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Effects of Scaffolding on Reading Comprehension

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Abstract

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Reading comprehension in high school involves students developing knowledge, skills, and experiences to understand, retain, and apply concepts of English as a written language. For ninth grade students to gain mastery in reading comprehension, ninth grade teachers implemented scaffolding teaching techniques to support their students. This study addressed how English language arts (ELA) teachers support ninth grade students' reading comprehension and retention through instructor-led scaffolding in high schools in the Happy Valley Independent School District (HVISD). The purpose of this narrative analysis qualitative study was to investigate how ELA teachers support ninth-grade students' reading comprehension and retention through instruction using the theory of scaffolding. This theory emerged as part of the social constructivist approach by Vygotsky. Open-ended questions were used to collect data from the district's 15 ninth grade ELA teachers. Data analysis involved open coding and categorization to identify patterns and themes. Results of this study revealed that ninth grade teachers employed practical scaffolding techniques in their classrooms to improve student learning. Further, results indicated that it would be useful to conduct more studies to explore teachers' support for ninth-grade students' reading comprehension and retention through instruction using the theory of scaffolding. This study contributes to social change by providing instructors, and educational leaders with a deeper understanding of the pedagogy teachers employ in the classroom to support ninth-grade students' reading comprehension and retention through instruction using the theory of scaffolding.

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to my husband, who supported me through this journey.

Acknowledgments

In 2017, I started this journey while working a full-time job. I have changed careers since I began, but my safety net remains the same. I acknowledge my husband, mom, son, and daughter-in-law, who have encouraged me throughout this journey. I would also like to recognize three of my Walden peers that have gone through this journey with me, and it looks like we will all graduate together! I love and appreciate all of you.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Educational researchers identified scaffolding as a valuable construct as far back as the 1970s. Over the past 40 years, scaffolding researchers across educational disciplines have employed a wide range of research questions, theoretical frameworks, and analytic methodologies, resulting in wide variation in conceptualizations of scaffolding (Reynolds & Daniel, 2018). However, little is known about instructor-led scaffolding of reading comprehension in high school, specifically among ninth-grade students. Reading comprehension among ninth grade students and scaffolding use was analyzed in terms of lack of instructional structure within the reading comprehension classes among ninth graders in English language arts (ELA) classrooms. This study is needed to address the lack of ninth grade teachers' understanding of instructor-led scaffolding of reading comprehension in ninth grade classrooms in a metropolitan public school district in north Texas. This study's social change implications include ELA teachers using instructor-led scaffolding techniques to help students understand what they are reading. The large metropolitan public school district located in northern Texas is be referred to by the pseudonym Happy Valley Independent School District (HVIDS). According to Babino et al. (2019), a high percentage of ninth grade ELA students have difficulty with reading comprehension and struggle in this area. Continued research needs to be done on scaffolding with younger versus older children to address continued struggles that older children have with reading comprehension when not addressed.

Despite robust literature documenting the effects of early reading interventions on improving word reading outcomes in early grades, many middle grade students with

learning difficulties demonstrate inadequate word reading and reading comprehension. Furthermore, 81% of middle-grade students with reading difficulties show problems with reading comprehension and defining words, decoding, and fluency (Wanzek et al., 2016). Scammacca et al. (2016) said adolescents who scored lowest on a reading comprehension assessment were most likely to have reading difficulties across all reading component areas, including comprehension.

According to Wanzek et al. (2016), 81% of middle school students with reading difficulties do not get better in the ninth grade, and 95% of that population's reading comprehension worsened upon entering ninth grade. Ninth grade students with reading comprehension problems have broad strengths and needs. ELA teachers and other content teachers have struggled to find ways to help their students comprehend content from their class. ELA teachers teach students how to learn and explore. Most importantly, scaffolding allows children to problem solve, achieve goals, and carry out tasks beyond their unassisted efforts (Kim & Lim, 2019).

Background

The US is ranked seventh amongst the most literate nations (Swanson et al., 2016). Given that statistics, it is important that schools provide opportunities for students to develop their reading skills. Independent reading habits cannot be produced simply via classes offered in the curriculum in our schools but also require strategies and activities that ultimately increase interest and reading habits. Teachers use many strategies and teaching techniques to accomplish this. One such technique is planned scaffolding, which is scaffolding through lesson plans and curricular tools. Another strategy is voluntary

reading which allows students to read at their leisure, thus increasing their interest in reading (Zarei et al., 2016). This reading strategy increases the learner's reading ability and provides greater competence demonstrated by those who read more, which affects their competence and growth habits.

The primary goal of literacy and reading comprehension is to educate children on thinking and using their logical and intellectual abilities to identify and solve problems. Teachers employ memorable experiences through various methods to build on students thinking skills. They demonstrate these experiences through role-playing, developing conflict resolution skills, heightening reading comprehension, and strengthening communication abilities (Williams, 2019). Role-playing is a teaching method that involves recreating situations and educational goals (Swanson et al., 2016). This method involves working through a situation, a scenario, or a problem by assuming roles and practicing what to say and do in a safe setting. This kind of learning experience has several benefits and advantages when skillfully implemented. Instructors can supplement their teaching methods with role playing in any context that seems relevant. Even rehearsals of personal situations through role playing with a trusted friend can provide beneficial learning opportunities (Definition & Benefits, 2017). In addition, role playing requires a highly-trained instructor in teaching techniques; otherwise, it can be difficult for students to grasp the concept accurately and identify the problem in reading comprehension (Higley et al., 2020).

The term scaffolding refers to the support teachers provide to students to help them access and strengthen a new concept or skill (Jin, 2021). The scaffolding technique

comes in many forms. Bruner introduced scaffolding in the 1970s, where he focused on learning as an active process in which learners construct new ideas or concepts based upon their current/past knowledge. When students learn something new, teachers should slowly introduce the concept until they understand the technique (Babino et al., 2019). There are differences in terms of teacher scaffolding between older and younger students. An educator uses cognitive scaffolding when working with a teenager to carry out a task among more senior students. This type of scaffolding is based especially on the concept of" zone of proximal development (Bruner, 1970). Because scaffolding is a dynamic process built on student responses, the most crucial source of scaffolding in the classroom is the teacher because teachers decide how and when to use textbooks, computers, or laboratory materials.

With high-level support, scaffolding is more structured and involves adult assistance (Beek et al., 2019). Teachers may provide young learners with a visual representation of daily schedules to accompany the text. A picture of a book along with an explicit explanation of how to read and use the chart would allow emergent learners to anticipate the day's events, even if they cannot independently remember the sequence or read the text on the map, which offers tremendous support to the learner (Agra et al., 2019).

Problem Statement

The problem was to investigate how ELA teachers support ninth-grade students' reading comprehension and retention through instruction using the theory of scaffolding. According to Clemens et al. (2017), high school students with reading comprehension

difficulties in the US struggle with foundational reading. Specific reading comprehension difficulties include recognizing and appropriately applying background knowledge, poor decoding and word recognition skills, limited vocabulary knowledge, underdeveloped reading fluency, and problems differentiating between common text structures, including sentences and paragraphs. Understanding instructional strategies to teach literacy across the curriculum is crucial for increasing high school students' literacy levels. Many adolescents struggle to succeed in schools because they do not comprehend what they read (Nippold, 2017). Collaborative actions need to be developed to accelerate levels of comprehension among high school students (Nippold, 2017).

Ninth grade students need to comprehend and read complex text such as classic novels to learn challenging content. This challenges content area educators whose classes typically include reading difficulties and various literacy needs among teens. Some teenagers struggle to decode what they read, while many struggles with comprehending upper-level concepts and complex vocabulary. Educators can use many different instructional methods such as scaffolding to accelerate opportunities for teenagers to engage when reading the text to enhance their understanding of reading comprehension concepts. The reading text can demand complexity across all classes, making these demands difficult for some to meet the expectations of a ninth grade student. Only 36% of ninth grade students read at or above a proficient level, and student performance tends to decrease over time in reading and other content areas (Rahman et al., 2019). Although research on adolescent literacy has identified effective interventions such as word study, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and motivation that improve students' text

comprehension, many obstacles limit teachers' ability to implement these practices in ninth grade school settings.

Furthermore, teachers may feel pressure to cover extensive content over a short time, making them hesitant to spend time focusing on literacy-related practices. They also may be unprepared to integrate literacy practices into content-area instruction. Finally, students who have struggled for years may exhibit low motivation and engagement, allowing teachers to engage students in literacy-related tasks (Wanzek et al., 2016). These challenges can hinder teachers in implementing reading instruction in ninth grade content area classrooms, leading to decreased opportunities for students to read and engage in instructional activities that boost comprehension. Ultimately, these challenges can lead to adverse effects on students.

According to Zhang and Zhang (2019), Students' achievement in secondary classes is significantly impacted. More research is needed in this area since students' ability to comprehend a range of complex texts is highly correlated with academic success. Through scaffolding, students can explore varied features of the language arts and enrich their content knowledge through comprehension. Many teens in high school face difficulties when reading text, and comprehension is an essential predictor for academic success. Nevertheless, scaffolding students could be necessary. According to Daniel et al. (2016), scaffolding is the responsive in-person support an expert reader provides to a novice and provides a promising means of support for students that grapple with the challenge of reading comprehension.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate how ELA teachers support ninth grade high school students' reading comprehension and retention through instructor-led scaffolding in HVISD. I examined how scaffolding happened in ninth grade classrooms. The scaffolding supported the process that provided help with reading comprehension and retention in ninth grade ELA classrooms. The scaffolding interpretive paradigm allowed teachers to examine those students who may have trouble comprehending reading and whether or not scaffolding strategies helped students understand the text they were reading. Since teachers who teach content in the classrooms have time constraints with curricular demands, reading comprehension strategies are beneficial to understand what they found helpful in their classes (Upham et al., 2014). The challenge for ELA educators in HVISD was to establish sound practices for scaffolding students' abilities and collaboratively construct knowledge through comprehension. Scaffolding is a highly effective intervention in classrooms and providing critical, compelling, and linguistically scaffolded literature can enhance comprehension for students (Belland et al., 2017).

Research Question

As students transition from elementary to middle school, reading comprehension becomes central to academic achievement and college and career readiness (Martinez-Lincoln et al., 2021). For this reason, it is important to engage students in reading comprehension activities that target skills necessary for struggling readers. To better

understand how teachers used scaffolding in the classroom, I used the following overarching research question:

RQ1: How do ELA teachers support ninth grade high school students' reading comprehension and retention through instructor-led scaffolding in HVISD?

Theoretical Framework

Based on the focus of my research, I used Jerome Bruner's (1970) social constructivism as a theoretical framework for this study. Bruner believed that learning is an active and social process where information is gathered and new ideas are formed concerning past knowledge and current knowledge. He felt that the focus of education should be intellectual development rather than the rote learning of facts. Bruner's theory emphasizes the learning process by the discovery (Rannikmäe, 2020). Upham et al. (2014) said that when students start to learn concepts, they need help from teachers and other adults in active support. In the beginning, students are dependent on their teacher's help. As they become more independent in their thinking and acquire new knowledge and skills, support can be withdrawn gradually (Upham et al., 2014).

Bruner's scaffolding theory directly informs the research question. I addressed how teachers support ninth grade ELA reading comprehension through scaffolding. Upham et al. (2014) referred to six types of support that a teacher can provide: reducing the degree of freedom in a task by simplifying it, maintaining direction, highlighting the critical aspects of a task, controlling frustration, demonstrating ideal solution paths, and recruiting students. When students begin to learn new concepts, they need assistance from adults and educators in the form of active support (Upham et al., 2014). This

support gradually wanes as students become more independent in their thinking and acquire new knowledge and skills. Scaffolding involves reducing choices a student might face to focus on developing skills or knowledge that is needed (Upham et al., 2014).

Educators must provide opportunities for students to learn consistently. Some concepts may be highly complex, requiring support from teachers because providing appropriate scaffolding is critical. Educators can improvise and provide scaffolding to help their students, as can parent helpers, teaching assistants, or more knowledgeable other children within the classroom (Rogers et al., 2016). As students gain competence and confidence, teachers might place them in groups to further extend their learning.

Nature of the Study

I investigated reading comprehension instruction and retention among ninth grade high school students in HVISD and how scaffolding in the ELA classroom affected students. I used a narrative analysis qualitative design with ELA teachers in HVISD who scaffold reading comprehension and retention. Interviews were conducted via Zoom. Interviews were transcribed and then coded to be analyzed. Journal entries and lesson plans were analyzed using manual and axial coding methods. Participants were ELA teachers who teach ninth grade high school students in HVISD.

Definitions of Terms

Cognitive scaffolding: Refers to the interaction between an expert (the teacher) and an apprentice (the student), in which the expert will progressively give control of the task to the learner until he does not need more help (Conroy, 2018).

Disciplinary literacy: The ability for students to comprehend and interpret a variety of academic vocabulary. It is also the competent use of language to communicate, express, argue, apply, and infer in academic contexts (Weideman, 2018).

Fading: Involves gradually removing scaffolding techniques from students until the intended lesson has been internalized in ELA classrooms. This is a process by which the instructor shifts more responsibility for learning to the student (Bumbacher et al., 2017).

Interactional scaffolding: Responsive in-person support that teachers provide students. This support is specifically tailored to each student and allows them to experience student-centered learning, facilitating more efficient learning than teacher-centered learning. The learning process promotes deeper reading comprehension than many other common teaching strategies (Kim & Lim, 2019).

Metacognitive strategies: The activities learners use to help them plan, monitor, and evaluate their cognitive processes. These processes are monitored and regulated techniques used to enhance understanding in reading (Vosniadou et al., 2021).

Planned scaffolding: Teachers develop a plan for their students to instruct or scaffold reading comprehension. Scaffolding through lesson plans and curricular tools is determined before students begin (Kim & Lim, 2019).

Scaffolding: The responsive in-person support an expert reader provides to a novice and provides a promising means of support for students that grapple with the challenge of reading comprehension Daniel et al. (2016). When students learn something

new, teachers balance out their teaching until they understand text concepts (Babino et al., 2019).

Scrum methodology scaffolding: A framework intended for students' learning processes when students work on complex and real-world tasks involving reading comprehension (Habig et al., 2018).

Theoretical teaching: Theoretical teaching is the comprehensive application of basic knowledge of a subject that allows students to establish a perceptual understanding of problems according to the subject's characteristics (Lei, 2021).

Voluntary reading: The process of learning to plan, execute, and finally evaluate their study or self-regulated learning, which refers to student activeness to deliberate planning and monitoring the cognitive and affective processes involved in completing academic tasks (Agus - Sholeh. (2019).

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD): The distance between the actual developmental level determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development determined through problem-solving under adult guidance and in collaboration with more capable peers (Chineka & Yasukawa, 2021).

Significance

I addressed a gap in the literature by providing insights regarding the effects of reading comprehension scaffolding among ninth grade students in ELA classrooms in HVISD. I aimed to understand how students and teachers derive meaning through reading comprehension and scaffolding in the classroom. Scaffolding is a very useful technique to use in teaching reading comprehension, and it assists students who struggle

with reading comprehension in developing skills needed to improve their reading. The study had great positive social implications and brought awareness to the scaffolding techniques used in the classroom by ninth grade teachers.

Possible Types and Sources of Data

There were three sources of data. Open-ended interviews were conducted with HVISD ELA ninth grade teachers who were the study participants. Interviews were conducted via Zoom. Each interview was audiotaped, transcribed, and member-checked by participants. Participants were asked to keep a journal about any instructor-led scaffolding techniques involving reading comprehension for five days. I reviewed their lesson plans for five days to see how scaffolding occurred within the classroom.

Limitations

This study had limitations, challenges, and barriers. One limitation involved scheduling teachers for the interview as most teachers were busy during the daytime and were reluctant to schedule during family evening time. Therefore, it was challenging to schedule a time convenient to them. I minimized this limitation by offering flexible times for teachers, and I gave options that included weekends, during breaks, or anytime suitable to them. Another challenge was ELA teachers who did not scaffold in their classroom. Some teachers wanted to participate but were not applying scaffolding in the classroom. I took steps to talk to teachers ahead of time and asked them if they scaffolded.

I needed to develop strong relationships with ninth grade ELA teachers. If teachers were too busy, this could be a barrier. I took steps to minimize this by getting to

know teachers in the district. I conducted research and started building rapport with them to be participants in my study. I realized that potential bias could occur if I developed too strong a relationship with teachers. Therefore, I kept a journal of my interactions and conversations with all participants. Logging this information allowed me to see if I spent too much time with participants. Knowing this information allowed me to change my behavior.

Another limitation involved teachers' journaling. Some participants were hesitant to write journal entries due to time factors. I minimized this by setting guidelines for what participants wrote in their journal entries, so all entries were uniform. Participants had to answer questions and were required to answer questions through journaling. Having teachers answer specific questions helped them want to participate. Teacher lesson plans may also be a limitation. Teachers were hesitant to share their lesson plans with outsiders, so I built relationships with teachers to win their trust.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, I could not physically be in the classroom but must rely on what participants told me in Zoom meetings. There was potential transferability among data results since students were absent during the three days when the research occurred. These absences occurred primarily due to the effect of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Limitations of dependability included changes in classroom attendance among students during my research. This was because students were absent on different days, and some could not complete all five days of scaffolding instructions. Therefore, teachers were scaffolding different students every day for three days. If students were absent, this compromised the data.

Conclusion

I examined scaffolding and its many phases of changes and reading comprehension difficulties encountered by ninth grade students in HVISD. I addressed the problem, purpose, and research question. The background of the topic and theoretical framework were explained. In Chapter 2, I presented the literature review, which informed my study. I discussed the literature search strategy followed by an analysis of the empirical literature about key factors of the study. I have identified the gaps in the literature and described how this study fulfilled a gap in the research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Although much research exists on scaffolding in reading instruction, confusion about the construct persists. There is no consensus in the literature concerning how teachers support reading comprehension through scaffolding (Reynolds & Daniel, 2018). The overarching problem was investigating how ELA teachers support ninth grade high school students' reading comprehension and retention through instructor-led scaffolding in HVISD. High school administrators of HVISD expected ninth grade students to read and comprehend complex text. The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate how ELA teachers supported HVISD ninth grade high school students' reading comprehension and retention through instructor-led scaffolding. I discussed current literature involving reading comprehension and scaffolding in ELA ninth grade classrooms. I addressed the history of scaffolding, reading comprehension in secondary grades, metacognition as a reading strategy, and teaching reading comprehension.

Literature Search Strategy

I collected research and related references using the Walden University Library and local libraries. More than 250 peer-reviewed scholarly journals and books were reviewed during this process. I used and analyzed the Resource Information Center and ProQuest, Online database searches from EBSCO host, Sage, ERIC, and Google Scholar, and data collected on scaffolding with ninth grade students in ELA classrooms. I conducted an academic search using the following terms and keywords: *reading comprehension*, *scaffolding*, *English language arts*, *ELA*, *ninth grade students*, *voluntary reading, overview reading, location reading, adolescents*, *teenagers*, *teacher strategies*,

and *scaffolding older children.* I then organize information into categories, concerns, program inputs, recommendations, and outcomes. From the 250 articles reviewed, I selected approximately 125 for inclusion in this study. I examined information from each article and compared results. I evaluated recommendations from sources for teacher-scaffolded reading comprehension strategies in ninth grade ELA classrooms. I looked at information through these sources regarding scaffolding and remediation plans of action. I examined instructional components related to scaffolding reading comprehension in ninth grade ELA classrooms at HVISD. The research literature provided pertinent data collection methods or data sources, data analysis methods, and findings to understand teacher-scaffolded reading comprehension strategies in ninth grade ELA classrooms in HVISD.

Current Literary Research

Classroom dialogue without purposeful scaffolding is unproductive. Unless teachers create a conducive and cooperative classroom culture for co-constructive learning, productive teacher-student and student-student interactions are unlikely to happen (Gillies, 2017). Additionally, teachers also need to teach students how to engage in constructive dialogue.

There was substantial evidence supporting teacher scaffolding of cooperative learning-produced productive talk. For instance, a dialogic teaching intervention designed to improve the quality of classrooms promoted better reasoning and cognitive skills. Classroom effects on reading comprehension were most pronounced when ninth grade students were allowed to work collaboratively and supported by appropriate teacher

scaffolding techniques (Howe et al., 2019). Through cooperative group work, ninth grade students willingly provide extended explanations of their learning opportunities. Teachers who offer functional scaffolds to support students' dialogue were more likely to engage students in compelling and creative talk (Bokova, 2018). When classroom activities were appropriately scaffolded to maximize learning, ninth grade students were guided to think aloud and learned how to think together (van der Scheer et al., 2018). Teachers who had dialogue with students through collaborative group work witnessed higher levels of classroom engagement. Howe et al. (2019) suggested that cooperative group work predicted the frequency of teacher elaboration. Students were more receptive to new ideas as they built upon each other's ideas to generate new understandings of reading comprehension.

History of Scaffolding

In 1976, Bruner introduced scaffolding as learning support in which a more knowledgeable instructor or peer provided learning contexts to complete tasks beyond their initial capacity. Bruner based the concept of scaffolding on the ZPD. Vygotsky (1978) defined the ZPD as the gap between what a learner accomplishes independently and still requires assistance. Educators use scaffolding as an activator to teach the learners total mastery of a concept. However, the fading process gradually removed scaffolding until the learner internalized the intended lesson became self-regulated and independent. The ZPD of progress had been targeted by instructors who evaluated students and provided educational scaffolding (Rogers et al., 2016). Scholars agreed upon

scaffolding since 1978; thus, instructional scaffolding was individualized and remained that way because the proximal ZPD continually changed (Rogers et al., 2016).

In the 1980s, Applebee and Langer took the theory formed by Bruner and Vygotsky and embedded that theory in a general framework of language learning (Applebee & Langer 1983). The process of reading and writing was claimed to be a reformation and extension of earlier language learning. Reed et al. (2017) claimed that students learned not just to read and write but also to do so in a certain way. Applebee and Langer (1983) argued that discourse acquisition played a part in scaffolding while comparing language scenarios between children and adult tasks they were learning.

The scaffolding application theory tightened in the 1990s; thus, scaffolding was the teacher's responsibility to establish a shared goal as much as possible; however, throughout the lesson, the learner's interests were considered and catered to. In their article, Hsu et al. (2015) suggested achieving this would mean knowing the student's prior knowledge and assessing the goal from there, yet remaining aware that the learners' unusual, ineffective, and unique problem-solving techniques were often acquainted. Also suggested was allowing the student to input their information to enhance intrinsic motivation (Rogers et al., 2016).

There was a way to scaffold to keep students interested. Scaffolding assistance should be received effectively and efficiently to keep students motivated and interested; nevertheless, scaffolding was provided by the teacher rather than by the student (Rogers et al., 2016). The student experienced far less discouragement and frustration when the teacher was present, assisting the students when help was needed. When the student

succeeded, the teacher succeeded, and thus, the student was motivated to drive and learn more independently.

The teacher understood the student's present focus, which was part of the scaffolding process to test the student's ZPD (Palincsar et al., 2017). Teachers kept the student's current intention in mind and relayed information aligned with their present purpose. If the student could not complete a task effectively, the teacher could redirect the student to fruitful (Palincsar et al., 2017). If the student's current policy was active, the educator did not redirect the strategy. Scaffolding consisted of the educator providing the least amount of assistance possible. The instructor gave the learner just enough guidance to overcome their current obstacle; they could still contribute and participate in the learning process with the instructor's assistance (Rogers et al., 2016). Thus, the instructor only assisted in areas that the student could not learn independently, and the teacher did not intervene if the current task given was within the student's grasp.

Scaffolding was introduced through several methods in the 2000s. Scaffolding in the 2000s involved two significant steps, according to Hogan (2002). Palincsar et al. (2017) suggested that educators execute scaffolding with techniques by introducing learners to tasks that take little or no assistance. The learner felt that they had accomplished something when the responsibility was complete, building self-efficacy. Palincsar et al. (2017) also stated that when needed, provide enough support to the student to achieve success quickly and assured that doing the task motivated students to move to the next step and helped lower frustration levels. Sevian et al. (2018) suggested that teachers help students fit in. Students work harder when they feel they look like their

peers academically. Once a skill was learned, not overwork that skill and to look for clues that the student had mastered the task (Palincsar et al., 2017). The instructor adjusted scaffolding a little and then completed scaffolding when the teacher saw that the student had mastered the task.

Reading Comprehension in Secondary Grades

In secondary grades, reading comprehension was essential. Content classes began in grade four and continued through twelfth grade (Andres, 2020). Researchers suggested that, as students get older, reading instruction becomes more disciplinary, which supported and reinforced students' academic performance (Lawrence et al., 2017). Students utilized, grasped, and comprehended the concept and process of communication in a specific text in all content areas. Reading comprehension became a concern as unique and challenging books became increasingly tricky.

For secondary students in the ninth grade, the goal of reading comprehension was for students to be helped by instructors as they understood written language. Students who comprehend quickly used fix-up strategies and monitored understanding as they read (Lipp & Helfrich, 2016). Students who did this also re-read and summarized what they did not understand. Fostering better understanding and self-monitoring what learners read helped prior knowledge relay new information. Many adolescents struggled to comprehend the text that they read due to several reasons like lack of background knowledge, an inability to relate content to prior knowledge, an inability to read text fluently, difficulty decoding words, an inability to attend to the meaning while reading,

an inability to use comprehension strategies, not being aware that they are not comprehending or difficulty understanding the words (Lawrence et al., 2017).

Metacognition as a Reading Strategy for Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension skills were enhanced because teachers proposed many techniques and strategies as solutions. A metacognitive reading strategy was one of them. A metacognitive reading strategy was useful to facilitate a student's reading comprehension (Reed et al., 2017). Many researchers have created taxonomies or metacognitive reading strategies to encourage reading comprehension.

Metacognitive strategies regard "high order executive skills making use of the knowledge of the cognitive processes and constituted an attempt to regulate one's learning employing, monitoring and evaluating" (Pyle et al., 2017, p. 469). O'Connor et al. (2017) discussed metacognitive strategies as the monitoring and regulative techniques that readers used to enhance comprehension. Metacognitive strategies in reading were self-regulated and self-monitored activities and focused on the product and process of text (Pyle et al., 2017).

Cognitive processing was formulated by regulating and knowing about the process through metacognition (O'Connor et al., 2017). The success of comprehension was affected by the process. Hock et al. (2017) claimed that strategies of metacognitive competence reflected the reader's control and monitoring of reading strategies. Studies suggested that metacognitive reading behavior taken under control by ninth-grade students was at an advantage because they could not clarify difficulties and restore the process when metacognitive reading failed by monitoring their comprehension (Meyer et

al., 2018). Promoting an understanding of students' reading comprehension, along with the performance of reading comprehension, was proven to be facilitated through metacognitive strategies. Ninth-grade teachers played a crucial role in fostering students' awareness of metacognitive strategy acquisitions by integrating the approach into reading instruction.

Systematic instruction should be given to the student by the teacher to apply metacognitive strategies about the instructions, learning, and concept. Students in ninth grade learned how to use new approaches to different reading tasks and comprehended them better with this help, which was in line with what Lupo et al. (2019) investigated. Students' metacognitive strategies for reading developed and were seen by the researchers as they conducted a study. The results showed that through metacognitive language learning skills, reading comprehension grew. This model of instruction helped the teachers find out from students their why, when, and how to use the strategies (Hughes et al., 2017). Because of the results, students gradually became not merely readers but started thinking metacognitively about methods they used to improve reading comprehension and therefore became strategic learners.

Researchers argued that the metacognitive process improved and should teach to control and monitor all readers and create proficient, active, and strategic comprehension (Ness, 2009). The metacognitive process had to be learned and practiced and did not occur automatically in ninth-graders. Because students needed to understand the material they were reading, strategies like this needed to be applied to comprehend text better.

Hock et al. (2017) described the metacognitive process as the knowledge about how someone perceived, remembered, understood, and acted upon what they knew. Other scholars described the process as knowing about knowing. "The first knowing represents the awareness of the second knowing, that is, the understanding of different factors to complete certain tasks, such as the state of one's knowledge and abilities" (Landi & Ryherd, 2019, p. 305). Knowledge, awareness, and control of a student's mind regulated the metacognitive ability to achieve specific purposes.

Eppard et al. (2020) asserted that metacognitive aspects of comprehension involved knowing what a learner did not understand and knowing when they understood a text using their knowledge for comprehension monitoring. Landi and Ryherd (2017) suggested that to increase the ninth-grade reader's experience of awareness, metacognitive strategies in reading were practical. The procedure enhanced the reader's understanding of perception. The procedure also improved reading comprehension by assessing the learner's reading process and evaluating whether the learner successfully succeeded in comprehending text. Monitoring comprehension was the reader's ability to know what the learner knew about their comprehension process. Metacognition was said to be the trigger for other methods that were necessary for understanding, like scaffolding (Breen et al., 2016). Breen et al. (2016) also noted that teachers that used metacognition showed students what strategies to use in certain conditions and instruction, including why, how, and when those strategies could be used. Students selected different passages with the most appropriate reading strategy and eliminated unnecessary ones. This ability saved time, and students used the benefits for completing other tasks.

Teaching Reading Comprehension via Intensive Reading

The method of reading comprehension was classifying and analyzing relevant information, and the interaction of reading happened when that information could be shared and discussed with their peers. Biringkane (2018) stated that automaticity was developed through reading because the reader expressed ideas and opinions after reading and could look for relevant information. Because of this, ninth-grade ELA teachers developed language teaching approaches to foster reading compression via intensive reading.

According to Khoshbakht and Gorjian (2017), intensive reading allowed readers to carry out a detailed analysis inside the class. The teacher studied vocabulary and grammar points in a short passage. Additionally, Andres (2020) called intensive reading "narrow reading;" students analyzed several texts about the same or different topics. Intense reading's purpose was to focus on grammatical structures and content. The process could also include asking questions, utilizing read-aloud, and predicting text information. Learners in ninth grade understood the meaning of a passage in this way. Eppard et al. (2020) stated that the key was giving the reader abundant opportunities to sync with the text in intensive reading. The reader promoted reading; the more straightforward the text was to the reader, the better the comprehension.

Blonder et al. (2019) asserted that reading was a kind of "springboard" that allowed people to develop other language skills. He emphasized that the results would benefit students if ninth-grade teachers placed reading at the core of learning. Moreover, DeGennaro (2018) believed that reading could be helpful if set as the main base of

learning other language skills. These authors also stated that students developed vocabulary and grammar; consequently, students could learn primary skills (Blonder et al., 2019).

According to Lipp and Helfrich (2016), the concept of reading was essential to foster reading among students upon exposure because the students could develop the concept in various interpretations. There were, however, other factors that ensured that reading comprehension took place. Furthermore, Andres (2020) established a relationship between overall language proficiency and intensive reading activities. Following an intensive reading approach, when the ninth-grade readers started to read, they improved vocabulary and grammar and adjusted their other primary language skills like writing, listening, and speaking. According to Behroozizad and Habibollahiagdam (2018), the intensive reading process to maximize students' learning was used by teachers going through three phases: pre, while, and post-reading. The three steps searched for better activation strategies, analysis, and language preparation. Reading was a valuable tool for improving reading comprehension when students read intensively.

Reading Process

Thus, teachers knew about the complexity of reading comprehension when they fostered reading comprehension. A range of teaching approaches that enabled readers to be independent and confident readers was used. A variety and richness of vocabulary provided the framework for teaching comprehension strategies, ensured that learners felt motivated, and helped students find reading pleasurable (Ness, 2009). Each aspect was

essential to understanding how the reading process was and how that process taught the student.

Andres (2020) explained that the three phases of reading were helpful due to the opportunities students followed, and reading passages were more detailed and organized. Also, each step had a series of strategies that teachers used to help students understand what they were reading. In the before-reading stage, Pyle et al. (2017) stated that instructors needed to encourage their learners through activities that piqued their interest, like pictures related to text, dramatic readings, or book talks. The goal of the instructors was to make the text relevant to learners. Another strategy suggested by Andres (2020) was what makes the text suitable and discussing what students read while activating students' background knowledge and considering what learners already know about the topic and text organization. Students, in this manner, identified and discussed complicated phrases, words, and concepts in a text, established reading purposes, previewed the text by surveying the illustrations, title, text structures, and predicted content.

During the reading stage, the teacher's role was the guide. The teacher encouraged the student to use comprehension strategies such as monitoring and reading strategies. Teachers asked learners questions in this stage to keep track of the reading and focus on the text's main ideas and essential parts (O'Connor et al., 2017). Teachers also asked their students to pay particular attention to roles in a text that required making inferences and summarizing key events or sections. Lastly, instructors encouraged learners to confirm predictions currently made. Khoshbakht and Gorjian (2017) proposed teachers use other

strategies in this stage. These included making connections between and among essential ideas, integrating those ideas with background knowledge, sequencing text ideas and events, restating events, paraphrasing, and identifying events, settings, or characters in a text.

Behroozizad and Habibollahiagdam (2018) expressed that all the ideas concluded in this stage summarized the reading in the post-reading stage. Here, teachers discussed the reading and summarized essential concepts and supportive details. Also, in their own words, students recalled and told crucial sections of the text. In addition, students responded to the reading in various ways (e.g., by writing, role-playing, music, posters, videos, debate, or pantomime). Other activities that teachers applied in this stage were evaluating and discussing the idea found in the text, plus using and contextualizing ideas in real-life situations (Pyle et al., 2017).

Scaffolding Reading Comprehension in the ELA Classroom as a Content Class

English teachers desired to have quality whole-class discussions about texts and fear letting decisions stray too far from the topic. As ninth-grade ELA teachers got more seasoned in their craft, they stopped appearing to have difficulty finding a balance between accurate student-centered, dialogic instruction and controlled teacher-centered formats (Reynolds & Townsend, 2018). Teachers did not want to monopolize but ensured they covered the required content. A struggling teacher interviewed 15 ninth-grade English teachers and observed five of them leading what they considered to be whole-class discussions (Pyle et al., 2017). The struggling teacher wanted to balance herself on the teacher's views of the whole-classroom forum through scaffolding. Nine of 15

English teachers said that quality discussion meant teacher silence in those interviews. In addition, 11 of the 15 said that the discussion was challenging (Reynolds and Townsend, 2018).

Observing the teacher teach, Reynolds and Townsend (2018) were intrigued by the contrast between two individual teachers known by the pseudonyms of Rachel and Joey. In the two class sessions, Rachel thought that the best way to discuss with students was to remove herself from the conversation. In contrast to Rachel, Joey believed that he needed to be present and participate in the student discussions. Drawing upon concepts of disciplinary literacy in reading comprehension, Reynolds and Toensend (2017) re-analyzed the original transcripts of the whole-class conversation to address the question: Does altering a teacher-student model or an utterly student-led model leads to more ELA scaffolding and, consequently, a more in-depth discussion of reading text to be examined? The findings indicated that even though the student's voice had value in both classrooms, the altering teacher-student format led to more disciplinary depth and scaffolding. In contrast, removing the teacher's voice led to more personal comments.

The assumption found in many studies that focus on ELA reading comprehension in ninth-grade high schools was that whole-class discussions centered on reading to understand teacher-focused or dialogic. Student-focused sessions left very little middle ground for teachers who wanted to utilize a teacher-student model to help scaffold the discussion and maintain focus. Dialogic instruction focused on student voices, and monologist instruction focused on teacher voices (Bricker et al., 2017). Ingram and Elliott (2016) attempted to fill this middle ground by noting the necessity of both

monologist and dialogic methods depending on the content. They proposed an interactive-authoritative discussion as the possible compromise; this was a discussion in which their instructors led the students into a question-and-answer routine, and the instructor focused on one point of view. Ingram and Elliott (2016) focused on expanding the middle ground through wait time after a response, finding that if teachers waited for three seconds before speaking after a student, student responses tended to be longer with more explanation.

Reynolds and Townsend (2017) described the middle ground as transitional. The teacher was moving from a more monologist discussion to a more dialogic discussion but had not completely switched to the dialogic format, thus leaving no room for scaffolding. The assumption was that the ninth-grade teacher should be moving from one side of the dichotomy to the other. Using Reynolds and Townsend's (2017) tool, teachers remained on the monologist side of the contradiction with only a quick charge into the transitional discussions.

This dichotomy between monologists and dialogic discussions created a perception among teachers that they should be entirely on the dialogic end. Beek et al. (2019) argued that teachers in a dialogic discourse acknowledged themselves in an ethical relationship that they simultaneously listened to and interpreted the contributions from students to guide them toward critical reflection upon themselves and others. Teachers, however, sometimes assumed that their role in a student-led, dialogic discussion was to remain silent.

Then, how much to scaffold the discussion was a question ambiguously, leaving teachers to guess how to have a dialogic conversation based on the content, which was what students read to see how well they comprehended the text. According to Reynolds and Townsend (2017), teachers assumed students knew how to engage in helpful discussion, but this erroneous assumption often resulted in ineffective conversations. Since students learned through observation, teacher withdrawal may have limited the modeling available. A helpful discussion was captured by Reynolds and Townsend (2018), in which they characterized dialogic interaction as dynamic interactions between ninth-grade teachers and ninth-grade learners. They flexibly shared turns as they co-created a network of meaning. An actively engaged teacher provided the modeling needed for students to see higher processes of textual analysis. However, seeking a balance as monologist discussions gave students no reason to engage in active participation.

ELA as a Disciplinary Scaffold

Disciplinary literacy emphasizes the knowledge and abilities possessed by those who created, communicated, and used knowledge within the discipline (Goldman et al., 2016). A discussion with quality disciplinary depth would utilize the unique tools that experts in a subject like ELA used to engage in the work of the discipline. The concept of disciplinary literacy created an opportunity to evaluate whether a discussion had enough depth worthwhile for ninth-grade students in ELA (Andres, 2020). If the discussion had enough depth concerning reading, could teachers scaffold the literature?

Goldman et al. (2016) stated that researchers studying ELA disciplinary literacy have attempted to define the strategies used by experts as they analyzed literature. Goldman et al. (2016) based their concepts of disciplinary literacy specifically on the literary theory of Rabinowitz (1998) and Hillocks and Ludlow (1984). Rainey (2016), Reynolds and Townsend (2017), and Reynolds and Rush (2017) focused their concepts on expert-novice studies where both experts and novices read literary texts and performed think-aloud as they processed the texts. Even though the terminology and foundations were different, some of the underlying practices found in these studies were consistent. Specific arguments claim or speculate that a reader made the passage or work in each case.

In that study, grouped strategies used by experts broke into four significant codes. Codes were relied upon to determine if the two discussions in the study had quality ELA disciplinary depth, which was created by Reynolds and Townsend (2017). ELA ninth-grade teachers coded background knowledge as general information the participant had before reading the text, such as religious practices and symbols or connections to other text. Disciplinary background knowledge included the expert's awareness of the author's history or situation or explication of structure, literary terms, or genres (Reynolds & Townsend, 2017). Interpretation involved building a hypothesis, in which experts used evidence to form a claim about a text not explicitly stated.

The two concepts were chosen for two reasons, first was that ideas were based on two separate but related studies of expert and novice readers (Reynolds & Townsend, 2017; Reynolds & Rush, 2017). By establishing the findings on the

differences between expert and novice readers, these studies provided a look into where ninth-grade English teachers could focus their efforts to encourage their students to read in ways more appropriate for the discipline. Second, from those two studies, the four significant codes emerged as places where the experts and novices learned and interacted with the texts differently. These four vital codes provided a quality lens through which to view discussions of literary text based on expert reading practices, which were clear enough to apply as students discussed texts. Knowing the experts tended to engage in more hypothesis-construction than novices (Rainey, 2016; Reynolds & Rush, 2017), experts would expect a discussion with greater disciplinary depth to contain more instances of interpretation. These discussions would entail students using textual evidence to create and test hypotheses in dialogue with the teacher and peers.

Theoretical Framework

Based on the primary research, I used social constructivism as a theoretical framework for this study. Bruner believed that when learners begin to learn concepts, they need help from teachers and other adults in the form of active support (Upham et al., 2014). Children were dependent upon their teacher's support; however, the help diminished and faded as they became independent thinkers and acquired new knowledge and skills (Upham et al., 2014). Scaffolding, specifically, focused on the knowledge and expertise required, representing the depreciation in the children's choices.

Scaffolding reading comprehension involved students reading a text and Communicating with teachers and peers to check understanding levels. ZPD signified the potential learning that a learner can obtain only after receiving assistance from others.

Vygotsky pondered assistance on a development level independently and suggested that what learners did with the help of others might be more indicative of their minds than what they did alone (Upham et al., 2014). What a learner did with help presently, they could do it by themselves later.

In Bruner's model, students' performance was essential through communication with teachers and collaboration with other students. Student learning is categorized by two levels: between people and within them (Upham et al., 2014). Learning occurred while scaffolding information after the student worked collaboratively with their teacher and then shared what they learned, and when the student expressed what they did not know (Vygotsky, 1978). For example, when the student read a passage that they did not understand, the passage was evident when they reviewed what they learned with their teacher or in a group of peers. The teacher and the group of students helped the student in their understanding. Doing this allowed the student to understand what they did not know. Over time, the learner's independent achievement became apparent because the student's thought process developed internally in a social context.

The teaching method of Bruner's scaffolding originated from Vygotsky's work. Vygotsky likened scaffolding to the use of a building to access difficult-to-reach areas. In teaching, scaffolding refers to an instructor's structure to support a student through an activity (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 121). The teacher's role was to guide students through hints, clarification, and directed questions while circulating through the room. Problem-solving skills are developed with this method, as students think collaboratively through problems.

Students imitated and processed what was read and solved their comprehension problem because that allowed problem demonstration. Both Bruner and Vygotsky claimed that not observation but practice was critical. Imitating was not merely mimicking teachers but an opportunity for learners to use scaffolding, similar to what the teacher demonstrated (Upham et al., 2014). Feedback as encouragement of behaviors was observed under Bruner, developed from Vygotsky's theory. When attention was drifting in the classroom, the teacher circulated throughout the room and redirected the student to the task. Teachers used scaffolding when students did not give the right feedback and received more complex assignments. The teacher gave up some classroom control when the students worked at their own pace in scaffolding.

The central phenomenon for this study was implementing the best scaffolding techniques in ninth-grade ELA reading comprehension classrooms. Scaffolding includes the teachers' added support for students to enhance learning and aiding in mastery tasks and teachers knowing when to remove that support gradually, minimalizing scaffolding (Zheng, 2016). Helpful adult guidance was the basis for scaffolding. Therefore, the theoretical framework for this study was based on the research of Bruner and Vygotsky concerning the ZPD, which refers to the time and place where students benefit the most from adult guidance (Zheng, 2016).

ZPD, according to Vygotsky (1978), included three major themes. The first theme was that ZPD represented a joint effort of the consciousness or intent of the participants engaged in dialogue. Vygotsky believed that this zone was about dyads, not individuals. The second theme was that both participants played active roles in this dialogue.

Vygotsky organized the third theme in a dynamic, dialectical format (Vygotsky, 1978). According to Vygotsky (1978), the most effective teaching and learning occurred in the ZPD. Since education involved moving beyond current levels of competence, scaffolding assisted learners in moving to the nearest point of their incompetence and helped them become competent at that point. As learning continued, the leading edges of competence kept moving forward. Therefore, teachers and students both stood the limits of ability and worked together to move just beyond those limits.

Vygotsky (1978) argued that the purpose of the ZPD was not to measure what a child knew but to assess how much the child could perform with the assistance of a more knowledgeable other. In his research, Vygotsky found that even when the difficulty level related to the problem assigned to students heightened, students could solve these problems if assistance was bestowed (Upham et al., 2014). Teachers provided this assistance by working with students in the first step of problem-solving a leading question that guided them in the problem-solving process. However, Vygotsky also noted that students who did not receive assistance but intended only to receive minimal support could not solve the problems (Upham et al., 2014). On the other hand, those students who received help from a more knowledgeable other could solve issues initially intended for students who were four years older than themselves. Vygotsky believed that students who received support from a more knowledgeable person within the ZPD could outperform their peers because they were developing their potential without regard to their chronological age, supporting Vygotsky's beliefs that learning often occurred before development (Vygotsky, 1978).

Scaffolding

The theoretical framework for this study was also related to the construct of scaffolding, which grew out of Vygotsky's research on designing instruction to develop higher cognitive functions in students, including self-organized attention, categorical perception, conceptual thinking, and logical memory. Vygotsky argued that collaboration between the teacher and the student was essential in developing these higher cognitive functions (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky believed that collaboration in the school setting referred to the partnership between the teacher and the student (Upham et al., 2014). The teacher collaborated with students to awaken their dormant higher cognitive functions by explaining, informing, inquiring, correcting, and encouraging. Furthermore, when the student explained concepts to other students, the student who demonstrated the idea made use of the ideal form by modeling how the teacher modeled, explained, inquired, and informed.

In their discussion of the tutor's role in problem-solving, Wood et al. (1976) noted that scaffolding referred to the temporary assistance that the teacher or more knowledgeable others created for the learner to move from what was already known to what needed to be known. The tutor manages the content or skills and modifies the material to learn new content or skills. The tutor benefits by monitoring the learning process to detect, diagnose, and correct misconceptions or understanding (Smith, 2021). Scaffolding occurred in the time and place when the learner was ready to use the temporary aides designed by the teacher or more knowledgeable others to grasp new concepts. Therefore, to improve student learning, Wood et al. (1976) maintained the

teacher or more knowledgeable others first needed to identify what the student already knew and what the student needed to learn. The teacher or more knowledgeable other designed assistance to bridge the cognitive gap between what was known and what needed to be known so that the learner grasped the new concepts.

Wood et al. (1976) sought to understand how students acquired problem-solving skills by conducting a study that examined the process of tutoring concerning scaffolding instruction. Their research sample consisted of 30 students from three to five years of age who constructed a three-dimensional wooden pyramid. By videotaping, the exchanges between the tutor and the students, Wood et al. (1976) found that students comprehended what a finished product should look like before producing a perfectly finished product themselves. They also found that students' understanding of a finished product guided their attempts to make it. Also, Wood et al. found that the tutor provided scaffolding consisting of three necessary steps. The first step involved modeling how to construct the pyramid. Wood et al. (1976) found that presenting a process for engagingly completing the model was crucial if students attempted the task independently. The tutor directed students to focus on easy aspects during the job presentation without the tutor's help. The purpose of this direction was to help students quickly become proficient in some of the necessary skills before attempting to master more advanced skills. This demonstrates how tutors can perform teacher tutoring activities, offering their knowledge to guide others (Monjelat et al., 2017).

According to Wood et al. (1976), the second step in scaffolding consisted of the tutor comparing and contrasting the model to the product students created. The tutor

executed this process of comparing and contrasting by asking clarifying questions or demonstrating how the students' products and the original product differed. In the second scaffolding process, teachers created a climate of encouragement and discouragement, which determined if students would attempt to complete once more or decide not to continue with the task.

Wood et al. (1976) found that students who were encouraged by the tutor, either directly or by attitude and tone, completed the task. Initially, students would try to complete the task to please the teacher; however, eventually, they would end the responsibility for completion and not for the tutor's approval. Wood et al. (1976) also found that three-year-old students needed more direction than four-year-old students during this second step. However, four-year-old students were the most challenging group because they needed a tutor to redirect their attempts at completing the task from a series of unorganized actions to a series of adequately sequenced steps.

For tutorial assistance to be useful for four-year-old students, the tutor knew the task, how to perform the task, the characteristics of students, and their output at this level. Therefore, teachers who provided effective instruction during the second stage for four-year-old students had specific knowledge of the content, delivered the content effectively, and understood students' learning characteristics at that particular stage (Zheng, 2016). Effective instruction at the second stage depended on how the tutor used all the knowledge about the task and the student to provide corrective feedback. Effective instruction was the quality of corrective feedback that allowed students to attempt the task again and control any frustrations. The second step of scaffolding for older students

involved the teacher's use of maintenance strategies to keep them focused on the task at hand and encourage them to set their own pace before advancing to a more complex goal.

According to Wood et al. (1976), the third scaffolding step was that the tutor must approve or disapprove students' final products. The tutor's ability to approve or disapprove of these products depended on the corrective feedback in the second scaffolding stage (Zheng, 2016). Wood et al. (1976) found that if the tutor offered specific steps or wooden pieces to complete the pyramid, students did not advance as quickly as they were encouraged to choose the remnants of the pyramid or most of the steps themselves. Wood et al. (1976) concluded that too much tutorial assistance hindered their ability to complete the pyramid.

The zone of proximal development (ZPD) continues to arouse research and practical interest due to its role in constructing a model of education to develop a student's thinking and personality rather than memorizing and reproducing information (Margolis, 2020). Current research supported the concept of the ZPD concerning scaffolding and reading instruction. Parsons (2012) examined the scaffolds that grade three teachers used to adapt reading instruction for students in a case study. Parsons collected data from classroom observations, lesson plans, and interviews. Parsons (2012) found that teachers used seven types of scaffolds to assist students in improving their reading comprehension. The seven types of scaffolding, according to Parson (2012), include: modifying the objective, changing the tasks to meet the purpose, inventing an example or analogy, inserting a mini-lesson, suggesting a different perspective to students, omitting a planned activity, and changing the order of instruction.

Furthermore, scaffolding comprises meeting the unmet learning objective and challenging or teaching a specific skill. It also includes assisting students in making a connection, in using the knowledge students have to alter instruction, check students' understanding, anticipate an upcoming difficulty, manage time, and promote student engagement. Parsons (2012) concluded that when teachers purposely chose their scaffolds, students completed the required assignments and acquired independence faster when scaffolds were not used. Teachers, therefore, play a crucial role in dynamically extending and complementing the support embedded in instructional materials, changing both the amount and quality of support based on their students' needs (Martin et al., 2019).

Verenikina (2008) investigated how to identify instructional decisions during guided learning, or what Wood et al. (1976) identified as the second step of scaffolding. The researchers found that teachers of ninth-graders used the strategy of questioning to compare and contrast student products to the modeled version more often than they used explanations to compare and contrast students' work with the work they shaped. Verenikina (2008) concluded that teachers might explain during the first step of scaffolding as they modeled the task students then performed the task. Later, when students completed the assigned reading, teachers chose to ask questions about the differences and similarities between the assigned task and the task students performed.

Subero et al. (2018) examined scaffolding techniques on second language learners' journal writing. They found that student writing improved when teachers controlled the task after modeling an ideal final product. The researchers recommended

that teachers provide encouraging feedback and guidance to complete the final writing task during the second step. Flynn (2004) explored using scaffolding techniques to teach a social studies lesson to ninth-grade students and found that the teacher demonstrated the ideal form of a task during the first step of scaffolding.

During the first step of scaffolding, the teacher performed most of the work while students observed, took notes, and asked questions to ensure their comprehension of the task (Flynn, 2004). During the second scaffolding step, the teacher guided students through various activities that helped them complete the final product. Students worked in collaborative groups or independently to perform the required tasks during the last phase. The author concluded that the teacher's feedback during the second step impacted the final student performance; specific feedback that the teacher offered about the job in the second step of the scaffolding process determined the quality of the final product (Flynn, 2004). Parsons (2012) found that scaffolding produced self-regulated students who could connect with challenging text.

Similarly, Inan (2012) investigated developing second language writing through scaffolding in the ZPD as part of a classroom magazine project. The researcher found that students who produced a more complex piece of writing during the third step of scaffolding received corrective feedback during the second step of scaffolding. The researcher concluded that this corrective feedback included identifying errors and using specific strategies for correcting the error. Inan (2012) recommended that peers also provided corrective feedback because when students trained to be experts during the first steps of scaffolding, they used those skills to assess their work and the work of others to

develop more complex skills during the third step of scaffolding when they worked independently.

These studies benefited from Vygotsky's research about the ZPD because they were at the reference point. The teachers mediated the learning that students needed to acquire within a tier of instruction. The level is the site for the ZPD; therefore, the level was the precise location where the student could gain knowledge. The teachers were more knowledgeable than others who delivered instruction at a level where students could acquire learning. The application of reading interventions for secondary school students who had reading difficulties was known at a deeper level (Zheng, 2016). In addition to the ZPD, this study was also based on the concept of scaffolding. Within the instructional delivery of interventions, teachers needed to use scaffolding to assist students in mastering the lesson objective. The overarching question was: How do ELA teachers support ninth-grade high school students reading comprehension and retention through instructor-led scaffolding in HVISD. The question built upon the theory because the question was the point of reference by which the teachers mediated the learning that students needed to acquire within a tier of instruction. Scaffolding consisted of the teacher modeling the ideal form, guiding students through a task, and working with others or independently on the assigned task (Zheng, 2016).

Strengths and Weaknesses of Researcher Approach

The overarching problem was understanding how ELA teachers supported ninth-grade high school students reading comprehension and retention through instructor-led scaffolding in HVISD. Clemens et al. (2017)have approached this problem by looking at

students' foundational areas and the prevalence of these difficulties. Several questions remained; however, studies reviewed evaluated fluency in combination with reading text, thus demonstrating by researchers the importance of reading text fluently played in teaching reading comprehension for teenagers, instead of word reading in lists (Clemens et al., 2017). Hock et al. (2017) identified teenage readers, specifically ninth-graders, who tested below 40% in reading comprehension. Approximately 88% of students plunged under 40% in a composite variable, including connected text, decoding, and fluency measures (Hock et al., 2017). Approximately 82% of students delved under the 40% in a composite variable involving listening comprehension and vocabulary measure, and 74% revealed moderately low scores in the dual areas (Hock et al., 2017). Latent class analysis (LCA) revealed that learners with low reading comprehension utilized the same data set in another study (Hock et al., 2017). Researchers in both studies discovered that nearly 70% of students showed a lack of reading fluency and fluency reading words in isolation and connected text, including struggling in decoding and language skills, which revealed measures of listening and vocabulary comprehension (Hock et al., 2017). Students with moderate global weaknesses the spanned all components were the most significant subgroup (Hock et al., 2017).

LCA was used among language-minority ninth-grade students to identify skills profiles who scored lower than the 35 percentile in the reading comprehension assessment section (Andres, 2020). Findings revealed that more than 80% of students displayed reading fluency difficulties in assessments and low vocabulary skills (Andres, 2020). Struggling readers had difficulty decoding and fluency in sixth through eighth-

grade classrooms, while factor analysis was used to investigate reading comprehension, reading fluency, and decoding (Wylie et al., 2017). The skills of eighth and ninth-grade students were also examined. The multicomponent intervention in word study, comprehension, and vocabulary was not focused on (Swanson et al., 2017). Discriminant function analyses revealed that among students with reading comprehension scores lower than 25%, 49% of the learners also exhibited scores lower than the 25% in measures of word list fluency (Swanson et al., 2017).

According to Landi and Ryherd (2019), lines of research suggested two possibilities. Impaired learning of word meaning when reading with students who do not comprehend well could be due to low linguistic cues like labels and failure to extract relevant features without explicit instruction. Researchers have not investigated either of these possibilities in poor comprehenders to date. Researchers controlled the type of facts available (verbal vs. nonverbal) and the type of guidance (directed vs. undirected) so that they could understand more about how low comprehenders learned different categories. Considering that poor comprehenders seemed to have a language-primary deficit (Panadero, 2017), researchers hypothesized that they showed more unsatisfactory performances than typically developing individuals when learning verbal features compared to nonverbal elements. Because poor comprehenders offered a benefit from directed instruction on relevant information for inference-making tasks (Okkinga et al., 2018), the author hypothesized that they showed better performance in the led version of the mission than the undirected version. Precisely, researchers predict an interaction between group and instruction. Researchers expect both groups to benefit from directed

instruction. Still, they anticipate that the poor comprehenders have difficulty selecting relevant features from their environment for word learning, with additional complexity in using verbal features (Okkinga et al., 2018).

Research expanded on the effects of digital learning environments on students' academic performance through scaffolding in the context of history in adolescents. Ness (2016) concluded from their systematic review on scaffolding in computer-based learning environments that digital hints appeared to be effective scaffolds, especially supporting stimulating learning strategies. For example, suggestions improved ninth-grade students' efforts regulation by suggesting what actions to perform when confronted with difficulties while reading texts.

Research suggests that strategy instruction was supported that established predictors of reading performance. However, many existing studies that use digital or computer-supported environments mainly investigated the effects of support in primary or higher education, even though reading comprehension was equally essential for secondary school (Zheng, 2016). Moreover, other research did not investigate the combined effects of cognitive and metacognitive teaching or scaffolds (de Kock, 2016). Beek et al. (2019) did not research computer-supported expository text reading in secondary education. Therefore, a recent study targeted the joint use of cognitive and metacognitive assistance in a digital setting in high school education in reading comprehension's specific context of history. Research from the study suggested that instructional support in digital learning environments could have a particular effect on learners' reading comprehension and academic performance (Beek et al., 2019). The

study added elements of autonomy and self-regulation to a digital learning environment: learners were able to differentiate if and when to use cognitive and metacognitive support during history text reading. The present study also addressed the possible effects of hints used on students' self-regulated learning and motivation.

Gap in Literature

According to Zhang and Zhang (2019), "Student's achievement in secondary classes are greatly impacted, and more research is needed in this area since students' ability to comprehend a range of complex texts correlates with academic success" (p. 135). Teachers used scaffolding as a strategy to track student achievement in the secondary classroom. Silva and Savitz (2019) used a template in their article for scaffolding information to adolescents as a way of critically examining and analyzing text. The template was used in secondary ELA classrooms. However, teachers used scaffolding to test students' achievement in textual analysis and critical thinking rather than comprehending a range of complex text. Students in this secondary classroom understood what they were reading and analyzed and used critical thinking while reading text.

Silva and Savitz (2019) provided background on young adult literature as a genre, the educational benefits of using young adult text in secondary classrooms, and a review of how the youth lens used the template in other contexts. They then provided an adaption of Silva & Savitz's (2019) youth lens analytic template, which explained the usage to guide their examination of self-selected youth novels and demonstrated youth representing whether they reinforced or disrupted social constructions of adolescents

through teacher scaffolding. Additionally, research recommended more text for teachers to use with their students' scaffolded literature. The scaffolding of the young adult literature involved critical thinking and analysis not attained without first comprehending what students read (Beek et al., 2019). Studies needed to be done on the achievement in secondary classes in students' ability to understand a wide variety of text, not on analysis and critical thinking after comprehension.

Scrum methodology scaffolding was a framework intended to scaffold students' learning process when they work on complex, real-world tasks in science (Habig et al., 2018). Implementation of context-based approaches in chemistry was challenging for some adolescent students and their teachers. Getting lost in the complexity of uncertainty and context about learning goals was a feeling felt by some students. Habig et al. (2018) emphasized that metacognitive skills and insufficient knowledge make open-ended authentic learning contexts and relevant decisions prepare students overwhelmed by the skilled complexity. Dori et al. (2018) reported that a willing, reflective, and competent teacher resorted to a more traditional instructor role during context-based implementation in the teacher's classroom due to a time constraint. Cook (2017) emphasized that teachers exhibited educational change caused by several reasons, including their beliefs about what excellent education entails and insufficient skills in guiding learners through their education process. Despite the development and introduction of new methods to empower teachers (Sevian et al., 2018), an additional tool was still needed, along with frameworks to captivate instructors to scaffold teenagers' learning (Bennett, 2017).

The Scrum methodology model originated in the 1990s as a project management framework frequently used in business (Schwaber & Sutherland, 2011). The term scrum referred to rugby players and was meant to form a powerful group poised in a specific way to conquer the ball. Scrum provided ceremonies, roles, and artifacts to monitor progress adjusts to changing circumstances and reflected on the quality of intermediate products. In an educational context, the scrum answered collaboration issues often perceived by students. Scrum connected teaching characteristics to several aspects of students' motivation, including expectancy of success, autonomy, feeling of belonging, and emotion regulation from a theoretical point of view (Schwaber & Sutherland, 2011). Scrum ceremonies and artifacts helped to situate metacognitive skills thoroughly and indirectly by creating room for building knowledge structures.

Scrum methodology supported context-based secondary chemistry classrooms. This methodology intends to scaffold students' learning process when they work on complicated and sometimes overwhelming projects (Schwaber & Sutherland, 2011). Although this article researched teachers scaffolding adolescents, the report did not scaffold ELA as a content-based subject. The experience of participating teachers in this study revealed that a classroom climate in which teachers and students were working together deployed their didactyl expertise to explain why and how they wanted to implement scrum methodology and to accomplish their preparation work in ceremonies, i.e., stand up, review, retrospective, and set up the required artifacts like the scrum board and product backlog. Teachers acknowledged that scrum methodology was a helpful scaffold when students worked on complex real-world questions (Schwaber &

Sutherland, 2011). The necessary scaffold led one to believe that teachers used scrum methodology in chemistry and research on ELA adolescent students.

Teachers used scaffolding in ELL classrooms, in every content area among all ages. ELLs benefited from their teachers, utilizing a wide range of English as a second language instructional strategies. However, there was a gap in learning student achievement in the secondary classroom dealing with reading comprehension in classes that did not have ELLs but still did not comprehend what they read—in a current study by Irby et al. (2018), scaffolding amongst ninth-grade English teachers in their use of scaffolding as a specific instructional strategy through an observation protocol that was analyzed.

Teachers, in this study, supported scaffolding reading when modeling how to read, including sounding out words during instruction, pronouncing words correctly, speaking clearly and in complete sentences, and repeating and restating ideas used with academic vocabulary (Irby et al., 2018). This study underscored that the difference between teachers utilizing specific English as a second language strategy like scaffolding made the content more accessible. Researchers also suggested the integration of English as a second language strategy such as scaffolding into content area teaching for English speaking students, especially those coming from economically challenged backgrounds who might benefit from an emphasis on academic language development (Caswell et al., 2016).

Scaffolding occurred overwhelmingly in elementary and primary schools; thus, more research was looming in secondary schools. Bardack and Obradovic (2019) built on

previous work that examined how adults' executive function skills related to children's operational, functional skills directly and indirectly through caregiving behaviors and practices. As parents, teachers act as relevant role models for elementary school students who learn to regulate their attention, behavior, and cognition by observing how adults implicitly displayed self-regulated scaffolding behaviors in the classroom. Obradovic et al. (2018) found a negative association between a composite measure of teachers showing impulsive, distracted, forgetful, and disorganized behaviors during classroom activities and students' performance of executive function tasks for the fall school year. Findings provided evidence that teachers' self-regulation skills in classroom settings related to student outcomes. Extended research relied on teachers reporting their abilities (Swanson et al., 2016). Self-regulation can be biased and may not reflect how teachers displayed these skills during their everyday teaching routines. Also, the study demonstrated the relevance of teachers' display of self-regulation for direct assessment of students' executive function skills, eliminating other biases that could be present when teachers reported on students' operational function skills (Garcia et al., 2019).

Teachers were skilled at controlling impulse-focused attention, kept track of competing priorities, and may have been more inclined to employ teaching practices that explicitly supported students in acquiring similar self-regulatory skills (Bardack & Obradovic, 2019). The teacher's display and scaffolding of executive function protocols go beyond the mere presentation of the teacher's executive function-related difficulties in capturing how teachers promoted the more complex students' operational function skills that pertained to planning and organization. Thus, this new observational method was

unique in shedding light on the co-occurrence of teachers' implicit executive function-related behavior and their explicit strategies for scaffolding children's planning and organizational skills. Findings revealed that teachers who showed higher executive function-related difficulties were less likely to engage in practices that scaffold their students' planning and organizational skills (Bardack & Obradovic, 2019). However, the association between the two dimensions was modest, suggesting that the teacher's display and scaffolding of executive function protocol could capture related but distinct aspects of teachers' behavior and practices. Indeed, multilevel path analyses revealed that two dimensions independently predicted students' executive function skills directly.

Summary and Conclusion

The nature of scaffolding described a situation in which teachers scaffold one another's learning in classrooms, with small groups of students, between student peers, and one on one settings. The overarching problem was understanding how ELA teachers supported ninth-grade high school students reading comprehension and retention through instructor-led scaffolding in HVISD. There was a gap in literature because students' achievement in secondary classes impacted their performance, and more research was needed in this area since students' ability to comprehend a range of complex texts was positively correlated with academic success (Zhang & Zhang, 2019). Such a study could improve secondary reading comprehension, and outcomes for these students who received scaffolding as a teaching technique could be deemed successful. The next chapter will discuss a detailed exposition of research. The research design and rationale,

the role of the researcher, methodology including instrumentation, and data analysis plan will evolve along with issues of trustworthiness, and ethical procedures will unfold.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this narrative qualitative study was to investigate how ELA teachers support ninth-grade students' reading comprehension and retention through instruction using the theory of scaffolding. I chose this study because it allowed me to understand how teachers see, view, approach, and experience reading comprehension and how students made meaning of their experiences. This chapter addressed the research design and rationale, the researcher's role, and the methodology and trustworthiness issues.

Research Design and Rationale

The research design for this study was a narrative qualitative design. The narrative qualitative design allowed me to understand the participant rationale for using specific classroom techniques to assist students in developing their reading comprehension skills.

I used Bruner and Vygotsky's scaffolding theory because this theory supports the central phenomenon addressed in this study, examining how teachers support ninth grade students through reading comprehension using scaffolding techniques and retention through instructor-led scaffolding in HVISD. Bruner believed that learning is an active and social process in which information is gathered, and new ideas are formed concerning past and current knowledge (Rannikmäe, 2020).

Another type of qualitative design considered for this research study was quantitative design. I did not select a quantitative study because quantitative research requires the use of standardized measures so that the varying perspectives and

experiences of people can be fitted into a limited number of predetermined response categories to which numbers are assigned (Patton, 2015). I chose a narrative qualitative design because, according to Ravitch and Carl (2016), a qualitative study seeks to discover and describe in narrative reporting what people do in their everyday lives and what their actions mean to them.

I interviewed 15 ninth-grade ELA teachers in HVISD. Interviews took place via Zoom. Rubin and Rubin (2012) said internet interviewing is more personal, gives interviewees more time to think about answers, and allows them to hide their emotional responses more discretely. Internet interviewing through Zoom is especially prevalent during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants received a $20.00 gift card to participate in my study.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher's role is to collect and interpret data (Burkholder & Cox, 2016). This process requires creativity and adherence to the scientific method. My role as the researcher was to maintain the study's transparency and credibility. I recorded any biases I encountered during the interview process in my journal as I interviewed ninth grade ELA teachers in HVISD. I gathered data during interviews and transcribed and analyzed data. I collected information from study participants I have never met or worked with. Confidentiality was demonstrated in showing respect by being straightforward with the expectations and process of the interview, as well as honoring any promise made to the participant. I assured that no harm or pressure was directed toward participants. I provided creditability, dependability, and transferability standards to reduce bias by using

my journal to record any biases. Understanding teachers' classroom interactions with students are beneficial in determining the extent of scaffolding so that students with reading comprehension problems can be monitored. I remained unbiased throughout this process by having participants record in journals for five days to reflect on data collection.

Methodology

The methodology section includes the sample of participants and questions that guide the interview protocol. Procedures for recruitment are explained, along with instrumentation and data collection. I also discuss data sources and selection, data analysis, and trustworthiness issues.

Participant Selection Logic

The sample was 15 ELA ninth grade teachers in HVISD. All participants taught ELA to ninth grade students, were currently employed as teachers in HVISD, were knowledgeable regarding the phenomenon of interest, and represented a larger targeted population of ninth grade teachers. The researcher decided where to gather data to answer their questions. Participants who fit the criteria for inclusion in the sample needed to be considered before selecting the specific data collection method for a study.

I reached out to principals of different school districts for permission to identify participants who fit my study (see Appendix G). A letter of participation(see Appendix E) and the consent letter (see Appendix D) were emailed to participants who agreed to participate in the interviews. I reached out to 20 potential study participants and 15 self-selected to participate in the study. A follow-up letter was emailed to each participant to

thank them for taking part in interviews at the end of the interview process (see Appendix I). A thank you letter was mailed to participants' residences with $20 gift cards (see Appendix K).

Participants were selected via purposeful sampling. Another strategy employed was soliciting additional participants through snowballing techniques. I asked current participants if they knew of other ninth grade ELA teachers who wanted to participate in my study. There was no need to solicit participants through social media, as enough participants were recruited from within the district through purposeful sampling and the snowballing technique.

Instrumentation

In a qualitative study, the researcher is considered the first primary research instrument throughout the research process (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The primary focus of this research was to understand how ELA teachers supported ninth-grade high school students reading comprehension and retention through instructor-led scaffolding in HVISD. To study the phenomenon, supportive semi-structured and open-ended research questions were addressed, based upon the frameworks of the study.

The instrumentation to collect data was semi-structured and probing interview questions used to interview participants in the study and guided the participants and researcher throughout the interview process. The questions were open-ended. I developed open-ended questions using the theoretical framework of Jerome Bruner as the basis of my questions and consulted with my chair and Walden peers. The overarching question was discussed with my chair and second committee member and tested through

colleagues at Walden University and assistance from subject matter experts. Questions were tested with SMEs, and a few were edited to open-ended question formats. Questions were then discussed with my chair and tested with SMEs again for content validity. Questions and probes were aligned with the research questions.

The overarching question is: How do ELA teachers support ninth-grade high school students reading comprehension and retention through instructor-led scaffolding in HVISD? These interview questions were sufficient and helped gather data to understand teachers' scaffolding support in their classrooms.

Procedure for Recruiting

When participants were identified, a participation letter and the consent form were sent via email for their review. An interview was then scheduled at a time convenient to participants. Interviews were scheduled through Zoom; due to the COVID-19 Pandemic as soon as contact was made with participants. It was anticipated each interview would take approximately 45 minutes. The snowball sampling strategy was used to obtain additional participants for the study. I asked participants if they knew of any other teachers that fit the inclusion criteria and wanted to participate in my study, thus using the professional snowball technique. Facebook and LinkedIn platforms were not used to obtain additional participants since enough participants were recruited through purposeful sampling and the snowball technique.

There were 15 ninth-grade ELA teachers interviewed that met the outlined inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria used for selecting participants specified that teachers must be knowledgeable of the phenomenon of interest and must also report

teaching reading comprehension in their ninth-grade ELA classroom. I started the interview by letting the participant review the overarching question. I asked them an icebreaker question about how long they had been teaching and what they liked about teaching. I then move into my sub-questions. I ensured that all questions were asked in the same manner for content validity. Participants' responses measured perceptions and attitudes toward different forms of scaffolding. After the interviews, I coded the interview transcripts, which helped gather themes from the interviews to answer the open-ended questions. A thank you letter was emailed to the participants, thanking them for participating in the survey (see Appendix J). A gift card of $20 was sent to participants as a token for their participation in the study (see Appendix K).

Procedure for Data Collection

Qualitative research was essential to follow due to strict protocols or procedures concerning the recruitment of participants and the participation of the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Adherence to these procedures enhances the trustworthiness of a qualitative study such as this one. The following sections describe these procedures.

Recruitment

Participants for this study were recruited by following the recruitment procedures in the application submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Walden University. Upon approval from Walden's Institutional Review Board, the schools' principals were contacted by emailing a letter of permission (Appendix G) and participation that included the study topic and interview questions through the high school's email system. The principals were also sent a letter of approval from the

superintendent (see Appendix B), which permitted me to collect data. In my discussion with each principal, I asked for assistance in determining the potential pool of participants for this study on the inclusion criteria. I asked for the participants' email addresses to ask their permission to participate in this study. A $20.00 gift card was given as an incentive and can be used at the participants' leisure.

Participation

I interviewed 15 ninth-grade teachers of ELA in a large metropolitan school in northern Texas. I sent each teacher a letter of invitation (see Appendix C) and asked them to return the letter to me along with the letter of consent (see Appendix E) in a self-addressed stamped envelope. From those invitations, I received four. I was able to apply the snowballing technique to obtain additional participants.

Individual Interviews

I conducted a personal interview with each of the 15 study participants via Zoom. By conducting the interview, I developed a better understanding of the types of scaffolding in each participant's classroom. The date and time of each interview were determined ahead of time. Interviews were audio-recorded. Before the interview began, I explained to the participants that they could review their completed transcripts later to check for the accuracy of the transcription. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes. At the beginning of each interview, I reminded participants that they had signed a consent form agreeing to review the tentative findings of the study for their trustworthiness at a later date.

Reflective Journals

The participants wrote in their reflective journals for three days, answering questions in the journal (see Appendix I). I explained this instrument to participants after their interviews. I presented each participant with a copy of the online reflective journal through email a few days before starting writing on Day 1.

Documents

The types of documents collected included documents related to the scaffolding process and reading comprehension problems among students in ninth grade. I collected documents concerning scaffolding strategies that ninth-grade classroom teachers could use with students who have reading comprehension problems through the participant's lesson plans. Documents were carefully collected and used for data analysis.

Data Analysis Plan

The role of any researcher is to collect and interpret data (Burkholder et al., 2016). I used open-ended and semi-structured questions to interview 15 ELA ninth grade teachers who utilized scaffolding techniques in their classrooms. Once the interviews were conducted, they were transcribed and stored on a Microsoft Word document. Participants' names were replaced with pseudonyms to protect their identities and ensure confidentiality. A thematic analysis process was conducted after analyzing data from the individual interviews. To be familiarized with the data, time was allotted reading and re-reading transcriptions, noting ideas and comments about the research questions.

The overarching problem was understanding how ELA teachers support ninth-grade high school students reading comprehension and retention through instructor-led

scaffolding in HVISD. Research needed to be conducted on how reading comprehension was taught in older students. More information is needed about how ninth-graders read comprehensive text with reading comprehension problems and how the text is scaffolded. The purpose of this study was to investigate how ELA teachers support ninth-grade high school students' reading comprehension and retention through instructor-led scaffolding in HVISD. The study was a narrative analysis qualitative research study that delved into how teachers support ninth-grade ELA reading comprehension through scaffolding. This research study was intended to investigate how scaffolding happens in the ninth-grade classroom.

I used a thematic data analysis approach to code each data segment. In using open coding, I categorized codes that shared similar characteristics. These codes became the beginning of a pattern. This allowed the classification and categorization of the individual pieces of data. Data was collected from personal interviews and thoroughly analyzed and coded after all interviews were completed. This process was repeated for each transcribed interview. After the open coding process was completed, I generated a list of codes. After each data set was analyzed, the second level of coding, known as axial coding, was conducted. This was to determine the most important codes relevant to answering the research questions. Categories and sub-categories were developed from the recurred patterns from the secondary coding process. I reviewed the data several times to gather repeated categories until no new themes emerged, considered saturation. I used triangulation to establish credibility. To establish credibility, codes were compared from one data set with the others to compare findings. Lastly, member checking was

conducted. Participants were asked to provide feedback affirming or denying the accuracy of their data. Six participants responded and agreed that the conversations were accurate. The remaining nine did not respond to the transcript validation.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is adhered to by qualitative researchers by a set of different criteria standards. The standards include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These standards should align with the research question through qualitative researchers' goals, questions, and study context.

Credibility

Credibility is the ability of the researcher to account for all complexities presented in the study and be able to deal with these complexities and explain patterns (Ravitch & Carl, 2019). Researchers draw significant inferences regarding their study design along with instruments that measure what is intended to be measured (Ravitch & Carl, 2019). Creditability was established by believability, and the results focus on the richness of the findings not from data collection but the participants. To establish credibility, I used member checks, triangulation, and reflexivity.

Reflexivity may eliminate bias that may occur. Ryerson (2017) said reflexivity binds the researcher to documents, based upon ongoing analysis, and journals any self-critical analyses or biases to research. For this reason, careful consideration of my thoughts and assumptions of other people, my surroundings, and myself, along with attention to who I am, was significant to the research.

Accuracy was provided through data triangulation. Several sources and methods were used to solidify a set of interpretations. Looking at unique perspectives from different vantage points was involved in forming themes and categories in the study. I asked questions during the interview process to validate information about teachers' attitudes, behaviors, interactions, and beliefs that I used to record in my journal, to enhance the validity of the study by examining data. Participants were probed using generated interview questions, and their responses were documented verbatim.

Member checking was the last method to provide accuracy in my qualitative research study findings. I checked with participants to review the accuracy of the information. Each teacher participant who was interviewed in this research study received a summary of the results. The participants reviewed the findings for accuracy, completeness, and fair representation in responses. Participant feedback was documented, and findings were reviewed for efficiency based on the input.

Transferability

Transferability is the degree to which research can be transferred or generalized to other settings or contexts. Tong & Dew (2016) suggested that researchers can compare their results with studies conducted in different contexts, regions, or populations; position their findings with other theoretical frameworks and describe the study setting and participant characteristics in detail so readers can judge the transferability of the findings to their context. The researcher enhances transferability by describing the research and assumptions central to the study (Ryerson, 2017). I used my journal notes to understand and build a clear picture of the participants in their setting,

describing the circumstances, meanings, intentions, strategies, motivations that characterized the role of the participants during the interview sessions. While talking with teachers, I utilized my observations that added a clear description to understand and build a picture of teacher participants' setting, describing circumstances, meanings, motivations, strategies, and intentions that characterized the participant's role during the interview sessions. I ensured a variation in participant selection, classroom experience, and knowledge of scaffolding techniques.

Dependability

The idea of dependability emphasized the ever-changing context that the researcher accounts for in which research occurs. The researcher's responsibility to change within the setting and how these changes affect how the study approaches the research is the researcher's responsibility. This means that there is consistent evidence in data collection, analysis, and reporting and that any adjustments or shifts are explained. I kept a journal to take notes on the interviewing process and kept track of the data. I documented the interview process and cross-checked interviews with participants.

Conformability

The degree to which readers could confirm or establish research results is also known as confirmability. There are several stages to confirmability. As I conducted this study, I documented the procedures for checking and rechecking the data throughout the study (Ryerson, 2017). I described and actively searched negative instances that contradicted prior observations (Ryerson, 2017). Furthermore, the researcher’s positionality and bias are important aspects that must be scrutinized (Guba, 1981). I used

my journal to engage in self-reflection to eliminate any bias that surfaced. Participants signed a consent form and were informed about their roles in the study and that they were free to withdraw from the interview for any reason they wished.

Ethical Procedures

Zaagsma et al. (2020) said the trustworthiness of a qualitative research study depends on the researcher's ethics. I followed the procedures required by the IRB to conduct this study ethically. The IRB procedures required all participants to sign an informed consent form before initiating the data collection process. I also contacted the school district where the teachers work to secure a letter of cooperation from the school district administrator and the schools from which data was collected. I obtained a signed consent form from each of the participants in this study. I protected the confidentiality of all data by assigning pseudonyms for the school district, the school site, and the participants. Finally, after the data was analyzed, I invited participants to review the tentative findings of the study to obtain credibility. Participants were assured that all observations and interviews conducted expressed awareness of the participants involved in the study. Therefore, all interviews were scheduled ahead of time and confirmed by the participants before (Hsu et al., 2015). All participants were aware that they could end the interviews and the journal writing session at any time. Finally, all participants understood that it was the researcher’s job to protect their privacy by following a strict code of ethics. Therefore, I was socially responsible on all levels of the design and data-collection process.

Summary and Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I outlined the design plan for addressing the effects of scaffolding in reading comprehension. I addressed the research design rationale. The role of the researcher was explained, including any researcher biases and ethical issues. I explained the methodology, including participant selection logic. I identified instruments, including data collection and sources. The sufficiency of data collection to answer the research question was discussed. Data analysis plan and trustworthiness issues were defined in credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Last, I addressed ethical procedures. In Chapter 4, research results are presented.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine how ELA teachers support ninth grade students' in ELA classes in HVISD reading comprehension and retention through instructor-led scaffolding. I discussed the setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, and evidence of trustworthiness. Additionally, data results involving open and manual coding and themes are addressed. One main research question guided the interview protocol during this study. The research question is:

RQ1: How do ELA teachers support ninth grade high school students' reading comprehension and retention through instructor-led scaffolding in HVISD?

Setting

This study took place in one of the largest school districts in Texas' northern region. This school district consists of more than 80 schools and has a diverse student population of about 60,000 and staff comprised of approximately 4,000 teachers. The setting was unique because it attracted around 100 square miles and welcomes students who live within the district's boundaries and neighboring counties. This school district has an active PTA that collaborated with parents, teachers, and other stakeholders to provide quality educational experiences for students and families. Additionally, it offered numerous programs to promote communication and greater school and community involvement.

During the study, the district continued to respond to the needs of its students and families as it shifted to a virtual platform where teachers and instructional staff conducted distance learning programs. This course of action directly responded to the country-wide

school closures to address the COVID-19 pandemic. This closure prevented the personal delivery of documents to administrators that included the study topic and interview questions and a copy of the letter of cooperation indicating approval to collect data, as was previously planned. Due to COVID-19 and school closures, interviews were conducted via Zoom, a web-based conferencing platform. This platform influenced the study as it was challenging to create a personal rapport. It was challenging to observe participants' actions and gestures during interview sessions. However, it permitted greater control over the interview environment. It was also difficult to recruit teachers willing to consent to interviews, and this became a relatively slow process in collecting my data.

Interviews were conducted individually with 15 participants through Zoom in between instructional times and weekends. Participants were given the option to choose times and dates that were most convenient to them. All participants were teaching ELA to ninth grade students, were currently employed as teachers in the district, knowledgeable regarding the phenomenon of interest, and representative of a larger teacher population of ninth grade teachers in HVISD.

Demographics

I interviewed 15 participants. All participants consented by returning the emailed consent form. I used purposeful sampling by identifying participants who met the inclusion criteria. Ravitch and Carl (2019) suggested that participants with unique abilities can participate in a study through purposeful sampling. A set of questions was formulated for the study and administered to determine the best participants. These

questions were open-ended and based on predetermined objectives and preestablished categories.

Initial interviews started with an orientation protocol or script with 20 questions of maximum variability. Some questions were general, while others were specific to the research question. Findings indicated that participants included males and females with teaching experience that ranged from 1 to 10 years (see Table 1).

Table 1

Participants' Identification, Gender, and Length of Service in the School District

Participants' Identification	Gender	Length of Service
Mike	Male	1 to 5 Years of Teaching
Jose	Male	
Liz	Female	
Suki	Male	
Becky	Female	
Angela	Female	
Jodi	Female	
Juan	Male	
Elvia	Female	5 to 10 Years of Teaching
Sue	Female	
Erika	Female	
Sam	Male	
Mary	Female	
Robert	Male	
Jim	Male	

Participants were selected from school principals within the HVISD. Participants agreed to participate by following directions on the consent form and returned the form with the words "I consent" as instructed. Only those participants who met inclusion criteria were included in the study, and those who did not fully meet the criteria were

excluded. Participants excluded from the study included those who wanted to participate but did not consistently work with students in the ninth grade. Personal information was not used for any purposes outside of this research project, and participants' names and identities were not identified in the study. Doing so would jeopardize participant confidentiality.

Data Collection

Upon receiving approval from the IRB (approval #03-23-21-0752192) to complete the research, I started reaching out to high school principals in the school districts within HVISD to recruit potential participants for the study. The principals of each high school within HVISD received a copy of the letter from the superintendent that stated that I was permitted to conduct my research in the district before my contacting them (see Appendix B). It was difficult getting started with collecting data as principals were unresponsive. Four principals responded via email, and two responded via telephone. Of those principals who responded, two offered to assist. In my discussion with each principal, I asked for assistance in determining the potential pool of participants for this study based on the inclusion criteria, which stated that participants must be a teacher teaching ELA to ninth-grade students, was currently employed as a teacher in the district, knowledgeable of the phenomenon of interest, and a representative of a larger targeted population of ninth grade teachers. Permission was granted to access teachers' school emails to ask their permission to be a part of this study. I sent out emails where more than 650 emails were sent to prospective participants within the first week. I resent the emails with no response, and after the second and third weeks, six participants

were recruited. Since I needed additional participants, I asked participants if they knew of any other participants who fit the inclusion criteria and would want to be a part of my study, thus using the professional snowballing technique.

I was able to recruit additional participants. The date and time of each interview were determined ahead of time so that both interviewer and interviewee could maintain privacy for the interview duration. At the start of the interview, each participant was briefed about their consent to the interview and informed about the interview procedure, including the timeline, the researcher's responsibility, and the participant's responsibilities during the interview. I conducted 15 interviews with ninth-grade ELA teachers within HVISD. The interviews aimed to understand better the types of scaffolding in each participant's classroom. It was anticipated the interviews would take 45 minutes; however, some interviews took approximately 30–45 minutes. My body posture, language, voice, and tone remained neutral during the interviews, allowing participants to respond more freely. Participants acted in a friendly and cordial manner, and they presented themselves professionally as they appeared to answer questions honestly. When participants responded to questions indirectly or provided information that seemed to follow a different path, they were gently directed to the research question.

After the interviews were conducted, the participants wrote in reflective journals for three days, answering questions in the journal (see Appendix I). The process of completing a reflective journal was explained to participants after their interviews. Each participant was emailed a copy of their reflective journal outline before writing. This was

to document scaffolding strategies that ninth-grade ELA teachers could use with students with reading comprehension problems through the participant's lesson plans.

The data collection was completed within eight weeks. Interviews were transcribed and reviewed by reverting to the recordings for clarity. The researcher's journal was used to clarify notes made during the interviews. A copy of the transcribed interview was sent to each participant to obtain transcript validation. Participants were asked to respond with any adjustments or remarks from the interviews. Six participants responded and agreed that the conversations were accurate. The remaining nine did not respond to the transcript validation.

Data Analysis

The interview transcripts, the ELA reflective journal, and scaffolded lesson plans were read several times for content familiarity. I also confirm insights recorded after each interview in the research journal. Open coding of the data in which text segments were identified and labeled was done by reviewing the data line-by-line by examining specific words, sentences, or sections of text gathered from reviewed ELA teacher reflective journal and scaffolded lesson plans. I then conducted axial coding to develop categories from patterns of repeated clusters. There were seven topics identified which resulted in five themes.

The themes identified were scaffolding in the classroom, which looks at the different strategies teachers used in assisting students in mastering skills needed to solve a problem; comprehensive reading strategies, which are strategies used to allow the student to understand a reading text; student's level of scaffolding needs to be readjusted,

which refers to the level of performance of each student; reading a problem in the classroom, which looks at problems encountered by both teacher and students in mastering the reading skill, and measuring scaffolding, which looks at the assessment methods used to obtain reading comprehension outcome. These themes were aligned with the research question.

The ELA reflective journal, scaffolded lesson plans, and interview transcripts were revisited to reinforce insights and identify common themes through the analysis process. This determined that the most important themes relevant to the research question were identified. After the relevant themes were identified, the redundant themes were eliminated. This process continued throughout the analysis until no new themes emerged, indicating saturation was reached. There were no discrepant themes within the analysis process.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Creditability is established by believability, and the results focus on the richness of the findings, not from data collection but the participants. I developed the interview questions from the literature review and tested them with Subject matter Experts, colleagues, family, and friends to establish credibility. Interview questions were aligned with the research purpose and research questions. Member checks, triangulation, and reflexivity were also used to provide accuracy and further establish credibility to ensure the research study was conducted ethically and that the findings would confirm trustworthiness.

Accuracy was provided through data triangulation in this study. I used probes and recorded and documented responses verbatim from interview questions. Reflexivity attempts to eliminate bias while conducting an interview or interpreting the study findings. I recorded my biases in my journal. Looking at unique perspectives from different vantage points is involved in forming themes and categories in the study. I asked questions during the interview process to validate information about teachers' attitudes, behaviors, interactions, and beliefs that I recorded in my journal, to enhance the study's validity by examining data. Participants were probed using generated questions from the interviewer, and their responses were documented verbatim.

Member checks were the last method I used to provide accuracy. Transcribed transcripts were emailed to participants for their review. Each teacher participant received a transcript of their interview. The participants reviewed the findings for accuracy, completeness, and fair representation in responses. Participant feedback was documented, and findings were reviewed for efficiency based on the feedback.

Transferability

Transferability judges the transfer's sensibility as a researcher transferring the results to a different context. While talking with teachers, I utilized my observations abilities, which added a clear description to understand and build a picture of teacher participants in their setting. This described circumstances, meanings, motivations, strategies, and intentions that characterize the participant's role during the interview sessions. Teacher participant selection was used as a variation to ensure that the teachers have experience instructing scaffolding and reading comprehension. The unique school

setting in terms of its location, student population, and teachers allowed the researcher to compare the study results conducted in different contexts.

Dependability

A journal was kept ensuring dependability where notes on the interviewing process and data collection were done. The data collection process and analysis procedures were explained in detail. Additionally, reflexivity was used to maintain dependability by providing an effective and impartial analysis. As an educator, I acknowledged expectations and beliefs brought into the research process that could shape the outcome. Notes and documentation about my thinking in my field were used throughout the research process. The interview process was documented, and the data generated through observations were kept in the researcher's journal. These methods of ensuring triangulation were used consistently throughout the research process for each participant to establish consistency.

Confirmability

Conformability looked at the potential bias I brought to the study**.** The researcher's journal was used to record any biases experienced during the interview process. The study procedures were documented, and the technique for checking and rechecking the data throughout the study was conducted. As a researcher conducting this study, I described and actively searched negative instances that contradict prior observations. A data audit examined data collection and the analysis procedures and judged the potential for bias and distortion. Interview notes were reviewed to confirm the data. A consent form was provided to each participant to ensure their willing participation

in the interview process. Before each interview, participants were informed about their role and were reminded that they were free to withdraw for any reason they felt necessary. The responses analyzed were accurately reported and was validated with the researcher's journal notes.

Results

Thematic Findings

The analysis of the findings from the study is discussed in this section. Using a thematic data analysis approach, codes were identified that indicated the meaning of a segment of data. Some participants responded to interview questions that overlapped with other interview questions. However, it was necessary to follow the flow of their thinking rather than just try to stick rigidly to the order of my interview questions. Probing questions allowed participants to get back on track with the interview flow. The research question for this study was: How do ELA teachers support ninth-grade high school students reading comprehension and retention through instructor-led scaffolding in HVISD? To answer this question, interviews were conducted. The following themes were formulated: scaffolding in the classroom, comprehensive reading strategies, need for readjustment of students' level of scaffolding needs, reading problems in the classroom, and measuring scaffolding.

Scaffolding in the Classroom

In the first theme, participants reported applying this strategy to understand better how students comprehend what they read. While a few participants stated that they do not particularly like the scaffolding strategy, most participants favor using it in their class.

Participants were further asked. Do you teach reading comprehension? How do you teach reading comprehension in your ninth-grade classroom? Jodi stated that she does teach reading comprehension. She asked students what they thought the story would be about based on the title or cover. She asked students to summarize what they had read or predicted what they thought would happen next. After reading, students were asked to summarize the story, identify the main idea, or highlight the most important facts or events. When asked about the implementation of scaffolding, Jodi said:

> Yes, I do use scaffolding as a teaching strategy. All students can benefit from educational scaffolding. One of the most common scaffolding techniques is to provide the vocabulary of a passage before reading it. Teachers can review the words that are most likely to cause problems for students by using metaphors or graphics. An example of this scaffolding in English class is the language preparation that teachers can do before assigning Romeo and Juliet. They can prepare for the reading of Act I by providing the definition "remove" so that students understand the meaning of "remove" when Juliet speaks from her balcony, for example, "Romeo, take off your name; and for that name, which is not part of you, take everything myself.

Mike and Elvia also asked if they teach reading comprehension and how they teach reading comprehension in their ninth-grade classroom. Mike mentioned that it's always a good idea to read more complicated texts out loud, and he believed that it’s an ideal situation when students have a copy of the book to follow along. He continued to say that reading aloud models good reading techniques and allows students to hear new

vocabulary in context without interrupting the flow of the story. Also, they find it easier to understand the story when someone else is reading it. Elvia said:

> Yes, I am always in favor of teaching reading comprehension in ninth grade. Whether you are a father, mother, or a teaching professional, you must know how to teach good reading comprehension, that is, to ensure that reading is effective in all of its aspects. Once a child learns to read, it is important to start working hard on reading comprehension throughout high school. It is the basis for good academic growth and success in life.

Regarding the theme of scaffolding in the classroom, Angela said reading comprehension is essential because it enhances student learning, and she believed that students should practice this critical skill daily. She said:

> Assigning reading comprehension activities that extend learning can be a rewarding way to move students toward transfer learning. The critical component that makes these extended activities successful is that they involve knowledge, deep thinking, and the transfer of information across diverse disciplines. You will be able to observe and identify what type of learning a student is using at any stage of the process. Your interventions can point out what they are doing and help them set goals toward a different kind of learning.

Jim said he does scaffolds as a teaching model. He stated that he used simple models or illustrations to support each step before moving on to more complex linear equations. Sue used Popplet, an online tool that can make concept mapping easy and

engaging. She explained that this strategy could be useful when moving them beyond superficial learning and into deep understanding.

Erika said she does not track progress because she does not always use scaffolding as a strategy. She continued to say that it is a problematic strategy compared to other strategies being taught these days. For the same question, Mary responded by saying that she encourages all of her students to participate in the activities related to reading comprehension. By examining their responses, she further corrects them.

Jose said if the subject points to something completely new, he will often explain it first and then hand it over to the students to repeat. Suki said she does not use scaffolding in her reading comprehension classes. Therefore, she would apply that strategy when the need arises and feels that students will benefit at a particular time.

Reading Problems in the Classroom

While most participants did not find reading a problem or think it was not easy, five participants differed. Juan, Sam, Robert, Liz, and Becky stated that they do not mainly use scaffolding in teaching reading comprehension in the classroom. Juan acknowledged that he is not fond of teaching reading comprehension as a whole, and Sam asserted that it isn't easy for him to teach reading comprehension to older students. Both Liz and Becky stated that they used it occasionally. At the same time, Robert mentioned that it needs in-depth knowledge for a teacher to teach.

Comprehensive Reading Strategies

Mike stated that he read through the document: He used technique. He would have students read several different documents and then synthesize the information. He

said synthesizing is a strenuous activity requiring all three learning types: superficial, deep, and transfer. Angela said:

> Teachers have been using a version of problem-based learning forever. However, many are not using it correctly. Do this tweak, and you could be quite effective. Instead of giving them a problem and inviting students to solve it, you can share conflicting information with them. Then ask the groups to identify what they think the problem is and how best to solve it, supporting their reasons with evidence.

Sam said the problem is not being defined by asking this question. He said, however, that students should be asked to work through the steps to identify the problem statement together and then solve it. By doing this, they will have to move flexibly between surface, depth, and transfer of learning to achieve this. While it is not an easy task, it is possible to do it together. Sue said:

> I have used various teaching strategies, including monitoring comprehension, metacognition, and answering questions. Generating questions, recognizing story structure, and summarizing are also used.

Jodi answered by saying that she used other methods, including showing the students videos and other audio to get a better idea of the comprehension, and their accent may improve. She mentioned that she often asks them related questions. Angela said:

> Many students suffer from reading comprehension as they were not taught the right strategy. However, gradually after applying strategies mentioned in previous answers, the problems faced by students regarding reading comprehension

> decreased. In a new classroom, the confidence levels of every student differ, which can be seen through the difficulty they face when they read.

Need for Readjustment of Students' Level of Scaffolding

Participants presented several suggestions for readjusting scaffolding, and Mary said this adjustment needed to be made when the student was not explicitly describing the strategies used. This includes when and how to use them, knowing how to demonstrate their use through modeling, and structuring opportunities for students to use the strategy in collaboration with their peers. The student will need guidance and practice of strategy, which will progressively increase their independence, encourage different strategies, and provide opportunities for their independent use. Juan said:

> Due to the great variety of learning styles and strategies and the complexity of the processes and skills involved in mastering a learning environment, it is clear that for teachers to provide adequate scaffolding, they must be adequately prepared.

In response to the question, Robert said, "When a student cannot understand the scaffolding strategy and approach, it becomes difficult. Therefore, it needs to be re-adjusted." Erika said, "I don't know," and Jim stated that he prefers to take back-to-back tests from his students, so it will be easy for him to judge the level of scaffolding for every student. Therefore, he will readjust it accordingly. Angela said:

> Usually, it would help if you kept an open eye and mind on how the student responds to the technique, like time taken to respond to questions, confidence level when answering questions, or debate.

Suki mentioned that while she does not always use scaffolding, she monitors students' performance. Elvia, who used scaffolding, said that she oversees students' performance. Juan said:

> When a student does not understand the concepts taught in class and is falling back compared to other students through the same level of scaffold learning that is applied throughout the classroom, it is time to readjust the level of scaffolding.

Measuring Scaffolding

Jodi said she measured scaffolding through assignments, and she also noted that long-term assignments could be incredibly challenging for students with executive function disorders or executive function challenges. Sam said he does not use technology but measures scaffolding by having the students read aloud. Mike noted the scaffolding mainly depends on the type of the class and the level of the student's understanding. He also said that it could only be decided by examining specific facts. At the same time, Jim responded by saying that he measured the effectiveness of teaching strategies based on the students' performance. Angela said:

> I measure through diverse assignments. Although smaller, more frequent assignments provide greater potential for independence, there are more frequent checkpoints, due dates, or opportunities for review with the teacher. This allows the teacher to see exactly where the student is having trouble. Each step enables the teacher to know where the student went wrong. The teacher then has time to provide the student's additional support or clarity before misconceptions hamper the student's progress.

Journal Writing

For this study, participants were asked to complete a three-day journal entry of their scaffolding strategies in the classroom. They were asked to document answers to answer the three questions based on three days of teaching experience.

In the first question, participants were asked about the scaffolding techniques used in the classroom. Mike reported that he used modeling as a scaffolding technique. He was able to record the description of the reading activity where students demonstrated the activities, tasks, and procedures so that they were able to perform them later. For these three days, he used the following scaffolding strategies:

He stated that he provided clear examples of what they expected the students to do. For instance, they were shown a video of a person reading a reading comprehension text. Angela said she used the schema construction technique for these three days. It involves organizing the learner's knowledge based on their previous experiences or cognitive schemata. She presented activities that helped them make the necessary connections.

The second question dealt with adjusting of scaffolding technique for students. Jose said that he had to adjust the scaffolding for two students. Sue responded by saying that she preferred to keep modifying her strategies for students for their better understanding. Elvia also modified her strategies for her students and said:

> These strategies transfer information and transform texts and content from one discursive genre. So, I must re-adjust the scaffolding according to the students' understanding. These days I must adjust the strategy for six students in total.

Suki, however, said that she does not think scaffolding has its benefits with almost no drawbacks. She integrated the strategy in her classes that required the students to go through long texts and significant components of the syllabus.

The third question was about adjusting scaffolding strategies for students. Juan, Sam, Robert, Liz, and Becky stated that they did not change or use the scaffolding strategy. Jodi divided students into groups based on their interests and adopted strategies accordingly. This helped to seek the best strategy for each group. Jim did have some problems. Few of his students were unable to follow the technique of verbalizing their concerns, and few were having difficulties with word recognition. The strategy worked very well for Erika because there was no need to adjust the scaffolding. She said:

> At the end of the class, I take feedback from the students about teaching the particular topic. I asked them if they had any difficulty in understanding anything. That's how I know the effectiveness of the scaffolding technique.

Summary

An investigation was done regarding how scaffolding occurred in the ELA ninth grade classrooms in HVISD. The scaffolding support process aids with reading comprehension and retention in ninth-grade ELA classrooms. The interpretive paradigm of the scaffolding allowed teachers to examine the students who may have difficulty understanding reading and whether the scaffolding strategy can help them understand the text they are reading. The challenge for ELA educators is to establish a sound practice for scaffolding students' abilities and jointly construct knowledge through understanding (Nachowitz, 2018). Results of this instructor-led scaffolding showed a consistently

positive effect on cognitive outcomes across reading comprehension by ELA teachers, determining that scaffolding is a highly effective intervention across levels of different characteristics in classrooms (Belland et al., 2017). Teachers foster discussion and guide students through the reading process and, as students, use evidence to support their claims. Reynolds & Townsend (2018) reiterated that scaffolding is a powerful technique in the classroom.

Some participants reported that they used scaffolding as a teaching strategy for reading comprehension for their students. While others stated that they are not using this as a technique, few reported using other comprehensive teaching strategies. Overall, scaffolding is a valuable strategy used by study participants, yet individual differences exist in administering scaffolding.

Chapter 5 includes interpretations of research findings. Limitations of this study and recommendations for future research are also discussed. Furthermore, recommendations for action and implications for social change are presented along with a conclusion.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

I aimed to examine ninth grade teachers' support of ninth grade high school students' in HVISD reading comprehension and retention through instructor-led scaffolding in the school district. One research question guided the study, and findings were developed from participants' descriptions of how scaffolding is done with ninth-grade students in the classroom. Findings also led to recommendations for action based on participants' knowledge and pedagogy employed in the classroom.

This chapter includes interpretations of the findings, limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, recommendations for action, and implications for social change. I also address how the study findings are related to the literature. The study's important findings include five major themes: scaffolding in the classroom, comprehensive reading strategies, need for readjustment of scaffolding needs, reading problems in the classroom, and measuring scaffolding.

Interpretation of the Findings

Scaffolding in the Classroom

Rogers et al. (2016) said scaffolding should be received effectively and efficiently to keep students motivated and interested. However, the process of scaffolding is not always automatic, and there is a way to overcome comprehension difficulties when they arise. This could lead students to form specific attitudes about reading comprehension.

There was a positive relationship between students' attitudes about scaffolding knowledge and strategies during the reading process. Participants were optimistic about the results of the 3-day scaffolding experience. They expressed that knowledge is built,

linked to attitudes, and acquired from experience, observation, and reading. Therefore, constructive beliefs about reading precede complex comprehension strategies. Results showed that teachers could monitor students' progress during the scaffolding process and assist them as they learn how to detect problems involving their comprehension and choose strategies to address them. Through this process, students read to build personal interpretations of the text, and they learn indirectly that understanding what they read can be created. Palincsar et al. (2017) suggested that when needed, scaffolding should provide enough support to students to achieve success quickly, and such support motivates students to lower frustration levels when applying scaffolding techniques.

Comprehensive Reading Strategies

Results showed that participants used the content of reading texts to apply strategies such as summarizing, predicting outcomes, reviewing information, and answering comprehension questions. They previewed text by surveying illustrations, titles, and text structures. Classroom teachers in HVISD employed strategies for adapting teaching strategies which can be essential to understand how students' beliefs about reading and themselves as readers are formed and factors that influence these beliefs. Teachers' beliefs about scaffolding strategies are also necessary to examine how their teaching and planned reading activities affect students' beliefs. Not all participants believed in scaffolding strategies, and as a result, some never employed these strategies in the classroom. Landi and Ryherd (2017) suggested that metacognitive strategies in reading were useful to increase the ninth grade readers' experience of student awareness. Findings also showed there is a necessity for teachers to know how more constructive

thoughts can be formed that favor metacognitive thinking and reading strategies. Employing scaffolding strategies can enhance readers' understanding of the perception of scaffolding. Scaffolding also improves reading comprehension by assessing learners' reading process and evaluating whether learners successfully succeeded in comprehending the text.

The explanation of reading comprehension strategies is limited to overview reading and location reading. Participants found that ninth grade teachers in HVISD took more time contemplating the reading process when working on reading comprehension. Results revealed that those teachers who experimented with the Dialogic Inquiry Tool pledged to continue implementing activities that enhance reading comprehension in their classes. These activities are selected according to efficiency, intelligibility, and proximity criteria.

The Dialogic Inquiry Tool is necessary to build the abilities and skills of teachers based on their practices. However, there are limitations. Even in the absence of ninth grade teachers' involvement in the initial design of The Dialogic Inquiry Tool, collaboration on reading strategies developed within the classrooms during projects could nevertheless reinforce specific expected cognitive outcomes on students reading development.

Need for Readjustment of Students' Level of Scaffolding

Reading comprehension in ninth grade English classes includes expressing ideas with coherence. Participants were asked to explain a situation where scaffolding was not applied. They mentioned that scaffolding is always needed in reading as students are not

performing at the same level. This corroborated Kraatz et al. (2020), who suggested that teaching scaffolding is beneficial for students, especially beginners and low-performing students. Implementing creative pedagogical strategies is essential to achieve proposed scaffolding objectives. Collaboration between students is essential for the understanding of a scientific text. Results showed that ninth grade teachers in HVISD believed in giving students long text to read. One participant anticipated that giving students long text to read can be problematic. Teachers need to collaborate on appropriate resources so that students would better comprehend what was taught when applying scaffolding strategies. Collaboration about previous and current learning can be beneficial to both students and teachers to perfect the unknown.

Reading Problems in the Classroom

Participants revealed they were not fond of teaching reading comprehension, and it was not easy to teach reading comprehension to older students. Scaffolding is used occasionally and needs in-depth knowledge for a teacher to teach. Findings revealed that not all participants adhere to what is usually required and what is taught as a result revealed that teachers are at leisure in applying scaffolding strategies in the classroom. The research found that this was evidenced in the students' reflections on the teacher's demands in the different courses, due to the absence of a curricular or disciplinary pedagogical project (Harris & Watts, 2021). Other research also found that literacy is not integrated into teaching in the different courses.

This coincides with what has been found in other countries. Despite the potential of literacy as a learning tool, there is a majority trend with teachers, which expect

students to read and write in specific ways but do not teach how to apply strategies. On the contrary, some educators assume that reading and writing are inappropriate for high school, ignoring that the required tasks and instructions are different from previous education (Alam & Ahmad, 2017).

In this study, data were found that confirmed the findings of Thomassen and Stentoft (2020), which supported the importance of a student acquiring the specific knowledge aimed at developing students' competencies in problem-solving. Thomassen and Stentoft (2020) affirmed that the control of comprehension or monitoring is an essential requirement to read effectively. This ability to monitor oneself is part of metacognitive thinking that allows readers to plan, reflect and evaluate their processes.

Jerome Brunner (1976) introduced scaffolding as learning support that a more provided to the student in a learning context task beyond their initial capacity. He uses scaffolding as a metaphor to explain the tutorial function to support or guide learning and the establishment of cognitive bridges as part of the activity mediator of the teacher and the social interaction that takes place during the construction of knowledge. The instructional scaffolding provides provisional support structures for learning and is justified in the mediating role of the teacher as current pedagogical trends conceive this.

A conception of learning as construction and not as a transmission of knowledge, based on social interaction and the teacher's mediation, focused on the student's strategic and cognitive processes, forms the context in which the scaffolding is inserted as a constructivist metaphor. This can be concluded that teaching scaffolding is a construct deeply linked to the theoretical foundations of pedagogical constructivism and is

theoretically supported by crucial concepts of the socio-cognitive aspect of constructivism.

The research indicated that some comprehension strategies are feasible to be taught and that, in most cases, this improves students' reading. Participants utilized various strategies over a period to demonstrate the effectiveness of scaffolding. Buslon and Alieto (2019) showed that elementary, middle, and high school students benefit from teaching repertoires of reading comprehension strategies. Since the 1970s, researchers on the subject have tried to show that comprehension strategies can be taught to students individually or in repertoires and thus improve their reading (Boulware-Gooden et al., 2007).

Measuring Scaffolding

Delmastro and Espinoza (2005) said the three phases of scaffolding (modeling, guided practice, and independent practice) could be developed in synchronicity with reading phases. Results revealed a reduction in synchronizing with the reading phases. Some participants were not always interested in participating, but not the teacher's total withdrawal of the scaffolding structure, which points to difficulties in achieving the optimal retirement point. This difficulty indicated that the students could not develop their autonomy as writers and were excessively dependent on the teacher's support.

The three phases of scaffolding indicated that the teacher must work closely with the students, encourage them, offer appropriate feedback and suggestions, model and explain specific reading strategies and link them with their previous cognitive schemes. Additionally, the teacher faced an inescapable difficulty in scaffolding reading

comprehension in learning environments. Results revealed that the development of reading comprehension is a long and complex process that is achieved over time and cannot be completed in a semester.

Theoretical Framework Alignment

The interpreted findings of this research were viewed from the perspectives of the conceptual frameworks of the social constructivism of Lev Vygotsky using the ZPD. Vygotsky (1978) said, “Every function in the child’s cultural development appears twice.” The following theoretical constructs on which the scaffolding concept is based were identified: area of proximate development and Vygotsky's peer interaction, Ausubel's meaningful learning, Bruner's discovery learning, cyclical teaching-learning approaches, cognitive modeling, and artisanal learning models. According to Vygotsky (1978), this function first appears on the social level and later on the individual level, between people, and inside the child. This function applies equally to voluntary attention, logical memory, and the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals. The second aspect of Vygotsky’s theory is that the potential for cognitive development depends upon the ZPD: a level of development attained when children engage in social behavior. Full development of the ZPD depends upon the entire social interaction. The range of skills developed with adult guidance or peer collaboration alone exceeds what adults can accomplish.

Vygotsky’s method highlights the control behavior, inner speech, the development of the senses, every day, and scientific concepts, and the ZPD. The ZPD is the difference between what the child can and cannot do independently. Children can

solve problems by themselves, and other times need the assistance of others. The teaching method of scaffolding originated from Vygotsky's work. Vygotsky believed that how a pattern language prompts actions, becomes sense when assimilated, associates with tacit knowledge, and supports development are essential in learning. He thought that there is a gap between what a learner accomplished independently and with the assistance of a more capable social agent. He insisted that not respecting this zone, either by helping children on tasks they cannot complete independently or by not allowing enough on challenging assignments, impedes cognitive development.

Limitations of the Study

One of the first limitations in conducting this study was the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic. As teachers grappled with the many challenges of preventing and subsequently spreading the disease, finding participants willing to commit to an additional responsibility in undertaking the study requirements was challenging. Participants adapted to new rules and regulations, which created difficulties in recruiting participants.

The second limitation was that some of the teachers did not have the time to interview via Zoom during their workday. Teachers were busy grading papers, writing lesson plans, and helping them find time to schedule an interview, at times, was difficult. To overcome this limitation, some of the teachers were interviewed via Zoom during weekends and in the evening convenient for them.

The third limitation stemmed from the lack of teachers scaffolded in ninth grade. I contacted participants before the interviews. Most participants were willing to participate

but cited heavy workloads and additional responsibilities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Others did not want to participate even though they used scaffolding in their classrooms.

The fourth limitation that I had was a limitation of transferability in understanding the participants in the context of their setting. There was a potential transferability among data results if students were absent during the three days of research. After data were collected, there were minimal changes in the classroom over the three days; most students were in class for the duration of the study.

Finally, I was limited to my personal bias as an instructional support teacher as I have experience in classroom management. I allowed my experience to build strong relationships with participants and was comfortable conducting the interviews. I presented a well-prepared interview process, and participants were willing to write journal entries about their scaffolding experience.

Recommendations for Actions

Based on the findings, the limitations of the study, and the literature review, several recommendations for further research are suggested to improve and advance the reading process among ninth graders at HVISD. My goal was to understand how English language arts teachers support ninth-grade students' reading comprehension and retention through instructor-led scaffolding in high schools in the HVISD. Recommendations were identified I believe they would be helpful for stakeholders. These findings can shed some light on actionable measures and the necessary steps to create the most significant opportunity to educate our future generation of children.

Firstly, it is recommended that students work and address texts that are consistent with the ages of the students. Pyle et al. (2017) said instructors need to encourage their learners through activities that piqued their interest, like pictures related to text, dramatic readings, or book talks. The goal of the instructors is to make the text relevant to learners. Age-appropriate texts create mental and emotional stability, and given that students are vulnerable to outside distraction, appropriate text must be utilized in the classroom.

Secondly, I recommend that frequent staff development workshops be offered to discuss scaffolding strategies, use, and importance. Findings revealed that some teachers do not see the need to apply scaffolding in their classrooms. Conducting frequent professional development for teachers can allow collaboration on scaffolding techniques or strategies employed in the classrooms.

Third, my recommendation is to explore the possibilities for participants to connect with others through networking to establish collaboration about scaffolding in the classroom. Since students have different learning abilities and styles, collaboration would create opportunities for teachers to discuss and share classroom strategies about scaffolding. Teachers can collaborate on issues in a more detailed manner, and networking can help those to collaborate when school is dismissed. When teachers collaborate, they fill the gap, bounce their ideas off each other, and help each other think through their thoughts.

Finally, I would recommend that students have access to up-to-date books in the library and the didactic materials, so they are in accordance with relevant resources. The school or the parent can provide these materials if needs be. According to Upham et al.

(2014), parents are recommended to fulfill their duties in the child's upbringing to assist in the scaffolding process and have a sense of belonging for their children's education.

Recommendations for Future Research

Learning takes place best by seeing rather than hearing alone. Students are encouraged to think for themselves and solve problems when they arise. Students need to be equipped with the necessary skills to enter the world of work. To do this, they must have the necessary skills to listen, analyze, and interpret the information that will be a regular part of their lives. Meeting such accomplishments is crucial in providing competencies required to prepare them to succeed in life, both academically and socially. My goal was to understand how teachers use scaffolding to enhance reading comprehension with their students. As a result, I propose three recommendations from the findings of this research for others to consider when utilizing this research.

My first recommendation is to conduct a longitudinal study. While this study was conducted over three days, it yielded relevant results. However, a study conducted over a more extended period would deliver more significant results as time and attention would be extended to analyze changes over time. Results revealed that the development of reading comprehension is a long and complex process that is achieved over time and cannot be completed in a semester.

My second recommendation for future research is to extend the analysis to include a larger population of representatives from the district. The findings of this study are representative of 15 participants ‘views and may not be that of the entire district. Results of a study of this nature could be beneficial to schools as scaffolding is a valuable

strategy to move students forward progressively toward more robust understanding and ultimately greater independence in the learning process.

Finally, I recommend that attention be drawn upon teachers' attitudes towards teaching reading comprehension. Reading is one of the most critical subjects in schools, and it is utilized for every course. If students are asked to make informed predictions, they must learn from well-prepared and equipped individuals. This study revealed that participants are leery in teaching reading comprehension, yet they are tasked with doing so.

Implications for Social Change

Given the rapid rise of technology and the demands of the global community, scaffolding in the classroom demands a new vigour for teachers not only of ninth graders but across the school environment. Teachers must adopt creative ways to impart knowledge will be helpful for teachers to develop better teaching plans for the students.

Materials such as textbooks must be provided to teach effectively, and this is crucial as teachers are responsible for creating students who are prepared to embrace the world of work. The results of this study spoke directly to the need for adequate materials to better equip our students to compete with their peers and create a productive environment and embrace positivity.

Results of this study can be used to help teachers employ useful scaffolding techniques in their classrooms to improve student learning. Teachers, parents, and administration are an integral part of students' education, and therefore, working together can propel students in their educational endeavors to make positive social change.

Conclusion

This study investigated how ELA teachers support ninth grade high school students' reading comprehension and retention through instructor-led scaffolding in HVISD. The study results depicted participants' responses as they described the effects of scaffolding in the classroom with detailed descriptions of their experiences and provided details that assisted the research study. Participants offered their understanding of how they saw, viewed, approached, and experienced applying scaffolding techniques in the classroom.

Since students have no idea about the concepts of training, knowledge, text, context, and synthesis, nor how to approach scientific texts, teachers are an essential part of students' learning process. When reading, students need to comprehend what they read. If they cannot understand what they are reading, the teachers can apply scaffolding strategies.

The study found that strategies are derived from adequate monitoring of the reading process to detect a comprehension problem and teachers' positive attitude to reading. The monitoring also allowed the teacher to recognize if the students' text was making sense and expected information. If it is logical and coherent, then the student benefits from it. When the teachers realized the student's lack of understanding a reading text, they could apply appropriate strategies to build the knowledge students had not initially achieved.

To conduct a good scaffolding process for reading in learning environments, the teacher must activate prior knowledge before showing or modeling their own. They must

guide the teaching activity based on the students' responses, allow enough time to retrieve information, and elaborate their answers. They must also provide the necessary feedback and promote the students' autonomy of thought, creativity, and initiative.

Due to the complexity of the reading processes, the teacher provides the support and support structures for reading, specifies the pertinent instructions, guides the reading activities, provides the necessary modeling, and induces comprehension and expression. Generally, a large part of the reading strategy skills in the learning environment required a direct pedagogical intervention for their acquisition. The teacher can intervene favorably in reading development through modeling and guided practice. Additionally, teachers must become careful observers of their students' performance to decide when to increase the difficulty of activities and when it is possible to remove support structures.

Finally, the literature review indicated that scaffolding provided by the teacher contributes to developing self-efficiency and allows students to take control of their learning. Participants have a consensus about the importance of using scaffolding techniques in the classroom. It is vital to provide professional development opportunities to train ninth grade teachers to design and apply tools to allow their students to access the knowledge they master. The ELA ninth-grade teacher must prepare students for oral and silent reading comprehension management and providing extra-class work can develop and strengthen the reading comprehension skill of students. When teachers are adequately prepared, they are empowered with strategies to become change agents, empowering their students with 21st-century skills to contribute to social change.

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Appendix A: Letter of Consent to Superintendent

May 17, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Renee Rose Latson, and I am a doctoral student at Walden University. I am conducting a research study to examine the effects of scaffolding ninth-grade ELA students' reading comprehension. I am completing research as a part of my doctoral degree. I am requesting your permission to conduct research data in public school districts from teachers who teach ninth grade in North Texas. I seek your consent to collect research data from teachers who teach ninth-grade ELA classes. I am seeking to conduct interviews for 15 – 20 teacher participants. The results of this study and a description of anticipated benefits are that this study may help teachers scaffold better in the classroom and help ninth-grade students develop techniques to comprehend what they read.

As part of my graduate studies specializing in Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Evaluation, I will be collecting data from interviews with teachers, which will be essential in completing my doctoral research study. The inclusion criteria by which teachers will be selected will specify that teachers must be current teachers employed in a school, teaching ELA, teaching reading comprehension in their ELA classroom, teaching ninth-grade students, and scaffolding what they teach to students as needed. The teachers must be knowledgeable of the phenomenon of interest and representative of the larger target population. The participants will be asked to complete a consent that details their roles in the study and partake in one open-ended interview that

should take 30 to 45 minutes via Zoom. The interview can be held at the participant's convenience and can be in the evening, after work, in the comfort of their own home. All information generated will remain confidential, and neither the school nor any teacher's identity will be identified in any report or submitted document. Data collected will be a 3-day journal and three days' worth of lesson plans. Participation is voluntary, and the participant has the right to decline or stop participation at any time. Foreseeable risks include taking 30 – 45 minutes out of the teachers' day to answer questions in an interview at whatever day and time are convenient for them.

I am required to protect your teachers' privacy. Their identity will be kept confidential within the limits of the law. I will not include their name or anything else to identify them in the study reports. If I were to share this dataset with another researcher in the future, I would be required to remove all names and identifying details before sharing; this would not involve another round of obtaining informed consent. Data will be kept secure by having all of its contents on a flash drive. Data will be held for at least five years, as the university requires. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at renee.roselatson@waldenu.edu or 469-307-6861. You can also reach my dissertation chair, Dr. Michael Jazzar, at michael.jazzar@mail.waldenu.edu.

I look forward to the opportunity to partake in this critical study and appreciate your assistance and cooperation with this research. If you consent for research to be conducted, please respond to this email.

Sincerely,

Renee Rose Latson

Appendix B: Letter of Cooperation from the Superintendent to the Principal

March 2021

To Whom It May Concern,

Based on the research proposal I have reviewed; I permit you to conduct the study entitled Effects of Scaffolding on Reading Comprehension. I also authorize you to contact the teachers of Grade nine who are ELA teachers at this school. I also permit you to interview the teachers who implement the process, to analyze documents related to scaffolding reading comprehension, to conduct member checks with the participants when needed as to reflexivity and triangulation, and to distribute a summary of the results of this study. Individual participation will be voluntary and at the discretion of the teacher. We understand that our organization's responsibility includes providing qualified teachers to participate in the study to interview after school at their convenience via Zoom. The district reserves the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research with our teachers.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the research team without permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Walden University.

Sincerely,

Superintendent

Appendix C: Participation Letter to Participants

March 2021

Dear potential participant,

My name is Renee Rose Latson, and I am currently a doctoral student at Walden University, an accredited institution of higher learning.

The purpose of this research is to examine the effects scaffolding reading comprehension has in the ninth-grade ELA classroom. I have received approval from Walden University and this school district to conduct this study. You are invited to participate in this study because you are a ninth-grade ELA teacher who teaches reading comprehension. Also, you have implemented scaffolding in your classroom.

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you are interested in participating in this study, please read and sign the enclosed letter of consent describing how I will collect data. I will interview 12 teachers in school districts throughout North Texas, South Texas, East Texas, West Texas, or Central Texas.

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you are interested in participating in this study, please read and sign the enclosed consent letter. I will interview 12 teachers that teach ninth-grade ELA. I will select 12 participants who express interest in participating in this study, and these interviews will be scheduled through Zoom at a time convenient for you. If you understand this research study enough to decide whether to participate, please reply to this email with the words, “I consent.” A $20 gift card will be used at your leisure as a thank you gift.

I appreciate your support of my study.

Sincerely,

Renee Rose Latson

Ph.D. Candidate

Appendix D: Participant Flyer

RESEARCHING FOR RESULTS

LOOKING FOR 9TH-GRADE ELA TEACHERS

You are invited to take part in a research study if you are a 9th-grade ELA teacher who teaches reading comprehension. You will receive a $20 incentive to participate.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED PLEASE CONTACT RENEE ROSE LATSON AT:

renee.roselatson@waldenu.edu

Appendix E: Letter of Consent Invitation Letter to Participants

You are invited to take part in a research study concerning the effects of scaffolding reading comprehension for ninth-grade students in English Language Arts classrooms. You are invited to participate in this study because you are a ninth-grade ELA teacher and because you teach reading comprehension in the ninth-grade class, and also because you scaffold in your classroom and understand the phenomenon of the study. I am seeking 15 – 20 participants. This form is a part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether or not to participate. You will receive a $20 gift card for participating.

This study is being conducted by Renee Rose Latson, a doctoral student at Walden University. This study is not being undertaken for or authorized by the school district, and a summary of the findings will be shared with district personnel and participants. It will, however, not include the names of the participants.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to investigate how teachers support ninth-grade ELA's reading comprehension through scaffolding.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in one individual interview via Zoom. This interview will last 30 to 45 minutes.
- Complete a reflective journal about implementing the scaffolding you did with your students. You will answer three questions each day, journaling for three

days. You can send your answers to the three journal questions through email to my email address: renee.roselatson@waldenu.edu.

- Share any documents that you think are relevant to the scaffolding process.
- Share your lesson plan for three days that includes scaffolding. You can send your lesson plans to me via email at: renee.roselatson@waldenu.edu.
- Review the tentative findings of your data, which could take up to 30 minutes. The findings of your interview can be received via email you. I will send the findings from my email address to your email address. Comments can be sent to the researcher via email. My email address is renee.roselatson@waldenu.edu.

Sample interview questions include:

1. I know some ninth-grade teachers do not teach reading comprehension in ninth-grade. Do you teach reading comprehension? How do you teach reading comprehension in your ninth-grade classroom?
    - Probing question: Do you find that reading comprehension is useful in helping your students? Do students comprehend what they are reading? How is it useful?
2. Do you scaffold as a teaching strategy, and if so, how often do you scaffold in your ninth-grade classroom?
    - Probing question: Do you scaffold every lesson? How do you know what to scaffold and what not to scaffold?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision as to whether or not you choose to participate in this study. No one at this school or in this district will treat you differently if you decide not to participate in this study. If you choose to participate in this study now, you can still change your mind later, and you may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Participating in this Study:

The benefits of participating in this study are that you could develop a deeper understanding of how teachers scaffold reading comprehension. The risks related to participation in this study are minimal. For example, it is possible that you could perceive the interview process or journal writing as extra work.

Privacy:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your data for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept in a secure location, and pseudonyms will be used for the school district, the schools, and all participants.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now, or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via email at renee.roselatson@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your participation rights, you can call or email IRB. IRBs phone number is 612-312-1210. IRBs email address is irb@mail.waldenu.edu. Walden University's approval number for this study is **IRB will enter the approval number here,** and it

expires on **IRB will join the expiration date.** Please keep this consent form for your records. You can take all the time you need to review this document.

Statement of Consent:

If you understand this research study enough to decide, please reply to this email with the words, "I consent." A $20 gift card will be used at your leisure as a thank you gift.

Appendix F: Interview Questions

Subquestion	Probing Question
I know some ninth-grade teachers do not teach reading comprehension in ninth-grade. Do you teach reading comprehension? How do you teach reading comprehension in your ninth-grade classroom?	Do you find that reading comprehension is useful in helping your students? Do students comprehend what they are reading? How is it useful?
Do you scaffold as a teaching strategy, and if so, how often do you scaffold in your ninth-grade classroom?	Do you scaffold every lesson? How do you know what to scaffold and what not to scaffold?
How do you track the progress of scaffolding in your ninth-grade classroom to guarantee that your students are learning?	Do you find that particular literature is better to teach reading comprehension and thus scaffold? What literature have your students read that you have scaffolded?
Some teachers try other strategies to reach their goal of students learning in the classroom. What different reading comprehension strategies besides scaffolding have you used?	Were the other reading strategies effective? Why or why not? Do you use any strategy in addition to scaffolding? If so, what strategies?
Many teachers teach and are not aware of what theory they are teaching or where the approach has come from. Are you familiar with the theorist pioneers of scaffolding? If so, how does the social constructivism theory of Bruner and Vygotsky aid in your scaffolding?	If you are not familiar with Bruner and Vygotsky's theory, what methods are you familiar with?
When scaffolding, the key is to give your students all the support they need and then start scaling back that support as the students become confident and know what they are doing. How do you scaffold?	Are you ever confused on how to scaffold or with what to scaffold? Do you scaffold differently to different students depending on their ability level? If so, does that become daunting for you?

How do you know that a student's level of scaffolding needs to be readjusted?	How many students are in your class? How do you keep track of each student to know what level of scaffolding they need? Do different students ever need different levels of scaffolding? How do you keep track of that?
Do you find reading comprehension to be a problem in your classroom?	Do student's grades ever suffer because they do not understand what they read? How frustrating is it that a student still has reading deficiencies in a ninth-grade high school class?
How do you measure scaffolding?	Has the scaffolding strategy been significant enough to change any student's grade to higher? If so, how are you sure that it was from scaffolding?

Appendix G: Letter of Permission to Principal from Superintendent

March 2021

To Whom It May Concern,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I permit you to conduct the study entitled Effects of Scaffolding on Reading Comprehension. I also authorize you to contact ninth-grade teachers who are ELA teachers at this school. I also permit you to interview the teachers who implement the process, to analyze documents related to scaffolding reading comprehension, to conduct member checks with the participants when needed as to reflexivity and triangulation, and to distribute a summary of the results of this study. Individual participation will be voluntary and at their discretion. We understand that our organization's responsibility includes providing qualified teachers to participate in the study to interview after school at their convenience via Zoom. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research with our teachers.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the research team without permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Walden University.

Sincerely,

Superintendent

Appendix H: Followup Email to Teachers

To Whom It May Concern:

I hope this email finds you well. This email is just a reminder that we will be meeting via Zoom on **Put Date and Time in**. I look forward to our conversation and enlightenment.

Sincerely,

Renee Rose Latson

Appendix I: Reflective Journal

Participants Name:

Date Journal Started:

Date Journal Completed:

Name of School:

Directions: Please respond to each of the three questions below with a brief paragraph or two. Then send this journal back to me as an email attachment after completing your five responses. Please send the completed journal to renee.roselatson@waldenu.edu.

Please answer these questions for three days:

1. What scaffolding techniques did you use today?
2. Did you have to adjust scaffolding with any students? If so, how many students?
3. If you had to adjust scaffolding with any student, how did you know that scaffolding needed to be adjusted?

Appendix J: Thank You Letter (Email)

March 2021

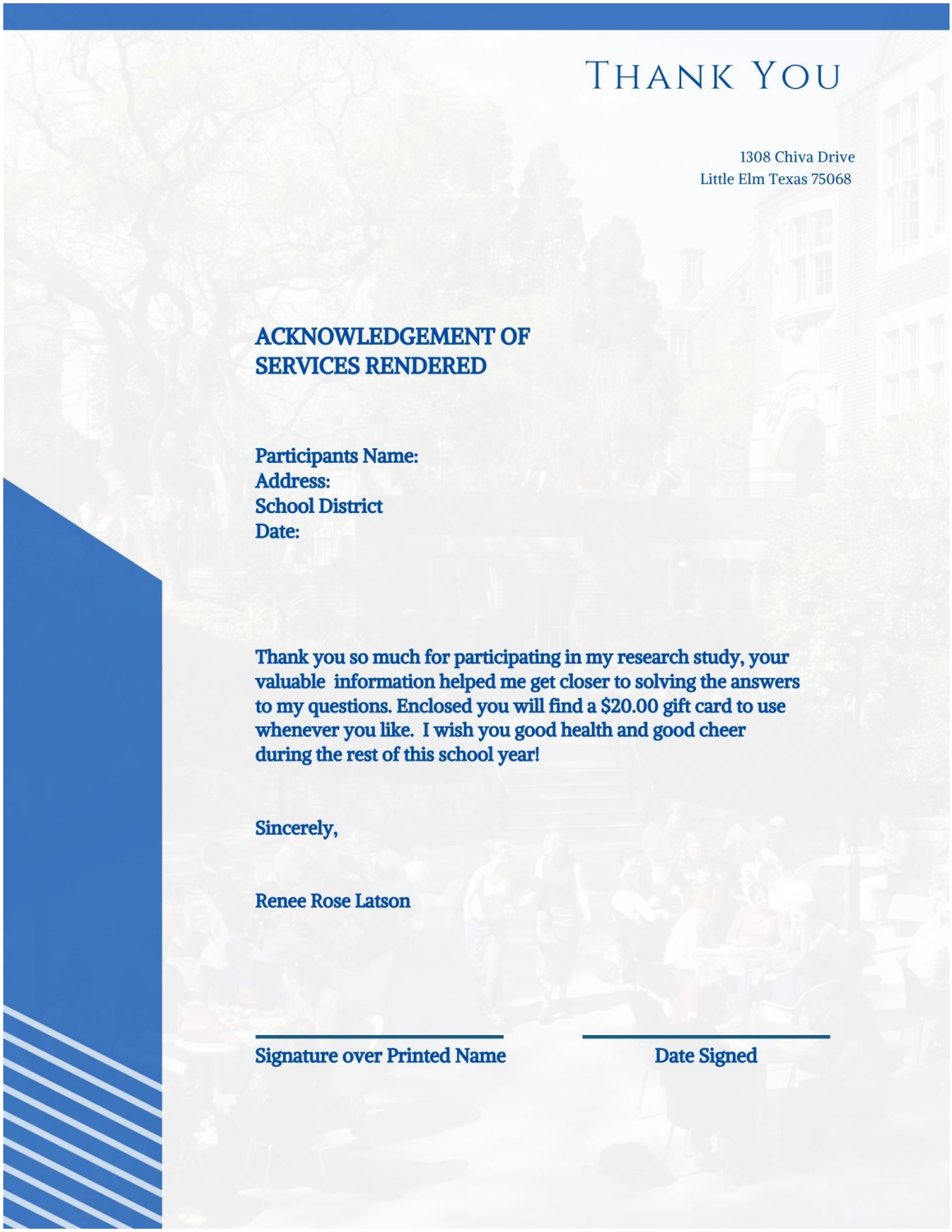
Dear: _____

Thank you so much for participating in my research study, your valuable information helped me get closer to solving the answers to my questions. I will be sending you a $20.00 gift card to use whenever you would like. I wish you good health and good cheer during the rest of this school year!

Sincerely,

Renee Rose Latson

Appendix K: Thank You Letter (Mail)



THANK YOU

1308 Chiva Drive
Little Elm Texas 75068

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SERVICES RENDERED

Participants Name:
Address:
School District
Date:

Thank you so much for participating in my research study, your valuable information helped me get closer to solving the answers to my questions. Enclosed you will find a $20.00 gift card to use whenever you like. I wish you good health and good cheer during the rest of this school year!

Sincerely,

Renee Rose Latson

Signature over Printed Name **Date Signed**