case study to understand a specific phenomenon. Yin (2017) believed researchers use exploratory case studies when the issue is unclear, and they are looking for a foundation to help solve a problem. Additionally, Yin (2017) believed researchers use exploratory research to specifically use the research questions to study a perplexing situation that has not been plainly outlined. Most importantly, the researcher does not expect to propose complete or specific solutions to current problems.

Researchers have researched teacher experiences, attitudes, and motivation of research-based reading instructional strategies that include quantitative methods (Hong-Nam & Szabo, 2017). However, Nam & Szabo's (2017) had an enormous quantity of 50 K-8 classroom teacher participants. The researchers were seeking to measure the results of interventions and experiments. Additionally, Yin (2017) noted the distinction separating a case study from other qualitative research is when researchers aim to look at

a bounded system searching for an in-depth analysis of a phenomenon within a realistic location. In this qualitative exploratory case study, I focused on collecting thorough information on teachers' perceptions, experiences, and challenges when using research-based reading instructional strategies with minority students.

Case studies are suitable when observing complex issues entailing extensive data collection involving various sources, as in Daniels's (2017) study. In that study, the researcher explored the problems that modify and impact literacy instruction to include the challenges teachers face when using research-based reading instructional practices. As a result, Daniels (2017) examined teacher efficacy using observations, interviews, and questionnaires, ensuring the information was composed of numerous sources. Furthermore, Yin (2014) stated when "there are more variables of interest than data points, researchers must intensely study and report on the *how* and *why* of the issue at hand." (p. 17)

When selecting the design for this study, I chose the qualitative exploratory case study to assess a bounded system to ensure a deeper exploration of an explicit topic's phenomenon, at a precise location, during a limited time (Yin, 2017). Papen and Tusting (2020) used the ethnography research design to study the ambiance, feelings, mood, and verbal expressions of a group to ascertain the classroom's specific environment. The ethnography research design was not used for this study because the researcher must connect with the participants during their observations of the activity while identifying similar behaviors. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) noted that researchers who use the narrative investigation method must include first-person reports of the experiences in a

person's life. This study explores more than just one person's story. Finally, Cekiso's (2017) exploration of teacher experiences of their teaching reading responsibilities, the importance of their initial training, cognizance of reading strategies, and how these strategies support teachers in their classroom practice is similar to this study. As a result, I used Cekiso's research design as a guide for this study. I collected and reported on multiple sources of data from a bounded system.

Before starting this research, I obtained permission from the institutional review board (IRB) of Walden University (approval no. 06-09-20-0158455). Upon authorization to use LinkedIn, a professional social media platform, I posted an invitation letter on my personal LinkedIn account requesting language arts teachers of minority students to participate in my study.

### **Participants**

I conducted the study via the Zoom video conferencing platform as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The participants were language arts teachers in an urban middle school located in the Eastern United States with approximately 900 students in Grades 6–8. The district's student body population at the time of data collection was 88.8% African American, 2.6% Caucasian, 6.9% Latino, 1.0% two or more, 0.5% American Asian, and 0.1% American Indian or Alaska Native (Virginia Department of Education School Quality Profiles, 2020) 12 language arts teachers teach in the middle school.

I used homogeneous, purposeful sampling as the sampling method, and eight out of 12 teachers fit the selected criteria and participated in this study via LinkedIn.

Qualitative researchers often use purposeful sampling. It grants the researcher the

opportunity to choose well-informed individuals and proficient in the topic under investigation and accessible and willing to participate (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Researchers who choose quantitative research use random sampling (Creswell & Poth, 2016). In contrast, researchers involved in qualitative case studies use homogeneous sampling because it ensures limited differences in participants' array of qualifications (Creswell & Poth, 2016). For this reason, homogenous sampling was used in this investigation to ensure the selected teachers had sufficient experience with implementing the research-based reading instructional strategies with struggling minority middle school students.

### **Criteria for Selecting Participants**

Creswell and Creswell (2017) indicated that a sample size of six to eight participants is often employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the topic. So, for this study, I followed the suggested sample size. The participants were teachers who were teaching during the 2019-20 school year at the study site. Participants are sixth, seventh, and eighth-grade language arts teachers with at least 1 or more years of teaching experience implementing the research-based reading instructional strategies. Eight participants of the 12 language arts teachers in the study school are more than one-third of the population and a manageable number to provide sufficient data to reach saturation.

I began participant recruitment by posting an invitation to participate in the study of language arts teachers of minority students on LinkedIn, an online platform that connects professionals. To ensure the potential participants' privacy, I directed the participants to respond to the post or contact me directly by phone or email. The

invitation included my contact information, a summary of the study, participant requirements, confidentiality procedures, and an offer to receive a \$15 gratitude gift card to their favorite restaurant for their participation in the study. After the participants made contact, I requested their personal email addresses. I sent the consent form to their personal email account explaining that replying to the email with the words “I Consent” with their contact information, current lesson plan, and the name of their favorite restaurant was confirmation needed to be a participant in the study.

The participant pool contained only the district teachers working in the study site for 1 or more years. If more than eight teachers had voiced interest in participating, then the first eight participants would have been selected for the study. If less than eight participants with 1 or more years of teaching at the study site were willing to participate, I would have posted the LinkedIn invitation again. If any of the participants had dropped out, I would have posted the invitation again. Lastly, if my goal to obtain eight participants was not met following these additional requests, I would have extended my search to the other middle schools in another district with a similar population. There is only one middle school in this district.

### ***Access to Participants***

To gain access to participants, I obtained permission from Walden University’s IRB committee to ensure proper measures for protecting participants’ rights were in place. The authorization included permission to post an invitation to participate in my study on LinkedIn, a professional social website. One person responded to my post by calling me. During the conversation, she stated she would participate. I sent the informed

consent form to her personal email and offered multiple interview dates and times for the participant to select. The participant replied to my personal email account with the phrase “I consent.” Due to my LinkedIn post's lack of responses, I asked the participant to mention to her colleagues that I am a doctoral student looking for participants for my study. The participant spoke with three of her colleagues, and one of those three spoke with one other colleague. Upon authorization from the Walden University IRB committee to recruit the teachers this way, the first participant informed them to visit my LinkedIn post if they were interested. The first participant is not in any supervisory position at the study site. The four teachers responded by calling me using the phone number listed on the invitation. I emailed consent forms directly to those teachers’ personal email addresses. Walden University IRB permitted me to ask each of them to share the invitation to participate in my study on their LinkedIn network. Three other teachers contacted me by phone to participate in my research. No recruitment took place on school property.

### ***Researcher Working Relationship with Participants***

The site for my study is in a different school district from where I am currently employed. I do not have a personal relationship with any of the sixth, seventh, and eighth-grade teachers. I transferred to a different school district 8 years ago, and I have never worked in any supervisory position in the study school district. None of the other participants are in any supervisory role at the middle school, ensuring human subjects' protection.

When making initial contact with the participants, I created a positive relationship by showing appreciation for their willingness to participate and ensuring their identities will be kept confidential. As suggested by Creswell and Creswell (2017), I informed the participants of their roles and responsibilities to include assurance of the amount of time I needed to gather interview responses and lesson plans. During this process, I demonstrated respect for the participants' information. I showed gratitude for their time and cooperation to participate by securing their address to mail the \$15.00 gift card to their favorite restaurant as promised. As a result of COVID-19 and social distancing mandates, I could not present the gift card during face-to-face contact with the participants.

### ***Establishing Expectations and Ethical Protections***

To establish participant expectations, I met with the teachers via Zoom to clarify information and answer additional questions. During the meeting, I informed the participants of how long the interview would be, my plan to review their lesson plans, and I reiterated their participation was voluntary. I ensured the participants that I was open and available to communicate any questions or concerns throughout this process via email, Zoom, or telephone. To establish ethical protection for the participants, I informed the participants that I would not share participant identities with supervisors or other staff members. I ensured the participants that I would remove identifiable information from documents and reports to prevent unfavorable situations. I also informed the participants that I would not discuss the study with my colleagues at my school or on LinkedIn.



I took extra safeguards to protect the confidentiality of the participants by using personal email to communicate. I appointed a letter and number to each participant to guarantee confidentiality. For example, information assembled from or about Teacher 1 was labeled “T1.” I ensured all electronic data collection materials, communications, and recorded interviews were saved to my password-protected personal computer and securely kept in my home. During the study, I kept all data in paper form in my home. Five years after completing the study, I will shred all paper records, delete all electronic communications, and recorded interviews.

### **Data Collection**

Researchers use qualitative research methods to understand participants' feelings, experiences, and behaviors in an everyday setting (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Qualitative research creates an opportunity for researchers to better understand situations from the participants' viewpoint (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Researchers commonly use interviews to collect information by asking open-ended questions compelling the participants to give detailed information. Document reviews are also used in qualitative research to include the ordinary part of an environment that prohibits any study site modifications (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Employing numerous data collection methods authenticates triangulation, consequently enhancing the study's inner validity and correctness. I achieved this by conducting semistructured interviews and reviewing teacher-created lesson plans.

### **Interviews**

To begin, I scheduled one-to-one private semistructured interviews for 30 minutes with the participants. Semistructured interviews are partially structured and unstructured

so researchers can create questions related to specific information on the topic.

Semistructured interview questions allow the researcher to include open-ended questions that will enable further exploration of the subject, offering a better understanding of the participant's perspective (Creswell & Creswell, 2012). As a result, interviewing the teachers using semistructured interview questions provided an opportunity to understand their personal and professional opinions, views, and actions on the topic (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

The interviews took place after school Asynchronously via a Zoom video conference. I created the seven open-ended interview questions centered on this study's research questions and the corresponding literature. I designed the interview questions to collect information directly linked to answering the research questions. The questions adhere to the semistructured interview practice (Merriam, 2009). The interview questions relate to the research questions and align with Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development. The interview questions motivated the participants to consider whether they adhere to research-based reading instructional strategies that include social interaction and scaffolding or not. When the teachers express feelings that conveyed they do not adhere to the research-based reading instructional strategies that include social interaction and scaffolding, I followed up with questions directed to the challenges they encounter and the supports they found to be successful. My goal was to establish a positive rapport with the participants using the semistructured interview method. Although, personal connections between participants and researchers during a one-on-one interview are possible. I remained professional as I directed the questioning path by not

verbally responding to changes in the participants' facial expressions and body language. In doing so, I was also able to adjust the interview questions to explore deeper into the participants' experiences without revealing my feelings, resulting in a deeper description of *why and how* (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). To obtain the participants' information, I asked each participant for permission to video record their interview. Immediately after each interview, I used the recording to transcribe the discussion in my research journal.

### **Document Reviews**

Reviewing documents provides stability and eliminates researcher bias, unlike in the interviewer's presence (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Using both interviews and document reviews allows the examiner the opportunity to compare the participant's oral response to their daily written notes and plans without researcher interference (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). After the interview, I obtained the participants' most recent lesson plans. If the current lesson plans selected did not contain enough information regarding teacher perceptions, experiences, or challenges to the research-based instructional strategies, I asked for the lesson plan created the week before. I also asked the participants to provide teacher-made assessments and the resources they used. As soon as I transcribed and coded the data, I organized the repeating ideas to create themes through connections from the interview data using NVivo software. I constructed a checklist to examine the lesson plans. I coded the findings to develop new themes and to explain prevailing ones further. I immediately deleted all features that identified participants from the lesson plans and assign the same T1, T2, and so on that corresponded to the

completed interviews. I saved the agenda and checklist to my external drive, keeping it in a personal locked filing cabinet.

### **Data Analysis**

Creswell & Creswell (2017) suggested that dictation of all of the collected data should commence within one day of its collection with responses and key ideas mentioned during the process because analyzing data at the end of data collection can be overwhelming. As a result, researchers may miss opportunities to include “reflections, tentative themes, hunches, and ideas” revealed in the first data collection. (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 196). For this reason, I transcribed the data within one day of each data collection setting. Adapting this process for this study ensured I allowed myself time to make evaluations that constrict the research, evaluate the type of study I wanted to achieve, developed relevant questions, and reflected on what I learned (Creswell & Creswell, 2016). As previously mentioned, I used NVivo as a coding device to guide the interviews and document reviews. During data collection, I used an Echo SmartPen and the Video Typing option in Google to document the interviews correctly. I also used video recordings to ensure clarity of the interview responses by comparing them to my documentation. Creswell & Creswell (2016) noted researchers understand the data better when they write their own rather than use a professional service. Even though I use NVivo software to consolidate, record, and document the data, I dissected and decoded the findings by hand to ensure I understood the themes and subthemes correctly (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

In conjunction with the process above, I used nodes to categorize words, viewpoints, and perceptions expressed within the data to create themes. Therefore, I narrowed the data down to four themes. Subsequently, Creswell and Creswell (2017) believed four themes are a manageable amount. Researchers often use thematic analysis when conducting qualitative research because it forces them to analyze data and not simply report facts (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Using the thematic analysis, I utilized specific words or phrases linked to my research questions to generate tags and short-term themes inside my interviews and document reviews.

As the findings developed, I began to interpret them. I summed up my itemized conclusions, including the discussion that reinforces the themes in participants' words, incorporating data to safeguard the participants' privacy and express their thoughts and encounters. I also included contradictory findings and boundaries after pondering on my results and linking them to present-day literature. Lastly, I confirmed my findings and then described those vivid and thorough explanations in narrative form.

### **Evidence of Quality**

Creswell and Poth (2016) noted one of the differences between quantitative and qualitative research is *credibility and validity*. Qualitative researchers must continually check for accuracy when transcribing and interpreting data to ensure the study remains credible (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Therefore, I frequently checked my data collection and documentation to ensure I did not include my bias. In addition to continuous reflection, I provided the participants a two-page summary and asked them to confirm that I correctly incorporated their ideas, perceptions, and beliefs. Using this method, I

further ensured biases or misunderstandings included in my reporting would be identified (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). By having a detailed description of the study's setting, sample, and content, in my reflection log, I ensured transferability. As a result, other researchers will utilize the outcomes in a comparable setting (Yin, 2017). To ensure the confidentiality of my participants, I keep my reflection log in a password-protected file cabinet.

I collected multiple data sources such as interviews and lesson plans from each participant to ensure data triangulation (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). I used the data from the interviews to validate the data collected from the lesson plans. Collecting data from various teachers in different grade levels also added to the credibility of the study's findings. By examining multiple data sources, I further ensured the consistency of the data collected.

### **Member Checking**

Member checking is a method used in qualitative research to further assist the researcher with validating participants' experiences and feelings (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Likewise, Yin (2017) believes member checking also adds another level of trustworthiness of the qualitative research results and helps ensure researcher bias and their ideals not be included in findings. I provided the participants with a complete summary of my initial findings. In doing so, the participants examined the synthesized data, and they recognized their experiences and feelings. To capture their perceptions' interpretation, I asked them to confirm and correct my findings that represent their

experiences best (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The reflective researcher's log also helped me ensure I kept track of my practices, thoughts, and notes during this process.

### **Discrepant Cases**

Finding data that opposed or undermined my study results was the last step to ensure the research's integrity (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). By examining the data for contrary findings, I strengthened the qualitative research's trustworthiness (Yin, 2017). Additionally, I continually searched for more data to ensure I reached the saturation point in my study, which prevented the conclusions' revision (Yin, 2017).

### **Data Analysis Results**

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions, experience, and challenges of language arts teachers' when using research-based reading instructional strategies with minority middle school students. The themes that developed from the research revealed teachers perceived students' social interactions, teacher scaffolding, and effective teacher training were instrumental when using the research-based reading instructional strategies.

The themes developed from teachers' perceptions, experiences, and challenges implementing the research-based reading instructional strategies with minority students: (a) reading strategies, (b) adaptive teaching, (c) professional development, and (d) culturally responsive teaching. During this research, social interaction and scaffolding surfaced as the essential technique teachers utilized when using the research-based reading instructional strategies effectively with minority students.

## **Reading Strategies**

The participants shared similar experiences about students entering their classrooms with varying reading levels. Some students scored as low as three grade levels below their expected grade level. During the interviews, the participants focused on the research-based strategy self-select reading (SSR) as the least effective strategy used in their classrooms with minority students.

Participant T3 shared this personal experience:

Minority students generally hate SSR; they stare at the book and say reading is boring. I believe they hate SSR because reading is hard for them. As a teacher, I dislike the strategy because it's a waste of my teaching time. I believe that time should be used to introduce books using a showcase, PowerPoint, or book trailer. Minority students need to be encouraged and motivated to read. Minority student struggling readers usually haven't had much experience with reading independently and enjoying it. We need time to get them excited about reading instead of watching them stare at the pages.

Participant T5 did not include book introductions using power points, book trailers, or showcases in the lesson plans during the SSR scheduled time slot.

## **Adaptive Teaching**

Several of the participants expressed how they make adaptations to SSR strategy to assist minority students. For example, participant T5 stated, "I introduce multiple books then assign those books to groups of two or three students according to their interest." The participant continued by saying, "in doing so they are able to encourage



and motivate minority students to actually read because reading partners are exciting to them.” Participant T4 had a similar response, “When minority students have a partner, they get so excited to discuss the book with their peers and showcase the book to other students.” The weekly lesson plan for participant T5 included various book titles, student reading leveled groups, and discussion questions for each book. In contrast the adaptations were not included in the lesson plan under the SSR strategy time slot. However, they were included during the Strategy practice reading time slot.

### **Culturally Responsive Teaching**

The participants expressed the belief that minority students need to be exposed to diverse books and curriculum that will trigger their interests. For example, participant T6 stated, “Students are more engaged in books when they see similarities of themselves in characters and in their life experiences.” Three participants focused on the lack of funds to purchase diverse books and participant T6 stated, “the school librarians need to do a better job purchasing books that include minority students’ interests.” Participant T6 had several diverse book titles listed in the lesson plan to introduce to students during the teacher read aloud time slot. Several other participants felt their minority students needed instruction that included time and space for them to question, discuss, and discover content. Participant T3 went on to say, “As a veteran teacher I know I have to be minority students’ learning partner not their silent partner.”

### **Professional Development**

The participants conveyed their desire for individualized professional development. For example, participant T3 stated, “We never get different levels of

training just one size fits all training, which is the opposite of how we are expected to teach.” Other participants focus on the constant mention of culturally responsive teaching by educational leaders and the lack of teacher training that would ensure it. Two novice teacher participants expressed similar thoughts that they think their students would have been more successful on their end-of-year assessments if they had received specific instruction on improving minority struggling readers’ comprehension skills during district-mandated professional development. The participants expressed wanting a better pedagogical understanding of reading, clear knowledge of the needs of minority students, and strategies from informed instructional strategies proven to improve literacy for struggling minority students. Participant T7 stated, “It would be good to have tiered examples of how to use the strategies with students who are at different reading levels.”

Participants named scaffolding, small group instruction, higher-level questioning, and peer tutoring as effective strategies middle school teachers use to adapt to the research-based reading strategies with minority students. Participant T8 stated, “I break down vocabulary used in the selected books by introducing the words before the reading begins. I strongly believe this helps minority students’ comprehension. I’m not able to do that during SSR because everyone is reading a different book.” Participant T8 also stated, “I put the students in small groups during SSR to collaborate and share notes when completing an assignment. The minority students’ participation is 100% during this time.” This does not happen when minority students are expected to select a book on their grade level and read it without any social interaction or scaffolding from their teacher. Participant T2 stated, “I present higher-level questioning in the small groups to allow the

higher level students to peer tutor the struggling students. Minority students are able to discuss with one another and help each other using real world examples and life experienced.” All of the participants included higher-level questioning in the lesson plans under the strategy practice section.

Table 1 shows excerpts related to the theme and subthemes related to RQ1: What are teachers’ perceptions of research-based reading strategies used with minority middle school students that include social interaction and scaffolding to improve literacy? The excerpts explain how teachers feel about their current knowledge of curriculum, strategies, and resources when working with minority students.

**Table 1***Excerpt from Data Sources of Culturally Responsive Teaching*

Theme	Subtheme	Interview and Lesson Plan Excerpt
Culturally Responsive Teaching	Diversity	I feel unprepared to teach minority students when I know the only curriculum available to them is of characters that don't include people that look like them. (Participant T7)
		As a white 1 <sup>st</sup> year teacher I wish I had more options of diverse books and curriculum to choose from. There are tons of African American authors. (Participant T3)
		I wish I knew more about how to motivate minority students to read and learn before I started teaching. (Participant T7)
Professional Development		To put it plainly, it just isn't helpful most of the time. We never revisit previous training and I've honestly never had a training specifically on how to improve minority student's literacy. (Participant T1)
		The strategies that are taught usually don't align with how to make SSR an effective strategy with minority students. I wish I had known SSR doesn't work well with struggling readers, one size doesn't fit all. Our Instructional leaders should know that by now. So much time has been wasted trying to implement this strategy. (Interview Participant T6)

Table 2 shows excerpts related to the theme and subthemes related to RQ2: What are teachers' experiences of research-based reading strategies used with minority middle school students that include social interaction and scaffolding to improve literacy? The excerpts clarify the language arts teachers' description of what they do during lesson planning to implement the strategies with minority students.

**Table 2***Excerpt from Data Sources Related to Adaptive Teaching*

Theme	Subtheme	Interview and Lesson Plan Excerpt
Adaptive Teaching	Scaffolded Instruction	<p>Over the years I've learned in order to get minority students to read independently I have to get them excited, so I use book trailers of different books to introduce the book. (Participant T3).</p> <p>I get students excited about a book by reading the summary of several different books. Minority students love Teacher Read Aloud (Participants T3, T6, T4, and T5)</p>
	Small Group Instruction	<p>I encourage students to read aloud in small groups of 3-4, despite the district's policy against popcorn reading. This strategy allows time for social interaction. I also model reading for the students in those groups. (Participant T8)</p> <p>The district mandates teachers use Newsela for reading instruction. Don't get me wrong it's a great resource but the passages are very difficult to read for struggling readers and there is no social interaction involved when assigning a Newsela article to students. They need social interaction and time to discuss. (Participant T3)</p> <p>I use SSR/SP simultaneously. I put them in groups, they read independently and then allowed time to discuss and answer teacher created questions. (Participant T2)</p>

Table 3 shows excerpts related to the theme and subthemes related to RQ3: What are the challenges teachers face when using research-based reading strategies used with minority middle school students that include social interaction and scaffolding to improve literacy? The data reveals teachers' description of the workarounds they believe would be more helpful with minority students during literacy instruction.

**Table 3**

*Example from Data Sources Related to Common Themes and Constraints*

Theme	Subtheme	Interview and Lesson Plan Excerpt
Reading Strategy Constraints	Social Interaction	SSR does not allow time for social interaction. Minority students demonstrate confidence when they are allowed to discuss with their peers. (Participant T3)
		The students don't get a chance to talk about their reading, if they were allowed to talk about their reading minority students would be more interested and motivated to read. (Participant T6)
	Teacher and Student Attitudes	SSR is a waste of time for most of my students. Because reading is hard for struggling readers. So reading independently provides the minority students an opportunity to do nothing, they stare at the books and read a line or two to answer the daily discussion question. (Participant T6)
	Reading Specialist	We had a reading specialist but the only students that could attend were students with learning disabilities because there are only so many slots. In schools that have struggling readers there should be unlimited slots. (Participant T5)
		Our reading specialist is very helpful but she is stressed out and over worked with all of the struggling readers she services on a daily basis. (Participant T8)

Table 4 shows excerpts related to research questions, themes, codes, and phrases that captured the perceptions, experiences, and challenges the language arts teachers faced when using the research-based reading strategies with minority students. The themes were formed from the nodes that developed during the analysis of the interviews.

**Table 4**

*Example from Data Sources Research Questions Codes and Themes*

Research Questions	RQ#1	RQ#2	RQ#3
	What are teachers' perceptions of RRIS used with minority middle school students that include social interaction and scaffolding to improve literacy?	What are teachers' experiences of RRIS used with minority middle school students that include social interaction and scaffolding to improve literacy?	What are the challenges teachers face when using RRIS used with minority middle school students that include social interaction and scaffolding to improve literacy?
Themes	Culturally Responsive Teaching Diverse Resources/Materials Training	Adaptive Teaching Scaffolding Small Group	Lack of Social interaction Teacher Attitudes Students Attitudes
Codes	Professional Development Resources Support	I buy books myself I find relevant curriculum I adapt the strategies	No talking Struggling readers need teacher motivation Not enough support

## **Summary of Outcomes**

Results showed the participants believed their professional knowledge of successfully implementing the research-based reading strategies that include social interaction and scaffolding with minority students is lacking. They also indicated the participants perceive self-selected reading as a waste of time that negatively affected minority students' literacy. The participants believed they need tiered professional development of research-based reading strategies that are successful with minority students. The participants also expressed frustration with the district's reading curriculum resources and the restraints it places on the teachers' ability to include social interaction and scaffolding. This study also revealed the participants had negative experiences using the reading strategies and provided knowledge of how to adjust the strategies despite these challenges. These findings are comparable to prior research that found teachers enhance minority student's literacy when they can adapt to district instructional mandates, and student success is directly related to teacher knowledge (Cekiso, 2017; Hartwig & Schwabe, 2018; Villamizar, 2017;). However, other researchers Shelton and Brooks (2019) and Ladson Billings (2018) found that preservice and veteran teachers perceive their knowledge of successfully implementing research-based reading strategies as inadequate when teaching minority students.

Vygotsky's (1978) social development theory (SDT) provides a framework explaining these findings. The participants' perceptions about incorporating reading strategies that included social interaction and scaffolding reflect the constructs of Vygotsky's STD. During the interviews, the participants reflected on their lack of



knowledge of how to successfully use the reading strategies with minority students, the importance of helpful discussions with experienced colleagues, and their feelings on the lack of support and resources needed to introduce, promote, and model literacy to minority students. They also indicated the importance of specific professional development, which would provide explicit knowledge of the needs of minority students and how to meet their needs successfully. Though the participants encountered challenges with implementing SSR with minority students, they expressed their ability to adjust the strategy and move past the pedagogical district mandates to meet their students' needs.

In response to the first research question teachers' perceptions of research-based reading instructional strategies that include social interaction and scaffolding with minority middle school students, the participants expressed feelings that reading strategies are necessary to improve literacy but feel unprepared when using the strategies with minority students. They believed they needed additional knowledge of each research-based reading strategy and culturally responsive teaching. The participants think professional development would be more helpful if it explicitly aligned to what is necessary to improve minority students' literacy. The teachers also identified the lack of culturally responsive curriculum and books as a particular concern that school administrators and librarians could better support by purchasing diverse books and allowing reading applications that include social interaction. These results differ from past research that did not suggest the kind of support that would enable teachers to use research-based strategies to minority students successfully. As shown in Table 1, the theme of culturally responsive teaching addresses research question 1.

For the second research question involving teachers' experiences using the research-based reading strategies, the participants revealed they learned through trial, error, and colleague support. As a result, the participants understand that adaptations are needed to use the research-based reading strategies with minority students. They perceive scaffolding, small group instruction, differentiating, and peer tutoring as helpful strategies for increasing minority students' literacy. The strategies acknowledged by the participants in the current study correspond with those indicated in prior research (Hong-Nam and Szabo, 2017).

The third research question encompassed the participants' methods for easing the challenges encountered when using the research-based reading instruction into their pedagogy. They agreed that self-selected reading wasted valuable teaching and learning time. Consequently, prior research argues that the strategy is successful because it allows student choice (Hong-Nam & Szabo, 2017). However, the teachers also agreed that the strategy practice and teacher read aloud reading strategy provided opportunities for teachers to include social interaction and scaffolding, which they perceive is necessary to implement with minority students. The participants indicated the significance of uncovering approaches that eliminate the challenges to enhance teacher knowledge to ensure student growth (Chandler & Hagaman, 2020). Participants noted they needed better access to a reading coach, collaboration with colleagues, and professional development from experts with documented success in improving the literacy of minority students.

### **Project Deliverable as an Outcome of Results**

This study revealed a gap in practice at the local level and education profession about language arts teachers' perceptions and the challenges that made it complicated to integrate research-based reading strategies that include social interaction and scaffolding during reading instruction. The participants identified the challenges they deem hindered integrating the research-based reading strategies and offered workarounds to the strategies. The participants believed reading is hard for the majority of minority students that they teach. As a result, they perceive the RRIS need to be adjusted to include this population of students. Furthermore, they believe educational leaders must provide specific professional development opportunities to minority students' teachers and add a culturally responsive curriculum to the district.

Though the teachers face challenges in integrating the reading strategies with minority students, they provided clear examples of adaptations they made to move beyond the general pedagogy to meet the needs of their minority students. As a result of this study's findings, I decided to create a teacher professional development project. In the next section, I explain the description of the project.

### Section 3: The Project

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to examine teachers' perceptions, experiences, and challenges when using research-based reading strategies that include social interaction and scaffolding with minority middle school students. According to prior research and findings from this study, there is a need for specialized learning to address language arts teachers' challenges concerning their lack of knowledge of how to effectively use the research-based reading strategies, specifically with minority students (De Silva et al., 2018). Findings revealed the teachers believed that social interaction and scaffolding are necessary but perceived that they lack sufficient skills and resources to make a significant difference in minority students' literacy. They were also concerned about their lack of knowledge of culturally responsive teaching and emphasized the need for professional learning to include it in their daily instruction.

Based on the participating teachers' responses, the project study deliverable was a professional learning plan that focuses on the teachers' stated need for more training. To support them in understanding the specific needs of minority students when teaching reading and integrating culturally responsive teaching into their instructional practices. The purpose of this professional learning project is to improve teachers' knowledge of social interaction, scaffolding, and culturally responsive strategies that align with the research-based reading strategies with minority students. The professional learning project will begin with a 2-day professional learning session before the school year begins to integrate culturally responsive teaching into delivering the research-based

reading strategies for their minority middle school students. After the 2-day sessions, 3 follow-up individual sessions will be scheduled bi-monthly throughout the school year to ensure novice and veteran teachers clearly understand. The session will contain refreshers and discuss needed revisions, reinforcement, and enhancements to ensure teachers achieve culturally responsive teaching.

### **Rationale**

I created the professional learning project to provide teacher's with more knowledge and skills to effectively implement the RRIS with minority students. The design of this project will focus on teachers being collaborators and administrators and librarians being supporters. The 2-day teacher training and three follow-up sessions align culturally responsive teaching strategies and research-based reading instructional strategies. This inclusive professional development plan is practical for language arts teachers of minority students as it considers all three research questions.

### **Review of the Literature**

This professional development project aligns with the problem and findings of the study. It focuses on the professional learning and ongoing support that language arts teachers of minority middle school students need. Andragogy, effective professional development, collaboration, coaching, mentoring, and culturally responsive teaching were the topics I explored for this literature review. I examined: Academic Search Complete, Thoreau, ProQuest Central, and the Education Resource Information Center (ERIC). I also utilized Google Scholar to locate sources. I used the following search terms: *professional development, effective professional development, adult learning,*

*andragogy, culturally responsive teaching, multicultural teaching, adaptive teaching coaching, and teacher training.* The 30 peer-reviewed studies in this literature review were published within the past 5 years.

It is essential to know and understand the learning characteristics of adults when considering a professional development project. According to Knowles's (1984) seminal theory on andragogy, adult learners seek opportunities to learn that foster change to enhance their current foundation of knowledge and teaching practices. Over the years, Knowles's (1984) andragogy framework has developed into the following six principles: (a) learner's need to know, (b) self-concept of the learner, (c) prior experience of the learner, (d) readiness to learn, (e) orientation to learning, (f) motivation to learn, (Mews, 2020). As a result, educational professional development leaders should consider the importance of educators' experiences, perceptions, and challenges when teaching minority students (Bryan, 2017). Furthermore, educational leaders must include teacher inquiry and feedback opportunities into adult learning and strategies relevant to the teacher's current teaching environment and prior knowledge (Knowles et al., 2015).

The enactment of the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015) has assigned a larger accountability target on state curriculum and school districts to ascertain and implement effective teaching and professional development methods that improve teachers' use of research-based strategies (Reddy et al., 2020). Effective professional development enhances educators' understanding of instructional practices, ensuring successful student learning (Lekwa et al., 2019). In a study conducted to identify the missing linkage of teacher effectiveness, Brion (2020) noted that effective professional development occurs

when more than one learning opportunity is offered on multiple occasions, providing teachers opportunities to change their daily habits (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). The results from this study revealed teachers wanted more follow-up professional development to ensure their understanding. Researchers have shared seven features of professional development (a) is content-focused, (b) incorporates active learning, (c) supports collaboration, (d) uses models of effective practice, (e) provides coaching and expert support, (f) offers feedback and reflection, (g) is of sustained duration (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Professional development leaders must be diligent with including these features when developing and delivering professional learning because researchers found they can help build the foundation for teacher confidence and efficacy (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). In contrast, researchers Bates and Morgan (2018) found that a one-time professional development does not allow teachers time to adjust their teaching or provide the support teachers need to monitor their practice or learning.

The essential factors in student educational achievement, particularly within varied learning situations, is the continuous quality of learning experiences and support teachers receive (Chaudhuri et al., 2019). The most effective professional learning strategies that can impact teachers' practices are collaboration, reflection, and knowledge (Forrest et al., 2019). These characteristics are essential when teachers of minority students are unsure of cultural norms (Brian, 2017). McCray (2018) noted that professional learning's careful alignment to teachers' specific content focus and environment must be taken under consideration by educational professional development leaders. Moreover, Vygotsky (1978) believed the more knowledge the teacher gains with

using the RRIS, the better opportunities the students will have for learning. However, McCray (2018) noted teachers reported the lack of alignment of professional development they received during the study.

McKeown et al. (2019) found rigorous, content-driven professional development directly linked to teachers' strengths, weaknesses, and student population within the setting increased teachers' knowledge and the quality of practice. Therefore, teachers of minority students need specific professional development that will ensure literacy improvement. Moreover, content-focused professional development supports teachers in obtaining more knowledge of their content area while increasing their skills and strategies, boosting higher comprehension levels and student academic achievement (Gallagher et al., 2017; Olson et al., 2017). However, professional development on focused content topics is less frequent and often inadequate and usually offered during a single-day workshop. The teachers typically have limited time for collaboration and even less in low-performing schools with coworkers about content explicit pedagogical practices. Consequently, researcher Harris & Graham (2017) believed when teachers can self-regulate and regard professional development as relevant and valuable to their current situation, their know-how, self-worth, and adaptability improve. Subsequently, Vygotsky (1978) noted educational leaders must consider teachers' perceptions of professional development because they are MKO in their classrooms.

Time for collaboration is equally important when developing professional learning because researchers Johnston and Tsai (2018) have found teachers' knowledge expands when they can share responsibility and perfect their teaching practices.



Specifically, researchers Doerr and Woywod (2018) noted that teacher collaboration results in positive outcomes that are substantially better than when teachers plan lessons alone. Lownsbrough (2020) contends that it positively impacts teacher efficacy and student achievement when teachers spend time together. Equally important Tallman, (2019) found teachers must trust one another and feel comfortable enough to try new instructional practices and question old ones. Moreover, researchers' Ma et al. (2018) and Smith et al. (2020) exploration of collaborative sessions shows that effective instructional practices result from teachers' knowledge and skills, which is essential to enhancing pedagogical understanding. Some teacher participants in this study expressed their desires to collaborate with other teachers. Others confirmed that collaboration improved their teacher knowledge and pedagogy and gave them more confidence with implementing the research-based reading instructional strategies.

As a result of the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, instructional coaches have been added into elementary and secondary schools to conduct teacher training on creating assessments, understanding student data, and planning lessons (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). Researchers Desimone and Pak (2017) noted that instructional coaches' implementation ensures ongoing learning and consistent support for teachers with new district initiatives. For example, Maher (2017) and Tanner et al. (2017) noted instructional coaches are available for individual coaching so that training can be differentiated for teachers and provide reinforcement and feedback opportunities. Perry and Boodt (2019) believed that mentoring is also an essential aspect of effective professional development as teachers with different professional and life experiences peer

mentor each other, providing multiple opportunities to learn new pedagogy. Finally, (Ciuffetelli (2017) and Gupta & Lee (2020) agree follow-up sessions are a valuable aspect of professional development. These sessions provide teachers more opportunities to improve their teaching because they are more likely to buy into the new curriculum strategies when they support the initial training in contrast to the one-time professional development generally offered (Suchankova & Hrbackova, 2017). This study's recommended project is effective professional development for the language arts teachers that include multiple follow-up sessions to ensure teachers' become the MKO implementing RRIS (Vygotsky, 1978).

This exploratory case study included detailed perceptions, experiences, and teachers' challenges that interconnect and support Vygotsky's social development theory. For example, the teachers believe they needed more time for social interaction and more opportunities to scaffold their students learning during reading instruction just as Vygotsky (1978) outlined in his social development theory. Equally important, the professional learning sessions that I created include the attributes of effective professional development outlined above by researchers Knowles (1984), Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), Mews (2020), and Bryan (2017). As a result of Darling-Hammond et al.'s (2017) research findings, I will supply frustrated teachers with a program to ascertain, collaborate, exercise, and enhance their knowledge of culturally responsive teaching that aligns with the research-based reading strategies that include social interaction and scaffolding. According to Logan et al. (2018), I will be providing an opportunity for teachers of minority students to acquire the critical information, skills,

and dispositional insight relative to their students' culture. Therefore, teachers will learn about the best culturally responsive strategies to use before, during, and after reading instruction that assists minority students with improving their literacy. The project will ensure the administration recognizes the importance of both culturally responsive teaching and effective professional development, so minority students meet the zone of proximal development characteristics explained by Vygotsky's (1978) social development theory to improve their literacy.

### **Project Description**

The purpose of this professional development project is to enhance teachers' understanding of culturally responsive teaching that aligns with research-based reading strategies of minority middle school students. Using LinkedIn Professional social network as my participant pool, the project will start by sending the research participants an invitation to volunteer their time for a 2-day biweekly book talk before the school year begins. I will invite other teachers to the professional development sessions if the research participants refuse (See Appendix A for language arts teacher participant invitation). Possible book choices to be considered for the book talk about culturally responsive teaching are: "*For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood and the Rest of Y'all Too*" by Edmin (2017); "*Culturally Responsive Teaching and The Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*" by Hammond (2014); "*These Kids Are Out of Control*" by Milner et al. (2019). The invitation will include the book talk overview, survey of teacher knowledge of culturally responsive teaching, a Zoom code to join a roundtable-style group discussion of the

challenges teachers encounter when using the research-based reading strategies with minority students.

On the first day of the 2-day biweekly sessions, teachers will participate in a Zoom roundtable-style discussion that will cover six chapters from the book and a presentation on culturally responsive pedagogy. The last book talk will include discussions about the previous six chapters and the conclusion of the book. A thorough review of content standards, alignment of learning targets, reading tasks associated with the standards, and examples of lesson plans, including activities that contribute to students' understanding of fiction and nonfiction text, will be included in each book talk discussion. Affording teachers opportunities to engage with culturally responsive pedagogy and developing lessons specific to their student population will ensure successful implementation of innovative strategies.

The teachers will attend three follow-up sessions during the school year will be held bi-monthly. These sessions will include Zoom whole group and small group breakout collaborative sessions based on teachers' current teaching positions. The teachers will select a leader to serve as a facilitator during the collaborative break-out time and whole-group discussion sessions. The following questions will guide the book talk discussions.

1. What is culturally responsive teaching?
2. Why should culturally responsive teaching be used by teachers of minority students?

3. How does culturally responsive teaching impact minority students' engagement during silent-sustained reading, the least successful strategy?
4. How important is using culturally responsive teaching to improve minority students' literacy? Why?
5. How have you ensured culturally responsive teaching when using the research-based reading strategies with minority students?

The researcher will purchase the books and mailed to each participant's home before the first meeting. The researcher will give the participants a reading schedule and participant expectations, and the facilitator's agenda of upcoming bi-weekly book talk meetings. To ensure teachers can reflect on their current practice, they will ask them to bring a reflective journal and the most recent lesson plan they have created and implemented.

One possible challenge to ensure successful implementation of the project is participant attendance. As the professional development will be voluntary and will involve ongoing participation throughout the school year, teachers will only attend if they are sure that the meetings will increase their instructional practices and knowledge. Another obstacle is teachers finding time to participate in the follow-up sessions because it will happen during professional hours. Potential solutions contain well-defined benefits to the participants from other participants within the cohort. The participants will also hear other language arts teacher's successful testimonies using culturally responsive teaching in their current teaching practice. (See Appendix B book talk professional development, book goals, and objectives.)

### **Proposal for Implementation and Timeline**

The first stage of executing the proposed professional development would be to share my findings with all the local school districts with similar enrollment and low literacy achievement levels on state exams. In addition, I would invite the school districts to review the professional development plan that aligns with the findings. In doing so, I will provide an opportunity for district leaders of minority students with low achievement literacy levels to better understand teachers' perceptions, experiences, and challenges implementing research-based reading strategies. As a result, educational leaders will consider the book talk professional development and the follow-up collaborative sessions on culturally responsive teaching. (See Appendix C letter to local districts.)

If the district leaders accept the proposed professional development book talk, I will set up a virtual meeting to discuss the goals, objectives, lessons, and book suggestions. However, the district leaders will make the final determination of the book. I will also recommend teachers be awarded re-certification points for their participation. Finally, I will offer my time to collaborate with district literacy coaches to prepare them to facilitate the book talks, conduct follow-up sessions, and evaluate their understanding and implementation progress.

### **Project Evaluation Plan**

I will use two different evaluations to ascertain the project's effectiveness and the participating language arts teachers' ability to incorporate culturally responsive teaching with research-based reading strategies. The first will be a formative assessment of the 2-day bi-weekly session. For example, I will ask open-ended questions regarding their

learning, elaboration or clarification on unclear content, and the most helpful strategies with minority students. Adjustments of the future bi-monthly professional development sessions will be made as results from the assessments' analyzed data indicates. I will assess the teachers' knowledge using a formative assessment after each bi-monthly session to determine the content and structure for the next session and determine if the objectives and learning targets are successful. (See Appendix D for the formative assessment.)

On the summative evaluation, the teachers will answer both closed and open-ended questions on the last day of the professional learning to determine their learning needs, what they learned, and how this training could improve. The participants will complete this assessment electronically using a Google form which is a web-based portal. (See Appendix E for the summative evaluation.)

The teachers will keep a reflective journal to document their understanding and using the culturally responsive teaching strategies learned from reading the book. This professional training book talk aims to assist language arts teachers with aligning the RRIS strategies with the CRT strategies to ensure minority students are successful in literacy. To capture teachers' success, failures, thoughts, questions, concerns, and ongoing learning of the culturally responsive teaching strategies, they will write in their reflective journals. The continuous support received from the follow-up professional development will ensure the language arts teachers become comfortable using the CRT strategies with minority students. The project will also provide teachers opportunities to collaborate and learn from their peers.

The language arts teachers of minority middle school students are the primary stakeholders. They voiced the need for professional development relevant to their challenges with improving the literacy of minority students to be more effective with enhancing literacy and ensuring their students reach district and state benchmarks. The project evaluation will present data that will ascertain if providing professional development to language arts teachers in a 2-day bi-weekly session and three follow-up collaborative sessions successful.

### **Project Implications**

I created the professional development project to help language arts teachers align culturally responsive teaching with research-based reading instructional strategies to improve their minority middle school students their literacy. The project is valuable to the local setting as the district goal is to improve minority middle school literacy levels. This study's participants voiced the significance and need for educational leaders to support professional development that enhances minority middle school students' literacy.

The professional development project I created has the potential to influence positive social change if the language arts teachers believe their knowledge of RRIS and CRT improved their ability to be effective in their daily practice. Administrators and curriculum leaders in other schools may be encouraged to utilize the professional development method to ensure language arts teachers implement CRT and RRIS to minority middle school students successfully.



### **Summary**

In section 3, I described specific elements of the project deliverable. It is a book talk professional development training detailed in Appendix B. In Section 3, I included a literature review that validates the need for ongoing training, culturally responsive literature, and embedded collaborative learning time. Section 3 summarized potential challenges and potential solutions. It also includes the rationale for the professional development, suggestions for execution, and a plan to assess teacher learning and the project. I also provided the implication for social change. Section 4 will provide the limitations and strengths of the project to include my reflections.

## Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

### **Introduction**

The purpose of the project was to examine teacher's perceptions, experiences, and challenges using research-based reading instructional strategies that include social interaction and scaffolding with minority middle school students. Language arts teachers responded to questions about the RRIS during interviews. I learned about their successes, failures, challenges, and the type of professional development they felt they needed to be successful in improving minority middle school students' literacy. The professional development project can enlighten future teacher training on aligning culturally responsive teaching with research-based reading instructional strategies. In this section, I assess the strengths and limitations of the professional development project. I also provide additional information on recommendations for this study.

### **Project Strengths and Limitations**

This project's significant strength is its emphasis on tackling the participants' professed needs to improve their pedagogical understanding of research-based reading strategies that align with culturally responsive teaching. This project's second strength is that it will allow teachers enough time to study, absorb, work in partnership, and reflect on innovative strategies and information continuously throughout the school year.

One of the project's limitations is the obligation from participants to be present and prepared for the book talk professional development sessions. The study's participants indicated the need for culturally responsive teaching professional development that aligns with the research-based reading strategies. Even though teachers

may be concerned about their minority students' literacy struggles, they may not rank their participation more important than the strict demands placed on them in their current positions. Planning a 2-day biweekly book talk session is another potential limitation as teachers will give up their time before their professional contract begins. Teachers may not believe professional development is essential enough to monopolize their private time.

### **Recommendations for Alternative Approaches**

This study aimed to explore the perceptions, experiences, and challenges teachers of minority students face when using research-based reading strategies that include social interaction and scaffolding. Teachers in the study indicated they needed better support and a better understanding of culturally responsive teaching. Educational leaders need to offer alternative approaches to professional development for teachers to ensure opportunities to improve their pedagogy and to align with demanding teacher schedules.

One possible alternative approach educational leaders could implement is to arrange time for the book talk discussion meetings during their regularly scheduled professional learning committee meetings. Another alternative approach is issuing the book selection as a summer read and rewarding the teachers with recertification points during the teacher workweek to meet once a day for the whole group and collaborative book talk sessions.

### **Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change**

The research process is a system of phases with a controlled method to explore a phenomenon. I used the information I collected and examined from the teacher

interviews to create the book talk professional development project. After I transcribed and coded the data using the computer program NVivo, I understood the data I collected. I have a thorough understanding of the issue and possible solutions. Creating the project was exciting because I specifically planned it to address the support teachers of minority students needed to improve their pedagogical understanding of including culturally responsive teaching in conjunction with the research-based reading strategies.

As an educator and scholar, I have matured as an adult learner and project creator. My experience as a researcher has inspired me to be more assertive about promoting and facilitating change opportunities. I feel satisfied in knowing that I have created a project that can be used as a method to enhance teachers' of minority students' instructional understanding and increase their student's literacy. During the development of the literature review for the project, I understood the importance of designing professional development that ensures active learning and collaboration improved. I gained exceptional knowledge regarding my strengths and weaknesses in becoming a successful scholar. I upheld my passion for promoting equity for minority students. As a middle school language arts teacher for 15 years who improved the literacy of my minority students, I witnessed teachers and students struggle in reading classes and wanted to create a project to assist teachers with effective strategies with my students. This project has allowed me to learn more culturally responsive techniques to share with teachers of minority students. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) believed adult learners must be given opportunities to process, collaborate, revisit, and reflect during and after professional

development. As a result, I ensure those suggestions in the professional development I created.

To promote change in education, teachers must have the knowledge, understanding, expertise, and strategies that enable them to become vehicles for change. Sandifer and Gibson (2020) noted change agents must be data-driven, passionate, and inventive. During my data collection of the research process, I learned that language arts teachers wanted more training on incorporating culturally responsive teaching that aligned with research-based reading instructional strategies when teaching minority middle school students. In my future undertakings, I would like to develop and facilitate professional development on culturally responsive teaching across disciplines in Grades K–12 in urban schools and continue to conduct research-based reading instructional strategies as they advance over time.

### **Reflection on Importance of the Work**

As this stage of my educational journey is coming to an end, it is rewarding to know that my study could have a progressive effect on the participants' professional knowledge and classroom pedagogical practices, and students where the study took place. Ensuring teachers can communicate their perspectives and methods of incorporating research-based reading strategies with minority middle school students was the main focus of this study and project. All participants interviewed in this study believe culturally responsive teaching is essential when teaching minority middle school students but perceived that they lack sufficient skills and strategies to do so and want more knowledge and resources. This project is significant in ensuring specific professional

development to support the needs of language arts teachers of minority students to assist students' literacy skills.

### **Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research**

This study's project is a 2-day biweekly professional development book talk session with follow-up collaborative sessions developed for minority middle school students' language arts teachers. Teachers in the professional development book talk sessions will learn about culturally responsive teaching strategies they can use alongside the research-based reading strategies with minority middle school students. This professional development project aims to enhance understanding of specific strategies that are successful with minority students during reading instruction. Based on the research I reviewed, effective professional development on culturally responsive teaching can positively influence teaching practices, teacher-efficacy, and student success. A recommendation for future research would be to broaden the lens of the study to include middle school and high school teachers in all content areas. The broadening of the current research could support districts in the local area and improve reading instruction for minority students. Future studies can also include new research to investigate the effectiveness of professional development methods on strengthening teachers' reading pedagogical practices use with minority students in urban schools.

This study can potentially impact positive social change by improving teacher knowledge and implementing culturally responsive teaching. School districts can effectively transform their professional development practices with the book talks. Subsequently, the increased literacy of minority students' can positively affect school

districts' graduation rates and enhance minority students' opportunities to qualify for higher-paying jobs in the community or increase their chances of attending college. As a result, minority students can better support themselves and their families. Finally, the study can positively enhance teacher knowledge of all minority students ensuring social change for our society.

### **Conclusion**

In managing this exploratory qualitative case study, I have learned that the study participants believe the research-based reading strategies are equally important as culturally responsive teaching when delivering instruction to minority middle school students. Yet, they feel they need professional learning opportunities to improve their teaching skills. In response to this study's findings, I designed a 2-day biweekly professional development book talk project and three follow-up sessions to provide ongoing support to the language arts teachers when using research-based reading instructional strategies with minority middle school students.

## References

- Akins, M., Tichenor, M., Heins, E., & Piechura, K. (2018). Teachers' knowledge of children's literature: What genres do teachers read? *Reading Improvement*, 55(2), 63. <https://eds-b-ebshost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=2&sid=85a61e25-22d7-4e03-be40-6590bfe23a77%40pdc-v-sessmgr01>
- Bates, C. C., & Morgan, D. N. (2018). Seven elements of effective professional development. *The Reading Teacher*, 71(5), 623-626. <https://eds-a-ebshost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=7867bf5a-7b66-45c3-946e-f11b03a8bebc%40sessionmgr4006>
- Bean, R. M., Dagen, A. S., Ippolito, J., & Kern, D. (2018). Principals' perspectives on the roles of specialized literacy professionals. *Elementary School Journal*, 119(2), 327-350. <https://eds-a-ebshost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=a3a88443-2567-4810-8298-76dff13624d9%40sdc-v-sessmgr01>
- Bedard, C., & Fuhrken, C. (2019). Deepening students' reading, responding, and reflecting on multicultural literature: It all started with "brown girl dreaming." *English in Texas*, 49(1), 25-31 <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1262280>
- Brannan, L. R., Johnson, R. B., Giles, R. M., & Kent, A. M. (2020). The beliefs and practices of second grade teachers who implement independent reading and its effect on students' reading achievement and reading volume. *Language and Literacy Spectrum*, 30(1). <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1263183>



- Brion, C. (2020). Learning transfer: The missing linkage to effective professional development. *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership*, 23(3), 32–47.  
<https://journals-sagepub-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/doi/pdf/10.1177/1555458920919473>
- Brownsword, S. (2019). Preparing primary trainee teachers to teach children from black, asian and other minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds or groups: Participation, experiences, and perceptions of trainee teachers. *Teacher Education Advancement Network Journal*, 11(2), 39–49. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1266357>
- Bryan, N. (2017). 'White teachers' role in sustaining the school-to-prison pipeline: Recommendations for teacher education. Urban review: *Issues and Ideas in Public Education*, 49(2), 346. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1266357>
- Capotosto, L. (2019). Scaffolding choice, increasing access: A summer initiative to promote middle school students' book reading. *Reading Horizons*, 58(3), 71–85.  
<https://eds-a-ebshost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=3f973ad6-e040-489e-a6bc-551d7e93eca1%40sdc-v-sessmgr02>
- Cekiso, M. (2017). Teacher perceptions of reading instruction in selected primary school in the Eastern Cape. *Reading & writing: Journal of the Reading Association of South Africa*, 8(1). <https://eds-a-ebshost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=0691ed07-4848-473e-8946-773c655fbecf%40sdc-v-sessmgr02>
- Chandler, B., & Hagaman, J. (2020). Pre-service teacher implementation of strategy

instruction of strategy instruction: Effects on the comprehension of middle school students. *Journal of Special Education Apprenticeship*, 9(1).

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1241844.pdf>

Chaudhuri, A. R., McCormick, B. D., & Lewis, R., Jr. (2019). Standards-based science institutes: Effective professional development that meets teacher and district needs. *Science Educator*, 27(1), 15-23. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1267766>

Ciuffetelli Parker, D. (2017). The impact of professional development on poverty, schooling, and literacy practices: Teacher narratives and reformation of mindset. *Cogent Education*, 4(1). <https://eds-a-ebSCOhost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=ca7cca07-8956-444d-b3bd-8cc2d886efcd%40sdc-v-sessmgr02>

Clark, S. K. (2020). Examining the development of teacher self-efficacy beliefs to teach reading and to attend to issues of diversity in elementary schools. *Teacher Development*, 24(2). <https://www-tandfonline-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/doi/full/10.1080/13664530.2020.1725102>

Cook, C. R., Miller, F. G., Fiat, A., Renshaw, T., Frye, M., Joseph, G., & Decano, P. (2017). Promoting secondary teachers' well-being and intentions to implement evidence-based practices: Randomized evaluation of the achiever resilience curriculum. *Psychology in the Schools*, 54(1), 13–28. <https://eds-a-ebSCOhost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=2&sid=9e8f87ee-41f9-4d4b-9480-8a7de3df90ea%40sessionmgr4007>

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and*

*mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Pearson Education.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage.

Creswell, J. W. & Creswell, J. D. (2017) *Research Design: Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches*. Sage.

Daniels, E. (2017). Curricular factors in middle school teachers' motivation to become and remain effective. *RMLE Online: Research in Middle Level Education*, 40(5), 1-14. <https://eds-b-ebshost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=cb08bfb7-e693-42cd-93fe-3466a976bc23%40pdc-v-sessmgr03>

Darling-Hammond, L. (2017). Teacher education around the world: What can we learn from international practice? *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 40(3), 291–309. <https://eds-a-ebshost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=80983b3b-8ad2-46ff-905c-190fbcf721f0%40sessionmgr4006>

Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M. E., & Gardner, M. & Learning Policy Institute. (2017). Effective teacher professional development. *Learning Policy Institute*. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED606743>

de Silva, R. M., Gleditsch, R., Job, C., Jesme, S., Urness, B., & Hunter, C. (2018). Gloria Ladson-Billings: Igniting student learning through teacher engagement in

culturally relevant pedagogy. *Multicultural Education*, 25(3–4), 23–28.

<https://eds-a-ebshost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=2&sid=5f443d08-fc58-4469-9908-ec0cb61d714c%40sessionmgr4008>

Desimone, L. M., & Pak, K. (2017). Instructional coaching as high-quality professional development. *Theory into Practice*, 56(1), 3-12. <https://eds-a-ebshost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=f59d2de6-84ac-4ab9-bd12-4a6b708d5cf2%40sdc-v-sessmgr03>

Dharamshi, P. (2019). I remember being aware of how I was being positioned by my school: How early experiences with deficit views of education influence the practices of literacy teacher educators. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 77, 90–99. <https://www-sciencedirect-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/science/article/pii/S0742051X17306534?via%3Dihub>

Doerr-Stevens, C., & Woywod, C. (2018). Stepping onto fertile round: Urban teachers' preparation for interdisciplinary inquiry. *Pedagogies: An International Journal*, 13(2), 164–180. <https://eds-b-ebshost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=4&sid=81bf7b99-7481-4110-83b6-6e21a9bf0848%40sessionmgr103>

Donahue-Keegan, D., Villegas-Reimers, E., & Cressey, J. M. (2019). Integrating social-emotional learning and culturally responsive teaching in teacher education preparation programs: The Massachusetts experience so far. *Teacher Education*

*Quarterly*, 46(4), 150-168. <https://eds-b-ebshost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=a6890585-d24f-42c9-8a37-373c4a949e2e%40sessionmgr101>

Every Student Succeeds Act, 20 U.S.C. § 6301 (2015).

<https://www.congress.gov/114/plaws/publ95/PLAW-114publ95.pdf>

Eun, B. (2019). The zone of proximal development as an overarching concept: A framework for synthesizing Vygotsky's theories. *Educational Philosophy & Theory*, 51(1), 18–30. <https://doi-org.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/10.1080/00131857.2017.1421941>

Farinde-Wu, A., Glover, C., & Williams, N. (2017). It's heart work: Strategies of effective, award-winning culturally responsive teachers. *Urban Review*, 49(2), 279-299. <https://www-proquest-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/docview/1900289375?accountid=14872>

Farmer, A. (2018). The impact of student-teacher relationships, content knowledge, and teaching ability on students with diverse motivation levels. *Online Submission*, 1(1), 13-24. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED588829>

Flory, S. B., & Wylie, R. A. (2019). Cultural competence of urban middle school physical education teachers. *Physical Educator*, 76(5), 1319–1341. <https://go-galecom.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/ps/i.do?p=EAIM&u=minn4020&id=GALE%7CA612475672&v=2.1&it=r&sid=ebSCO>

Forrest, R., Lowe, R., Potts, M., & Poyser, C. (2019). Identifying the factors that influence teacher practice change in a single case study. *Educational Psychology*

*in Practice*, 35(4), 395-410. <https://www.tandfonline-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/doi/full/10.1080/02667363.2019.1623761>

Gallagher, H. A., Arshan, N., Woodworth, K. (2017). Impact of the national writing project's college-ready writers program in high-need rural districts. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, 10, 570–595. <https://eds-a-ebSCOhost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=72eb795d-b6fc-4b4a-8187-3b0275510ab1%40sdc-v-sessmgr02>

Gehlot, L., Al-Khalaf, H. A., & Gehlot, H. (2020). Evaluation of the reading habits of Indian students reading aloud and reading silently from low, middle and high class schools. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 15(2), 41–51. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1242187>

Glock, S., Kleen, H., & Morgenroth, S. (2019). Stress among teachers: Exploring the role of cultural diversity in schools. *Journal of Experimental Education*, 87(4), 696–713. <https://eds-a-ebSCOhost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=fe67c972-7316-400b-90be-0fea8b829315%40sessionmgr4008>

Greene, P. (2018). Common core testing and the fracturing of literature. *Forbes Education*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/petergreene/2018/11/09/common-core-testing-and-the-fracturing-of-literature/?sh=7d551e1913f1>

Gupta, A., & Lee, G.-L. (2020). The effects of a site-based teacher professional development program on student learning. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, 12(5), 417–428. <https://eds-b-ebSCOhost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=72eb795d-b6fc-4b4a-8187-3b0275510ab1%40sdc-v-sessmgr02>

[com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=b6c9bd48-f2df-4ef9-a031-6e7d2badd04a%40sessionmgr101](https://com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=b6c9bd48-f2df-4ef9-a031-6e7d2badd04a%40sessionmgr101)

Gürsoy, E., & Şahin, O. (2019). The students' attitudes in preparatory classes towards the effectiveness of silent reading in terms of reading comprehension. *Inonu University Journal of the Faculty of Education*, 20(3), 744–752. <https://eds-b-ebscohostcom.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=07a5617d-fadb-4bfa-a968-8626faea6d9c%40sessionmgr101>

Hammond, Z. (2017). *Culturally responsive teaching and the brain: Promoting authentic engagement and rigor among culturally and linguistically diverse students*. Corwin

Harris, K. R., Graham, S. (2017). Self-regulated strategy development: Theoretical bases, critical instructional elements, and future research. In Fidalgo, R., Harris, K. R., Braaksma, M. (Eds.), *Design principles for teaching effective writing: Theoretical and empirical grounded principles* (pp. 119–151). Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318116887\\_Self-Regulated\\_Strategy\\_Development\\_Theoretical\\_Bases\\_Critical\\_Instructional\\_Elements\\_and\\_Future\\_Research](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318116887_Self-Regulated_Strategy_Development_Theoretical_Bases_Critical_Instructional_Elements_and_Future_Research)

Hartwig, S. J., Schwabe, F., (2018). Teacher attitudes and motivation as mediators between teacher training, collaboration, and differentiated instruction. *Journal for Educational Research Online*, 10(1), 100-121. <https://eds-a-ebscohost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=23eb1054-dcab-4de9-9ab4-935e2c7624ef%40sessionmgr4006>

- Hikida, M. (2018). Holding space for literate identity co-construction. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 50(2), 217–238. <https://journals-sagepub-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/doi/full/10.1177/1086296X17751824>
- Hong-Nam, K. & Szabo, S. (2017). Investigating master level k-6 reading teachers' attitude toward teaching content-area literacy strategies. *Journal of Teacher Action Research*, 3(3), 72-82. <https://eds-b-ebSCOhost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=246c2135-fc20-4ca1-9850-d51345d15a79%40sessionmgr102>
- Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (2017). The use of cooperative procedures in education and professional development. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 43(3), 284-295. <https://eds-b-ebSCOhost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=246c2135-fc20-4ca1-9850-d51345d15a79%40sessionmgr102>
- Johnston, W. R., & Tsai, T. (2018). The prevalence of collaboration among American teachers: National findings from the American Teacher Panel. *Creative Commons, RAND Corporation*.  
[https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR2217.html#:~:text=Key%20Findings&text=Only%2031%20percent%20of%20teachers,type%20of%20collaboration%20in%20question](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2217.html#:~:text=Key%20Findings&text=Only%2031%20percent%20of%20teachers,type%20of%20collaboration%20in%20question).
- Kennedy, E. (2018). Engaging children as readers and writers in high-poverty contexts. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 41(4), 716–73. <https://eds-a-ebSCOhost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=14c1e153->



[703c-4a7c-a383-d300616c2002%40sessionmgr4006](#)

- Knowles, M. (1984). *Andragogy in action: Applying modern principles of adult learning*. Jossey-Bass.
- Knowles, M. S., Holton, E. F., & Swanson, R. A. (2015). *The adult learner: The definitive classic in adult education and human resource development* (8th ed.). Routledge.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32(3), 465–491.
- [file:///C:/Users/karen\\_gordon/Downloads/Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy.pdf](file:///C:/Users/karen_gordon/Downloads/Toward_a_Theory_of_Culturally_Relevant_Pedagogy.pdf)
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2016). Literate lives matter. Black reading, writing, speaking, and listening in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. *Literacy Research: Theory, Method, and Practice*, 65(1), 141-151. <https://journals-sagepub-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/doi/full/10.1177/2381336916661526>
- Lekwa, A. J., Reddy, L. A., Dudek, C. M., & Hua, A. N. (2019). Assessment of teaching to predict gains in student achievement in urban schools. *School Psychology*, 34(3), 271–280. <https://eds-b-ebshost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=77156781-9a40-48f9-86b8-21d3bea0685c%40sessionmgr102>
- Li, N., & Hasan, Z., (2010). Closing the achievement gap: Strategies for ensuring the success of minority students. *National Teacher Education Journal*, 3(2), 47-59. <https://eds-a-ebshost->

[com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=135057df-0968-43f6-8718-55137d30d999%40sessionmgr4008](http://com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=135057df-0968-43f6-8718-55137d30d999%40sessionmgr4008)

Loertscher, D. V. (2014). Danielson, Charlotte. The framework for teaching evaluation instrument, 2013 Edition: The newest rubric enhancing the links to the common core state standards, with clarity of language for ease of use and scoring. *Teacher Librarian*, 41(4), 42. <http://www.loccsd.ca/~div15/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/2013-framework-for-teaching-evaluation-instrument.pdf>

Logan, S. R., Hilton, A. A., Watson, D. C., & Kirkland-Holmes, G. (2018). African American history and culture: What white teachers should know. *Educational Foundations*, 31(3–4), 7–26. <https://eds-b-ebshost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=9928404a-a85c-4bbd-ba64-56277b52ad5d%40sessionmgr103>

Lownsbrough, S. (2020). Exploring approaches to ensure more effective professional development for English teachers. *RaPAL Journal*, 101, 30–37. <https://eds-b-ebshostcom.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=ebd8e0e3-e907-47ca-91ee-5becf3fa019d%40pdc-v-sessmgr01>

Lui, A. (2012). White paper teaching in the zone: An introduction to working within the zone of proximal development to drive effective early childhood instruction. *Children's Progress*. <https://esltaggart.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/zone-of-proximal-development.pdf>

Lowe, K (2017). Four instructional practices so no one falls through the gaps. *Literacy Learning: the Middle Years*, 25(3) 28-37. <https://eds-b-ebshost->

[com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=1303e556-f22e-4b03-83b7-976b86ce72ce%40pdc-v-sessmgr02](https://com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=1303e556-f22e-4b03-83b7-976b86ce72ce%40pdc-v-sessmgr02)

Ma, N., Xin, S. & Du, J. (2018). A peer coaching-based professional development approach to improving the learning participation and learning design skills of inservice teachers. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society*, 21(2), 291-304.

<https://eds-b-ebshost->

[com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=179af27b-ca94-4137-b090-3a79d7d001bb%40sessionmgr102](https://com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=179af27b-ca94-4137-b090-3a79d7d001bb%40sessionmgr102)

Marlatt, R. (2018). This is what we do: Emphasizing discipline-specific literacy practices in teacher education. *Journal of Language & Literacy Education / Ankara*

*Universitesi SBF Dergisi*, 14(2), 1–23. <https://eds-b-ebshost->

[com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=88927e50-dea1-41a0-8b87-de9b32f3f80e%40pdc-v-sessmgr01](https://com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=88927e50-dea1-41a0-8b87-de9b32f3f80e%40pdc-v-sessmgr01)

Maher, D., Schuck, S., & Perry, R. (2017). Investigating knowledge exchange amongst school teachers, university teacher educators and industry partners. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 42(3), 73–90.

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1137872.pdf>

McCray, C. (2018). Secondary teachers' perceptions of professional development: a report of a research study undertaken in the USA. *Professional Development in Education*, 44(4), 583–585. <https://www-tandfonline->

<https://www-tandfonline->

[com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/doi/full/10.1080/19415257.2018.1427133](https://com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/doi/full/10.1080/19415257.2018.1427133)

McKeown, D., Brindle, M., Harris, K. R., Sandmel, K., Steinbrecher, T. D., Graham, S.,

- Lane, K. L., & Oakes, W. P. (2019). Teachers' voices: Perceptions of effective professional development and classwide implementation of self-regulated strategy development in writing. *American Educational Research Journal*, 56(3), 753–791. <https://journals-sagepub-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/doi/pdf/10.3102/0002831218804146>
- Merga, M. K. (2020). Fallen through the cracks: Teachers' perceptions of barriers faced by struggling literacy learners in secondary school. *English in Education*, 54(4), 371–395. <https://www-tandfonline-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/doi/full/10.1080/04250494.2019.1672502>
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J., (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Jossey-Bass.
- Mews, J. (2020). Leading through andragogy. *College and University*, 95(1), 65–68. <https://eds-b-ebSCOhost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=5fb55fc8-d869-4ded-a796-60cd7c646572%40sessionmgr102>
- Moses, L., & Kelly, L. B. (2018). We're a little loud. That's because we like to read: Developing positive views of reading in a diverse, urban first grade. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 18(3), 307–337. <https://journals-sagepub-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/doi/full/10.1177/1468798416662513>
- Mercado, L., & Dikotla, M. (2016). Teaching better together: Literacy coaching as collaborative professional development. *English Teaching Forum*, 54(4), 24-31. <https://eds-a-ebSCOhost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=5fb55fc8-d869-4ded-a796-60cd7c646572%40sessionmgr102>

[com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=2&sid=eb698dda-aec1-4bb8-8154-84754fe65009%40sdc-v-sessmgr02](https://com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=2&sid=eb698dda-aec1-4bb8-8154-84754fe65009%40sdc-v-sessmgr02)

Murphy, K. P., Greene, J. A., Firetto, C. M., Hendrick, B. D., Li, M., Montalbano, C., Wei, L., (2018). Quality talk: Developing students' discourse to promote high-level comprehension. *American Educational Research Journal* 55(5), 1113.

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1191768.pdf>

Neugebauer, S. R., & Blair, E. E. (2020). I know how to read and all, but: Disciplinary reading constructions of middle school students of color. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 52(3), 316–340. [https://journals-sagepub-](https://journals-sagepub-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/doi/pdf/10.1177/1086296X20938780)

[com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/doi/pdf/10.1177/1086296X20938780](https://journals-sagepub-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/doi/pdf/10.1177/1086296X20938780)

Nilsson, N. L. (2020). Examining literacy specialist candidates' self-efficacy beliefs in leadership competencies before and after internships in schools. *Reading Horizons*, 59(1), 70–91. [https://eds-a-ebSCOhost-](https://eds-a-ebSCOhost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=bc8800be-7d4f-4728-ae0d-cf465adb3ce5%40sdc-v-sessmgr02)

[com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=bc8800be-](https://eds-a-ebSCOhost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=bc8800be-7d4f-4728-ae0d-cf465adb3ce5%40sdc-v-sessmgr02)

[7d4f-4728-ae0d-cf465adb3ce5%40sdc-v-sessmgr02](https://eds-a-ebSCOhost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=bc8800be-7d4f-4728-ae0d-cf465adb3ce5%40sdc-v-sessmgr02)

Northrop, L., & Kelly, S. (2019). Who gets to read what? Tracking, instructional practices, and text complexity for middle school struggling readers. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 54(3), 339–361. [https://eds-a-ebSCOhost-](https://eds-a-ebSCOhost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=824325e9-0424-4cec-b45b-d2d4653c1283%40sdc-v-sessmgr02)

[com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=824325e9-](https://eds-a-ebSCOhost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=824325e9-0424-4cec-b45b-d2d4653c1283%40sdc-v-sessmgr02)

[0424-4cec-b45b-d2d4653c1283%40sdc-v-sessmgr02](https://eds-a-ebSCOhost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=824325e9-0424-4cec-b45b-d2d4653c1283%40sdc-v-sessmgr02)

Olson, C. B., Matuchniak, T., Chung, H. Q., Stumpf, R., Farkas, G. (2017). Reducing achievement gaps in academic writing for Latinos and English learners in grades

7–12. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 109, 1–21. <https://eds-a-ebSCOhost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=70e3c80f-6f50-4a15-8c19-3669240afaa4%40sessionmgr4006>

O' Mahony, T. (2017). The impact of a constructivist approach to assessment and feedback on student satisfaction and learning: a case study: *The All Ireland Journal of teaching and learning in higher education*, 9(2) 2871-28719.

<https://eds-a-ebSCOhost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=2e050769-53f7-4c71-86f0-517ce76b38ae%40sessionmgr4006>

Ortmann, L. L., Brodeur, K., & Massey, S. L. (2020). The learner profiles of novice literacy coaches. *Reading Horizons*, 59(2), 59–83. <https://eds-a-ebSCOhost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=c7d15fa1-a799-425c-9899-3f4d689ec910%40sdc-v-sessmgr03>

Papen, U., & Tusting, K. (2020). Using ethnography and real literacies to develop a curriculum for english literacy teaching for young deaf adults in India. Compare: *A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 50(8), 1140–1158.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2019.1585756>

Perry, E., & Boodt, S. (2019). Supporting the professional development of hybrid teacher educators in the further education sector. *Teacher Education Advancement Network Journal*, 11(2), 60–71. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1266272.pdf>

Pitt, E., Bearman, M., & Esterhazy, R. (2020). The conundrum of low achievement and feedback for learning. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 45(2), 239–

250. <https://doi-org.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/10.1080/02602938.2019.1630363>

- Pletcher, B. C., Hudson, A. K., & Watson, K. (2019). I want to learn from them as Much as I want them to learn from me: Finding a balance of coaching and consulting through the analysis of a literacy coach's conversations. *Reading Horizons*, 58(1), <https://content.ebscohost.com/ContentServer.asp?T=P&P=AN&K=135687717&S=R&D=eue&EbscoContent=dGJyMNxb4kSeprU4v%2BbwOLCmsEmep7JSrqu4TLGWxWXS&ContentCustomer=dGJyMPGss0q1qK5IuePfgeyx44Dt6fIA>
- POMERANTZ, F., & PIERCE, M. (2019). When do we get to read: Reading instruction and literacy coaching in a failed urban elementary school. *Reading Improvement*, 56(2), 89–106. <https://eds-b-ebscohost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=e8532adf-9802-4c42-b912-ac5ce8013099%40pdc-v-sessmgr02>
- Pöysä, S., Vasalampi, K., Muotka, J., Lerkkanen, M.-K., Poikkeus, A.-M., & Nurmi, J.-E. (2019). Teacher-student interaction and lower secondary school students' situational engagement. *The British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 89(2), 374–392. <https://eds-b-ebscohost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=a56ce603-d9d3-4d92-b481-74c275552d42%40pdc-v-sessmgr03>
- Prezyna, D. M., Garrison, M. J., Lockte, H. A., & Gold, C. P. (2017). Principal leadership and reading specialist role understanding in the era of test-based accountability policies. *International Journal of Education Policy & Leadership*, 12(2), 1–16. [https://eds-b-ebscohost-](https://eds-b-ebscohost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=8c8c8c8c-8c8c-4c4c-b481-74c275552d42%40pdc-v-sessmgr03)

[com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=7cab8ebd-04e6-4cbb-b9e8-7a91afaec9fb%40sessionmgr102](https://com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=7cab8ebd-04e6-4cbb-b9e8-7a91afaec9fb%40sessionmgr102)

- Protacio, M. S. (2019). How positioning affects English learners' social interactions around reading. *Theory into Practice*, 58(3), 217–225. <https://eds-b-ebshost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=31088e49-3d70-4331-b2e1-1efefe466dcf%40pdc-v-sessmgr03>
- Revelle, K. Z. (2019). Teacher perceptions of a project-based approach to Social Studies and literacy instruction. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 84, 95–105. <https://doi-org.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/10.1016/j.tate.2019.04.016>
- Sánchez-Suzuki Colegrove, K., & Zúñiga, C. E. (2018). Finding and enacting agency: An elementary ESL teacher's perceptions of teaching and learning in the era of standardized testing. *International Multilingual Research Journal*, 12(3), 188–202. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1182679>
- Sandifer, M. I. C., & Gibson, E. M. (2020). School counselors as social justice change agents: Addressing retention of African American Males. *Journal of School Counseling*, 18(21–23), 1–28. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1267930.pdf>
- Santoro, D. A. (2018). Is it burnout? Or demoralization? *Educational Leadership*, 75, 10–15. <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/summer18/vol75/num09/Is-It-Burnout%C2%A2-Or-Demoralization%C2%A2.aspx>
- Schipper, T. M., van der Lans, R. M., de Vries, S., Goei, S. L., & van Veen, K. (2020). Becoming a more adaptive teacher through collaborating in lesson study?



Examining the influence of lesson study on teachers' adaptive teaching practices in mainstream secondary education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 88.

<https://www-sciencedirect-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/science/article/pii/S0742051X19304366?via%3Dihub>

Scribner, S., & Cole, M. (1981). *The psychology of literacy*. Harvard University Press.

Shelton, S. A., & Brooks, T. (2019). We need to get these scores up: A narrative examination of the challenges of teaching literature in the age of standardized testing. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education*, 15(2).

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1235207.pdf>

Skerrett, A., Williamson, T., LeeKeenan, K., Rubin, J. C., Land, C. L., Hendrix, A.,

Zenkov, K. (2018). Transforming literacy education in Urban schools. *Journal of adolescent & adult literacy*, (4), 457. <https://ila-onlinelibrary-wiley-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/doi/full/10.1002/jaal.706>

Smith, R., Ralston, N. C., Naegele, Z., & Waggoner, J. (2020). Team teaching and learning: A model of effective professional development for

teachers. *Professional Educator*, 43(1), 80–90. <https://eds-b-ebshost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=ba3de638-bff7-420b-871e-8ec3cfac1a0%40pdc-v-sessmgr02>

Spichtig, A. N., Gehsmann, K. M., Pascoe, J. P., & Ferrara, J. D. (2019). The impact of adaptive, web-based, scaffolded silent reading instruction on the reading achievement of students in grades 4 and 5. *Elementary School Journal*, 119(3),

443–467. <https://eds-b-ebshost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=b50c9d0c-e37d-4f64-8374-236af5a64c8f%40sessionmgr103>

Stevenson, H., & Markowitz, N. L. (2019). Introduction: social emotional learning and culturally responsive and sustaining teaching practices. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 46(4), 3–9. <https://eds-b-ebshost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=45d20ddc-e3e6-444f-b736-044756dca662%40pdc-v-sessmgr02>

Suchánková, E., & Hrbáčková, K. (2017). Mentoring in the professional development of primary and secondary school teachers. *Journal on Efficiency and Responsibility in Education and Science*, 10(1), 7–15. <https://eds-b-ebshost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=e9c89d45-e416-4b5f-bce7-bcaa0c90256f%40sessionmgr101>

Tallman, T. O. (2019). How middle grades teachers experience a collaborative culture: An interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Research in Middle Level Education Online*, 42(8), 1–16. <https://eds-b-ebshost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=1b38d34d-dc7a-402c-b440-5c8a05837e06%40sessionmgr103>

Tanner, J., Quintis, L., & Gamboa, T., Jr. (2017). Three perspectives of planning, implementation, and consistency in instructional coaching. *Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, 7(1), 30–44. <https://eds-b-ebshost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=1b0bbb5f->

[3aaa-48a8-80f3-68940e026543%40pdc-v-sessmgr01](#)

Thomas, K. L. (2020) Building literacy environments to motivate African American boys to read. *Reading Teacher*, 1(72), 761–765. <https://eds-b-ebSCOhost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=c5d9d47f-9211-4933-8317-72865247745a%40sessionmgr102>

U.S. Department of Education (2018) National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Washington, DC: Author. <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>

Vaughn, M. (2019). Adaptive teaching during reading instruction: A multi-case study. *Reading Psychology*, 40(1), 1–33. <https://eds-b-ebSCOhost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=66e2c7b2-e359-4ace-8e55-69b74c504dec%40pdc-v-sessmgr03>

van Rijk, Y., de Mey, L., de Haan, D., van Oers, B., & Volman, M. (2018). Reading for meaning: The effects of developmental education on reading achievements of primary school students from low SES and ethnic minority families. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 29(2), 285–307. <https://doi-org.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/10.1080/09243453.2018.1433691>

Virginia Department of Education (2017). School report card. <https://schoolquality.virginia.gov/>

Villamizar (2017). The effects of Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory on second language acquisition and language input. *Revista de Docenciae Investigacion*, 7(1) 92-102. <https://eds-b-ebSCOhost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=81a127df-1fcf->

[4f54-930d-8dc0f3cf4b9a%40pdc-v-sessmgr01](#)

Vygotsky L. S. (1997). Interaction between learning and development. In: Gauvain M. & Cole G. M. (eds.) *Readings on the development of children*. Second Edition. W. H. Freeman, New York: 29–36.

<https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=0VIROZKuKNsC&oi=fnd&pg=PA34&dq=interaction+between+learning+and+development&ots=8q35TRraSz&sig=P7MMJx7yS6Cm4bZWG1Q1rw8yJCQ#v=onepage&q=interaction%20between%20learning%20and%20development&f=false>

Wang, Y., & Grieve, E. L. S. (2019). Understand the child better: Using retrospective miscue analysis to engage children of color in meaningful reading conversations. *Multicultural Education*, 26(2), 30–35. <https://eds-a-ebSCOhost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=68588eea-f26c-496b-b91c-b2b299ee1a63%40sdc-v-sessmgr01>

Weber, S. (2017). The impact of service learning on pre-service teachers' preconceptions of Urban education. *Journal of Inquiry and Action in Education*, 8(2), 21–33. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1140139.pdf>

Wetzel, M. M., Vlach, S. K., Svrcek, N. S., Steinitz, E., Omogun, L., Salmerón, C., Batista-Morales, N., Taylor, L. A., & Villarreal, D. (2019). Preparing teachers with sociocultural knowledge in literacy: A literature review. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 51(2), 138–157. <https://journals-sagepub-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/doi/pdf/10.1177/1086296X19833575>

Yin, R. K. (2017). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.).

Sage.

Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case Study Research Designs and Methods* (5th ed.). Sage.

Zoch, M. (2017). It's important for them to know who they are: teachers' efforts to sustain students' cultural competence in an age of high-stakes testing. *Urban Education*, 52(5), 610–636. <https://doi-org.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/10.1177/0042085915618716>

## Appendix A: Teacher Invitation

Dear Language Arts Middle School Teachers,

You are invited to participate in a book talk discussion professional development on Culturally Responsive Teaching due to concerns expressed by language arts teachers of minority middle school students. As a language arts teacher, you are ideal for learning valuable firsthand information on aligning the research-based reading instructional strategies that you are currently using with culturally responsive teaching during literacy instruction of minority middle school students.

Upon agreement, you will receive the book and zoom meeting code to a 2-day bi-weekly book talk session to discuss six chapters each day collaboratively. During the sessions, you will revise a current teacher-made lesson plan. Lastly, there will be three follow-up sessions to support teachers' implementation of the strategies to ensure culturally responsive teaching.

Your participation will be beneficial and could lead to greater public understanding. Sharing your challenges, experiences, and new knowledge with your colleagues on successfully aligning research-based reading strategies with culturally responsive teaching to minority students would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Karen Gordon

Walden University Doctoral Student

## Appendix B: Goals and Objectives

**Target Audience:** Language arts teachers of minority middle school students  
Grades 6-8

**Goal:** This professional development course aims to improve language arts teachers' knowledge and understanding of culturally responsive teaching strategies that align with research-based reading instructional strategies and improve the effectiveness of literacy instruction.

**Objectives:**

1. Teachers will be able to understand culturally responsive teaching strategies
2. Teachers will be able to demonstrate adequate knowledge and understanding of culturally responsive teaching strategies that align with research-based reading strategies
3. Teachers will use the knowledge to develop lesson plans that incorporate and align culturally responsive teaching strategies with the research-based reading instruction strategies for literacy instruction
4. Teachers will be able to reflect on implementation with the knowledge obtained from the professional development

**Materials needed:**

Culturally responsive teaching book, computer, previously implemented lesson plan, reflective journal, and reading state standards

**Pre-professional Development instructions:**

Teachers are required to read six chapters of the book before the first book discussion

---

 Appendix C: Professional Development Day 1
 

---

Time	Activity
A month before professional development	Teachers will be issued the book, pre-assessment questions, and instructions by mail. Teachers will read chapters 1-6 before 1 <sup>st</sup> Book Talk Meeting and complete pre-assessment Teacher survey of knowledge: Teachers will answer the following pre-assessment questions <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How would you define culturally responsive teaching (CRT)?</li> <li>2. How would you define research-based reading strategies (RRIS)?</li> <li>3. How would you combine the strategies during literacy instruction with minority students?</li> </ol>
8:00-8:15	Professional Development Introduction, Agenda, and Zoom Housekeeping
8:15-8:30	Overview of the Exploratory Qualitative Case Study <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose</li> <li>• Research Questions</li> <li>• Results</li> </ul>
8:30-9:00	<b>Overview of Language Arts State Standards</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effectively communicate</li> <li>• Create multimodal presentations</li> <li>• Determine the purpose of media messages</li> <li>• Determine the meanings of multiple words</li> <li>• Demonstrate comprehension of fictional text, literary text, and poetry</li> </ul> The teacher will quickly write a research-based reading strategy that they use when implementing the state standard
9:00-9:30	Pre-Assessment Results: (Teacher survey of knowledge Revisit/Reflect) <p>The facilitator will share the answers from the completed survey before reading chapters 1-6 by sharing the link into the chat box in the google meet for the participants to review (Time duration 15 minutes to review). Teachers will revisit the pre-assessment question to ensure teachers have a clear understanding of culturally responsive Teaching</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How would you define culturally responsive teaching?</li> <li>2. How would you define research-based reading strategies?</li> <li>3. How would you combine the strategies during literacy instruction with minority students?</li> </ol>
9:30-10:00	Chapters 1-3 Discussion (Time duration 45 minutes) Whole group: <p>The book talk session will begin by discussing the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How was culturally responsive teaching explained in the book?</li> <li>• Which strategies discussed could align well with the research-based reading strategies?</li> <li>• Wonders? Meaning what questions or concerns do you have at</li> </ul>

---



	<p>this time</p> <p>Teachers will record one question or point of interest onto a shared Google form, and the facilitator will ask the group to discuss each question as a group. The discussion will end with teachers answering the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How can CRT be aligned with the research-based reading strategies RRIS.</li> </ol> <p>Reflection-</p>
10:00-10:15	Break
10:15-10:30	<p><b>Reflections:</b> Teachers review the previously implemented lesson plan for 5 minutes and use it to reflect on how they can align culturally responsive teaching with the research-based reading strategies. Teachers will use a highlighter to make notes directly on the lesson plan. Teachers will switch lesson plans to review for 10 minutes and discuss ideas and suggestions.</p>
10:30-11:30	<p>Teachers will begin discussing Chapters 4-7</p> <p>Teachers will answer the following questions in their reflection journal and discuss them with the whole group.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. List three strategies and explain how to use them with minority students.</li> <li>2. List questions about the strategies taught in chapters 1-7.</li> <li>3. List strategies from these chapters that would best serve minority readers.</li> </ol>
11:30-12:00	Lunch on your own
12:00-1:00	<p>Lecture: Culturally Responsive Teaching</p> <p>What is culturally responsive teaching</p> <p>Culturally responsive teaching is designing lessons that meet the students where they are, making connections with kids in and out of school, and recognizing students learn from the ways teachers teach and not solely from the curriculum (Ladson Billings, 1999; as cited in de Silva, 2018).</p> <p>Successful teachers of minority students do the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on the kids' abilities not their disabilities</li> <li>• They believed their students were capable of learning</li> <li>• Invest in the community</li> <li>• They empowered their students with collective responsibility</li> <li>• Established a classroom of community</li> <li>• Believed they were producers of knowledge and not just consumers</li> </ul>
1:00-2:00	<p>Challenges Associated with culturally responsive teaching</p> <p>Lack of resources-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. What resources mentioned in Chapters 1-6 could be obtained and used in your classroom?</li> </ol> <p>Training-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. Do you think this training will enhance your understanding enough to implement culturally responsive teaching that effectively aligns with RRIS?</li> </ol>

Lack of empathy: Teachers are committed to students who they value.

c. Do you value your students? What do you do to show minority students they are valued?

**Reflection:** Participants will write in their journals reflecting on new knowledge learned and how they can overcome these challenges.

2:00-2:15

**Exit Ticket**

Describe your personal feelings, opinions, and fragility you experienced in today's professional learning. Do you have any suggestions for our future book talk that could improve this professional development delivery?

Participants are informed of the next meeting day, time, and reading assignment. Teachers will read Chapters 8-11/Conclusion

<b>Day 2</b>	
<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>
9:00-9:15	Ice Breaker Game: My favorite things – Teachers write down five favorite items and share them with five people.
9:15-10:15	<p>Review from day 1</p> <p>Group Discussion: Teachers will present ideas or strategies they implemented into their classrooms since the last meeting. If so, what? If not, why not?</p> <p>Chapters 8-11/Conclusion Whole group Discussion</p> <p>The book talk session will begin by discussing the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why is culturally responsive teaching necessary</li> <li>• Which strategies discussed in chapter 8-11 can align well with the research-based reading strategies?</li> <li>• Wonders? Meaning: what questions or concerns do you have at this time?</li> </ul> <p>Teachers will record one question or point of interest onto a shared Google form, and the facilitator will ask the group to discuss each question as a group. The discussion will end with teachers answering the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How can CRT be aligned with the research-based reading strategies?</li> </ol> <p>Reflection-</p>
10:15 10:45	Break
10:45-12:00	<p><b>Reflections-</b> Teachers review the previously implemented lesson plan used on Day 1 and use it again to reflect on how they can align culturally responsive teaching with the research-based reading instructional strategies learned from these chapters. The teachers will use a different color highlighter to make notes directly on the lesson plan.</p> <p>Day 2 Complete lesson plan that was under revisions from Day 1 professional development. Working collaboratively with other</p>

12:00-12:30	teachers on the same grade-level
12:30-1:00	Lunch on your own
1:00-1:15	<p data-bbox="656 317 1149 348">Teachers will share with the whole group:</p> <p data-bbox="609 350 1395 382">2. How were you able to revise your lesson plan to include CRT?</p> <p data-bbox="656 384 1386 449"><b>Summative Evaluation:</b> Teachers will complete a summative assessment of the effectiveness of professional development.</p> <p data-bbox="656 451 1133 483">Follow up Book Talk Sessions Schedule</p> <p data-bbox="656 485 1424 550"><b>1<sup>st</sup> Follow up session:</b> October 1 3:00-4:00 Meeting the needs of struggling minority middle school students</p> <p data-bbox="656 552 1382 716"><b>Activity:</b> Group Discussion: Thoughts, Experiences, and Challenges from teachers. Collaborating: Sharing suggestions and Ideas with colleagues: Lesson Planning and sharing resources. Video Presentation on CRT Using Music and Co-Teaching with Minority Student.</p> <p data-bbox="656 718 1279 783">Teachers will present a lesson they implemented that incorporated music.</p> <p data-bbox="656 785 1409 850">Teachers will present a lesson they implemented on co-teaching with their students.</p> <p data-bbox="656 852 1406 917"><b>Reflection:</b> In what ways do you think what you've learned has effectively impacted minority students' literacy?</p> <p data-bbox="656 919 1386 951">How Important is it to implement CRT with minority students</p> <p data-bbox="656 989 1352 1054"><b>2<sup>nd</sup> Follow up session:</b> November 6 3:00-4:00 Meeting the needs of struggling minority middle school students</p> <p data-bbox="656 1056 1382 1220"><b>Activity:</b> Group Discussion Thoughts, Experiences, and Challenges from teachers. Collaborating: Sharing suggestions and Ideas with colleagues: Lesson Planning and sharing resources. Video Presentation on CRT Using Competition to increase minority student's success.</p> <p data-bbox="656 1222 1386 1287">Teachers will present a lesson they implemented that included friendly peer competition on a literary assignment.</p> <p data-bbox="656 1289 1406 1354"><b>Reflection:</b> In what ways do you think what you've learned has effectively impacted minority students' literacy?</p> <p data-bbox="656 1356 1386 1388">How Important is it to implement CRT with minority students</p> <p data-bbox="656 1425 1390 1491"><b>3<sup>rd</sup> Follow up session:</b> January 8 3:00-4:00 Meeting the needs of struggling minority middle school students</p> <p data-bbox="656 1493 1382 1690"><b>Activity:</b> Group Discussion Thoughts, Experiences, and Challenges from teachers. Collaborating: Sharing suggestions and Ideas with colleagues: Lesson Planning and sharing resources. Video Presentation on CRT: Giving Students Classroom Responsibility to include them into the learning process.</p> <p data-bbox="656 1692 1305 1757">Teachers will present a lesson they implemented that incorporated roles and responsibilities to their students.</p> <p data-bbox="656 1759 1386 1824"><b>Reflection:</b> In what ways do you think what you have learned has effectively impacted minority students' literacy?</p> <p data-bbox="656 1827 1401 1858">How Important is it to implement CRT with minority students?</p>

---

**Overview of Language Arts State Standards**

- Effectively communicate
- Create multimodal presentations
- Determine the purpose of media messages
- Determine the meanings of multiple words
- Demonstrate comprehension of fictional text, literary text, and poetry

Teachers will list CRT and RRIS they will use that align both strategies with the state standards.

Teachers will complete **Summative Assessment** of Bi-monthly Follow Up

---

## Appendix D: Pre-Assessment

### Leaders of Minority Middle School Students

My name is Karen Gordon. I am a Walden University Doctoral Student who used the LinkedIn professional social network to conduct a study entitled Teachers' Perceptions of Researched-based Reading Strategies and Minority Middle School Students Literacy. This exploratory qualitative case study's focus was to examine language arts teachers' perceptions, experiences, and challenges they face when using the strategies with minority middle school students. Minority students' literacy levels in the local area are far below their Caucasian peers. As a result, minority students struggle in other academic areas, fall short of meeting high school graduation requirements, and miss college opportunities. Therefore, it would be beneficial for your minority students if you view the study's findings and consider creating space and time for teachers of minority middle school students in your district to participate in the professional development the teachers in the local area suggested they needed to enhance their pedagogy.

The findings: Teachers of minority students feel they need professional development to implement culturally responsive teaching strategies to successfully align them with the research-based reading strategies currently being used. Proposal: 2-day bi-weekly professional development book talk on culturally responsive teaching and three follow-up bi-monthly sessions. For more information, please contact

Karen Gordon Walden University Doctoral Student

## Appendix E: Evaluation for 2 Day Professional Development

## Professional Development Evaluation

Please select the number that best represents your opinion.

(5=excellent: 1=poor)

Participant					
1. The professional development was well organized.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The professional development goals and objectives were clearly defined.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The professional development was relevant to my current teaching position needs.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The resources, materials, and equipment were relevant to minority students.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Instructors overall performance	1	2	3	4	5
Relevance to participants current teaching					
1. The book talk professional development discussions improved the teacher's knowledge for incorporating Culturally Responsive Teaching into my literacy instruction with minority students.	1	2	3	4	5
2. This book talk professional development increased teachers' teaching skills on aligning Culturally Responsive Teaching with Research-based Reading Strategies.	1	2	3	4	5
3. This book talk professional development provided various Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies to use in my current classroom practice.	1	2	3	4	5
4. This book talk professional development provided skills and strategies for planning and delivering instruction that promotes learning for struggling minority students.	1	2	3	4	5
5. This book talk professional development empowered teachers to work collaboratively to improve teacher effectiveness.	1	2	3	4	5
6. This book talk professional development improved the participant's professional growth and provided time for reflection on the teachers' current teaching practice's effectiveness.	1	2	3	4	5

### Appendix E: Summative Assessment of Bi-monthly Follow Up

Please respond to the following questions.

Your answers will assist in determining how to improve the professional learning opportunity.

1. How has this professional development caused you to facilitate reading instruction with minority students?

---

---

---

---

2. What new learning have you acquired that has helped you face a challenge, and how do you plan to implement this new learning in your instructional planning and lesson delivery?

---

---

---

3. What information was most helpful to you?

---

---

---

4. What ideas do you have to improve this professional development?

---

---

---

---

*5. Additional comments.*



## Appendix F: Interview questions

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What grade do you teach?

2. How long have you been teaching?

3. How do you include social interaction into classroom lessons when using the research-based reading instructional strategies with minority students? (RQ 2)

Prompting, if necessary, will include:

a. How does it affect minority students? (RQ 2)

b. How do you feel during the process? (RQ 1)

c. What do you see as the benefits of these strategies with minority students? (RQ 2)

d. What do you see as the drawbacks of these strategies when used with minority students? (RQ 2, 3)

e. What makes it so hard (RQ 2)

f. What have you done to work around the difficulties of using these strategies with minority students (RQ 3)

4. How do you feel about the professional training you've had on using research-based reading strategies with minority students? (RQ 1)

5. Do you feel you have supports in place to assist with implementation when it's not working for minority students? (RQ 1)

If so, what or who?

6. What do you wish you knew more about before using research-based reading strategies with minority students? (RQ 3)

7. Which strategies do you feel are the most successful when using the strategies with minority students. (R