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Deconstructing Differences In Effectiveness Of Teachers Of Tenth Grade Non-proficient Readers In One Florida School District

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DECONSTRUCTING DIFFERENCES IN EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHERS OF
TENTH GRADE NON-PROFICIENT READERS
IN ONE FLORIDA SCHOOL DISTRICT

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Education
in the School of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership
in the College of Education
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Summer Term
2013

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ABSTRACT

Despite an intense focus and considerable financial commitment to remediate non-proficient readers in high school, the large suburban school district that was the target of this study had been unable to consistently improve student achievement in the lowest 25% of students as measured by outcomes on the FCAT Reading. Scholarly literature on high school reading had focused mostly on evaluation of curriculum rather than on teacher practices. A clear understanding of these differences in practice will inform future decisions related to staffing, scheduling, and professional learning. This study sought to identify the underlying professional and instructional differences between the most effective and least effective teachers of tenth grade intensive reading courses through teacher and principal/assistant principal surveys along with teacher evaluation data. This study revealed with regards to a teacher's preparation to teach reading (research question one), that years of experience in the classroom and years of experience as a high school reading teacher were the only significant factors that influenced a teacher's effectiveness. For research questions two and three; which had to do with the beliefs and professional practices of the teacher, the educationally relevant belief that the more effective teachers were more confident about their abilities than their less effective peers was noted. Research question four provided the data with regards to the general classroom teaching strategies and the adolescent reading strategies the effective teachers employed. This data revealed that the more effective teachers implemented posting and communicating daily and long term learning goals more frequently than their less effective peers. In addition, the general classroom teaching practices of efficient use of

learning time, establishing and maintaining classroom routines, and checking for understanding proved to be educationally relevant. Additionally, the adolescent reading strategies of sustained silent reading, paired/partner readings, and students reading one-on-one with teacher, were educationally relevant as well. Finally, in regards to research question five, it was of statistical significance that administrators valued the use of the general classroom teaching strategy of posting and communicating daily and long term learning goals and were able to recognize the use of this strategy when observing and evaluating the teachers.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are numerous people I wish to thank for their endless support in helping me accomplish the production and completion of this dissertation. I am extremely grateful to my husband Richard and three sons Josh, Brian, and Richie for the encouragement, patience, and understanding they provided me during this process. They, along with my parents and siblings, understand and value the importance and continued betterment of public education and supported my efforts in researching and reporting my findings. I would also like to thank those in the field of education that helped me to further my knowledge, abilities, and confidence as a high school principal and scholar. Mr. Darvin Boothe – a mentor and friend for thirty years, Dr. Rose Taylor – my major professor for this doctoral program, but also a tremendous educator of students of all ages, and the Seminole County cohort – Mr. Walt Griffin, Mr. Jason Wysong, Mr. Tim Harper, Mr. Jose Sanchez, Mr. Jordan Rodriguez, and Mr. Sidney Moss – individuals who worked steadfastly together as a team in order to achieve the accomplishment of completing this doctoral program. Last, but not least, my two dear school friends, Donna and Joe, who, on a daily basis, were always there to support me in the enormous task of providing the best possible education and learning environment to the students of Lake Brantley High School.

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CHAPTER 1: PROBLEM STATEMENT AND DESIGN COMPONENTS

Introduction

Educators across the nation have understood that reading must be the centerpiece of a well-constructed curriculum, (Taylor & Chanter, 2008). In addition, reading has been fundamental to the well-being of a democratic society in terms of the education of its youth, the future of its economy and the citizenship of its people (Joseph & Schisler, 2006). Since the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), an intensive focus and sizeable amount of energy has been devoted to reducing the percentage of illiterate students in schools as documented by Hess and Petrilli (2009). Despite this massive effort, students at the high school level have not made educationally important progress on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2009). For 12th graders, the 2009 reading average was two points higher than in 2005, but four points lower than in 1992. In addition to this data, in 1992 accommodations for NAEP were not permitted for Exceptional Students of Education or English Speakers of Other Languages (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009), therefore indicating an even greater gap in the lack of achievement. Furthermore, extensive attempts to close the achievement gap among subgroups have not yielded any measurable differences; neither have any of the individual subgroups shown educationally important gains. Even more disconcerting, was that in 2009 the low income gap at grade 12 was larger than gaps reported in all previous assessments (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009).

As stated by Moats (2001), poor development of critical literacy skills underlies poor reading at all ages and building these core skills has been as important for older

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children as it has been for younger children. Struggling adolescent readers may have specific skill deficits that have required remediation in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, oral reading fluency, vocabulary and comprehension (National Reading Panel, 2000). Biancarosa & Snow (2006) further advised that there are certain characteristics of school literacy programs that must be present for the benefit of adolescent readers. Fortunately, it is not too late to intervene with older adolescents, even with students with learning disabilities, when targeted intervention is applied (Scammacca, Roberts, Vaughn, Edmonds, Wexler & Reutebuch, 2007).

There was not a lack of understanding of the problem, nor confusion about the remediation required to correct the inadequacies the secondary student may have had. There was however, the most important piece of the puzzle that needed to be recognized – the question of what creates an effective intervention teacher to help the student overcome the deficiencies he may have in deciphering and comprehending the written word. Although there has been an ample amount of literature on best practices in teaching (Pressley, 1998), it remained important to be determined which habits and strategies relevant to literacy classrooms were most often embraced by teachers deemed to have been effective based on student learning growth results.

Value-added metrics, which were used in Florida for the first time in the 2012-2013 school year, provided the opportunity to quantitatively distinguish effective from ineffective educators.   The purpose of this research was to identify the specific professional practices and strategies that were used by effective teachers of high school intensive reading courses. Effective teachers of high school intensive reading were

defined as those who met a certain percentage of students who made a learning growth on the Florida value-added model for the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) in Reading.

<div align="center">Conceptual Framework</div>

No educational innovation, no new teaching tool, method, product, or proven program holds a candle to the effect of traditional, reasonably well-executed lessons (Schmoker, 2007). Originally formalized by Madeline Hunter (1984) and later identified by Marzano (2007), Schmoker (2011) further maintained that every classroom lesson should include the following elements of good teaching: (1) prominently posting and clarifying the daily learning goals, (2) lessons being taught in short, carefully calibrated progressions with each one followed immediately with guided practice, and (3) checks for understanding during and after each guided practice to ensure mastery. Furthermore, according to Schmoker (2011), if these principles were employed in every classroom, whole classes would learn up to four times as quickly. Principals should introduce these practices one at a time and provide ample opportunities for clarifying questions and modeling until teachers are confident that they are using the principle effectively (Schmoker, 2011). Best practices should be shared amongst faculty members and successes celebrated.

Researchers Poplin, Rivera, Durish, Hoff, Kawell, Pawlak, Hinman, Straus, and Veney (2011) did a qualitative study of 31(24 women and seven men) highly effective teachers in low-performing urban schools and found not only the instructional strategies that were used by these teachers, but also the professional practices they valued.

<div align="center">3</div>

Instructional strategies included the explicit routines regularly practiced in their classrooms. Specifically, five distinct characteristics came to light. The first was identified as instructional intensity (pace), which was simply defined as the intensity of the academic work. In this classroom there was the mission to challenge each child continuously (high expectations), transition activities moved quickly and smoothly from one to another, and no minutes were spent idle of academic work time. Timers were used frequently (Poplin et al., 2011).

The next characteristic was strictness. This article was very specific about the difference between being strict and being mean. The difference to students is that being strict meant the teacher cared about them (Poplin et al., 2011). Strictness provided a boundary which was perceived to students as a safe zone. Students knew that there were certain expectations they must live up to. The teachers in this study who were perceived as being strict were very concerned about effective teaching, learning, safety, and respect.

As stated (Poplin et al., 2011), the single most productive practice of most of these teachers was their frequent movement around the classroom to assist each individual student (meaning physical proximity and engagement with students). This practice allowed the teachers to help students be on track and focused, while also offering extra help and encouragement. It provided the teacher the opportunity to not only demonstrate their withitness of what was going on in their classroom, but also their natural interactions enabled them to provide personal assistance to each child as needed. Teachers were able to better gauge the students' level of understanding when they can make a one on one connection with a student, while at the same time fostering a

meaningful and lasting student/teacher relationship. Students knew when their teachers care about their success and their well-being, and the simple action of moving among children can help to develop this association (Poplin et al., 2011).

The next commonality among the highly effective teachers was that they all believed in traditional instruction. As stated earlier, the practices of Madeline Hunter as found in Marzano, (2007); learning goals, modeling, checking for understanding, guided practice, and monitoring were all employed as part of these teachers' daily routines. They also, as a group, tended to have fidelity to the standards and curriculum that they were responsible for teaching and were pragmatic about required testing. Explicit, direct instruction and patiently explaining over and over was how they felt they could most effectively impact the learning of the large majority of their students. There was very little evidence of projects, cooperative learning or culturally embedded activities (Poplin et al., 2011).

The personal characteristics exhibited by these teachers; kindness, caring, devotion, patience, enthusiasm and dedication, all demonstrated the importance of building strong student/teacher relationships and promoting mutual respect (Poplin et al., 2011). These teachers made a daily effort to speak with each student and it was evident that they constantly encouraged them to think about their futures (goal setting) and practice the qualities of working hard, not giving up, being respectful, doing their best work and being responsible (Danielson, 2007). It was evident that the teachers themselves practiced these same virtues; by the way they conducted themselves as employees, their attitudes, and their work ethic.

There also existed plentiful literature on teacher strategies and habits that were specific to teaching reading. Specifically, interventions that focus on word study, developing word meanings and concepts as well as comprehension strategies are appropriate and beneficial for adolescent non-proficient readers (Scammacca, Roberts, Vaughn, Edmonds, Wexler & Reutebuch, 2007). In addition, teachers used strategies that targeted multiple reading skills and are easily transferable to other disciplines (Scammacca et al., 2007). Some of the intensive reading strategies prevalent in the literature included incremental rehearsal, repeated reading, peer assisted reading, decoding, word boxes, semantic maps, and reciprocal teaching (Joseph & Schisler, 2006). They further cautioned that the following elements of effective explicit instruction by the teacher must also be incorporated: modeling or demonstrating, active student engagement, corrective feedback, scaffolding, shaping and reinforcement, and opportunities to practice. Lastly, students should be able to make choices in what they read relevant to their interests (Joseph, 2002).

While effective teaching strategies were important, there still existed the problem of the motivation of the student to do their best work. Guthrie and Wigfield (1997) stated that the real engagement in reading is not the product of strategies alone but a fusion of self-efficacy, interest and strategic knowledge. Guthrie and Wigfield focused on what habits and strategies have proven to be ineffective. The first of these was the practice in schools of not allowing students to read. If students were to improve their capability in reading they must be given the opportunity to practice. Formal Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) was a regularly implemented practice that provided the student time for

independent reading. According to Pilgreen (2000), this practice increased a student's

motivation, background knowledge and vocabulary. An important element of SSR was

that the student is allowed choice in what they read. Obligating students to always read

the same books that they did not know or care about was ineffective practice. Teachers

therefore, needed to know the interests, background knowledge, reading ability, and

motivation of their students in order to provide the most relevant choices. Requiring a

student to read a book that is far too difficult is counter-productive and humiliating for a

child. Students should read text at their level and gradually practice on more complex

pieces (Ivey & Fisher, 2005).

Ivey and Fisher (2005) stated that effective teachers understood the difference

between teaching comprehension skills and testing comprehension skills. The authors

defined comprehension as a proactive, continual process of using prior knowledge,

metacognitive awareness and reflection in making sense of the text. Teachers should

practice strategies that helped the student negotiate the text through relevant before,

during, and after reading activities (Ivey & Fisher, 2005)

Although there was research showing that software used with fidelity could be a

part of a successful intensive reading experience, this was not withstanding the role of an

effective teacher. Through qualitative observations, Ivey and Fisher (2005) maintained

that students require feedback and coaching from their teachers and this could not be

accomplished with a computer program or website alone.

Lastly, was the question of the preparation the teacher had received prior to

becoming a literacy teacher and whether or not that level of preparation made a

difference? One such study was done in 1999 when the National Commission on

Excellence in Elementary Teacher Preparation for Reading Instruction was formed and

charged with developing and executing a program of research that would identify

qualities of effective teacher preparation programs in reading. The commission planned

three interrelated studies which included a survey of current practices, the features of

excellent teacher preparation programs, and the effects of preparation on the transition

into teaching and on teaching practices through the first years of teaching. The purpose

was clearly stated as "the study reported in this article focused on the preparation of

elementary preservice teachers to teach reading and their first three years of teaching in

schools" (Hoffman, Roller, Maloch, Sailors, Duffy & Beretvas, 2005, p. 267). The

research was guided by two research questions: (1) What effects did participation in and

completion of an excellent reading teacher education program have on the experiences of

teachers as they enter schools? and (2) How did teachers' preparation relate to their

teaching practices? (Hoffman, Roller, Maloch, Sailors, Duffy & Beretvas, 2005, p. 267).

Based on the evidence gathered over the three year study authors concluded that

elementary teachers of reading who participated in a high quality teacher preparation

program would be positively influenced as they entered the teaching profession.

In reviewing the literature over the years of 1998-2001 regarding teacher

education in reading, there were four major points of consensus established including (1)

all advocated ongoing professional learning; learning to teach should be considered a

career-long endeavor, (2) teachers should be flexible, adaptive, and responsive to

students' needs in reading, (3) field based teacher programs that emphasize practicum

experiences were most effective and (4) teachers could learn what they were taught, though it was not clear how long this knowledge was sustained (Hoffman, Roller, Maloch, Sailors, Duffy & Beretvas, 2005 p. 269). Therefore, although strong preparation in teaching reading was of utmost importance, it was not the end of the journey of learning to teach, but only the beginning.

<u>Statement of the Problem</u>

Despite an intense focus and considerable financial commitment to remediate non-proficient readers in high school, the large suburban school district that was the target of this study had been unable to consistently improve student achievement in the lowest 25% of students as measured by outcomes on the FCAT Reading. Scholarly literature on high school reading had focused mostly on evaluation of curriculum rather than on teacher practices. The problem studied was to identify the fundamental differences between the most effective and least effective tenth grade high school reading teachers. A companion study was completed by another researcher that focused on ninth grade teachers. A clear understanding of these differences will inform future decisions related to staffing, scheduling, and professional learning.

<u>Purpose of the Study</u>

The purpose of this study was to identify the underlying professional and instructional differences between the most effective and least effective teachers of tenth grade intensive reading courses through teacher and principal/assistant principal surveys along with teacher evaluation data.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following questions regarding reading teachers employed in the target school district during the 2011-2012 school year:

1) To what extent would the most effective and least effective teachers of tenth grade intensive reading classes with non-proficient students differ in their professional preparation to teach literacy?

2) To what extent would the most effective and least effective teachers of tenth grade intensive reading classes with non-proficient students differ in their beliefs about student achievement?

3) To what extent would the most effective and least effective teachers of tenth grade intensive reading classes with non-proficient students differ in their professional practices, such as planning, reflection, and collaboration with colleagues?

4) To what extent would the most effective and least effective teachers of tenth grade intensive reading classes with non-proficient students differ in their valuation of specific instructional strategies?

5) To what extent would principals and assistant principals identify the professional and instructional characteristics that distinguish the most effective tenth grade intensive reading teachers from the least effective?

Methodology

Research Design

This study used a mixed methods approach to answer the research questions. Quantitative data were gathered using the Dimensions of Teacher Effectiveness survey (Appendix A) that was given to intensive reading teachers of tenth grade students and the Dimensions of Teacher Effectiveness—Administrator Perspective survey (Appendix B) that was given to high school principals and assistant principals. The survey contained Likert-scale items from which descriptive statistics could be calculated and analyzed. Qualitative data were gathered from open-ended items posed to both teachers and administrators who responded to the survey. Teacher effectiveness data were supplied by the school district.

This study was conducted in conjunction with a companion study by Researcher A, who used the same survey instruments to examine the teaching practices of ninth grade reading teachers in the same target school district. This section included information about interaction between the two researchers and the two separate studies.

Population

The target school district for this study was a large suburban school district with a total student enrollment of 63,000. Nine high schools and two other centers contributed to a total high school enrollment of approximately 20,000 students. All teachers of intensive reading classes with tenth grade students comprised the population for this study. Students were placed in these courses based on a non-proficient (Level 1 or Level 2) FCAT Reading score in 2011. The estimated size of the teacher population for the

2011-2012 school year was 100. Although the study will be implemented during the 2012-2013 school year, participation was restricted to those who taught in the school district in 2011-2012 due to the need for prior year effectiveness data and formed the study sample. All teachers in the sample were invited to complete the survey.

Additionally, research question five requires administration of the Dimensions of Teacher Effectiveness—Administrator Perspective Survey (Appendix B) to all high school principals and assistant principals. This survey was a modified version of the aforementioned teacher survey. The population of high school administrators for the 2011-2012 school year was 50.

<center>Instrumentation</center>

The Dimensions of Teacher Effectiveness survey was administered to all 2011-2012 intensive reading teachers of tenth grade students (Appendix A). The survey included four sections: preparation to teach adolescent literacy, beliefs related to improving student achievement of non-proficient readers, professional practices, and instructional strategies, both general and specific to literacy. The survey was developed by the researcher along with Researcher A for the companion study. Administrators participating in the study for research question five will take the Dimensions of Teacher Effectiveness—Administrator Perspective Survey, which was a modified version of the teacher instrument (Appendix B). Items on the surveys were constructed after a comprehensive review of the literature on effective teaching techniques in both adolescent literacy and general classroom instruction. The surveys were reviewed by

knowledgeable educators and literacy experts to establish content validity and readability. Edits to the instrument were made after the review.

<center>Procedures</center>

The Deputy Superintendent of the target school district and designees reviewed the format and content of the surveys to ensure that they met the organization's research needs, and formal school district approval was applied for and received prior to administration. Prior to implementation of this study, approval was also sought from the researcher's dissertation committee and the university's Institutional Review Board.

Upon approval by all three entities, the researcher requested access to contact information for all potential participants as well as anonymous effectiveness data for teachers in the population. The specific data to be included was an alpha-numeric code that masked individual identity and school affiliation, intensive reading courses and grade levels taught, and percentage of intensive reading students who met learning growth expectations by grade level using Florida's value-added model for FCAT Reading in the 2011-2012 school year. The alpha-numeric code was comprised of a letter common to all teachers at the same school and a unique numeric code for each teacher. The common letter code permitted school-level data analysis.

Because some teachers in the target school district taught both ninth and tenth grade students, this researcher and Researcher A collaborated to send a joint invitation and consent letter (Appendix C) to all reading teachers. Those who instruct more tenth than ninth grade non-proficient readers were in this researcher's sample, while teachers who instruct more ninth than tenth grade non-proficient readers were in Researcher A's

sample. After administration of the surveys had been completed, data supplied by teachers of both ninth and tenth grade students was analyzed by both researchers.

This researcher and Researcher A mutually requested that the principal and assistant principals of each participating school also be assigned an anonymous alpha-numeric code, but that the alphabetical character be the same as teachers at the school to facilitate school-level data analysis.

The researcher would then invite each teacher to participate in the study by letter transmitted through email. The introductory communication included an informed consent letter (Appendix C) and a link to the survey, which was administered anonymously in a web-based application. Anonymity was maintained through the participant's use of the alpha-numeric code instead of name. The code file was maintained by a staff member from the target school district which maintained confidentiality of all teacher information and therefore it was anonymous to the researcher as she is a school district employee. Access to individual participant responses was not provided to the target school district, and only school-level and district-level aggregate data were reported. This framework ensured that neither the researcher nor school district personnel could link teacher identity to both performance evaluation data and survey responses.

Implementation of the administrator survey proceeded in the same fashion. However, for the purpose of precluding the possibility of duplicated invitations and responses, this researcher and researcher A sent a joint invitation and consent letter

(Appendix D) to all principals and assistant principals. Survey responses from

administrators were used by both researchers for data analysis purposes.

The researcher provided the target school district staff with a list of codes

attached to completed surveys at two and three weeks after the survey opens. School

district staff returned a list of participants not completing the survey so that the researcher

could send follow-up communications. The survey was open for a total of 30 days.

These procedures were followed for the group of administrators who are part of the

population.

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

Results from the survey items for both teachers and administrators were coded

into SPSS, a statistical program. Analysis included nominal data for categorical items.

Descriptive statistics were generated for Likert-scale items and for constructs within the

survey (professional preparation, beliefs, professional practices, instructional strategies).

Mean scores were calculated for these constructs. A test of inferential statistics was used

to assist with answering each research question.

These analyses were conducted at the school district level by considering all

responses. Further analyses were conducted for each school identified as High School A,

B, C, etc. by grouping responses from teachers and comparing to administrators at the

same school. These analyses provided the researcher with data on the extent of

alignment of perceptions of administrators and teachers within the same environment.

Responses to the open-ended items on the survey were analyzed for common

statements and themes that either validated or conflicted with quantitative results and

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provide richer detail. The researcher followed guidelines for qualitative research suggested by Patton (2002). Powerful commentary was excerpted for use in chapters four and five.

Significance of the Study

This review of the literature, which defined the habits and strategies used by the most effective teachers in high school reading, was important because of the millions of dollars being spent on the remediation of hundreds of thousands of secondary students across the nation each year. If these high yield strategies can be determined and if the strategies were required to be implemented for all teachers from Kindergarten through 12th grade, there might finally be a shift in the number of struggling adolescent readers in schools, and in addition, the quality of teachers as a whole would improve. There would definitely be cause for further research and attention to this very important topic as it relates not only to the betterment of our students but also the betterment of our teachers.

Limitations

1. Value-added metrics were new to Florida, so there was a lack of long-term data to verify that the quantitative results correctly distinguish effective from ineffective teachers.

2. The survey instruments were designed by the researcher along with Researcher A for use in one target school district and within the context of that district's interests. Therefore, generalizability of the findings to other settings would be limited.

Assumptions

1. Value-added data were correctly calculated by the Florida Department of Education.

2. The target school district had correctly identified the population and accurately grouped them by effectiveness.

3. Survey participants responded honestly to all items.

Summary

As Carbo (2007) had stated, great principals understood the importance of focusing reading instruction on comprehension and enjoyment so that learning to read became easy and fun. Furthermore, when a reading program was grounded in research and best practices, students learned through their strengths and interests and they subsequently read a great deal because they enjoyed it. A well-researched and obvious problem existed in the deficiencies that were evident among secondary students in the area of reading. In the 2012 educational community, there was not enough being done to make substantial gains to improve this situation. There did exist however, individual teachers in schools that were seeing statistically significant improvement in the gains of their students. The purpose of this study was to identify the habits and strategies that the effective reading teachers employed on a day to day basis.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive review of the important literature that underpins the complexity of this study. In conducting this review, the researcher used the University of Central Florida (UCF) online libraries and databases such as ERIC and EBSCOHOST, to access scholarly journal articles, empirical studies and annual reviews. In addition, national, state and local government documents were accessed for statistical facts and data.

This researcher sought to discover the differences between the most effective and least effective teachers of tenth grade intensive reading students through the analysis of several different factors. Multiple variables were considered such as the teacher's level of preparation to teach reading, their beliefs about student achievement, the professional practices they used to support instruction, and the instructional strategies they employed, both general and more specific, for teaching intensive reading to adolescent readers. Furthermore, as a final attempt to triangulate this study, data pertaining to administrators and whether or not they could recognize the most effective strategies was obtained. This data were then correlated with the score the teacher received on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test 2.0 (FCAT 2.0). This score measured the percentage of their students making statistically significant learning growth in the previous year, which demonstrated the teacher's ability or inability to effectively teach the intensive tenth grade reading student. Teachers and administrators in one Florida school district were

the target of this study, which the researcher would aspire to have further generalizability to other teachers and students across the nation.

The following review of the literature embodies the most relevant research to the study, namely, intensive reading teachers of adolescents, factors that contribute to teachers' effectiveness, and whether or not administrators recognize those factors. Specifically, Chapter 2 is organized into five sections which align to the research questions and survey: (a) the teacher's preparation to teach reading to adolescents, (b) the teacher's beliefs about teaching, (c) general classroom teaching strategies and professional practices, (d) adolescent reading strategies and (e) the role of instructional leadership. The chapter concludes with a final analysis of current research and the findings related to the effective practices of successful adolescent reading teachers and the way their administrators perceive them.

<div align="center">Preparation to Teach Reading to Adolescents</div>

Reading Next: A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy (2004) not only provided a rationale for why ongoing literacy development at the secondary level is more challenging for educators but also a research-based, practice-based explanation of ways to improve the acquisition of reading skills that will serve our adolescents over a lifetime. Biancarosa and Snow (2006) posited that "ensuring adequate ongoing literacy development for all students in the middle and high school years is a more challenging task than ensuring excellent reading education in the primary grades, for two reasons: first, secondary school literacy skills are more complex, more embedded in subject matters, and more multiply determined; second, adolescents are not as

universally motivated to read better or as interested in school-based reading as kindergartners" (p. 1-2). The report outlined 15 elements aimed at improving middle and high school literacy which should be used flexibly and prescriptively in various combinations. Furthermore, "in acting as a foundation for instructional innovations, no literacy program targeted at older students is likely to cause educationally important improvements without three specific elements: professional development, formative assessment, and summative assessment" (p. 5). This section of the literature review will focus on the professional learning that begins with university teacher preparation programs and proceeds with ongoing, life-long training that occurs over the course of an educator's career. "Effective professional development will use data from research studies of adult learning and the conditions needed to effect change, in addition to helping school personnel create and maintain indefinitely a team-oriented approach to improving the instruction and institutional structures that promote better adolescent literacy" (p. 20).

Teacher preparation programs across the nation have become the target of much criticism and disapproval. The United State's Education Secretary Arne Duncan, stated that many of our schools of education are mediocre at best and many teachers are poorly trained and isolated in their classrooms (Paulson, 2012). Specifically, a focus on preparing high school teachers is necessary because they, more often than elementary teachers, say they were inadequately prepared to do their jobs well, according to a policy brief called "Teaching for a New World," published by the Alliance for Excellent Education (Gewertz, 2009). Furthermore, the Alliance urges teacher preparation

programs to do better at producing teachers who have both deep knowledge of the content they teach and mastery of the best pedagogical approaches to teaching that material and that literacy should be taught across all disciplines. Arthur E. Levine, former president of Teachers College, Columbia University, and a sharp critic of teacher-preparation programs, applauded the report's proposed shift in thinking about teacher effectiveness from inputs to outputs (Gewertz, 2009). Outputs as defined as well prepared beginning teachers who are ready and capable to step into the classroom and successfully provide rich and effective instruction to their students.

Intensive reforms in teacher preparation programs, while in many countries have been rigorous and systemic; have not made educationally important progress in the United States. While the implementation of No Child Left Behind required that schools receiving federal funds employ only highly qualified teachers did result in some innovative new teacher education models (programs that allow more extensive study, more intensive clinical training, and professional development schools) many teachers still enter the field with inadequate preparation. Darling-Hammond states that "whereas the decentralized U.S. education system tends to produce both exciting innovations and enormous inequalities, some other nations have taken a more systemic approach to the development of teacher knowledge and skill, which makes more well-trained teachers more widely available" (p.238). Specifically, many European and Asian nations considered to be US peers or competitors routinely prepare teachers more extensively, pay teachers more in relation to competing occupations, and provide teachers with more

time for joint planning and professional development (Darling-Hammond, 2005). She has stated:

> In the knowledge based economy we now inhabit, the future of our economy rests on our ability, as individuals and as a nation, to learn much more powerfully on a wide scale. This outcome rests in turn on our ability to teach much more effectively; especially those students who have been least well supported in our society and our schools (Darling-Hammond, 2005, p. 35).

Of particular interest in the purpose of this literature review is the question of how teacher education programs are specifically designed to prepare beginning teachers on the knowledge and skills necessary for teaching adolescent reading. Unfortunately, many undergraduate degree programs in the majors of elementary education and secondary English education require only one or two courses specific to teaching reading and diagnostically assessing the appropriateness reading instruction. Many universities do offer advanced degrees in reading; however these are not required programs. Thus, there is not much research available on the effects of the preservice experience on the ability or inability to teach reading to adolescents. Following, are examples of how some universities are attempting to make advancements in the reading instruction of preservice teachers.

One empirical study conducted by Conley, Kerner and Reynolds (2005) attempted to connect the curriculum and instruction a university offered with the concerns and issues of the adolescents in a nearby urban community by infusing the coursework into the contextual setting of the school. This study brought about several salient points

including the preparation of the university instructors to effectively provide appropriate

and valuable reading instruction for their students. The researchers found that while well

versed in adolescent literature, many university instructors were far removed from youth

and their behaviors and actions in their own school environments. The school

environment, including the students, parents, teachers, community and culture, presents

unique opportunities for creating strong connections for the students in their learning,

thus amplifying their motivation to be successful. Conley, Kerner and Reynolds (2005)

conclude that "greater understanding of the context of the schools and communities will

enable a more focused exploration of adolescent literacy so that more explicit

understandings of adolescent literacy and related practices can be promoted" (p. 31). To

this end, Lefever-Davis states that "the nature of coursework and field experience for

preservice teachers is changing and often includes inquiry-based experiences that require

preservice teachers to critically examine their own teaching." (p. 196).

Additionally, in a related study, the adolescent reading experiences that secondary

preservice teachers themselves were exposed to in their youth and in their own school

environments provided a basis for how they viewed the importance of reading

instruction. As stated by Daisey (2010), many preservice teachers cited high school

teachers as the most negative influence on them as readers. Their remembrances of

reading in high school centered on looking for key words, highlighting, taking notes, and

preparing for tests based on reading homework in which that they had little interest.

Teachers' professional experiences with reading form an important basis for their

attitudes toward infusing reading activities into their instruction (Bean, 1994), because

"teachers don't just appear out of thin air. They are products – as well as active agents – of the worlds from which they came" (Greenleaf et al., 2002, p. 487). This particular study emphasized the important aspect of providing preservice teachers with the opportunity to reflect on their own personal experiences and those components such as choice, variety, and relevance of reading material that should be considered in their lesson planning. Teacher educators need to ask preservice teachers to write content area lessons that include a variety of reading material and reading strategies (Daisey, 2010). Teacher educators can also model and discuss the value of reading aloud (Daisey, 1993), gathering a classroom library (Daisey, 2009), and incorporating sustained silent reading (Fisher, 2004).

Teacher preparation programs are not just isolated to the university teaching colleges any longer. Florida, ranked 5th in the nation in education, has attributed its recent and much improved standing on a comprehensive program of school reform that has five main points: school accountability, literacy enhancement, student accountability, teacher quality, and school choice (Ladner & Lips, 2009). A recent trend in fulfilling the quota of high quality teachers needed in Florida is alternative certification. Ladner and Lips (2009) acknowledged that "today, more than one third of all new teachers in Florida are coming to the profession through alternative certification programs" (p.26). Albeit attractive to a variety of individuals because these programs have emphasized quick entry into the classrooms, this practice has been met with controversy and challenges, mainly questioning the presence of high quality standards congruent to that of the universities (Lefever-Davis, 2002). There is very little research indicating the impact of teacher

effectiveness, the nature of the literary experiences provided to students, and the overall effect on literacy development of students taught by the teachers who have taken alternative pathways to licensure (Lefever-Davis, 2002). Of particular interest is how the certification process has altered teacher's choices and decisions regarding literacy instruction. Questioned, are the ways the certification process influences teachers' understanding of literacy development and how this understanding translates to student achievement and the types of literacy activities experienced in the classrooms (Lefever-Davis, 2002).

Another piece of teacher preparation to teach reading required in the state of Florida is a reading endorsement. Specifically, the Florida Department of Education, in conjunction with the requirements of No Child Left Behind ("Just Read, Florida," 2008), mandated that all reading teachers obtain a reading endorsement. This endorsement can be acquired through a series of specific coursework in reading instruction and scientifically based reading research strategies. Greenwell (2009) postulates that there is evidence that professional development in scientifically based research strategies has an impact on the instructional practices of teachers, but that further research is needed. Furthermore, she stated that the reading endorsed teachers did create enthusiastic classroom environments where student motivation was increased, but the teachers voiced obstacles that inhibited their professional development (Greenwell, 2009).

The last factor that contributes to the preparation of a teacher to teach reading to adolescents is the ongoing, professional learning that they participate in over the duration of their career. The literature on effective professional development provides several

researched based mechanisms of support that may be beneficial to school personnel. Such professional support includes coaching, job-embedded learning, and professional learning communities (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Hasbrouck & Denton, 2005; Sparks & Hirsh, 1997; Walpole & McKenna, 2004). These supports are not specific to reading teachers alone and should be appropriate and effective when used by teachers in any discipline.

Bush (1984) and his research team conducted a study regarding the impact of various approaches to professional learning and how they effected teachers' teaching practices. He found that the rate of transfer from attending a workshop into actual classroom practice increased to 95% of the teachers in the study, when attending the workshop, modeling, practice, and feedback were enhanced by peer coaching. Excellent coaching contains several components including: focus on professional practice, job-embeddedness, intensive and ongoing, grounded in partnership, dialogical, non-evaluative, confidential, and facilitated through respectful communication (Knight, 2009). Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) affirmed that coaching that is job-embedded can help teachers situate new knowledge by providing teachers with an experienced peer who can provide a guide for how effective instruction should look within specific classroom contexts. She further stated that during these job-embedded coaching sessions, teachers have the opportunity to ask questions, try out new ideas learned from their preparation experiences, and receive targeted, contextualized feedback, thus strengthening the link between teacher learning and practice. Finally, in a study by Parris and Block (2007) "highly effective secondary literacy teachers are aware of the necessity to use current

research and that qualitative research reveals the general nature of a problem and enables exemplary educators to form scientifically testable hypothesis about learning mechanisms and pedagogical techniques that can be explored in their classrooms" (p. 592).

DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, and Many (2006) defined a professional learning community as one in which educators are committed to working collaboratively in ongoing processes of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve. Professional learning communities operate under the assumption that the key to improved learning for students is continuous, job-embedded learning for educators. In professional learning communities, teachers can engage in joint planning, pursue action research projects, problem-solve with school personnel and teacher educators, share ideas and strategies, and provide informal peer critique (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). Inherent to fostering and maintaining successful learning communities in schools are the beliefs that all students can learn at a high level, educators cannot work in isolation, and student learning must be monitored. Fulton, Yoon, and Lee (2005) believe that the most persistent norm that stands in the way of 21st century learning is isolated teaching in stand-alone classrooms. Furthermore, that transforming schools into 21st century learning communities means recognizing that teachers must become members of a growing network of shared expertise.

This literature review begins with a comprehensive appraisal of the wide range of professional learning opportunities available for reading teachers of adolescents; including the preparation that the individual received prior to the beginning of their professional career and that which they were involved in over the course of their career.

Further research needs to examine the potential impact of such inconsistencies in preparation and training in light of the research indicating that well-prepared teachers are a critical factor in determining student achievement (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006; Parris & Block, 2007). This study seeks to discover to what extent teachers differ in their preparation to teach reading to adolescents, and will examine how this attributes to their effectiveness as reading teachers.

<div align="center">Beliefs about Teaching</div>

Stronge (2007) identified six qualities that make an effective teacher: background characteristics (which were discussed in the previous section), the caring teacher, classroom management, planning, instructional delivery, and assessment practices. Stronge (2007) further goes on to say that successful teachers meet students' emotional requirements by caring for and relating to them, being reasonable and respectful, being passionate and inspiring, having a positive outlook toward teaching, and being thoughtful and insightful practitioners. This section will focus on the caring teacher and the beliefs these teachers have regarding their own self efficacy, relationships with their students, and how they effectively teach their students despite factors external to the classroom.

Teachers that possess a high level of self efficacy can be defined as those who believe that teaching changes the lives of students and that they have the expertise required to make such a difference (Ashton & Webb, 1986), or stated more simply, self efficacy is the belief in one's ability (Bandura, 1977). In a recent study, Popp, Grant and Stronge stated that:

The teachers with high levels of self efficacy were passionate about their students and about their work; they believed in both. Teachers with high self efficacy do not blame their students for failures; they look at themselves and challenge their own teaching to better reach those students in the future. Teachers with high levels of self efficacy do not give up. (Popp, Grant & Stronge, 2011, p. 287).

In a related study designed to examine the impact of teachers' beliefs and instructional practices on students' performance on the Florida Reading Comprehensive Assessment Test, Peabody (2011) added that effective teachers that demonstrated a high level of self efficacy in their ability as a teacher avowed that "curriculum should be reciprocal and student centered, students should be given choices and decision making power in their learning, and students should take ownership over aspects of curriculum planning" (p. 186). Furthermore, the high level of teacher efficacy noted in the high performing schools in this study, suggests internal school cultures that are more conducive to supporting reform efforts (Peabody, 2011). These methods support culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2000).

Parris and Block categorized the 38 indices of exemplary teachers into eight domains:

(1) literacy approaches used to teach: teaching pedagogy, (2) methods of addressing diverse needs, (3) personal characteristics, (4) knowledge base, (5) quality and quantity of literacy activities used, (6) amount of professional development, (7) relationships with students, and (8) classroom management (Parris & Block, 2007, p. 587).

Regarding domain three, personal characteristics, the six most cited indices in this grouping suggested a teacher whose self efficacy was evident. These effective teachers demonstrated their ability to show enthusiasm when engaging all students, their love of teaching was evident, and their expectations of self were enormous.

Finally, Corkett, Hatt and Benevides (2011) sought to determine the correlation between teachers' self efficacy, students' self efficacy and students' ability. The self efficacy students have in their ability to accomplish a task determines how much effort they initiate and the extent to which they persist when faced with obstacles and adverse situations (Bandura, 1977; Kim and Lorsbach, 2005; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). These researchers postulate that teachers may play an important role in the formation of student self efficacy and achievement. Self efficacy is formed through four main constructs: personal accomplishments, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological arousal (Bandura, 1977; Fall & McLeod, 2001; Hoy & Spero, 2005; Schunk, 2003). Furthermore, these constructs are not hierarchical and the influence of any one of the four constructs may result in an increase or decrease in self efficacy, which in turn will affect academic performance (Fall & McLeod, 2001). Given these constructs and the considerable opportunity for interaction, a teacher's influence on the self efficacy their students possess could be substantial.

Equally as important as the teacher's possession of a high level of self efficacy is the power of developing relationships with their students. Popp, Grant and Stronge (2011) found that successful teachers consider the educational needs and the emotional needs of the same significance for their students. Furthermore, they viewed their caring

and positive relationships with students, particularly trusting relationships, as paramount to their success as teachers and to the success of their students. As stated (Poplin et al., 2011), the teachers had a profound respect for the students and there was a sense the teachers were genuinely optimistic for their student's futures and provided them a vision of their best selves. These teachers worked diligently to provide positive classroom environments in which high expectations for student achievement prevailed. They expected their students to perform well by having a "whatever it takes" mentality and by planning challenging instruction that focused on making meaning, rather than on memorizing facts (Popp, Grant & Stronge, 2011). Parris and Block (2007) corroborate by stating that "these teachers try to understand and interact positively with their students and that humor is a necessary component in highly effective secondary classrooms" (p. 592).

Finally, adolescents' motivation is a critical factor for reading success. The lack of motivation adversely affects adolescent's abilities to enhance vocabulary and reading comprehension skills as well as developing reading strategies (Roberts, Torgeson, & Boardman, 2008). Furthermore, it is generally acknowledged that motivation plays a critical role in learning (Gambrell, 1996). In addition to a lack of motivation, many students are further hindered by factors external to the classroom including tumultuous home lives, poverty, high mobility, and homelessness. These factors are generally not anything students or teachers have control over, nor do they create an environment conducive to helping a struggling reader improve.

When over 4000 students were asked what they thought caused their lack of interest and motivation, Allen (2009) noted that students repeatedly pointed to the lack of relevance and tedious delivery of information. In addition, other students stated that the cumulative impact of years of academic failure reduced their motivation. Allen states that "many students have never learned to love books, and we spend our days attempting to layer the study of literature on a non-existent foundation" (p.60). She cited student choice, shared reading - teachers reading aloud while students followed along- and teachers modeling strategic reading techniques for their students, as effective practices to improve the motivation of students.

In a related study by Lapp and Fisher (2009), the researchers sought to determine key elements that would improve the motivation of students to read. They believed that key components that should be included in reading programs for struggling readers were giving the student choice in what they read, allowing for the support of peers, and being challenged, supported, and encouraged. Additionally, in a study conducted by Cuevas, Russell and Irving (2012), they noted that students reading from computer modules showed statistically significant and improved increase in reading motivation.

General Classroom Teaching Strategies and Professional Practices

Curriculum, class size, school district funding, family and community involvement, and many other school-related factors all contribute to school improvement and student achievement (Cawelti, 1999). But the single most influential factor is the teacher (Stronge & Tucker, 2000). Further, studies show the quality of the teacher has a powerful residual effect on student learning (Stronge & Hindman, 2003) which can

positively or negatively affect the student's progress for a subsequent number of years. Therefore, in order to enhance school improvement and student achievement, the teaching strategies and professional practices employed by effective teachers merit examination. Marzano stated:

> There is not (nor will there ever be) a formula for effective teaching and that research will never be able to identify instructional strategies that work with every student in every class. The best research can tell us is which strategies have a good chance (i.e. high probability) of working well with students. Individual teachers must determine which strategies to employ with the right students at the right time. He further proposes that effective classroom teaching is both an art and a science (Marzano, 2007, p. 4-5).

The art is the teachers' understanding of the appropriateness of the strategy to be used; the science is the teachers' understanding of the effect size of the chosen high yield strategy and how it will benefit each student's learning. High yield strategies, as defined by Marzano (2009), are those classroom techniques that have research supporting their utility at enhancing student achievement and have a statistically significant effect size. He also advises that:

> Effective teaching is a complex endeavor with many components, a broad range of strategies should be considered and that no strategy is appropriate for every situation. The ultimate criterion for effective teaching is student knowledge gain. Classroom strategies are tools to produce knowledge gain (Marzano, 2009, p. 30-36).

Effective teachers possess certain characteristics, although an exact definition of teacher effectiveness remains elusive. According to Stronge and Hindman (2002), six broad domains on key attributes, behaviors, and attitudes of effective teachers can be clarified. These attributes include prerequisites of effective teachers, the teacher as a person, classroom management and organization, organizing for instruction, implementing instruction, and monitoring student progress and potential. Another model, Marzano (2007), defines teacher effectiveness in four domains; classroom strategies and behaviors (which is further broken down into three lesson segments: involving routine events, addressing content, and enacted on the spot), planning and preparing, reflecting on teaching, and collegiality and professionalism. Furthermore, each of the domains is broken down into more specific design questions that clarify effective, research-based practices.

The first domain according to Stronge and Hindman (2002); prerequisites of effective teachers, includes strong verbal and written communication skills, content knowledge and knowledge of teaching, certification status, and work experience. Ongoing professional learning ensures that the educator is both current in their pedagogy and practice and willing to avail themselves to continuous improvement. Marzano (2007) further defines reflecting on teaching as the teacher evaluating their own personal performance and developing and implementing professional growth plans.

The second domain cited by Stronge and Hindman (2002) is the teacher as a person. Characteristics of an effective teacher such as caring, fairness, respectfulness, enthusiasm, motivation and dedication are qualities indicative of an effective teacher.

Marzano (2007) categorizes these same elements in two domains; one pertaining

primarily to working with students in the classroom and one working with peers and

parents. The first domain describes engaging students, establishing and maintaining

effective relationships with students, and communicating high expectations for students

whereas the fourth domain - collegiality and professionalism through the promotion of a

positive environment with all stakeholders seeks to clarify further the characteristics of an

effective teacher.

 The third domain as noted by Stronge and Hindman (2002) is classroom

management and organization and the discipline of students. Likewise, Marzano (2007)

recognizes that effective teachers must establish rules and procedures and recognize

adherence to these rules and procedures. In his book *Conscious Classroom Management*,

Smith (2004) states that:

> As teachers, it is a combination of who we are and what we do…the "who we
>
> are" refers to how we hold ourselves internally and thus how we come across to
>
> our students. The "what we do" refers to the nuts and bolts of classroom
>
> management – specific strategies for designing and maintaining a positive
>
> classroom environment, connecting with students, and taking care of business
>
> (Smith, 2004, p. 7).

 The fourth domain, organizing for instruction, describes the importance of

instruction, time allocation, teacher expectations, and instructional planning (Stronge &

Hindman, 2002). This domain parallels Marzano's (2007) second domain which includes

planning and preparing for lessons and units, planning and preparing for the use of

resources and technology, and planning and preparing for the needs of English Language Learners and Special Education Students. These domains emphasize the important work the teacher must do outside of the classroom in preparation for teaching their students.

Finally, domains five and six emphasize how effective teachers implement instruction and monitor student progress (Stronge & Hindman, 2002). Instructional strategies, content and expectations, complexity, questioning and student engagement must work in combination with the monitoring of individual student progress and differentiation based on the particular needs for each student. Marzano (2007) refers to these same effective practices as communicating learning goals and feedback to students, helping students interact with new knowledge, helping students practice and deepen new knowledge, helping students generate and test hypothesis, and engaging students. Schmoker (2011) agrees stating that "our failure to implement the most obvious, effective teaching practices corrupts the entire education enterprise" (p. 70).

<div align="center">Adolescent Reading Strategies</div>

In addition to effective classroom teaching strategies and professional practices, high school teachers of struggling adolescent readers are required to possess supplementary knowledge and skills in order to be successful with their students. Alliance for Excellent Education (2003) noted that American students are dropping out of high school at an alarming rate – more than three thousand students every school day. Many of these students cite literacy skills and the lack of being able to keep up with an increasingly demanding high school curriculum as the primary reason. According to Digisi (2010), "as the data show, students do not naturally become proficient at reading

more complex material as they age and more intensive instruction is necessary if we want students to become sophisticated readers of more difficult text" (p. 116). These students face a plethora of literacy needs; however the most common difficulty is a lack of comprehension. Couple this with the fact that as literacy demands increase in our rapidly changing, modern and global society (Barton, 2000); the outlook on a bright future for these students looks increasingly bleak. America's schools need to produce literate citizens who are prepared to compete in a global economy and who have the skills to pursue their own learning well beyond high school (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006). Furthermore, limited reading proficiency hinders access to the curriculum; contributes to low self esteem and poor motivation; can lead to inappropriate placement in special education; increases the risk of academic failure and dropping out of school; and is linked to behavior problems, delinquency, and such lifelong negative consequences as criminal activity and welfare dependency (Joseph & Schisler, 2006).

Reading Next – A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy (2006) was a collaborative effort of many educational researchers who sought to discover how to improve achievement in the field of adolescent literacy. Specifically, their goal was three-pronged; how could they best disseminate the current state of knowledge about adolescent literacy, which reading interventions proved to be the most promising, and how might they evaluate reading programs and the value-added dimension. Understanding that comprehension, and not decoding is the main struggle for adolescent readers, they defined fifteen critical elements necessary to facilitate effective reading instruction. Furthermore, the elements should not be seen simply as isolated

essentials, but rather as a group in which the elements have a dynamic and powerful interrelationship. It has not been determined what the optimal mix of these elements is and it might be different for different populations of students (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006).

The authors divided the elements into two categories: instruction and infrastructure. They posited that improving school infrastructure to better support literacy teachers and students in addition to instructional improvement would reap the biggest rewards (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006). In addition, although all fifteen of the elements were well supported by research, without the elements of professional development, ongoing formative assessment of students, and ongoing summative assessment of students and programs as the minimum foundation, major change in adolescent literacy achievement could not be accomplished.

Instructional elements included first and foremost, direct and explicit comprehension instruction whereas any combination of comprehension strategies, comprehension monitoring and metacognition instruction, teacher modeling, scaffolded instruction and apprenticeship models could serve as approaches to best provide students with comprehension difficulties. Reciprocal teaching is an example whereby the teacher models the four critical strategies of questioning, clarifying, summarizing, and predicting, so that in turn, the students will emulate what the teacher has demonstrated. A second example of direct and explicit comprehension would include reading apprenticeship whereas students focus on how and why they read based on the content of what they are reading (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006). As cited by Parris and Block (2007) teaching

pedagogy should also include allowing students to use critical thinking skills, ask questions, participation in decision making, and becoming increasingly independent learners. "Highly effective secondary literacy teachers understand that the discrepancy in student's reading abilities is vast by the time they reach adolescence, and that they need to constantly revise the curriculum to maintain relevance and to meet the continuing changing needs of their current students" (p. 589). Furthermore, in a study done by Harmon, Hedrick, Wood and Vintinner (2011) they found teachers with the most experience and preparation to teach reading to value higher level thinking activities, integrating reading and writing, the importance of the right texts, active student engagement and the use of direct, explicit instruction to be most beneficial for students.

Effective instructional principles embedded in content are the second element and are demonstrated in two forms. The first has to do with the transformation of skills to content areas other than literature, in other words, learning from other texts using specific skills the student has learned in the reading classroom. The second form of this element requires the subject area teacher to implement the same skills the reading teacher has implemented. This serves to constantly remind students of the ways they can organize themselves when reading and writing in other disciplines, in often very difficult texts (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006). However, an important contribution to advance the successfulness of this element is the concept of disciplinary literacy – advanced literacy instruction embedded within content-area classes such as math, science, and social studies. In a study done by Shanahan and Shanahan (2008), comprehension strategies used by content-area teachers specifically for their subject area were revealed and then

subsequently taught in their instruction to students. Notably, literacy skill development

progresses from basic (decoding and knowledge of high frequency words) to intermediate

(generic comprehension strategies, common word meanings and basic fluency) to

disciplinary (specialized literacy skills). Progressing higher in the pyramid means

learning more sophisticated, but less generalizable skills and routines and through their

findings, these authors came to the conclusion that "the varied emphases particular to a

content area are related to the intellectual values of a discipline and the methods by which

scholarship is created in each of the fields" (p. 50). Or, as stated by McConachie, Hall,

Resnick, Ravi, Bill, Bintz and Taylor (2006), "disciplinary literacy is based on the

premise that students can develop deep conceptual knowledge in a discipline only by

using the habits of reading, writing, talking, and thinking which that discipline values and

uses" (p. 8).

The third element, motivation and self-directed learning has to do with instilling a

love of reading in the student's heart and mind by allowing choice in what the student

wants to read and study and by providing them instructional support in comprehending

what they have chosen. Many schools have instituted sustained silent reading as an

avenue for promoting this choice of independent reading, in which students can find

relevancy in what they are reading (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006). Graesser, McNamara,

and Kulikowich (2011) state that teachers should consider a combination of texts when

making recommendations for their students. Challenging texts with associated

explanations, texts at the zone of proximal development, easy texts to build self-efficacy,

a balanced diet of texts by varying difficulty, and texts tailored to develop particular

reading components all serve a particular purpose. Harmon, et al. stated that:

> Motivated students will see the worthiness of the activity and believe that their
>
> efforts will be effective. They believe that they have internal control over
>
> whether their efforts are successful rather than believing that someone else is
>
> responsible for their success or failure in reading (Harmon, et al, 2011, p. 117).

The next element, text-based collaborative learning, is a technique that provides

for every ability group of student to contribute in a way that promotes better oral

language and content area skills development to discuss and solve content area questions

and problems. Students should be assigned certain roles in their collaborative groups to

ensure what is expected from each team member and what the anticipated outcome of the

group should be. Guiding queries walk the students through questions they have about

the text so that they can together comprehend what is being explained to them. The

conversation between students is important whereas they feel free to voice their ideas and

questions to their nonjudgmental peer group all of whom are trying to discern the nature

of the text and what the outcome should be (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006).

The next elements are more specific to a student's individual needs. These

include first, strategic tutoring, which individualizes diagnostic instruction and provides

for diverse texts. Next, intensive writing, based on a variety of future expectations

including high school and beyond, is an area that can improve as reading competency

grows, provided ample and legitimate instruction has been made available. Finally,

technology should be considered both an instructional tool and an instructional topic

serving as both guided practice and a means to connecting with the wide world web (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006).

Lastly, ongoing formative assessments are the most efficient and effective method of making sure that continuing and developmental measurement of student achievement is being monitored and scrutinized. These assessments allow teachers to track students' development and progress throughout a school year. Furthermore, these assessments are not summative, therefore allowing both teachers and students to make adaptations in regards to their understanding and level of performance (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006).

In regards to infrastructural elements (those that support the aforementioned instructional improvements) the first non-negotiable is extended time for students needing additional reading comprehension assistance. This metric is strongly viewed as being a two to four hour daily requirement, if considerate change is to be effected. In addition to the time the student spends in the language arts classroom, this element could also be supported through a content specific classroom with the proper supports in place (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006).

The next three elements; professional development, teacher teams, and leadership all serve as ways that school personnel can support student learning. Professional development opportunities should be ongoing and purposeful. According to Parris and Block (2007), extremely successful educators can be distinguished by the expanse of their knowledge relative to both their content area and the newest, research-based strategies that best help students learn. Teachers and administrators should work as a team to analyze data and pinpoint areas of concern. Instruction should be targeted and

persistent to individual student needs. The leadership of school administrators, reading

coaches and teachers is a necessity in promoting an effective literacy program within a

school (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006).

The next element seen as a key component for an effective adolescent literacy

plan is ongoing summative assessment of students and programs. Not only is this form of

progress monitoring a requirement of local, state and federal mandates, but it also serves

educators in decision and policy making capacities. Summative assessment, when used

in conjunction with formative assessment can be an extremely beneficial evaluation tool

in ascertaining strengths and weaknesses. However, as Scherff and Piazza (2009)

caution, "while we hold students accountable to the same high-stakes tests there is

evidence to reveal that there is an unconscionable variation in the extent to which

resources and instruction support their achievement" (p. 343). Opportunity to learn is

defined as the capacity of schools to provide adequate learning opportunities for all

students (Bracey, 1995) and shifts the focus away from the outputs of schooling (test

scores only) to the inputs of education or the resources provided for helping students

reach high standards (Scherff & Piazza, 2009). Specifically, these researchers

recommend a careful examination of structural and physical factors, access and exposure

to relevant curriculum, and acknowledgement by students how they can best be engaged

in their own learning. Lastly, a comprehensive and coordinated literacy program seeks to

employ all members of a school staff to work together as a team to achieve the complex

task of providing students a well-designed, thorough and successful reading intervention

program (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006).

Role of Instructional Leadership

The publication *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future* (1996) has driven the concept of teacher quality in our public schools into the limelight of each state's educational policy making agendas. As previously stated in this review of the literature, the single most influential factor on student achievement is the teacher (Stronge & Tucker, 2000). So the question then becomes, how can instructional leaders hire and retain the highest quality teachers and ensure that all of our students are achieving at their maximum potential?

To this end, administrators are charged with the evaluation of teachers which serves as both a quality assurance measurement and as a guide for future professional learning. Danielson (2001) stated that "most educators recognize that teaching is a complex activity and that a simple, brief observation of a teacher in the classroom is not enough to ensure that the classroom is in the care of a competent teacher. An evaluation system should recognize, cultivate, and develop good teaching" (p. 2). According to Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004), "leadership is widely regarded as a key factor in accounting for differences in the success with which schools foster the learning of their students" (p.17) and in fact, "leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school" (p. 5).

Crum (2006) acknowledged that there is a renewed and ongoing effort to improve literacy leadership in secondary schools. The leader of the building must be able to understand the components of reading success and monitor the achievement – or lack

thereof – of programs, staff, and students and work in a side-by-side manner with instructional personnel to ensure cross-curricular literacy practices are in place (Crum, 2006). Taylor (2005) recognized that a fail-safe literacy program is one that identifies the roles, responsibilities and actions for everyone, including daily literacy-related non-negotiables for all teachers. These include all teachers will use the processes of literacy (reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, thinking, and expressing through multiple-symbol systems), all teachers will read to and with students to give them access to grade level content, students will read by themselves at their level with accountability, and teachers will teach, model, and practice expert reading and writing strategies. School administrators must recognize these daily non-negotiables as being key components in every teacher's classroom.

Similarly, in *Creating a Culture of Literacy: A Guide for Middle and High School Principals* (National Association for Secondary School Principals, 2005), a highly effective reading teacher is described as one who is both strategic in their teacher behaviors and knowledgeable in their instructional practice. Teacher behaviors would include understanding and applying motivational strategies, understanding unique learning needs of adolescents, and understanding and applying research on learning styles and multiple intelligences. Instructional practices would include making critical connections of literary strategies (pre, during and post), providing explicit instruction, and providing for opportunities in small group learning. It is the challenge for school administrators to recognize these research-based effective practices and make an objective conclusion about the effectiveness of the reading teacher with their students in

their classroom. It is also important to keep in mind that fail-safe literacy leadership is a never-ending cycle of learning and improvement (Taylor, 2003) and that student achievement remains the top priority for educators.

Summary

The review of the literature has revealed the most important and appropriate connections in the research relevant to this study, namely, the preparation, beliefs, strategies, and practices of intensive reading teachers of adolescents, factors that contribute to teachers' effectiveness, and whether or not administrators recognize those factors. Specifically, Chapter 2 was organized into five sections which align to the research questions and survey: (a) the teacher's preparation to teach reading to adolescents, (b) the teacher's beliefs about teaching, (c) general classroom teaching strategies and professional practices, (d) adolescent reading strategies and (e) the role of instructional leadership. The information presented in this chapter provides the background understanding that is necessary and foundational for this research.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

<u>Introduction</u>

The primary goal of this study was to research the questions that relate to identifying the underlying professional and instructional differences between the most effective and least effective teachers of tenth grade intensive reading courses through teacher and principal/assistant principal surveys along with teacher evaluation data. As stated in Chapter 1, this study sought to answer the following research questions regarding reading teachers employed in the target school district during the 2011-2012 school year:

1) To what extent would the most effective and least effective teachers of tenth grade intensive reading classes with non-proficient students differ in their professional preparation to teach literacy?

2) To what extent would the most effective and least effective teachers of tenth grade intensive reading classes with non-proficient students differ in their beliefs about student achievement?

3) To what extent would the most effective and least effective teachers of tenth grade intensive reading classes with non-proficient students differ in their professional practices, such as planning, reflection, and collaboration with colleagues?

4) To what extent would the most effective and least effective teachers of tenth grade intensive reading classes with non-proficient students differ in their valuation of specific instructional strategies?

5) To what extent would principals and assistant principals identify the professional and instructional characteristics that distinguish the most effective tenth grade intensive reading teachers from the least effective?

Table 1 includes variables and data sources for each research question.

Table 1
Data Sources for Research Questions

Questions	Data Sources	Dependent/Independent Variables
Research Question 1	Dimensions of Effective Teaching Section 1	I: Level of preparation D: Effectiveness
Research Question 2	Dimensions of Effective Teaching Section 2 Items 10-14	I: Beliefs about student achievement D: Effectiveness
Research Question 3	Dimensions of Effective Teaching Section 2 Items 15-18	I: Professional practices to support instruction D: Effectiveness
Research Question 4	Dimensions of Effective Teaching Section 3	I: Instructional strategies D: Effectiveness
Research Question 5	Dimensions of Effective Teaching Sections 2 & 3; Dimensions of Effective Teaching—Administrator Perspective Sections 2 & 3	I: Status as teacher or administrator D: Distinguishing characteristics of the most effective teachers

Years of prior teaching experience (for teachers) and both years of prior teaching and prior administrative experience (for administrators) would serve as moderator variables.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were defined within the context of the study to provide clarity regarding the scope of the research that was completed:

Non-proficient student: A tenth grade pupil whose most recent Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) reading score was classified at level 1 or level 2, which was considered to be less than satisfactory performance (Florida Department of Education, 2012).

Effectiveness: A quantitative measure that differentiates teachers based on the percentage of students who met a learning growth standard using Florida's value-added model for FCAT Reading (American Institutes for Research, 2011). See Appendix E for more information about this metric.

Beliefs: A teacher's convictions about the nature of teaching, learning and student achievement. These convictions could positively or adversely impact the teacher's ability to build meaningful relationships with students (Hattie, 2009).

Professional Practices: Teacher responsibilities that were external to classroom instruction, including planning, reflection, communication, and collegiality (Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011).

Instructional Strategies: Teacher-selected methods that had a high probability of improving student achievement (Marzano, 2007).

Finally, variables were measured using two separate survey instruments, one for reading teachers and one for administrators. The methodology used to test the research questions is presented in this chapter. The chapter is organized into five sections: (a) design of the study (b) selection of participants, (c) instrumentation, (d) data collection, and (e) data analysis.

<div align="center">Design of the Study</div>

This study used a mixed methods approach to answer the research questions. Quantitative data were gathered using the Dimensions of Teacher Effectiveness survey (Appendix A) that was given to intensive reading teachers of tenth grade students and the Dimensions of Teacher Effectiveness-Administrator Perspective survey (Appendix B) that was given to high school principals and assistant principals. The survey contained Likert-scale items from which descriptive statistics could be calculated and analyzed. Qualitative data were gathered from open-ended items posed to both teachers and administrators who responded to the survey. Teacher effectiveness data were supplied by the school district. Teacher effectiveness data were defined as a quantitative measure that differentiates teachers based on the percentage of students who met a learning growth standard using Florida's value-added model for FCAT Reading (American Institutes for Research, 2011). This score was given on a scale of 1 to 4 and represented 40 percent of a teacher's overall evaluation (the other 60 percent was administrative evaluation).

This study was conducted in conjunction with a companion study by Researcher A, who used the same survey instruments to examine the teaching practices of ninth

grade reading teachers in the same target school district. This section included

information about interaction between the two researchers and the two separate studies.

<p style="text-align:center">Selection of Participants</p>

The target school district for this study was a large suburban school district with a

total student enrollment of 63,000. Nine high schools and two other centers contributed

to a total high school enrollment of approximately 20,000 students. All teachers of

intensive reading classes with tenth grade students comprised the population for this

study. Students were placed in these courses based on a non-proficient (Level 1 or Level

2) FCAT Reading score in 2011. The estimated size of the teacher population for the

2011-2012 school year was 100. Although the study will be implemented during the

2012-2013 school year, the sample was restricted to those who taught in the school

district in 2011-2012 due to the need for prior year effectiveness data and formed the

study sample. All teachers in the sample were invited to complete the survey. Thus, the

sampling technique employed was nonrandom and purposive (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008).

Additionally, research question five requires administration of the Dimensions of

Teacher Effectiveness—Administrator Perspective Survey (Appendix B) to all high

school principals and assistant principals. This survey was a modified version of the

aforementioned teacher survey. The population of high school administrators for the

2011-2012 school year was 50.

<p style="text-align:center">Instrumentation</p>

The Dimensions of Teacher Effectiveness survey was administered to all 2011-

2012 intensive reading teachers of tenth grade students (Appendix A). The purpose of

the instrument was to collect teacher responses that would serve as a gauge of their

beliefs and practices about teaching reading to tenth grade students. The survey included

four sections: preparation to teach adolescent literacy, beliefs related to improving

student achievement of non-proficient readers, professional practices, and instructional

strategies, both general and specific to literacy. The Preparation to Teach Reading to

Adolescents subscale identifies factors such as coursework taken in teaching adolescent

reading, reading certification and/or endorsement, years of experience, and ongoing

professional learning the teacher participates in. In these nine multiple choice items, the

researcher sought to discover if any of these variables had to do with the success or lack

of success of the teacher. The second subscale included ten Likert-scale items that asked

questions about Beliefs about Teaching as related to improving student achievement of

non-proficient readers. This section deals with teachers' self-efficacy and those aspects

of relationships with students including motivation and high expectations that could

influence a student in their initiative to be successful in the classroom. Next, the General

Classroom Teaching Strategies and Professional Practices subscale examines a teacher's

planning, self-refection, and collegiality, as well as having students set goals and self-

monitoring, classroom management, and direct instruction. This section of 24 Likert-

scale items emphasized the instructional model used in the target school district. Finally,

the last subscale, Adolescent Reading Strategies, reviews teachers' methods of organizing

reading instruction, classroom environment, and student reading strategies. Again, this

section emphasized the reading strategies prioritized and discouraged in the target school

district and included twenty Likert-scale items. In addition to the previous items, which

were used to generate quantitative data regarding the background, beliefs, practices, and strategies of the targeted school district reading teachers, both the teacher and administrator surveys included the same three open-ended items, so that qualitative data could also be included in the findings of the research.

The survey was developed by the researcher along with Researcher A for the companion study. Administrators participating in the study for research question five will take the Dimensions of Teacher Effectiveness—Administrator Perspective Survey, which was a modified version of the teacher instrument (Appendix B). Items on the surveys were constructed after a comprehensive review of the literature on effective teaching techniques in both adolescent literacy and general classroom instruction. The surveys were reviewed by knowledgeable educators and literacy experts including college professors, doctoral students, reading coaches and reading teachers (none directly connected to the study), to establish content validity and readability. Edits to the instrument were made after the reviews done by those who tried out the survey.

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

The Deputy Superintendent of the target school district and designees reviewed the format and content of the surveys to ensure that they met the organization's research needs, and formal school district approval was applied for and received prior to administration. Prior to implementation of this study, approval was also sought and received from the researcher's dissertation committee and the university's Institutional Review Board.

Upon approval by all three entities, the researcher requested access from the target school district to contact information for all potential participants as well as anonymous effectiveness data for teachers in the population. Potential participants included those instructional personnel who taught ninth and tenth grade courses whose course codes were associated with intensive reading classes in the target school district. There were five specific course codes included (Appendix E). Additionally, each teacher was identified as a ninth grade teacher, a tenth grade teacher, or both. Researchers used these data to create personalized information letters (and two letters of follow-up in the event of non-response) inviting these teachers to participate in the survey. The researchers placed each letter in an envelope labeled with the teacher's name. A school district employee from the Assessment and Accountability Department then assigned an alpha-numeric code to each teacher that masked individual identity and school affiliation, intensive reading courses and grade levels taught, and percentage of intensive reading students who met learning growth expectations by grade level using Florida's value-added model for FCAT Reading in the 2011-2012 school year. The alpha-numeric code was comprised of a letter common to all teachers at the same school and a unique numeric code for each teacher. The common letter code permitted school-level data analysis.

Because some teachers in the target school district taught both ninth and tenth grade students, this researcher and Researcher A collaborated to send a joint invitation and consent letter (Appendix C) to all reading teachers. Those who instruct more tenth than ninth grade non-proficient readers were in this researcher's sample, while teachers

who instruct more ninth than tenth grade non-proficient readers were in Researcher A's sample. After administration of the surveys had been completed, data supplied by teachers of both ninth and tenth grade students was analyzed by both researchers.

This researcher and Researcher A mutually requested that the principal and assistant principals of each participating school also be assigned an anonymous alpha-numeric code, but that the alphabetical character be the same as teachers at the school to facilitate school-level data analysis. This was the final format that was used.

The researcher then invited each teacher to participate in the study by sealed letter transmitted through permission of the principal. The introductory communication included an informed consent letter (Appendix C) and a link to the survey, which was administered anonymously in a web-based application. Anonymity was maintained through the participant's use of the alpha-numeric code instead of name. The code file was maintained by a staff member from the target school district which maintained confidentiality of all teacher information and therefore it was anonymous to the researcher as she is a school district employee. Access to individual participant responses was not provided to the target school district, and only school-level and district-level aggregate data were reported. This framework ensured that neither the researcher nor school district personnel could link teacher identity to both performance evaluation data and survey responses.

Implementation of the administrator survey proceeded in the same fashion. However, for the purpose of precluding the possibility of duplicated invitations and responses, this researcher and researcher A sent a joint invitation and consent letter

(Appendix D) to all principals and assistant principals. Survey responses from administrators were used by both researchers for data analysis purposes.

The researcher provided the target school district staff with a list of codes attached to completed surveys at three and eight weeks after the survey opens. School district staff returned a list of participants not completing the survey so that the researcher could send follow-up communications. The survey was open for a total of 74 days. These procedures were followed for the group of administrators who are part of the population.

This researcher implemented a methodology for data collection that endeavored to establish trust from participants and a motivation to complete the survey. Together, along with Researcher A of a companion study, an effort was made collaboratively with the target school district to obtain permission and present a customized study that would benefit the district through our findings. In addition, we put a process in place that would ensure confidentiality, be convenient to respond to, and be cost effective (Dillman, Smyth & Christian, 2009).

<u>Data Analysis</u>

Results from the survey items for both teachers and administrators were coded into Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS), a statistical program. The first research question:

1) To what extent would the most effective and least effective teachers of tenth grade intensive reading classes with non-proficient students differ in their professional preparation to teach literacy?

The researcher sought to determine whether or not the level of preparation (independent variable) played a role in teacher effectiveness (dependent variable). The analysis will include nominal data for these categorical items and a chi-square statistical test will determine whether or not there is statistical significance in the difference in frequencies in two or more different nominal categories (Steinberg, 2011). Research questions two, three and four required an analysis of data that should be considered to be descriptive:

2) To what extent would the most effective and least effective teachers of tenth grade intensive reading classes with non-proficient students differ in their beliefs about student achievement?

3) To what extent would the most effective and least effective teachers of tenth grade intensive reading classes with non-proficient students differ in their professional practices, such as planning, reflection, and collaboration with colleagues?

4) To what extent would the most effective and least effective teachers of tenth grade intensive reading classes with non-proficient students differ in their valuation of specific instructional strategies?

Through descriptive statistics the researcher determined which variables most impacted student achievement. Specifically, which beliefs about student achievement, professional practices that support instruction, and instructional strategies (independent variables) have the greatest impact on teacher effectiveness (dependent variable).

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Descriptive statistics were generated for these Likert-scale items within the constructs of the survey. Central tendency scores, dispersion statistics, and standard scores were calculated for these constructs. Two tests of inferential statistics (Z tests and t tests) were used to assist with answering each of these research questions.

Finally, the last research question again required a review of descriptive data:

5) To what extent would principals and assistant principals identify the professional and instructional characteristics that distinguish the most effective tenth grade intensive reading teachers from the least effective?

The researcher assessed whether or not the status of teacher or administrator (independent variable) made a difference in the ability to distinguish characteristics of the most effective teachers of reading (dependent variable). Again, descriptive statistics were generated for these Likert-scale items within the constructs of the survey. Central tendency scores, dispersion statistics, and standard scores were calculated for these constructs. Two tests of inferential statistics (Z tests and t tests) were also used to assist with answering each of these research questions (Steinberg, 2011).

These analyses were conducted at the school district level by considering all responses. Further analyses were conducted for each school identified as High School A, B, C, etc. by grouping responses from teachers and comparing to administrators at the same school. These analyses provided the researcher with critical data for triangulation on the extent of alignment of perceptions of administrators and teachers within the same environment.

Responses to the open-ended items on the survey were analyzed for common statements and themes that either validated or conflicted with quantitative results and provide richer detail. The researcher followed guidelines for qualitative research suggested by Patton (2002). Powerful commentary was excerpted for use in chapters four and five.

Summary

This chapter provided an understanding of the purpose of the research and restated the research questions. The participants were chosen by a nonrandom, purposive method which served to find specific information about the beliefs and practices of adolescent reading teachers and their administrators in the targeted school district. The survey instrument used, Dimensions of Effective Teachers, was reviewed by knowledgeable educators and literacy experts for reliability and validity. The data collection procedures were complex and required explicit explanation, but ensured absolute confidentiality of each participant's answers. Finally, the methods of data analysis for each of the research questions was presented and justified. The following chapter contains a presentation and analysis of the data.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

This study intended to investigate the extent to which the professional preparation to teach literacy, beliefs about student achievement, professional practices such as planning, reflection, and collaboration with colleagues, and valuation of specific instructional strategies differed between the most effective and least effective teachers of tenth grade intensive reading classes. In addition, it intended to investigate the extent to which principals and assistant principals could identify the professional and instructional characteristics that distinguished the most effective tenth grade intensive reading teachers from the least effective. The purpose of this study was achieved by examining the data collected through teacher and principal/assistant principal surveys along with teacher evaluation data. This chapter presents the results of the data analysis of the five stated research questions.

The descriptive statistics used to answer research question one: "To what extent would the most effective and least effective teachers of tenth grade intensive reading classes with non-proficient students differ in their professional preparation to teach literacy?" included a presentation of the frequencies and an analysis of chi square comparing the expectations to the results for the most and least effective teachers.

The descriptive statistics including frequency, mean, standard deviation, and independent samples t-test were used to analyze research questions two, three, and four: "To what extent would the most effective and least effective teachers of tenth grade intensive reading classes with non-proficient students differ in their beliefs about student

achievement?', "To what extent would the most effective and least effective teachers of tenth grade intensive reading classes with non-proficient students differ in their professional practices, such as planning, reflection, and collaboration with colleagues?," and "To what extent would the most effective and least effective teachers of tenth grade intensive reading classes with non-proficient students differ in their valuation of specific instructional strategies?."

Finally, the descriptive statistics analyzed for research question five: "To what extent would principals and assistant principals identify the professional and instructional characteristics that distinguish the most effective tenth grade intensive reading teachers from the least effective?" included the frequency, mean, median, standard deviation and an independent samples t-test.

<u>Descriptive Statistics</u>

Beliefs about Student Achievement Variables

These variables will center on the thoughtful and compassionate teacher and the beliefs these teachers have regarding their own self efficacy, relationships with their students, and how they effectively teach their students despite factors external to the classroom. Table 2 reports the mean, median, and standard deviation for the construct regarding the beliefs about student achievement variables. The point scale used was 4 for Strongly Agree, 3 for Agree, 2 for Disagree, and 1 for Strongly Disagree. Table 3 reports the frequency in percent for each of the answers, Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.

Table 2

Beliefs about Student Achievement Construct

_____

	n	M	Mdn	SD
Research Question 2	42	3.14	3.20	.35

Table 3

Percentage of Teachers Who Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree in Beliefs about Student Achievement

_____

	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Students can improve reading.	71.4	26.2	0.0	2.4
I know how to improve reading.	47.6	50.0	0.0	2.4
Motivation is my responsibility.	66.7	33.3	0.0	0.0
Quality of the teacher is most important.	45.2	47.6	7.1	0.0
Effective teachers cannot overcome some factors.	0.0	7.1	40.5	52.4

_____

Professional Practices to Support Instruction Variables

These variables will focus on the professional practices employed by the teachers in this study including planning, classroom management, self-reflection, and collaboration with colleagues. Table 4 reports the mean, median, and standard deviation for the construct regarding the professional practices to support instruction variables. Table 5 reports the frequency in percent for each of the answers, Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.

Table 4

Professional Practices to Support Instruction Construct

_____

	n	M	Mdn	SD
Research Question 3	42	3.61	3.75	.31

_____

Table 5

Percentage of Teachers Who Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree in Professional Practices to Support Instruction

	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Planning is important.	69.0	28.6	0.0	2.4
Classroom management is important.	83.3	14.3	0.0	0.0
Collaboration makes me better.	71.4	26.2	0.0	2.4
I reflect on my teaching every day.	33.3	57.1	7.1	0.0

General Classroom Teaching Strategies Variables

These variables will explore the extent to which the teachers in this study valued and used general classroom teaching strategies that they believe positively impacted their tenth grade students. Table 6 reports the mean, median, and standard deviation for the construct regarding general classroom teaching strategies variables. Table 7 reports the frequency in percent for each of the answers, Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.

Table 6

General Classroom Teaching Strategies Construct

	n	M	Mdn	SD
Research Question 4	42	3.14	3.12	.26

Table 7

*Percentage of Teachers Who Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree in
Their Valuation of General Classroom Teaching Strategies*

	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Post and communicate learning goal	21.4	54.8	21.4	2.4
Assist students with goal setting	38.1	59.5	0.0	0.0
Teach students to self-monitor progress	45.2	54.8	0.0	0.0
Establish and maintain classroom routines	66.7	28.6	0.0	0.0
Chunk content	69.0	23.8	2.4	0.0
Use similarities and differences	47.6	50.0	0.0	0.0
Use of guided practice	76.2	23.8	0.0	0.0
Efficient use of learning time	78.6	21.4	0.0	0.0
Cooperative learning activities	50.0	42.9	4.8	0.0
Visual aids and/or graphic organizers	76.2	21.4	2.4	0.0
Check for understanding	81.0	16.7	0.0	0.0
Daily homework	11.9	38.1	45.2	4.8

Adolescent Reading Strategies Variables

These variables will explore the extent to which the teachers in this study valued
and used adolescent reading strategies that they believed positively impacted their high
school students' improvement in reading. Table 8 reports the mean, median, and
standard deviation for the construct regarding adolescent reading strategies variables.

The four point Likert-scale that was used on both the teacher and administrator
surveys assigned a value of 4 to Strongly Agree, 3 to Agree, 2 to Disagree, and 1 to
Strongly Disagree. When comparing the four constructs for the 42 teachers' responses,
the construct of Professional Practices yielded the highest level of agreement among
teachers with a mean of M=3.61, whereas the lowest area of agreement was in the

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construct of Adolescent Reading Strategies, with a mean of M=2.77. Additionally, the

standard deviation of SD=.43 for Adolescent Reading Strategies indicates data for that

construct were the most varied. Beliefs about Student Achievement and General

Classroom Strategies both had a mean of M=3.14 which indicated that items in these two

constructs were agreed upon practices among teachers. Finally, the General Classroom

Strategies construct had the smallest standard deviation of SD=.26, which indicated data

were the least spread out and teachers were most consistent. Table 9 reports the

frequency in percent for each of the answers, Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and

Strongly Disagree.

Table 8
Adolescent Reading Strategies Construct

	n	M	Mdn	SD
Research Question 4	42	2.77	2.84	.43

Table 9

Percentage of Teachers Who Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree in Their Valuation of Adolescent Reading Strategies

	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Sustained silent reading	26.2	66.7	4.8	2.4
Student reading one-on-one with teacher	23.8	69.0	7.1	0.0
Paired/partner student readings	33.3	57.1	4.8	2.4
Choral reading	4.8	47.6	40.5	2.4
Round robin reading	9.5	31.0	47.6	9.5
Classroom library with diverse offerings	66.7	33.3	0.0	0.0
Word wall for vocabulary	33.3	61.9	4.8	0.0
Hot and cold readings	9.5	40.5	11.9	0.0
Text coding/annotating	57.1	35.7	4.8	0.0
Question-Answer-Relationship (QAR)	40.5	45.2	9.5	0.0

Testing the Research Questions

Research Question One

Question 1: "To what extent would the most effective and least effective teachers of tenth grade intensive reading classes with non-proficient students differ in their professional preparation to teach literacy?"

The first research question examined the results of nine items that the 42 teachers were asked, as shown in Appendix A, items 1-9. Items 1 and 2 in Appendix A revealed the teachers response to the grade level they taught and the types of students they taught by program (general education, ELL, and ESE). The remaining seven items included years of service as a classroom teacher, years of service as a reading teacher, undergraduate degree major, graduate degree major, status of Florida Reading Endorsement, professional learning opportunities attended, and the teacher's perception

of how they became an effective high school intensive reading teacher. Each of these

items provided nominal data that could be categorized into frequency distributions.

Additionally, items three through nine were grouped into two groups, more effective

teachers and less effective teachers, as evidenced by their student learning growth data.

By using Florida's value-added model for student learning growth more effective

teachers had 50% or more of their students make satisfactory learning growth, while less

effective teachers had 49% or less of their students make satisfactory learning growth.

Table 10 illustrates years of service as a classroom teacher for more effective and less

effective teachers. Table 11 illustrates years of service as a high school intensive reading

teacher for more effective and less effective teachers. These two items can be found in

Appendix A, items 3 and 4.

Table 10
Years of Service as a Classroom Teacher for More and Less Effective Teachers

			Years			
Effectiveness	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-20	21 or more	Total
More	1	2	7	6	7	23
Less	4	4	7	4	0	19
Total	5	6	14	10	7	42

Table 11

Years of Service as a High School Intensive Reading Teacher for More and Less Effective Teachers

| | Years | | | | | |
Effectiveness	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-20	21 or more	Total
More	3	14	3	3	0	23
Less	9	7	3	0	0	19
Total	12	21	6	3	0	42

Using a more effective/less effective cross-tabulation chi square analysis, it is revealed that a significant relationship exists x (4, N = 42), p=.048 between years of service as a classroom teacher and teacher effectiveness. The more years of service the more effective the teacher. The minimum expected count in each cell was 2.26. The expected frequency of number of teachers in some cells is less than five and this may question the validity of the assumption and should be considered in questioning the results. Table 12 illustrates the results of the chi square analysis.

Table 12

Analysis of Chi Square Test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.573	4	.048

Using a more effective/less effective cross-tabulation chi square analysis, it is revealed that a significant relationship also exists x (3, N = 42), p=.045 between years of service as a high school intensive reading teacher and teacher effectiveness. It was found that the more years of service the teacher had served, the greater the learning growth of the student. The minimum expected count in each cell was 1.36. The expected

frequency of number of teachers in some cells is less than five and this may question the

validity of the assumption and should be considered in questioning the results.   Table 13

illustrates the results of the chi square analysis.

Table 13
Analysis of Chi Square Test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.025	3	.045

In regards to degree major in teaching reading and/or teaching reading to

adolescents and the status of attaining a Florida Reading Endorsement, no significant

findings were revealed when comparing more and less effective teachers using the cross-

tabulation chi square analysis. Frequencies for the percentages of responding teachers

(categorized by more and less effective teachers) who reported the attainment of a degree

in reading coursework and/or the attainment of a reading endorsement are shown in Table

14 below. These items can be found in Appendix A, items5-7.

Table 14
Percentage of Teachers Attaining a Degree Major in Teaching Reading, Teaching Reading to Adolescents, and Status of Florida Reading Endorsement

	% More effective	% Less effective
Undergraduate degree reading coursework	30	47
Undergraduate degree adolescent reading coursework	22	42
Graduate degree reading coursework	39	37
Graduate degree adolescent reading coursework	35	32
Hold a Florida Reading Endorsement	78	63
Partially hold a Florida Reading Endorsement	17	32
Not reading endorsed and not interested	4	5

Pertaining to professional learning opportunities attended by more and less effective teachers and self perception of how individual teachers felt that they became effective high school intensive reading teachers, no significant findings were noted. Frequencies for the percentages of responding teachers (categorized by more and less effective teachers) who reported attending professional learning opportunities and their own self perceptions are shown in Tables 15 and 16 below. These can be found as items 8 and 9 in Appendix A.

Table 15
Percentage of Teachers Attending Professional Learning Opportunities

	% More effective	% Less effective
PLC focusing on effective instructional strategies	87	79
PLC focusing on reading, literacy, and curriculum	70	84
In-service on reading/literacy by an administrator	35	26
In-service on reading/literacy by a reading coach	74	74
In-service on reading/literacy by district level personnel	44	58
Workshop/Conference outside my district	30	32
Did not participate in any professional learning on reading	9	0
Read and improved my skills on my own	65	58

Table 16
Percentage of Teachers' Perceptions: How They Became an Effective Reading Teacher

	% More effective	% Less effective
Self taught by reading, conversation, online	61	74
Formal education (graduate or undergraduate)	52	58
School district professional learning	83	68
School level learning	52	53
Collaboration with other reading teachers	78	95
"I am an ineffective reading teacher."	0	5

Research Question Two

Question 2: "To what extent would the most effective and least effective teachers of tenth grade intensive reading classes with non-proficient students differ in their beliefs about student achievement?"

The second research question examined the results of five items, 10-14, which can be found in Appendix A that the 42 teachers were asked. After careful consideration of these five items, it was determined that item 14 should be re-coded in order to be consistent with the other four items in this category. The opposite Likert-scale was applied accordingly.

Consistent with previous findings, results from these items were analyzed by more effective and less effective teachers of intensive high school reading students. The four point Likert-scale that was used assigned a value of 4 to Strongly Agree, 3 to Agree, 2 to Disagree, and 1 to Strongly Disagree. Frequencies for the percentages of responding teachers (categorized by more and less effective teachers) who reported that they Strongly Agree with the statement regarding their own personal beliefs about student achievement are shown in Table 17 below.

Table 17
Percentage of Teachers Who Strongly Agree in Beliefs about Student Achievement

	% More effective	% Less effective
High school students can improve in reading.	78	63
I know how to improve reading of high school students.	57	37
Motivation of students is a primary responsibility.	61	74
The quality of the teacher is the most important variable.	48	42
There are external factors that even effective teachers cannot overcome.	52	53

Upon the completion of an independent samples t-test, it was found that there were no statistically significant differences in beliefs about student achievement between the two groups of more effective and less effective teachers. Specifically, the most educationally relevant element that approached significance was item 11, "I know how to improve reading of high school students." The difference between more effective teachers and less effective teachers when answering this item was $t(40) = 1.48$, p=.146, p is not $< .05$. This did not meet the p<.05 threshold of significance, however, did merit educational relevance regarding the confidence levels of the ability to improve reading of high school students for more effective teachers in comparison to less effective teachers. More effective teachers had greater confidence in their abilities to teach high school intensive reading students than less effective teachers. Additionally, when an independent samples t-test was performed on the Beliefs about Student Achievement Construct, no statistically significant findings became evident.

<center>Research Question Three</center>

Question 3: "To what extent would the most effective and least effective teachers of tenth grade intensive reading classes with non-proficient students differ in their professional practices, such as planning, reflection, and collaboration with colleagues?"

The third research question examined the results of five items, 15-19, found in Appendix A, that the 42 teachers were asked. After careful consideration of these five items, it was determined that item 19 should not be included in the Professional Practices to Support Instruction Construct as it was not consistent with the other four items in this category in its design. Item 19 posed the statement "I am excited about coming to work

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at my school every day." This item, in retrospect, did not support the intent of the construct, as it was not a professional practice.

Consistent with previous data, results from these items were analyzed by more effective and less effective teachers of intensive high school reading students. The four point Likert-scale assigned a value of 4 to Strongly Agree, 3 to Agree, 2 to Disagree, and 1 to Strongly Disagree. Frequencies for the percentages of responding teachers (categorized by more and less effective teachers) who reported that they Strongly Agree with the statement regarding their own personal beliefs in the professional practice to support instruction are shown in Table 18 below. Table 19 displays the means, medians and standard deviations for each item.

Table 18
Percentage of Teachers Who Strongly Agree in Professional Practices to Support Instruction Construct

	% More effective	% Less effective
Instructional planning is very important in teaching reading.	65	74
Classroom management is a prerequisite for effective teaching.	87	79
I am better when I collaborate with other teachers of reading.	74	68
I allocate time every day to reflect on my teaching and how to improve.	39	26

Table 19

Professional Practices to Support Instruction Construct

	n	M	Mdn	SD
Instructional Planning	42	3.64	4.00	.62
Classroom Management	41	3.85	4.00	.36
Collaboration	42	3.67	4.00	.61
Daily Reflection	41	3.27	3.00	.59

The means and medians of each item, consistent with the percentages presented above, illustrate that daily reflection on teaching and how to improve, is the least used professional practice by both the more effective and less effective teachers. Upon the completion of an independent samples t-test, it was found that there were no statistically significant differences in professional practices to support instruction between the groups of more effective and less effective teachers. In addition, there were no educationally important findings to be reported regarding the individual elements of the construct.

Research Question Four

Question 4: "To what extent would the most effective and least effective teachers of tenth grade intensive reading classes with non-proficient students differ in their valuation of specific instructional strategies?"

The fourth research question examined the results of 22 items, items 20-41, found in Appendix A. These items were related to teachers' beliefs that a particular instructional strategy positively impacted high school student improvement in reading. The next 22 items, items 42-63 in Appendix A, listed the same instructional strategies, but asked the 42 teachers to report how often they used each strategy. Additionally, these instructional strategies were divided into two groups; the first 12 strategies listed were

general classroom teaching strategies and the next 10 were adolescent reading strategies. The statistical tests that were used to analyze this data were performed on each set of strategies. After careful consideration of these strategies, it was determined that items 36 and 58 (having to do with the value and use of round robin reading) should be re-coded in order to be consistent with the other strategies in the adolescent reading category. The opposite Likert-scale was applied accordingly.

Consistent with previous data, results from these items were analyzed by groups of more effective and less effective teachers of intensive high school reading students. The four point Likert-scale that was used assigned a value of 4 to Strongly Agree, 3 to Agree, 2 to Disagree, and 1 to Strongly Disagree. Frequencies for the percentages of responding teachers (categorized by more and less effective teachers) who reported that they Strongly Agree with the statement regarding their valuation of the general classroom instructional strategy are shown in Table 20 below. Frequencies for the percentages of responding teachers (categorized by more and less effective teachers) who reported that they Strongly Agree with the statement regarding their daily use of the general classroom instructional strategy are shown in Table 21 below. Daily use data are shown to demonstrate the strategies the 42 teachers reported to use the most often.

Table 20

Percentage of Teachers Who Strongly Agree with the Valuation of the General Classroom Strategy

	% More effective	% Less effective
Post and communicate learning goal	22	21
Assist students with goal setting	30	47
Teach students to self-monitor progress	44	47
Establish and maintain classroom routines	65	68
Chunk content	61	79
Use similarities and differences	52	42
Use of guided practice	78	74
Efficient use of learning time	70	90
Cooperative learning activities	57	42
Visual aids and/or graphic organizers	83	68
Check for understanding	83	79
Daily homework	13	11

Table 21

Percentage of Teachers Who Report Use of the General Classroom Strategy Daily

	% More effective	% Less effective
Post and communicate learning goal	74	47
Assist students with goal setting	13	0
Teach students to self-monitor progress	26	26
Establish and maintain classroom routines	96	90
Chunk content	78	68
Use similarities and differences	35	58
Use of guided practice	78	63
Efficient use of learning time	87	95
Cooperative learning activities	44	21
Visual aids and/or graphic organizers	57	53
Check for understanding	96	84
Daily homework	13	26

Upon the completion of an independent samples t-test, one statistically significant difference in the reported daily use of a general classroom strategy was revealed between

the groups of more effective and less effective teachers; specifically, item 42, "posting and communicating daily and long term learning goals." The difference between more effective teachers and less effective teachers when answering this item was $t(39) = 2.58$, p=.014. This outcome met the p<.05 threshold of significance. For the corresponding valuation for "posting and communicating daily and long term learning goals" there was no difference between more effective and less effective teachers. This means that although there was no significance in their valuation of posting and communicating daily and long term learning goals, more effective teachers reported daily use of this general teaching strategy, whereas less effective teachers did not.

The most educationally relevant elements that approached significance were items 27 (efficient use of learning time), 45(establishing and maintaining classroom routines), and 52(checking for understanding). For the valuation of item 27 "efficient use of learning time," the difference between less effective teachers and more effective teachers when answering this item was $t(40) = -1.57$, p=.123, p is not < .05. This did not meet the p<.05 threshold of significance, however, did merit educational relevance regarding the valuation of efficient use of learning time for less effective teachers in comparison to more effective teachers. Meaning, less effective teachers placed a stronger emphasis on the efficient use of learning time than did more effective teachers.

For the reported daily use of item 45 "establishing and maintaining classroom routines," the difference between the groups of more effective teachers and less effective teachers when answering was $t(39) = 1.57$, p=.125, p is not < .05. This did not meet the p<.05 threshold of significance, however, did merit educational relevance regarding the

reported daily use of establishing and maintaining classroom routines for more effective teachers in comparison to less effective teachers, meaning that more effective teachers reported the daily use of establishing and maintaining classroom routines more frequently than less effective teachers.

For the reported daily use of item 52 "checking for understanding," the difference between more effective teachers and less effective teachers was $t(38) = 1.62$, p=.114, p is not < .05. This did not meet the p<.05 threshold of significance, however, did merit educational relevance regarding the reported daily use of checking for understanding for more effective teachers in comparison to less effective teachers, indicating that more effective teachers reported the daily use of checking for understanding significantly more frequently than less effective teachers. Additionally, when independent samples t-tests were performed on the General Classroom Teaching Strategies Construct in regards to the valuation and use of the strategy, no statistically significant findings became evident.

Frequencies for the percentages of responding teachers (categorized by more and less effective teachers) who reported that they Strongly Agree with the statement regarding their valuation of the general classroom instructional strategy in comparison to their reported use of the general classroom strategy are shown in Table 22 below.

Table 22

Percentage of More and Less Effective Teachers Who Strongly Agree with the Valuation of the General Classroom Strategy and Who Report Use of the General Classroom Strategy Daily

	Valuation		Reported Use	
	% More	% Less	% More	% Less
Post and communicate learning goal	22	21	74	47
Assist students with goal setting	30	47	13	0
Teach students to self-monitor progress	44	47	26	26
Establish and maintain classroom routines	65	68	96	90
Chunk content	61	79	78	68
Use similarities and differences	52	42	35	58
Use of guided practice	78	74	78	63
Efficient use of learning time	70	90	87	95
Cooperative learning activities	57	42	44	21
Visual aids and/or graphic organizers	83	68	57	53
Check for understanding	83	79	96	84
Daily homework	13	11	13	26

Next, is a review of the data regarding the 42 teachers' valuation and reported use of specific adolescent reading strategies. Frequencies for the percentages of responding teachers (categorized by more and less effective teachers) who reported that they Strongly Agree with the statement regarding their valuation of the adolescent reading strategy are shown in Table 23 below.

Table 23

Percentage of Teachers Who Strongly Agree with the Valuation of Adolescent Reading Strategies

	% More effective	% Less effective
Sustained silent reading	30	21
Student reading one-on-one with teacher	22	26
Paired/partner student readings	44	21
Choral reading	0	11
Round robin reading	10	10
Using a classroom library with diverse offerings	65	68
Word wall for vocabulary	30	37
Hot and cold readings	4	16
Text coding/annotating	52	63
Question-Answer-Relationship (QAR) activities	44	37

Frequencies for the percentages of responding teachers (categorized by more and less effective teachers) who reported that they Strongly Agree with the statement regarding their reported daily use of the adolescent reading strategy are shown in Table 24 below. Daily use data are shown to demonstrate the strategies reported to be used the most often.

Table 24

Percentage of Teachers' Reported Daily Use of Adolescent Reading Strategies

	% More effective	% Less effective
Sustained silent reading	26	42
Student reading one-on-one with teacher	9	0
Paired/partner student readings	13	5
Choral reading	0	5
Round robin reading	5	5
Using a classroom library with diverse offerings	39	68
Word wall for vocabulary	35	37
Hot and cold readings	4	0
Text coding/annotating	52	37
Question-Answer-Relationship (QAR) activities	26	21

Upon the completion of an independent samples t-test, it was found that there were no statistically significant differences in the valuation and reported use of specific adolescent reading strategies between the groups of more effective and less effective teachers.

The most educationally relevant elements that approached significance were items 32 (sustained silent reading), 34(paired/partner student readings), and 55(student reading one-on-one with teacher). For the valuation of item 32 "sustained silent reading," the difference between more effective teachers and less effective teachers when answering this item was $t(40) = 1.61$, p=.115, p is not $< .05$. This did not meet the p<.05 threshold of significance, however, did merit educational relevance regarding the valuation of sustained silent reading for more effective teachers in comparison to less effective teachers, indicating that more effective teachers valued the research based educational practice of sustained silent reading than less effective teachers.

For the valuation of item 34 "paired/partner student readings," the difference between more effective teachers and less effective teachers when answering this item was $t(39) = 1.64$, p=.108, p is not $< .05$. This did not meet the p<.05 threshold of significance, however, did merit educational relevance regarding the valuation of paired/partner student readings for more effective teachers in comparison to less effective teachers.

For the reported daily use of item 55 "student reading one-on-one with teacher," the difference between more effective teachers and less effective teachers when answering this item was $t(37) = 1.71$, p= .096, p is not $< .05$. This did not meet the p<.05

threshold of significance, however, did merit educational relevance regarding the reported daily use of student reading one-on-one with teacher for more effective teachers in comparison to less effective teachers, meaning that the daily practice of reading to students one-on-one with teacher was practiced more on a daily basis with more effective teachers than with less effective teachers. Additionally, when independent samples t-tests were performed on the Adolescent Reading Strategies Construct in regards to the valuation and use of the strategy, no statistically findings become evident.

Frequencies for the percentages of responding teachers (categorized by more and less effective teachers) who reported that they Strongly Agree with the statement regarding their valuation of the adolescent reading strategy in comparison to their reported use of the adolescent reading strategy are shown in Table 25 below.

Table 25
Percentage of More and Less Effective Teachers Who Strongly Agree with the Valuation of the Adolescent Reading Strategy and Who Report Use of the Adolescent Reading Strategy Daily

	Valuation		Reported Use	
	% More	% Less	% More	% Less
Sustained silent reading	30	21	26	42
Student reading one-on-one with teacher	22	26	9	0
Paired/partner student readings	44	21	13	5
Choral reading	0	11	0	5
Round robin reading	10	10	5	5
Using a classroom library with diverse offerings	65	68	39	68
Word wall for vocabulary	30	37	35	37
Hot and cold readings	4	16	4	0
Text coding/annotating	52	63	52	37
Question-Answer-Relationship (QAR) activities	44	37	26	21

Research Question Five

Question 5: "To what extent would principals and assistant principals identify the professional and instructional characteristics that distinguish the most effective tenth grade intensive reading teachers from the least effective?"

The fifth research question examined the results of whether or not the administrator would recognize an instructional strategy that a more effective reading teacher used more than a less effective teacher. The survey instrument that administrators responded to is found in Appendix B. Earlier results (item 42, found in Appendix A) revealed that more effective teachers posted and communicated daily long term learning goals on a daily basis. Table 26 displays the mean, median, and standard deviation for items 20 and 17 respectively, on the teacher and administrator surveys (Appendices A and B, respectively). The item states "I believe this instructional strategy positively impacts high school student improvement in reading: posting and communicating daily and long term learning goals." Table 27 shows the percentages of teacher and administrator responses related to their valuation of this learning strategy.

Table 26
Teacher and Administrator Valuation of the Posting and Communication of Daily and Long Term Learning Goals

	n	M	Mdn	SD
Teacher	42	2.95	3.00	.731
Administrator	46	3.61	4.00	.537

Table 27

Percentage of Teacher and Administrator Responses to their Valuation of the Posting and Communication of Daily and Long Term Learning Goals

	%Strongly Agree	%Agree	%Disagree	%Strongly Disagree
Teacher	21.4	54.8	21.4	2.4
Administrator	61.7	34.0	2.1	0.0

Upon the completion of an independent samples t-test, the difference between teachers and administrators when answering this item was $t(86) = -4.83$, p=.000, p < .05. This outcome met the p<.05 threshold of significance. Therefore, although there was no difference between more and less effective reading teachers on their valuation of the general classroom strategy of posting and communicating a learning goal, there was statistical significance between more and less effective reading teachers when reporting that a learning goal was used daily. Additionally, administrators valued the posting and communication of using daily and long term goals and were able to recognize this when observing and evaluating the most effective teachers.

In regards to the aforementioned findings of those items that are educationally relevant although not statistically significant, a comparison of the percentage of teacher and administrator responses as to their valuation of each belief, general classroom strategy, or adolescent reading strategy is displayed in Tables 28-34. The first item is item 11 on the teacher survey (Appendix A) and item 8 on the administrator survey (Appendix B).

Table 28

Percentage of Teacher and Administrator Responses to their Valuation of the Belief That the Teacher Knows how to Improve Reading of High School Students

	%Strongly Agree	%Agree	%Disagree	%Strongly Disagree
Teacher	47.6	50.0	2.4	0.0
Administrator	95.7	4.3	0.0	0.0

The second item is item 27 on the teacher survey (Appendix A) and item 24 on

the administrator survey (Appendix B).

Table 29

Percentage of Teacher and Administrator Responses to their Valuation of the General Classroom Strategy: Efficient Use of Learning Time

	%Strongly Agree	%Agree	%Disagree	%Strongly Disagree
Teacher	78.6	21.4	0.0	0.0
Administrator	83.0	17.0	0.0	0.0

The third item is item 23 on the teacher survey (Appendix A) and item 20 on the

administrator survey (Appendix B).

Table 30

Percentage of Teacher and Administrator Responses to their Valuation of the General Classroom Strategy: Establishing and Maintaining Classroom Routines

	%Strongly Agree	%Agree	%Disagree	%Strongly Disagree
Teacher	66.7	28.6	0.0	0.0
Administrator	78.7	19.1	0.0	0.0

The fourth item is item 30 on the teacher survey (Appendix A) and item 27 on the

administrator survey (Appendix B).

Table 31

*Percentage of Teacher and Administrator Responses to their Valuation of the General
Classroom Strategy: Checking for Understanding*

	%Strongly Agree	%Agree	%Disagree	%Strongly Disagree
Teacher	81.0	16.7	0.0	0.0
Administrator	93.6	6.4	0.0	0.0

The fifth item is item 32 on the teacher survey (Appendix A) and item 29 on the

administrator survey (Appendix B).

Table 32

*Percentage of Teacher and Administrator Responses to their Valuation of the Adolescent
Reading Strategy: Sustained Silent Reading*

	%Strongly Agree	%Agree	%Disagree	%Strongly Disagree
Teacher	26.2	66.7	4.8	2.4
Administrator	31.9	61.7	4.3	0.0

The sixth item is item 34 on the teacher survey (Appendix A) and item 31 on the

administrator survey (Appendix B).

Table 33

*Percentage of Teacher and Administrator Responses to their Valuation of the Adolescent
Reading Strategy: Paired/Partner Student Readings*

	%Strongly Agree	%Agree	%Disagree	%Strongly Disagree
Teacher	33.3	57.1	4.8	2.4
Administrator	42.6	51.1	4.3	2.1

The seventh item is item 33 on the teacher survey (Appendix A) and item 30 on

the administrator survey (Appendix B).

Table 34

Percentage of Teacher and Administrator Responses to their Valuation of the Adolescent Reading Strategy: Student Reading One-on-One With Teacher

	%Strongly Agree	%Agree	%Disagree	%Strongly Disagree
Teacher	23.8	69.0	7.1	0.0
Administrator	42.6	46.8	8.5	0.0

Qualitative Data

The teacher survey concluded with four items that allowed the participants an opportunity for free response. The data collected was then organized into three themes. After categorizing the data into themes, the data were then sorted by the more effective (*f*=23) and the less effective (*f*=19) teachers to see patterns and trends that developed in the responses specifically given by the more and less effective teachers. The first theme was strategies, techniques, or any other factors that the teacher believed contributed to their success with a non-proficient tenth grade reader. The second theme was what the teachers believed were the three most important things they did to support non-proficient readers. Finally, the third theme was what the teachers believed school and school district leaders could do to assist in providing support in improving reading of non-proficient readers.

Strategies, Techniques, and Other Factors

Many of the strategies and techniques cited by the teachers were mentioned earlier in the review of the literature as proven, research-based teaching methodology. Specifically, the most effective teachers (*f*=13) noted using before, during, and after reading strategies and the consistent practice of scaffolding and modeling…I do, we do,

you do. Additional strategies (*f*=16) included students monitoring their own thinking as they read, teachers providing feedback about a student's reading, students writing about their reading, and being able to back up their ideas, and involving students in the progress monitoring process. Notably, four teachers mentioned the use of Kagan strategies as an effective method of increasing student engagement and motivation. Other strategies employed by the most effective teachers (*f*=12) included use of high interest literature, use of varied technology, and use of games and activities to practice skills. Table 35 shows the frequency of the more effective teachers' responses to their self-reported preferred strategies.

Table 35
Number of More Effective Teachers Reporting Preferred Strategies

	Number of teachers
Students monitor their own thinking	5
Teacher uses progress monitoring to guide instruction	4
Teacher provides feedback as student reads	3
Use of SSR and journaling about what was read	8
Use of Kagan strategies to increase student engagement	4
Use of before, during and after reading strategies	6
Use of scaffolding and modeling…I do, we do, you do	7
Use of high interest literature	5
Use of varied technology	5
Use of games and activities to practice the skills	2

Techniques that were mentioned by the most effective teachers (*f*=13) as often employed included teaching vocabulary and word etymology, using decoding skills and context clues, and teaching students how to make predictions, question, and make connections in their reading. Furthermore, strategies that are focused on benchmark skills including making inferences, synthesizing, evaluating, determining validity and

reliability, and test taking strategies were also cited by the more effective teachers (f=6). The use of literature and Socratic circles in the classroom was noted as a frequent practice by the most effective teachers (f=3). Table 36 shows the frequency of the more effective teachers' responses to their self-reported preferred techniques.

Table 36
Number of More Effective Teachers Reporting Preferred Techniques

	Number of teachers
Teaching/reviewing benchmark skills	3
Using literature/Socratic circles for discussion	3
Teaching test taking strategies	3
Teaching vocabulary and word etymology	6
Teaching decoding skills and context clues	7

In addition to the aforementioned strategies and techniques, was the category for other factors that the more effective teachers believed made a difference in their effectiveness. The majority of these teachers (f=14) noted they worked very hard to establish rapport with their students so that the students knew that they were cared for and that the teacher cared about their learning. This required the teacher (f=9) to listen to their students' concerns, find ways to motivate them, build their confidence, be patient with them, and be firm, fair, positive, and encouraging. Additionally, in order to round out the best possible learning scenario for each student, a comfortable, structured, and safe environment in which to learn must be provided and constant parent-teacher communication must to be maintained (f=12). Table 37 shows the frequency of the more effective teachers' responses to their self-reported preferred other factors.

Table 37

Number of More Effective Teachers Reporting Preferred Other Factors

	Number of teachers
Finding ways to motivate students	6
Listening to student concerns	3
Setting high expectations for the students	4
Communication with parents	3
Establishing rapport with students	14
Provide a comfortable, structured, and safe environment	9

Three Most Important Things

This item provided the teachers the opportunity to express what they believed

were the three most important practices that contributed to their success with tenth grade

non-proficient readers. When reviewing the data, answers were noted and tallied when

repeated.   Three themes emerged which are: establishing a rapport with their students so

the student knows the teacher cares about their learning, providing a comfortable,

structured and safe environment in which to learn, and use of SSR and journaling about

what was read. Table 38 shows the frequency of the more effective teachers' responses

to the three most important things they believe they do to contribute to the success of

their tenth grade non-proficient readers.

Table 38

Number of More Effective Teachers Reporting the Three Most Important Things They Do
that Contribute to the Success of their Tenth Grade Non-Proficient Readers

	Number of teachers
Establishing rapport with students	14
Providing a comfortable, structured, and safe environment	9
Use of SSR and journaling	8

The most frequently mentioned important practice (*f*=14) was that the teachers believed in their students' potential of accomplishing anything they wanted. The teachers recognized their students' capabilities, developed a rapport with them, and found encouraging and exhilarating ways to motivate them. Their efforts were centered on seeing the students be successful in their classroom.

The second most mentioned practice (*f*=9) was that of providing a comfortable, structured, and safe environment in which to learn. Students should have continuous opportunities to experience success in a non-threatening, low anxiety learning environment, in which they are familiar with the routine and what is expected of them. The most effective teachers assure their students they can learn, and use strategies to help them be successful.

Finally, the last most frequently mentioned practice (*f*=8) by the most effective teachers was the valuable use of sustained silent reading, student self-reflection, and journaling. The teachers stated that finding the students' reading level, providing high interest materials, carving out time for them to read, and establishing a classroom that was conducive to silently reading were successful ways to nurture a love of reading in their students. Having the students self-reflect or journal about what they read, increased the students ability to comprehend the material and support their writing skills.

<div style="text-align:center">What School and District Leaders Can Do</div>

The more effective teachers identified two themes that leaders can do to support them. The themes are: resources and time for continued professional improvement. Table

39 shows the frequency of the more effective teachers' responses to the most important things they believe that leaders can do to support them.

Table 39
Number of More Effective Teachers Reporting the Most Important Things Leaders Can Do to Support Them

	Number of teachers
Resources (listed below)	14
Time for continuous professional improvement	12

The more effective teacher's most common suggestion for what school and district leaders could do was to continue providing support for the high school reading programs (f=14). Resources requested included current, high-interest reading materials, consumable materials, supplemental materials, and improved technology for the classroom. Other resources and supports included limiting the size of the classes to no more than 15 students, provide common planning, scheduling the classes with students of similar abilities and closely monitoring the scheduling of students with ESE and ESOL accommodations. Several teachers also asked for additional help in the classroom including teacher aides, support facilitators and/or volunteers.

The next resource that was requested by the more effective teachers (f=12) was time to work with their colleagues. Specifically mentioned was time for the reading teachers to observe each other, work as professional learning communities, and opportunities during the school year for team collaboration. Additionally, they requested professional learning in the form of workshops designed specifically for teaching strategies appropriate for the needs of their students. Lastly, noted by several of the

reading teachers (f=5) was the request for the school district to stop changing the curriculum with no notice of the change being given to the teachers in a timely fashion.

Summary

In this chapter, an introduction was given regarding the analysis and statistical tests that were to be discussed and which order they would be addressed. Specifically, each research question was restated and the results from the Dimensions of Effective Teachers Survey (Appendix A) and the Dimensions of Effective Teachers – Administrator Perspective Survey (Appendix B) that pertained to that particular research question were analyzed and reported. The statistical tests performed depended on the type of data that was being studied. Prior to looking at each individual research question, descriptive statistics were revealed for each construct.

Results from the first quantitative research question revealed that by using a more effective/less effective cross-tabulation chi square analysis, a significant relationship exists between years of service as a classroom teacher and teacher effectiveness. Furthermore, by using a more effective/less effective cross-tabulation chi square analysis, a significant relationship also exists between years of service as a high school intensive reading teacher and teacher effectiveness. No other factors regarding professional preparation of the intensive reading teachers were statistically significant.

Results from the second quantitative research question revealed that upon the completion of an independent samples t-test, it was found that there were no statistically significant differences in beliefs about student achievement between more effective and less effective teachers. Specifically though, the most educationally relevant element that

approached significance between more effective and less effective teachers was the belief that "I know how to improve reading of high school students."

Results from the third quantitative research question revealed that upon the completion of an independent samples t-test, it was found that there were no statistically significant differences in professional practices to support instruction between more effective and less effective teachers. In addition, there were no educationally important findings to be reported regarding the individual elements of the construct.

Results from the fourth quantitative research question revealed that upon the completion of an independent samples t-test, one statistically significant difference in the daily use of a general classroom strategy was revealed between more effective and less effective teachers; specifically, "posting and communicating daily and long term learning goals." For the corresponding valuation for "posting and communicating daily and long term learning goals" there was no difference between more effective and less effective teachers. The most educationally relevant elements that approached significance were for the valuation of "efficient use of learning time," for the daily use of "establishing and maintaining classroom routines," and for the daily use of "checking for understanding."

Additionally, for research question four it was found that upon the completion of an independent samples t-test, there were no statistically significant differences in the valuation and use of specific adolescent reading strategies between more effective and less effective teachers. The most educationally relevant elements that approached significance were for the valuation of "sustained silent reading," for the valuation of

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"paired/partner student readings," and for the daily use of "student reading one-on-one with teacher."

Results from the fifth quantitative research question revealed that upon the completion of an independent samples t-test there was statistical significance between more and less effective reading teachers when a learning goal was used daily. Additionally, administrators valued the posting and communication of using daily and long term goals and were able to recognize this when observing and evaluating the most effective teachers. Finally, qualitative data were analyzed regarding the strategies and techniques that were important to the most effective teachers and what the administrators and district could do to support their work. Responses from the less effective teachers mirrored the responses from the more effective teachers.

The next chapter will present a summary of the study and a discussion of the findings. These are followed by implications for practice, recommendations for further research, and conclusions.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The presentation and analysis of data were reported in the previous chapter. Chapter 5 is comprised of a summary of the study, discussion of the findings for each of the research questions, implications for practice, recommendations for further research, and conclusions. The purpose of this chapter is to further clarify and expand upon the findings presented in Chapter 4 in an effort to provide a deeper understanding of their influence on teaching reading to intensive tenth grade high school students and implications for school and school district leaders. Furthermore, this chapter will present suggestions for further research targeting those factors which make tenth grade reading teachers more effective. Finally, an overarching statement is offered in order to capture what has been attempted in this research.

Summary of the Study

This chapter begins with a summary of the purpose and structure of the study and is followed by the major findings related to deconstructing differences in effectiveness of teachers of tenth grade non –proficient readers in one Florida school district. Conclusions from the findings of this study are discussed and implications for future practice and recommendations for further research are presented.

The purpose of this study was to identify the underlying professional and instructional differences between the most effective and least effective teachers of tenth grade intensive reading courses through teacher and principal/assistant principal surveys

including both quantitative and qualitative data along with teacher evaluation data in one Florida school district.

The Dimensions of Effective Teachers Survey and the Dimensions of Effective Teachers – Administrator Perspective Survey were both developed by the researcher and another researcher doing a companion study. After an extensive review of the literature on effective teaching techniques in both the general classroom and the intensive reading classroom, the researchers constructed multiple choice items to reflect the teachers' beliefs and practices about teaching reading. The surveys were reviewed by knowledgeable educators and literacy experts to ensure content validity and reliability and edits were made accordingly. Participants were asked to respond to nine items regarding their years of experience, educational background, and the professional learning they had participated in. The participants then responded to multiple choice items 10-63, which asked them about their beliefs about teaching, general strategies they valued and employed, and adolescent reading strategies they valued and employed. This information served as the quantitative data for the study. The survey concluded with four open response items which served to collect qualitative data regarding the beliefs, practices, and opinions of the teachers.

The target school district was a large suburban district with a population of about 63,000. This district had nine high schools and two special centers and the teachers of tenth grade intensive reading were targeted to participate in this study. The study was restricted to those who taught in the 2011-2012 school year, due to the fact that the teacher effectiveness data from that school year was to be considered. The study

included 54 out of 80 (67.5%) eligible teacher respondents and 47 out of 51 (92.2%) eligible administrator respondents. Of the 54 teacher respondents, 42 taught all or part tenth grade intensive reading students. Of the 54 teacher respondents, 23 were in the more effective group and 19 were in the less effective group, as categorized by the Florida metric of those teachers with an equal or above 50% student learning gain and those with below 50% student learning gain in the value-added model newly adopted by the state. This study included five research questions and as previously stated, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected in the survey:

1) To what extent would the most effective and least effective teachers of tenth grade intensive reading classes with non-proficient students differ in their professional preparation to teach literacy?

2) To what extent would the most effective and least effective teachers of tenth grade intensive reading classes with non-proficient students differ in their beliefs about student achievement?

3) To what extent would the most effective and least effective teachers of tenth grade intensive reading classes with non-proficient students differ in their professional practices, such as planning, reflection, and collaboration with colleagues?

4) To what extent would the most effective and least effective teachers of tenth grade intensive reading classes with non-proficient students differ in their valuation of specific instructional strategies?

5) To what extent would principals and assistant principals identify the professional and instructional characteristics that distinguish the most effective tenth grade intensive reading teachers from the least effective?

Questions one, two, three, and four were answered quantitatively from the data obtained from teacher participant scores on the backgrounds, beliefs and practices factors presented on the Dimensions of Effective Teachers Survey. Question five was answered from the data obtained from administrator participant scores presented on the Dimensions of Effective Teachers Survey – Administrator Perspective Survey. Question one was answered using the results of a more effective/less effective cross-tabulation chi square analysis, comparing the expectations to the results for the most and least effective teachers. The descriptive statistics including frequency, mean, standard deviation, and independent samples t-test were used to analyze research questions two, three, four, and five. Additionally, qualitative data were obtained through open-ended items at the end of the survey, and was analyzed regarding the strategies and techniques that were important to the most effective and the less effective teachers, and what the administrators and district could do to support their work.

<div align="center">Discussion of the Findings</div>

Previous researchers (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; Stronge, 2007; Parris & Block, 2007; Marzano, 2007; Stronge &Hindman, 2002; Danielson, 2001) studied extensively the backgrounds, practices, and beliefs that exist between more and less effective high school teachers of intensive adolescent readers. The goal of the study was to determine the factors which were statistically significant in one suburban school district in the state

of Florida. This section discusses the implications of the findings for each of the five

research questions. Teacher effectiveness was determined by learning gains on FCAT

Reading which the FLDOE determines to be about one year's growth for a year in school.

One of the challenges for high school intensive reading teachers and students is that the

tenth grade FCAT Reading proficient (Level 3) has a norm referenced test (NRT) of the

62nd percentile.

<div align="center">Research Question One</div>

Question 1: "To what extent would the most effective and least effective teachers

of tenth grade intensive reading classes with non-proficient students differ in their

professional preparation to teach literacy?"

The findings resulting from research question one indicate a positive and

significant relationship between years of experience as a classroom teacher and teacher

effectiveness. This finding speaks to the aspect that the more years of experience a

teacher had, the more effective they were as evidenced by their student learning growth

score on FCAT Reading, as determined by the Florida Department of Education.

Furthermore, a positive and significant relationship exists between years of experience as

a high school intensive reading teacher and teacher effectiveness. This finding speaks to

the aspect that the more years of experience as a high school intensive reading teacher,

the more effective the teacher was as evidenced by their student learning growth score, as

determined by the Florida Department of Education.

Additionally, no significant relationships were revealed when comparing more or

less effective teachers and their attainment of coursework in reading (at either the

undergraduate or graduate level) or if they had obtained a Florida Reading Endorsement, suggesting that this formal education may not be a causal factor in teacher effectiveness. In regards to the professional learning opportunities attended by more and less effective teachers and the self perception of how the individual teachers perceived that they became effective high school intensive reading teachers, no significant findings nor educationally important results were discovered. These findings raise the question of what do teachers perceive to improve their effectiveness as those who are to improve reading proficiency of high school students.

Research Question Two

Question 2: "To what extent would the most effective and least effective teachers of tenth grade intensive reading classes with non-proficient students differ in their beliefs about student achievement?"

The findings for research question two revealed no significant differences between more and less effective teachers of high school adolescent readers. Specifically, when asked about their beliefs including: whether or not they believed high school students can improve their reading, whether or not the teacher knew how to improve their reading, whether or not motivation was the reading teacher's responsibility, the quality of the teacher being the most important variable, and that there were external factors that even effective teachers could not overcome, responses between more and less effective teachers were not dissimilar.

Notably, the belief that did prove to be educationally relevant was "I know how to improve reading of high school students." This item revealed that the more effective

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teachers were considerably more confident in their ability to teach high school intensive reading students than their less effective, less confident, reading teacher colleagues.

Additionally, although not reaching the educationally relevant threshold but quite important to educators and students, the belief about student achievement agreed upon by most teachers (both the more and less effective teachers), was "High school students can improve in reading." On the contrary, as agreed upon by the fewest number of teachers (both more and less effective) was the belief that "The quality of the teacher is the most important variable." These two items revealed the valuation and non-valuation of the beliefs that teachers believed led to the achievement of their students. This means that teachers view themselves as being in the position to help students because they believe their high school students can find success in improving their reading capabilities; however they also feel that other factors contribute to that success, not just the effectiveness of the teacher.

Finally, in the open-ended items on the survey, when teachers were asked to respond regarding their personal beliefs about what made them more effective teachers in the reading classroom, it was revealed by the majority of teachers that they believed they must establish a strong rapport with their students, they must listen to them, they must find ways to motivate them and they must build their students' confidence. This requires patience and encouragement by the teacher, as well as firmness, fairness, and positivity. Additionally, the teachers believed this connection would foster itself in an environment that was comfortable, structured and a safe place to learn. As pointed out by Popp, Grant and Stronge (2011), effective teachers viewed the academic needs and the affective needs

of their students as of equal importance and sought to provide both elements to their students.

<div align="center">Research Question Three</div>

Question 3: "To what extent would the most effective and least effective teachers of tenth grade intensive reading classes with non-proficient students differ in their professional practices, such as planning, reflection, and collaboration with colleagues?"

The findings for research question three revealed no significant differences between more and less effective teachers of high school adolescent readers. Specifically, when asked about the professional practices that supported their instruction which included: the importance of instructional planning in teaching reading, classroom management being a prerequisite for effective teaching, collaboration with other teachers of reading, and the allocation of time to reflect on their teaching, responses between more and less effective teachers were not dissimilar. Notably, although not reaching the educationally relevant threshold but quite important to educators and students, the classroom practice that supported instruction agreed upon by most teachers (both the more and less effective teachers), was "Classroom management is a prerequisite for effective teaching." On the contrary, as agreed upon by the fewest number of teachers (both more and less effective) was the practice of "I allocate time every day to reflect on my teaching and how to improve." These two items revealed the valuation and non-valuation of the professional practices that teachers felt supported their classroom teaching.

Meaning that, both more and less effective teachers strongly valued (70 – 90% of the teachers) the professional practices of instructional planning, classroom management, and collaboration as solid strategies that improve instruction. These are well known and widely practiced strategies and are included on most teacher evaluation instruments. The practice of daily reflection was slightly higher for the more effective teachers; however, only about a third of all of the teachers surveyed said they actually took the time to engage in this practice on an everyday basis.

Research Question Four

Question 4: "To what extent would the most effective and least effective teachers of tenth grade intensive reading classes with non-proficient students differ in their valuation of specific instructional strategies?"

The findings resulting from research question four indicate a positive and significant relationship between the reported daily use of a specific classroom strategy and teacher effectiveness. This finding speaks to the aspect that "posting and communicating daily and long term learning goals" occurred more frequently in the more effective teachers' classroom than in the less effective teachers' classroom as evidenced by their student learning growth score, as determined by the Florida Department of Education. Furthermore, even though more and less effective teachers valued "posting and communicating daily and long term learning goals" similarly, it was the follow-through of daily use that differentiated the effectiveness of the teacher.

Notably, there were several general classroom strategies that did prove to be educationally relevant. The first was that less effective teachers valued "efficient use of

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learning time" more than their more effective peers. This item revealed that the less

effective teachers considered efficient use of learning time as a top priority, whereas the

more effective teachers scored this specific classroom strategy high, but did not prioritize

it. Meaning that, other classroom strategies such as posting and communicating daily and

long term learning goals, establishing and maintaining classroom routines, and checking

for understanding, when practiced purposefully, had greater impact on student learning

and that efficient use of learning time was a non-negotiable.

The second general classroom strategy that proved to be educationally relevant

between more and less effective teachers was "establishing and maintaining classroom

routines." This item revealed that the more effective teachers considered the use of

establishing and maintaining classroom routines as a main concern, whereas the less

effective teachers did not recognize, to the same degree, the importance of this strategy.

This dichotomy of responses is particularly interesting in light of the responses related to

efficient use of learning time. Routines are intended to reduce loss of learning time and

provide stable and secure environment for learning.

Finally, the third educationally relevant finding revealed that more effective

teachers practiced the general classroom teaching strategy of "checking for

understanding" more often than their less effective colleagues. This item exposed a

teaching strategy that is related to the use of posting and communicating a learning goal,

discussed earlier. Meaning that, when students are given a scale or metric by which they

can rate their level of understanding, the teacher is provided instant feedback as to their

students' progress. Furthermore, students can self-monitor and self-correct so that both the teacher's feedback is more frequent and the student is given tools to self monitor.

Additionally, the general classroom strategy valued by most teachers (both the more and less effective teachers), was "check for understanding." On the contrary, as valued by the fewest number of teachers (both more and less effective) was the classroom strategy of "giving daily homework." The research on homework reveals an effect size of .39 for high school students that supports the teachers in their valuation, particularly with students who may not work well independently. These two items revealed the valuation and non-valuation of the general classroom strategies that teachers felt led to the achievement/non-achievement of their students.

Lastly, the general classroom strategy reported to be used by most teachers (both the more and less effective teachers), was "establish and maintain classroom routines." On the contrary, as reported to be used by the fewest number of teachers (both more and less effective) was the classroom strategy of "assist students with goal setting." Goal setting has an effect size of .55 and so it may be helpful for teachers to revisit this strategy as it works well with the learning scale, checking for understanding, and providing frequent and specific feedback. These two items revealed the reported use of the general classroom strategies that teachers believed led to the achievement/non-achievement of their students.

To completely answer research question four, the valuation and use of adolescent reading strategies must also be considered. The findings for research question four revealed no significant differences between more and less effective teachers of high

school adolescent readers. Specifically, when asked about the valuation and use of adolescent reading strategies teachers used that supported their instruction, responses between more and less effective teachers were not dissimilar.

Notably, there were several adolescent reading strategies that did prove to be educationally relevant. The first was that more effective teachers valued "sustained silent reading" more than their less effective peers. This item revealed that the more effective teachers considered sustained silent reading as a key feature in their adolescent students' continued reading progress, whereas the less effective teachers did not recognize, that when used effectively, the magnitude of this practice.

The second adolescent reading strategy that proved to be educationally relevant between more and less effective teachers was "paired/partner student readings." This item revealed that the more effective teachers valued the use of establishing and maintaining not only the regular practice of sustained silent reading, but that reading aloud with a partner also benefitted their students by improving oral reading fluency and comprehension confidence.

Finally, the third educationally relevant finding revealed that more effective teachers practiced the adolescent reading strategy of "student reading one-on-one with teacher" more often than their less effective colleagues. This item uncovered a teaching strategy that is again related to the two previously mentioned strategies; the consistent practice and use of sustained silent reading and paired/partner reading. Meaning, giving the student opportunities to read; silently, with a peer, or with the teacher, is an effective adolescent reading strategy. Although not often practiced by either the more or less

effective teacher, it was reported that less effective teachers never read one-on-one with their students.

Additionally, the adolescent reading strategy valued by most teachers (both the more and less effective teachers), was "using a classroom library with diverse offerings." On the contrary, as valued by the fewest number of teachers (both more and less effective) was the adolescent reading strategy of "choral reading." These two items revealed the valuation and non-valuation of the adolescent reading strategies that teachers believed led to the achievement/non-achievement of their students.

Moreover, the adolescent reading strategy reported to be used by most teachers (both the more and less effective teachers), was "using a classroom library with diverse offerings." On the contrary, as reported to be used by the fewest number of teachers (both more and less effective) was the adolescent reading strategy of "hot and cold readings" and "choral readings." These two items revealed the reported use of the adolescent reading strategies that teachers believed led to the achievement/non-achievement of their students.

Finally, in the open-ended items on the survey, when teachers were asked to respond regarding the strategies and techniques that made them more effective teachers in the reading classroom, it was revealed by the majority of teachers that they used before, during, and after strategies, as well as scaffolding and modeling for their students, as the key to their success. They also believed in the power of consistent and frequent monitoring of progress by both the teacher and the students' own self-monitoring. Other strategies included the use of SSR, high interest literature, the varied use of technology,

and games and activities to practice. Techniques included teaching vocabulary, decoding skills and the use of context clues, and teaching students how to make predictions, question, and make connections to their reading.

<div align="center">Research Question Five</div>

Question 5: "To what extent would principals and assistant principals identify the professional and instructional characteristics that distinguish the most effective tenth grade intensive reading teachers from the least effective?"

The findings resulting from research question five indicate a positive and statistically significant relationship exists between the teachers and administrators in their valuation of posting and communicating daily and long term learning goals. Additionally, administrators recognized the use of this specific classroom strategy and how it relates to the effectiveness of the teacher, as evidenced by their observations and evaluations of the teachers. This finding speaks to the aspect that "posting and communicating daily and long term learning goals" occurred more frequently in the more effective teachers' classroom than in the less effective teachers' classroom as evidenced by their student learning growth score, as determined by the Florida Department of Education, and that administrators were able to accurately discern how the use of this strategy influenced the effectiveness of the teacher.

Additionally, in regards to the aforementioned, educationally relevant findings having to do with the teacher and administrator responses to their valuation of certain beliefs and strategies, a pattern was revealed. For responses to all of the items "the belief that the teacher knows how to improve reading of high school students," general

classroom strategies, "efficient use of learning time," "establishing and maintaining classroom routines," "checking for understanding," and the adolescent reading strategies, "sustained silent reading," "paired/partner readings," and "student reading one-on-one with teacher," the administrators who responded "strongly agree" were always greater than the percentage of teachers who responded "strongly agree." Specifically, for the belief that the teacher knows how to improve reading of high school students, almost all of the administrators strongly agreed with this statement, whereas only about half of the teachers did. This indicates a strong confidence that the administrators have in their reading teachers' ability that the majority of teachers do not feel. Furthermore, although the disparities between teachers and administrators who "strongly agree" are not as great for the general classroom strategies and adolescent reading strategies, it is interesting to note that the percentages of teachers and administrators who strongly agreed with the general classroom strategies were in the 70% - 90% range, whereas the percentages of teachers and administrators who strongly agreed with the adolescent reading strategies were in the 20% - 40% range. This may point toward the extensive use of the Marzano evaluation system adopted by this participating school district, which speaks to the understanding and use of these general classroom teaching strategies, whereas the adolescent reading strategies are not specifically stated or measured in the evaluation instrument. Additionally, both teachers and administrators may not have strongly agreed because they are not aware of the powerful impact of the appropriate and effective use of these particular adolescent reading strategies. Unfortunately, although very important, as this point relates to the performance assessment system, measured strategies are general

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across all teachers and are not specific to the needs of non-proficient high school students.

Finally, in the open-ended items on the survey, when teachers were asked to respond regarding what schools and school districts could do to support their efforts as reading teachers, two themes emerged: resources and time for continued professional improvement. Resources included current, high-interest materials, consumable materials, supplemental materials, and current and various technologies. Other resources had to do with appropriate staffing of classes and keeping the class sizes smaller. With regards to time for continued professional improvement, teachers asked for common planning, time to meet in their professional learning communities, opportunities for collaboration throughout the school year, as well as being provided occasions to observe each other.

<u>Implications for Practice</u>

School accountability in the state of Florida has never been as rigorous or as challenging than it is today. Ladner and Lips (2009) stated that Florida's recent accomplishment of being ranked 5th in the nation in education, must attribute its recent and much improved standing on a comprehensive program of school reform that has five main points: school accountability, literacy enhancement, student accountability, teacher quality, and school choice. Not only are Florida's high schools held accountable for metrics that include testing results for reading, mathematics, writing, and science, but also for graduation rate (including the graduation rate of at-risk students), college readiness, and students taking and being successful in advanced coursework. On top of these requirements was the addition of value-added metrics (used in Florida for the first

time in the 2012-2013 school year), which provided the opportunity to quantitatively

distinguish effective from ineffective educators.   This research embodied the

aforementioned school reform points regarding school accountability, literacy

enhancement, student accountability, and teacher quality, and successfully identified the

specific professional practices and strategies that were used by the effective teachers of

high school intensive reading courses in one Florida school district. Effective teachers of

high school intensive reading were defined as those who met a certain percentage of

students who made a learning growth on the Florida value-added model for the Florida

Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) in Reading. The findings of this study have

far-reaching implications for many persons interested in the effective teaching of high

school intensive reading students in the state of Florida. This study identified several

best practices by the most effective teachers and triangulated these findings with the

ability of the districts' administrators to be able to identify these best practices. As

Biancarosa and Snow (2006) so knowledgeably stated, "ensuring adequate ongoing

literacy development for all students in the middle and high school years is a more

challenging task than ensuring excellent reading education in the primary grades, for two

reasons: first, secondary school literacy skills are more complex, more embedded in

subject matters, and more multiply determined; second, adolescents are not as universally

motivated to read better or as interested in school-based reading as kindergartners" (p. 1-

2). Following are the implications from my research which serve as a response to the

challenging task of teaching adolescents to read.

For intensive reading teachers of high school students, this study offers insight into which specific instructional strategies (including general classroom teaching strategies and adolescent reading strategies) are valued and therefore used by the most effective teachers and result in the greatest gains in student learning growth. It also provides intensive reading teachers of high school students those practices and strategies that may negatively influence student achievement. In particular, this study suggests that the daily use of the general classroom strategy of posting and communicating daily and long term learning goals can largely contribute to a teacher's effectiveness. In addition, establishing and maintaining classroom routines and the daily use of checking for understanding are significant ways in which to improve student learning growth. Additionally, it was found that specific adolescent reading strategies that were cited by the most effective teachers included sustained silent reading, paired/partner student readings, and the student reading one-on-one with teacher. Research question four demonstrates this phenomenon. With regards to research questions one, two, and three, years of experience proved to be statistically significant, and a positive attitude about the ability to teach non-proficient high school reading students was educationally relevant.

In addition to this pertinent information regarding teaching strategies for high school students, is the qualitative data that exposes the personal beliefs of the more effective teachers. They believe they must establish a strong rapport with their students, listen to them, find ways to motivate them, and build their students' confidence and self-esteem. Finally, when the most effective teachers were asked to respond to the strategies and techniques they employed the most often, they noted the use of before, during, and

after strategies, scaffolding and modeling for their students, consistent and frequent monitoring of progress by both the teacher and the students' own self-monitoring, SSR, high interest literature, the varied use of technology, games and activities to practice, teaching vocabulary, decoding skills, context clues, and teaching students how to make predictions, question, and make connections to their reading.

For high school and school district administrators, this study offers insight into the findings resulting from research question five indicating a positive and statistically significant relationship between the teachers and administrators in their valuation and use of posting and communicating daily and long term learning goals. In addition to this general classroom strategy, educationally relevant strategies specifically for the reading classroom that administrators should look for are efficient use of learning time, establishing and maintaining classroom routines, checking for understanding and providing feedback, sustained silent reading, paired/partner readings, and student reading one-on-one with teacher.

Interestingly, both the teachers and administrators responded much more in agreement to the general classroom teaching strategies, than they did the specific reading strategies, which may indicate their familiarity and not that these are actually better for the intensive reading classes. Professional learning for administrators and intensive reading teachers to remind them of the high effect literacy strategies that will improve reading of non-proficient high school students could be important for continued learning gains. Implications from this information include a valuable perspective on what administrators should be looking for in their observations in order to do accurate and

helpful observations. Additionally, when asked about what schools and school districts could do to support their efforts as reading teachers, the teachers responded: resources and time for continued professional improvement.

As an extension of high school administrators, school district administrators should invest their resources; including time, treasure, and talent in recruiting teachers who are knowledgeable about the previously mentioned strategies and techniques, as well as focusing on the professional learning offerings that will enhance all high school reading teachers' abilities to teach reading to adolescents. Furthermore, along with the massive amount of time and money spent on professional learning its administrators for the district's current evaluation model (Marzano), explicit professional learning should also be given to those administrators who are specifically observing and evaluating reading teachers. This professional learning should include relevant, research-based adolescent reading strategies as evidenced as successful reading strategies by the most effective reading teachers in this study and other emerging research.

<center>Recommendations for Further Research</center>

The goal of this study was to deconstruct the differences in effectiveness of teachers of tenth grade non-proficient readers in one Florida school district. Data were collected to test five research questions relating to this goal. The information was analyzed and several significant findings resulted from studying this data. The findings however, do have some limitations. The first limitation is that value-added metrics were new to Florida, so there was a lack of long term data to verify that the quantitative results correctly distinguish effective from ineffective teachers. The assumption here is that this

value-added data were correctly calculated by the Florida Department of Education and that the teachers' learning growth score is accurate. A second limitation was that the survey instruments were designed by the researcher along with another researcher for use in one target school district and within the context of that district's interests. Additionally, because this research was only conducted in one school district, the sample size for teacher respondents was constrained. Therefore, generalizability of the findings to other settings would be limited. Lastly, in order to maintain confidentiality and anonymity, the two researchers employed district personnel who identified teachers learning growth data to the more and less effective teachers. This person did not have access to the teachers' survey data; therefore, neither the researchers nor the district personnel had all of the data which could divulge a teacher's identity. The assumption here is that the target school district correctly identified the population and accurately grouped the teachers by effectiveness.

Based on the limitations found herein, suggestions are made for further research. In looking at all five research questions and the manner in which the findings of each research question were reported, it is most imperative that in order to discern the differences between more and less effective teachers, we must accurately be able to group them into those two categories. As Florida progresses with the use of the value-added model in order to determine teacher effectiveness, more abundant and more accurate data should become available. When this happens, districts will then be able to look at multiple years of data for each reading teacher in order to make the best staffing decisions for the high school reading classrooms.

In response to the second limitation, which was the generalizability of the findings beyond the scope of one Florida school district, some suggestions can be made. The quantitative portion of the survey served to collect valuable information regarding the background, beliefs, professional practices, and valuation and use of general classroom teaching strategies and adolescent reading strategies in order to answer research questions one through four. Research question five was answered by the administrators' survey, which asked questions which served to discover rather or not the administrators could recognize the best practices of the most effective teachers. The qualitative portion of the survey asked for the teachers' opinions on what constituted best practice and what they felt district officials should do to support them. Although this survey provided the information the researcher sought to discover, future researchers on this subject could compare and contrast this instrument with others like it, in order to refine and improve its' usefulness. Additionally, future research should include a larger population of high school reading teachers, which would serve to validate or challenge the findings of this research. By including teachers and administrators in many different school districts, a more diverse perspective depending on district initiatives, the evaluation system that is used, the implementation of the evaluation (fidelity), the demographic makeup of its' student population, etc. would help to clarify, explain, and illuminate best practice for high school reading teachers.

Lastly, in response to the third limitation, although the methodology was complicated and tedious, it did accomplish its mission of keeping the teachers confidentiality and anonymity in place. The researchers on this companion project felt

that it was very important, that in order to obtain the most honest feedback from the participants, the teachers needed to be assured that their student learning growth score not be identifiable to the researchers in any way when the survey data were analyzed. Again, this feature affected the results of research questions one through four, as well as the open-ended items at the conclusion of the survey. This approach may not be realistic for future studies with larger populations; however it did serve to improve the response rate and generated rich qualitative data.

Conclusions

The findings of this research expanded the work of previous researchers in the area of deconstructing differences between the more and less effective reading teachers of high school students. This study revealed the research relevant to a teacher's preparation to teach reading, and the beliefs, strategies, and practices that contributed to their effectiveness and whether or not administrators could recognize these strategies and practices. Regarding a teacher's preparation to teach reading (research question one), it was discovered that years of experience in the classroom and years of experience as a high school reading teacher were the only significant factors that influenced a teacher's effectiveness. No other professional preparation had any significant impact. For research questions two and three; which had to do with the beliefs and professional practices of the teacher, no statistically significant aspects came to light. However, the educationally relevant belief that the more effective teachers were more confident about their abilities than their less effective peers was noted.

Research question four along with the qualitative data associated with this question, provided the data that allowed the greatest insight into the differences between the more and less effective teachers with regards to the general classroom teaching strategies and the adolescent reading strategies they employed. This data revealed that the more effective teachers implemented posting and communicating daily and long term learning goals more frequently than their less effective peers. In addition to this statistically significant information, the general classroom teaching practices of efficient use of learning time, establishing and maintaining classroom routines, and checking for understanding proved to be educationally relevant as noted by the most effective teachers. Additionally, the adolescent reading strategies of sustained silent reading, paired/partner readings, and students reading one-on-one with teacher, were educationally relevant as well.

Finally, in regards to research question five, it was of statistical significance that administrators valued the use of the general classroom teaching strategy of posting and communicating daily and long term learning goals and were able to recognize the use of this strategy when observing and evaluating the teachers.

The literature on teaching adolescents to read indicates there are research-based best practices that make a difference in the effectiveness of the teacher, when used appropriately in the high school reading classroom. This paper served to highlight some of these best practices used by the most effective teachers in one Florida school district.

APPENDIX A:
DIMENSIONS OF EFFECTIVE TEACHERS SURVEY

Dimensions of Effective Teachers Survey

<u>Section One</u>

1. In the 2011-2012 school year, I taught intensive reading students who were (select one):

       --In 9th grade only.
       --In 10th grade only.
       --In 9th and 10th grade.

2. In the 2011-2012 school year, I taught intensive reading students who were (select one):

       --General education only.
       --ELL only.
       --ESE only.
       --ELL and ESE.
       --General education and ELL.
       --General education and ESE.
       --General education, ESE, and ELL.

3. I have been a classroom teacher for:
       --1-3 years.
       --4-6 years.
       --7-9 years.
       --10-20 years.
       --21 or more years.

4. I have been a high school intensive reading teacher for:
       --1-3 years.
       --4-6 years.
       --7-9 years.
       --10 or more years.

5. My undergraduate degree major: _____

     a. Coursework in teaching reading: Yes   No
     b. Coursework in teaching reading to adolescents?   Yes   No

6. My graduate degree major (leave blank if no graduate degree): _____

     a. Coursework in teaching reading: Yes   No
     b. Coursework in teaching reading to adolescents?   Yes   No

7. The status of my Florida Reading Endorsement is (select one):
   --Hold a Florida Reading Endorsement
   --Completed one or more competencies toward the Florida Reading Endorsement
   --Not reading endorsed but would like to pursue it
   --Not reading endorsed and do **not** want to pursue it

8. In the 2011-2012 school year, I attended the following professional learning opportunities (select all that apply):
   --I participated in a Professional Learning Community that focused on effective instructional strategies.
   --I participated in a Professional Learning Community that focused on implementation of a reading/literacy program/curriculum.
   --I attended in-service on teaching reading/literacy led by a school administrator.
   --I attended in-service on teaching reading/literacy led by an instructional/reading coach or teacher.
   --I attended in-service on teaching reading/literacy led by a district-level administrator/teacher.
   --I attended a workshop or conference about reading/literacy instruction organized outside of my school district.
   --I did not participate in any professional learning on reading/literacy instruction.
   --I read and improved my skills as a reading/literacy teacher on my own.

9. The following best describes how I have become an effective high school intensive reading teacher (select all that apply):
   --Self taught by reading, conversations, seeking answers online
   --Formal education either undergraduate or graduate
   --School district professional learning
   --School level learning
   --Collaboration with others who teach high school intensive reading
   --I do not consider myself to be an effective high school intensive reading teacher.
   --Other. Please explain:

For questions 10-19, rate each statement on this scale:

Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

10. I believe high school students in intensive reading classes can improve in reading.
11. I believe I know how to improve reading of non-proficient high school readers.
12. One of my primary responsibilities is student motivation.
13. The quality of the classroom teacher is the most important variable in improving achievement of non-proficient high school readers.
14. There are factors external to school that even the most effective teachers of non-proficient high school readers cannot overcome.
15. Instructional planning is very important in the teaching of reading.
16. Classroom management is a prerequisite for effective teaching.
17. I am a better teacher when I collaborate with my colleagues.
18. I allocate time every day to reflect on my teaching and how to improve.
19. I am excited about coming to work at my school every day.

Section Three

For questions 20-41, rate each statement on this scale:

Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Don't know
                                                                                     strategy

I believe this instructional strategy positively impacts high school student improvement in reading:

20. Posting and communicating daily and long term learning goals
21. Assisting students with setting their own goals
22. Teaching students to self-monitor their progress
23. Establishing and maintaining classroom routines
24. Chunking content into manageable length and content segments
25. Using similarities and differences at low, moderate, and high levels
26. Leading students through guided practice
27. Efficient use of learning time
28. Cooperative learning activities
29. Visual aids, nonlinguistic representations, and/or graphic organizers
30. Checking for understanding
31. Providing daily homework
32. Sustained silent reading
33. Student reading one-on-one with teacher
34. Paired/partner student readings
35. Choral readings
36. Round robin reading

37. Using a classroom library with diverse offerings
38. Word wall for vocabulary
39. Hot and cold readings
40. Text coding/annotating
41. Question-Answer-Relationship (QAR) activities

For questions 42-63, rate each statement on this scale for how often you use the instructional strategy in your classroom:
Every day   At least weekly   At least monthly   Never Don't know strategy

I use this instructional strategy in my classroom:

42. Posting and communicating daily and long term learning goals
43. Assisting students with setting their own goals
44. Teaching students to self-monitor their progress
45. Establishing and maintaining classroom routines
46. Chunking content into manageable length and content segments
47. Using similarities and differences at low, moderate, and high levels
48. Leading students through guided practice
49. Efficient use of learning time
50. Cooperative learning activities
51. Visual aids, nonlinguistic representations, and/or graphic organizers
52. Checking for understanding
53. Providing daily homework
54. Sustained silent reading
55. Student reading one-on-one with teacher
56. Paired/partner student readings
57. Choral readings
58. Round robin reading
59. Using a classroom library with diverse offerings
60. Word wall for vocabulary
61. Hot and cold readings
62. Text coding/annotating
63. Question-Answer-Relationship (QAR) activities

Section Four

Please provide additional information to assist the school district in improving high school intensive reading.

64. Are there other strategies, techniques, or factors not in this survey that contribute to your success in working with non-proficient readers?

65. In your opinion, what are the 3 most important things you do to support non-proficient readers?

66. What can school and school district leaders do to assist you in improving reading of non-proficient high school readers?

67. Please add anything about your use of strategies that you believe will improve literacy.

APPENDIX B:
DIMENSIONS OF EFFECTIVE TEACHERS-
ADMINISTRATOR PERSPECTIVE SURVEY

<u>Dimensions of Effective Teachers—Administrator Perspective Survey</u>

<u>Section One</u>

1. My undergraduate degree major: _____

    a. Coursework in teaching reading: Yes   No
    b. Coursework in teaching reading to adolescents?   Yes   No

2. My graduate degree major (leave blank if no graduate degree): _____

    a. Coursework in teaching reading: Yes   No
    b. Coursework in teaching reading to adolescents?   Yes   No

3. The status of my Florida Reading Endorsement is (select one):
    --Hold a Florida Reading Endorsement
    --Completed one or more competencies toward the Florida Reading Endorsement
    --Not reading endorsed but would like to pursue it
    --Not reading endorsed and do **not** want to pursue it

4. In the 2011-2012 school year, I attended the following professional learning opportunities (select all that apply):
    --I participated in a Professional Learning Community that focused on effective instructional strategies.
    --I participated in a Professional Learning Community that focused on implementation of a reading/literacy program/curriculum.
    --I attended in-service on teaching reading/literacy led by a school administrator.
    --I attended in-service on teaching reading/literacy led by an instructional/reading coach or teacher.
    --I attended in-service on teaching reading/literacy led by a district-level administrator/teacher.
    --I attended a workshop or conference about reading/literacy instruction organized outside of my school district.
    --I did not participate in any professional learning on reading/literacy instruction.
    --I read and improved my skills as a reading/literacy teacher on my own.

5. Years of Experience in an Instructional Position (classroom teacher, dean, guidance counselor, instructional coach, etc.):
    --1-3
    --4-6
    --7-9
    --10-20
    --21 or more

6. Years of Experience as an Administrator (Principal, Assistant Principal, District Office):

--1-3
--4-6
--7-9
--10-20
--21 or more

Section Two

For questions 7-16, rate each statement on this scale:

Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

  7. Intensive reading teachers should believe that their students can improve in reading.
  8. Intensive reading teachers should know how to improve reading of non-proficient high school readers.
  9. A primary responsibility of intensive reading teachers is student motivation.
10. The quality of the intensive reading classroom teacher is the most important variable in improving achievement of non-proficient high school readers.
11. There are factors external to school that even the most effective teachers of non-proficient high school readers cannot overcome.
12. In intensive reading classes, instructional planning is important.
13. In intensive reading classes, classroom management is important.
14. In intensive reading classes, collaboration with colleagues is important.
15. Intensive reading teachers should allocate time every day to reflect on teaching and how to improve.
16. Intensive reading teachers at my school are excited about coming to work every day.

Section Three

For questions 17-38, rate each statement on this scale:

Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Don't know
                                                                              strategy

I believe this instructional strategy positively impacts high school student improvement in reading:

17. Posting and communicating daily and long term learning goals
18. Assisting students with setting their own goals
19. Teaching students to self-monitor their progress
20. Establishing and maintaining classroom routines
21. Chunking content into manageable length and content segments
22. Using similarities and differences at low, moderate, and high levels
23. Leading students through guided practice

24. Efficient use of learning time
25. Cooperative learning activities
26. Visual aids, nonlinguistic representations, and/or graphic organizers
27. Checking for understanding
28. Providing daily homework
29. Sustained silent reading
30. Student reading one-on-one with teacher
31. Paired/partner student readings
32. Choral readings
33. Round robin reading
34. Using a classroom library with diverse offerings
35. Word wall for vocabulary
36. Hot and cold readings
37. Text coding/annotating
38. Question-Answer-Relationship (QAR) activities

39. In the 2011-2012 school year, did you:
      A. Conduct walkthroughs in reading classrooms   YES   NO
      B. Write evaluations of reading teachers   YES   NO

(Note: If respondent answers yes to 39A and/or 39B, then the survey will continue with questions 40-61. If respondent answers no to both 39A and 39B, then questions 40-61 will be skipped and the survey will continue with question 62.)
For questions 40-61, rate each statement on this scale for how often you observe this instructional strategy in reading classrooms.
Every day   At least weekly   At least monthly   Never Don't know strategy

40. Posting and communicating daily and long term learning goals
41. Assisting students with setting their own goals
42. Teaching students to self-monitor their progress
43. Establishing and maintaining classroom routines
44. Chunking content into manageable length and content segments
45. Using similarities and differences at low, moderate, and high levels
46. Leading students through guided practice
47. Efficient use of learning time
48. Cooperative learning activities
49. Visual aids, nonlinguistic representations, and/or graphic organizers
50. Checking for understanding
51. Providing daily homework
52. Sustained silent reading
53. Student reading one-on-one with teacher
54. Paired/partner student readings
55. Choral readings
56. Round robin reading

57. Using a classroom library with diverse offerings
58. Word wall for vocabulary
59. Hot and cold readings
60. Text coding/annotating
61. Question-Answer-Relationship (QAR) activities

<u>Section Four</u>

Please provide information to assist the school district in improving high school intensive reading.

62. Are there other strategies, techniques, or factors not in this survey that contribute to your intensive reading teachers' success in working with non-proficient readers?

63. In your opinion, what are the 3 most important things your intensive reading teachers do to support non-proficient readers?

64. Please add anything about your intensive reading teachers' use of strategies that you believe will improve literacy.

APPENDIX C:
INFORMED CONSENT LETTER FOR TEACHERS

Go to https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/readingt

September 13, 2012

Dear Seminole County Reading Teacher:

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this important study about instructional practices used by high school intensive reading teachers. You are among approximately 160 educators who have been invited to provide input for this research. My hope is that this study will contribute to our understanding of what can be done to improve support for teachers of high school reading.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Whether or not you take part is your choice. You may elect to participate now or at a later period or change your mind while in the process of participating in the study. There is no consequence for your decision to accept or decline participation in the study.

This study involves the matching of quantitative data about student and teacher performance to your views about classroom teaching and reading instruction. This is an anonymous study, and your anonymity will be maintained through use of an alpha-numeric code that you will enter at the start of the survey. The code was assigned by an employee of Seminole County Public Schools who will not have access to your responses. As the researcher, I will have access to your responses but not your name or other personally identifiable information about you. This process ensures that no one will have access to your name, your quantitative data, and your responses. **A link to the survey and your survey code is located in the upper-right corner of this letter.**

There are no anticipated risks or benefits to participating in this study. Since the research is conducted electronically, you will be able to participate from anywhere you choose. There is a one month window in which to complete the online questionnaire in order for your input to be included in the study. The questionnaire should take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. Upon completion of this study, you will have the opportunity to receive a copy of the published results.

If you have any questions about this study on high school reading instruction, please contact me at maryw2010@knights.ucf.edu. My faculty advisor, Dr. Rosemarye Taylor, may be contacted by phone at (407) 823-1469 or by email at rosemarye.taylor@ucf.edu.

Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Questions or concerns about research participants' rights may be directed to the UCF Institutional Review Board Office at the University of Central Florida, Office of Research and Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246. The phone numbers are (407) 823-2901 or (407) 882-2276.

By going to the survey link, you are consenting to participate in this study. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate at anytime without consequence. If you choose to withdraw your consent, please contact me using the provided email address.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your time and effort are greatly appreciated.

Best Regards,

Mary Williams, Principal Investigator
Doctoral Candidate, University of Central Florida
407-491-1224

Dear Seminole County Reading Teacher:

Please review the attached information letter and consider responding to this research survey. We know your time is valuable and appreciate your consideration of our research on effective instruction in tenth grade reading classes.

Best regards,

Dear Seminole County Reading Teacher:

Please review the attached information letter and consider responding to this research survey. I know your time is valuable and appreciate your consideration of my research on effective instruction in tenth grade intensive reading classes.

This will be the last participation request you receive because the survey will close in two weeks.

Best regards,

APPENDIX D:
INFORMED CONSENT LETTER FOR ADMINISTRATORS

September 13, 2012

Dear Seminole County School Administrator:

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this important study about instructional practices used by high school intensive reading teachers. You are among approximately 160 educators who have been invited to provide input for this research. My hope is that this study will contribute to our understanding of what can be done to improve support for teachers of high school reading.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Whether or not you take part is your choice. You may elect to participate now or at a later period or change your mind while in the process of participating in the study. There is no consequence for your decision to accept or decline participation in the study.

This study involves the matching of quantitative data about student and teacher performance to your views about classroom teaching and reading instruction. This is an anonymous study, and your anonymity will be maintained through use of an alpha-numeric code that you will enter at the start of the survey. The code was assigned by an employee of Seminole County Public Schools who will not have access to your responses. As the researcher, I will have access to your responses but not your name or other personally identifiable information about you. This process ensures that no one will have access to your name, your quantitative data, and your responses. **A link to the survey and your survey code is located in the upper-right corner of this letter.**

There are no anticipated risks or benefits to participating in this study. Since the research is conducted electronically, you will be able to participate from anywhere you choose. There is a one month window in which to complete the online questionnaire in order for your input to be included in the study. The questionnaire should take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. Upon completion of this study, you will have the opportunity to receive a copy of the published results.

If you have any questions about this study on high school reading instruction, please contact me at maryw2010@knights.ucf.edu. My faculty advisor, Dr. Rosemarye Taylor, may be contacted by phone at (407) 823-1469 or by email at rosemarye.taylor@ucf.edu.

Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Questions or concerns about research participants' rights may be directed to the UCF Institutional Review Board Office at the University of Central Florida, Office of Research and Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246. The phone numbers are (407) 823-2901 or (407) 882-2276.

By going to the survey link, you are consenting to participate in this study. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate at anytime without consequence. If you choose to withdraw your consent, please contact me using the provided email address.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your time and effort are greatly appreciated.

Best Regards,

Mary Williams, Principal Investigator
Doctoral Candidate, University of Central Florida
407-491-1224

Dear Seminole County School Administrator:

Please review the attached information letter and consider responding to this research survey. I know your time is valuable and appreciate your consideration of my research on effective instruction in tenth grade reading classes.

Best regards,

Dear Seminole County School Administrator:

Please review the attached information letter and consider responding to this research survey. I know your time is valuable and appreciate your consideration of my research on effective instruction in tenth grade intensive reading classes.

This will be the last participation request you receive because the survey will close in two weeks.

Best regards,

APPENDIX E:
RESEARCH REQUEST FOR ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY STAFF

Mary Williams/Jason Wysong   **Research Request for A/A Staff**

Successful implementation of our separate dissertation research studies necessitates support from staff in the Assessment and Accountability department. We are submitting one request for purposes of efficient use of district resources. Specifically, we request the following supports from the appropriate district staff:

1) Identify all 2011-2012 instructional personnel who taught the following course codes associated with intensive reading classes in SCPS:

    1002380 (ESOL)   1002381 (ESOL)   1000400 (General Ed.)
    1000410 (General Ed.)   7910100 (ESE)

Additionally, for each teacher, identify whether the teacher taught 9th grade students, 10th grade students, or both.

***Researchers will use this data to create personalized information letters (and two letters for follow-up in the event of non-response) inviting these teachers as well as high school administrators to participate in an online survey. The researchers will place each letter in an envelope labeled with the teacher's name.

2) Assign an alpha-numeric (one letter, two numbers) code to each teacher. The letter code would be common to all teachers in a school, and the numerical code would be unique to the teacher. Additionally, create an alpha-numeric code for each 2011-2012 high school principal and assistant principal using the same parameters.

3) Using the letters prepared by the researchers, label each letter with the teacher's /administrator's alpha-numeric code. Return the first set of sealed letters to the researchers for distribution via hand delivery to school principals.

4) Create a table with the following information:
        --List of the alpha-numeric codes (no name attached to each code).
        --Percentage of the teacher's 9th grade students who met learning growth expectations during the 2011-2012 school year. This data are available from the Florida Department of Education.
        --Total number of 9th grade students on which the above percentage was calculated.
        --Percentage of the teacher's 10th grade students who met learning growth expectations during the 2011-2012 school year. This data are available from the Florida Department of Education.
        --Total number of 10th grade students on which the above percentage was calculated.

5) At two weeks and three weeks following survey distribution, researchers will return a list of codes that have not responded to the survey. Each time, staff will return sealed follow-up letters for non-responders to the researchers for distribution.

Rationale for Request

--Step 1 is necessary to ensure that only teachers in the researchers' population are invited to participate in the survey.

--Steps 2 and 3 are necessary to maintain the confidentiality of each teacher's identity. The researchers will not have access to the table that connects teacher names to alpha-numeric codes. Furthermore, the personnel involved in the research request will not have access to teacher survey responses.

--Step 4 provides the researchers with critical data for triangulation of quantitative and qualitative results from the surveys. Note that this step does not need to occur at the same time as steps 1-3; this can be performed at a later date as staff time permits.

--Step 5 provides for follow-up communication to non-responders to increase response rate without jeopardizing the confidentiality of the code system.

APPENDIX F:
IRB APPROVAL OF EXEMPT HUMAN RESEARCH

University of **Central Florida**

Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board #1**
          FWA00000351, IRB00001138

To: **Mary Y. Williams**

Date: **August 01, 2012**

Dear Researcher:

On 8/1/2012, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review:	Exempt Determination
Project Title:	EFFECTIVE LITERACY INSTRUCTION FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
Investigator:	Mary Y Williams
IRB Number:	SBE-12-08583
Funding Agency:	
Grant Title:	
Research ID:	N/A

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the Investigator Manual.

On behalf of Sophia Dziegielewski, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 08/01/2012 10:50:35 AM EDT

Joanne Muratori

IRB Coordinator

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