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## Examining Teachers' Attitudes on the READ 180 Program in Six Southern Louisiana Schools

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EXAMINING TEACHERS' ATTITUDES ON THE READ 180 PROGRAM IN SIX  
SOUTHERN LOUISIANA SCHOOLS

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
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in

The School of Education

by  
Shanell C. Dowling  
B.A., James Madison University, 2012  
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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this research was to examine teachers' attitudes on the READ 180 scripted curriculum in six Southern Louisiana schools. The researcher wanted to evaluate the factors that impact teachers' attitudes toward using the READ 180 scripted curriculum in today's classrooms. The study focused on teachers' feelings, advantages and disadvantages of the READ 180 program, and how the program is being implemented. To discover teachers' experiences with the READ 180 program the researcher conducted audio-recorded teacher interviews, recorded field notes during classroom observations, and collected documents from participating teachers. This study was conducted over the course of four months in which a qualitative research approach was utilized to determine that teachers enjoy the scripted curriculum, both advantages and disadvantages of using the READ 180 scripted curriculum are based on several factors, and how teachers implement practices impacts student learning.

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

In order to lead students to obtain a high school diploma, students must have a basic foundation of knowledge and a skillset that enables them to tackle grade level coursework. The problem is many students are thrown into classes or passed on to the next grade with the assumption that basic skills have been mastered. Yet, that is not always the case. It takes a joint effort from both students and teachers to successfully get students on grade level if they have been left behind. One intervention program in today's schools utilizes computer software, an assortment of books, and a scripted curriculum to work towards developing basic skills in grammar, spelling, reading comprehension, and fluency. A scripted curriculum is defined as a pre-packaged lesson which requires teachers to follow a particular sequence of prepared lessons. The READ 180 scripted curriculum is designed to improve basic skills, strengthen prior knowledge, and raise reading achievement for struggling readers. I will specifically study teachers' attitudes on the READ 180 program, advantages and disadvantages of the program and how the program is being implemented to impact student learning in today's classrooms.

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

It was not until I was assigned to teach a scripted curriculum that I even knew scripted curricula existed. I tried recalling if my own teachers growing up used scripted curriculums, and I could not bring to mind one. Why was I just being introduced to a scripted

curriculum as a first-year teacher? Who are scripted curriculums made for? Where and how are they best used? To answer those questions, I sought to explore the viewpoints of teachers.

It is important that I write about this matter for two reasons. One is that it is close to me. As a first-year teacher I was assigned to teach the READ 180 program to students who struggle academically and who have high behavioral problems. These students are two or more years behind their reading grade level, have short attention spans, little to no motivation toward learning in school, and show no interest in reading. One goal of the READ 180 program is to not only improve reading skills, but to also combat distracting behaviors by providing variation in centers. In the program, students have the opportunity to engage in whole group class discussions and in rotations students complete small group work, read independently, and interact with computer software. The program is designed to improve students' reading Lexiles over the course of one year.

As a first-year teacher new to the READ 180 program teaching and learning about the program simultaneously, I began to develop my own thoughts and views around the program. In this study, with the awareness that scripted teaching is being done across the country, I hoped to explore teachers' attitudes on the READ 180 program, issues within the scripted curriculum, and how both the teacher and program influences students.

Oftentimes scripted curriculums are presented to the lowest academic kids as remediation, with the intention that they will be "brought up to speed." Still, there are educators who argue against the use of scripted curriculums in classrooms, believing that is not the solution. Whether educators oppose scripted teaching or not, we must continue to study, analyze, and evaluate what works in classrooms and what does not.



By working with the READ 180 program, I have grown to see both the positives and negatives of teaching a scripted curriculum. As a first-year teacher it was comforting to have a plan and direction as to what should be taught amidst of keeping up and learning other additional teacher responsibilities. Feelings of being overwhelmed and hopelessness conquer the minds of many new teachers due to the time and energy required to fulfill duties such as creating daily lesson plans, attending professional development meetings, making parent phone calls home, grading papers, being present at staff meetings, etc. So, for first-year teachers especially, could the use of scripted curriculums be a possible solution to retaining teachers and lowering the high teacher turnover rates some schools experience yearly? Would scripted curriculums hinder creativity thus deter teachers from teaching? These were thoughts raised as I ventured through teaching the READ 180 scripted curriculum as a first-year teacher.

As I reflected on my own thoughts and feelings, the purpose of my research was to examine teachers' attitudes on the READ 180 program in six Southern Louisiana schools. In doing so, I analyzed the advantages and disadvantages of the use of the READ 180 scripted curriculum in today's classrooms, how teachers view the program, and how the program is implemented. "As perceptions play a key role in practice" the primary goal of this study was to gain insight into the perceptions of the READ 180 program held by teachers (cited in Moreau, 2014, p.3). This will allow me, as well as other educators who use scripted curriculums, to further discover best practices of implementation, and track trends and patterns of educators who share the common thread of teaching READ 180. It will also help to further inform principals' decisions on the READ 180 program.

I do believe students can learn and make great gains from the teachings of most curriculums when the presentation is delivered with relevance and enthusiasm. Whether teachers teach a scripted curriculum or not, positive relationships with students are what ultimately opens the door to allow for the highest learning possible. Wharton-McDonald (2011) stated that “despite a current emphasis on programs, materials, and assessment tools, it is the teacher – and the instruction she or he provides in the classroom – that matters most to the development of successful readers” (cited in Moreau, 2014, p.3). It is how a teacher delivers content which truly makes learning happen in a classroom. So, what are the views of teachers who teach the READ 180 program? Can scripted teaching work or not work and is it effective? According to Leah Moreau (2014), “A focus on the teachers and their realities is significant as Cook (2002), Silverman (2007), and Rohl and Greaves (2005) suggest that beliefs are predictors of behaviours, specifically mentioning attitude as a factor in adapting classroom strategies and persistence” (p. 3). My hope is that after reading, readers will be able to learn from the viewpoints of READ 180 teachers, view scripted curriculums through a different lens, and discover new information about struggling readers and the READ 180 program.

#### Research Questions

The following research questions were explored:

- How do teachers view the READ 180 scripted curriculum and overall program?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of using scripted curriculums in today’s classrooms?
- How do teachers implement the READ 180 scripted curriculum into their classroom practices and what are the effects on student learning?

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The research of this study is based on the theory of change (TOC) model. The theory of change is “the product of a series of critical-thinking exercises that provides a comprehensive picture of the early- and intermediate-term changes in a given community that are needed to reach a long-term goal articulated by the community” (Harvard Family Research Project, 2016). The READ 180 program has the long-term goal of building proficient readers who are college, career, and citizenship-ready for the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Scholastic, 2011). The program consists of various components utilized to achieve that goal. The Instructional Model serves as the picture for how the outcome will be achieved. Yet, concrete steps must be planned and executed in order to achieve that long-term goal. In doing so, teachers are provided a script to follow and implement with fidelity.

According to the READ 180 Implementation Review, “READ 180 is most effective when implemented with fidelity” (p. 1). Fidelity is the adherence to fact or detail, accuracy, and exactness. Ways in which school administrators implement fidelity is by keeping class sizes the recommended 15 students per class, scheduling classes to meet 90 minutes daily, equipping classrooms with all materials (rBooks, teacher resources, and the READ 180 classroom library), and confirming that technology is fully functioning with CD and DVD players, headsets, and software installed. (An rBook is a student workbook with units on various topics.) At the classroom level teachers implement fidelity by managing daily procedures and routines, monitoring three rotation areas, and using the rBook Teacher’s Edition to guide student learning.

However, before steps are acted upon, assumptions need to be examined for planning to be most effective. Within this study, teachers' attitudes are discussed to gain insight into their feelings, the advantages and disadvantages of the READ 180 program, and how teachers implement practices within their classroom. It will take a class community to develop better readers, and the attitudes and efforts of both students and teachers are critical to achievement.

According to the Harvard Family Research Project:

A TOC creates an honest picture of the steps required to reach a goal. It provides an opportunity for stakeholders to assess what they can influence, what impact they can have, and whether it is realistic to expect to reach their goal with the time and resources they have available.

Without strategic planning and examining assumptions and biases, the chances of goal achievement decreases. There is a hidden belief that teachers believe they will be penalized if they do not implement the program with fidelity. Through research, that penalty has yet to be found and clearly stated though potential consequences may come from individual school and district leaders.

## **METHODS OVERVIEW**

This qualitative research study took place in six Southern Louisiana schools. I specifically interviewed both new and veteran, middle and high school READ 180 teachers in efforts to analyze various viewpoints and feelings towards teaching scripted curriculums using the READ 180 program. During interviews, I questioned teachers on how they view scripted curriculums and how they utilize the READ 180 program in their classrooms. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. I also collected lesson plans, handouts, and documents the participating teacher was willing to share.

In addition, I conducted classroom observations, noting student engagement and interactions. In the READ 180 program students begin in whole-group which consists of whole class instruction led by the teacher. Then students are divided and move through three rotations: small group with the teacher, computerized instruction, and independent reading. During each station, students learn within that rotation. Scholastic recommends that no more than 15 students be assigned to one class (Levin, Catlin, & Elson, 2010). The program should also be taught within 90-minute class periods; students get 20 minutes of teacher-led instruction for every three 20 minute rotations through each station (Levin, Catlin, & Elson, 2010). Class time ends with a wrap-up question for the class to discuss.

During teacher-led instruction the teacher models fluent reading by reading aloud. Students in small group are taught by the teacher using the rBook. Life skills, literature, history, and science topics are all included in the rBook for daily instruction (Harcourt, 2015). Students on the computer, work on leveled software with topics and videos to provide students with visuals. Leveled software is personalized to meet individual student needs as the program “advances to new text only after students demonstrate mastery in fluency, word recognition, spelling, and comprehension” (Levin, Catlin, & Elson, 2010, p. 5). The software supports readers by providing a video to “enhance background knowledge, pronunciation, translation, and definitions for difficult words in the text, decoding tips, and a summary of the student’s reading accomplishments” (Levin, Catlin, & Elson, 2010, p. 5). Students in the independent reading group silently read informational and literary text that address different genres and cultures. Books are chosen within the range of 50 points above or 100 points below a student’s reading

Lexile in efforts to support and meet students where they are, but also offer a push for students to grow, expand vocabulary, and increase reading endurance.

A student's Lexile score is determined by the Scholastic Reading Inventory Test (SRI Test). The SRI Test is taken by all students in the READ 180 program at the beginning of the year, two to three times throughout the year, and at the end of the year. The SRI Test aims to help both students and teachers choose appropriate leveled books to accurately match students' reading abilities. Students select books within their Lexile range based on their interests.

According to Moreau (2014), "Teacher perceptions of struggling readers not only include ideas about the students, but also views of themselves as practitioners and teachers of struggling readers, and their professional role in the reading development" (p. 4). This research will provide me the opportunity to learn from the experience of other teachers and gather information on how to effectively implement the READ 180 program in my own classroom. This study will also allow my colleagues to further improve their practices of implementation and learn about the views of like READ 180 teachers.

## **LIMITATIONS**

Limitations of this study included time constraints, the uneven number of middle schools versus high schools that participated in the study, and potential non-disclosure of teachers' feelings. I interviewed five middle school teachers and one high school teacher. Thus, research was also limited in student population as more middle school classrooms were observed than high school. Additionally, there was limited time to conduct interviews and

observations as I needed to be present for my own students. It was assumed that the participating teachers regularly carried out procedures like on a normal day.

## **DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS**

In order to fully understand many of the terms referenced, the definitions and concepts listed below are provided:

- 1) English Language Learner (ELL) - the native language of the individual is other than English and that language is the dominant means of communication and understanding for the individual (Casey, 2010)
- 2) Fidelity - the act of executing a program according to how the curriculum developers intended (cited in Cleveland, 2014)
- 3) Lexile score – a measure reported on the Scholastic Reading Inventory that indicates an estimate of the student's true reading ability (cited in Melekoglu, 2011)
- 4) READ 180 – a comprehensive reading intervention program designed to provide differentiated instruction for readers whose comprehension ability is significantly below grade level (Scholastic Inc., 2011a). The three instructional components of READ 180 are teacher directed rbook instruction, computer software based instruction calibrated to individual student reading levels, and silent reading time that utilizes READ 180 approved books (Vogel, 2013)
- 5) rbook – an interactive reading response book used as the primary component of whole group and small group teacher-directed instruction (Vogel, 2013)

- 6) Scholastic Achievement Manager (SAM) - a data management tool that allows teachers and leaders to aggregate and report data on student achievement and program implementation (Scholastic, 2011)
- 7) Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) – a computer-based READ 180, 20 question reading assessment test designed to measure the progress of the READ 180 students’ reading levels completed at least four times in one academic year (Vogel, J)  
  
The measure assigns a Lexile score which dictates the independent reading selections the students may read. This assessment is administered by computer and graded immediately (Casey, 2010)
- 8) Struggling Readers – students who exhibit difficulty meeting grade level expectations in reading (cited in Cleveland, 2014)

## **SUMMARY OF CONTENT**

This study analyzes teachers’ attitudes on the READ 180 scripted curriculum, the advantages and disadvantages of using the program in today’s classrooms, and how program implementation impacts student learning. In the next chapter, literature from previous and related research is shared, including a READ 180 study done on incarcerated youth. In Chapter 3, a specific description of how the research was conducted and methods for data collection is provided. The findings of the research project are presented in Chapter 4. In Chapter 5, conclusions are drawn and implications for future research are discussed. Lastly, pertinent READ 180 information, and the interview and observation guides used during the study is found in the Appendices.



## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **INTRODUCTION**

With growing access to the Internet, schools across the U.S. are implementing educational software in classroom curriculums. READ 180 is one of those programs. According to the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt website, the READ 180 program has been in schools for 15 years impacting roughly 1,600,000 students (49% middle, 28% high school, 19% elementary) with a goal of improving students' comprehension skills and reading fluency. The program was created by Dr. Ted Hasselbring, READ 180 Senior Program Author, with the help of Lead Researcher and Designer, Laura Goin, and Senior Program Advisors and rBook co-authors, Dr. Kate Kinsella and Dr. Kevin Feldman (Harcourt, 2015).

Dr. Ted Hasselbring of Vanderbilt University teamed up with Dr. Janet Allen of the University of Central Florida and Florida's Orange County public school to create the basis of the instructional model of the READ 180 program (Scholastic, 2013). Dr. Hasselbring's vision was to develop "software that uses individual student performance data to differentiate reading instruction" which would be "rooted in research-proven literacy practices" (Scholastic, 2013, p. 8). In 1997 Scholastic joined forces with Vanderbilt University and "READ 180 adopts the Lexile Framework for Reading developed by Dr. Jack Stenner of MetaMetrics, Inc., as its leveling system" (Scholastic, 2013, p. 8). The Lexile Framework serves as a measurement for determining a student's reading level and the level of text difficulty at which a student should be reading. The Lexile Framework can be found in Appendix A. By 1999 Scholastic published READ 180 and the program was implemented in hundreds of schools across the country (Scholastic, 2013). A complete timeline of the history and development of the program is

shown in Appendix B. Not noted on the timeline is the announcement of the company Houghton Mifflin Harcourt's recent purchase in 2015 of Scholastic's READ 180 program for \$575 million (Harcourt, 2015).

The literature reviewed showed there are several factors that impact the implementation of the READ 180 program which in turn affects varying teacher attitudes. The first part of the literature review discusses the costs to have the READ 180 program implemented in school classrooms across the U.S. The second part of the literature review identifies what causes reading difficulties and what struggling readers need. Next, the review considers how the program combats students' behavioral problems. The final part explores the progress students make within the program and READ 180's connection to Common Core standards.

## **COST OF IMPLEMENTATION**

Literacy growth comes with a price: it costs to have the READ 180 program present on school campuses. In order for schools to see growth, implementation is important so that "schools have a better chance of achieving their desired goals" (Levin, Catlin, & Elson, 2010, p. 2).

Schools must pay for equipment and materials, such as computers and headphones, eBooks, binders, and dividers to go in those binders. Teachers are needed, and professional development is needed for those teachers. Despite beliefs, "the simple purchase of Read 180 courseware in itself is inadequate to ensure increased student literacy achievement without appropriate staffing, professional development, and use of the courseware" (Levin, Catlin, & Elson, 2010, p. 8). For example, Levin, Catlin, & Elson (2010) noted:

A teacher from a large urban district reported that, in its first four years of Read 180 instruction, his school had four different principals, none of whom were committed to Read 180. As a result, there was vast inconsistency in implementation, with children constantly being shifted in and out of Read 180 classes. In the fifth year of implementation, the school hired a principal who was supportive of Read 180 and, for the first time, the teacher had the same students from September to June.

To not only keep and maintain the effectiveness of the program, support is needed from district leadership (Levin, Catlin, & Elson, 2010). When staffing, resources, and supplies are readily available it is easier to accommodate and overcome program challenges which may include computer and headphone issues, and lack of student motivation and interest. School resources and investment from the principal are essential for the program's success (Levin, Catlin, & Elson, 2010). If schools lack the necessary resources or do not have 90-minute class periods, schools must adjust the program to fit their school's schedule and available resources.

No two schools are alike so the exact cost of READ 180 differs from school-to-school. The cost of implementation is based on "conditions such as class size, technology infrastructure, length of class periods, and personnel" (Levin, Catlin, & Elson, 2010, p. 9). Ideally, for 30 students the program costs about \$1,100 for a school looking to follow the suggested Scholastic model for implementation (Levin, Catlin, & Elson, 2010). However, when class size is reduced or instructional time is slightly increased, the costs are decreased (Levin, Catlin, & Elson, 2010). It is important to be aware that program success may be impacted by deviations from the recommended READ 180 implementation model. When deviations are made from the recommended implementation model, a risk is taken in sacrificing maximum learning for students. The program must be adequately supported financially to decrease reading difficulties.

## **CAUSES OF READING DIFFICULTIES**

The causes of “stalled readers can be varied and complex” (cited in Stuart, 2008, p. 14). When struggling students get to high school and educational needs have not been met, reading skills remain a challenge. According to Master’s student Melinda Stuart at Dominican University of California, “general education teachers do not receive adequate training or strategies to help these students learn basic reading skills while also providing access to the general education curriculum” (p. 18). Other contributors to reading difficulties according to Balajthy and Lipa-Wade (2003) are instructional practices, reading materials, general language skills, and home environments (cited in Stuart, 2008). In addition, Dyslexia, ADD, and ADHD are associated with causes of reading difficulties (Stuart, 2008).

From elementary to high school, students struggle to read. Melinda Stuart reported that “Many ninth and tenth graders are still reading at a fourth-grade level” (p. 18). Stuart (2008) indicated that “one study of struggling high school students pointed out the need for a direct intense reading program that will teach basic reading decoding and comprehension skills” (p. 18). Problems students face include the lack of necessary skills to read new or unusual words, trouble determining the meanings of unfamiliar terminology, and difficulty understanding much of what they read (Boardman, Roberts, Vaughn, Wexler, Murray, & Kosanovich, 2008). However, when a strong foundation of reading skills is built, students are better prepared for success in the classroom.

## **WHAT STRUGGLING READERS NEED**

Educators best assist and support struggling readers by first understanding their needs. The READ 180 program strives to address the support struggling readers need. Yet, Lyons

(2003) states, “Motivation is arguably the most critical ingredient for long-term success in learning to read and write” (cited in Stuart, 2008, p. 16). Lyon (2003) suggests the following strategies: “let the student know that you the teacher are truly interested in what the student does or says, help and allow students to choose books about topics that are reflective of the student’s own interest, teachers must monitor their own feelings and projections toward student success, and create a safe and welcoming environment for students so high expectations can be conveyed” (cited in Stuart, 2008, p. 16).

Scaffolding is also a critical strategy to helping struggling readers succeed. Lehmann (2004) defines scaffolding as “all the things teachers do, and all the tools teachers provide, to help learners be successful (cited in Stuart, 2008, p. 17). The following bullet points highlight important elements of scaffolding by Lehmann (2004) (cited in Stuart, 2008):

- Talk with students about what they already know about the lesson to be taught.
- Use pictures or actual objects of what concepts you are trying to teach.
- Ask students to notice similarities and differences when teaching about objects.
- Have students draw or write about what they have learned.
- Have students discuss amongst table groups or partners about the new concept.

## **RESPONDING TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL) AND CULTURAL NEEDS**

READ 180 was designed to help improve reading for particularly struggling readers, but what about ELL students? According to Chiu-hui Wu and Maria Coady, “their reading needs are different from those of native English-speaking students who are struggling readers” (p. 154). English language learners are able to practice specific language skills within the rBook, and there is a translation feature that includes Spanish, Cantonese, Haitian Creole, Hmong, and

Vietnamese (Wu & Coady, 2010). Results of the program's effectiveness have been tied to academic achievement, growth, and standardized test scores. However, how students learn and their experience learning has not been given much attention (Wu & Coady, 2010). It is important to know "when planning a curriculum for English learners who come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, teachers should acknowledge that students have different learning experiences from their American peers" (cited in Wu & Coady, 2010, p. 153).

Wu and Coady (2010) investigated how the READ 180 program addresses cultural needs. A qualitative study was conducted which included four adolescent ELL students at a Florida middle school. The results showed that READ 180 does provide some cultural relevancy in activities. However, the program does not respond to the unique cultural needs and background knowledge of each ELL student to improve reading development.

### **COMBATING BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS**

Some READ 180 students tend to have behavioral problems due to the challenges that come with reading. Bruhn and Watt (2012) examined how to improve student behavior by using multicomponent self-monitoring within the READ 180 program. Self-monitoring consists of students being cognizant of their behaviors and recording whether the appropriate behavior was demonstrated (Bruhn and Watt, 2012). Furthermore, adult feedback increases the effectiveness of self-monitoring (Bruhn and Watt, 2012).

A quantitative study was conducted which included two eighth grade girls at a small rural middle school in the Midwest. One participant read at the basic level, did not have a disability, and was recommended based on classroom behavior and office referrals. The other participant did receive special education services, read below basic level, and consistently

displayed defiant behavior. Results from integrating a multicomponent self-monitoring intervention into a targeted reading classroom showed an increase in academic engagement and decrease in disruptive behavior. Referral rates, expulsions, and suspensions also declined in California's Napa Valley Unified School District as students experienced academic growth with the implementation of the READ 180 program (Scholastic, 2013). Disruptive behavior must be minimized in order to see student growth in the areas of spelling, fluency, and reading comprehension.

## **STUDENT GROWTH**

Reading can be categorized into five different areas: word study, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and motivation (Boardman, Roberts, Vaughn, Wexler, Murray, & Kosanovich, 2008). According to Boardman, Roberts, Vaughn, Wexler, Murray, & Kosanovich (2008) the characteristics of struggling readers versus successful readers in each of the five categories is illustrated in Appendix C. The goal is to see student growth by shifting struggling readers' habits to those of the habits of successful readers.

Melekoglu (2011) examined the impact of motivation to read on reading gains for struggling readers with and without learning abilities. A qualitative study was utilized where READ 180 was implemented in secondary schools in a Midwestern state. The findings showed significant reading improvement among both students with and without a learning disability. However, results yielded significant improvement in reading motivation only from students without a disability. For students with a disability a continuous struggle reading below grade level may have been the cause of the zero increase in motivation (Melekoglu, 2011). As reading skills are furthered, confidence and motivation might grow as well.

Furthermore, Melekoglu (2011) suggests teachers not only work to improve students' reading skills, but also make known the importance of reading for students' lives. If students see value in what they are doing or being asked to do, they may become more invested in improving and less reluctant to reading. Motivation is enhanced when students are able to make connections between reading materials and relatable experiences (cited in Melekoglu, 2011).

To increase student motivation and a willingness to read, a foundation of basic reading skills has to be set. In addition, "technology-based reading instruction can improve students' motivation to read because user-friendly computer programs make teaching easier for educators and instruction more enjoyable for students" (Melekoglu, 2013, p. 86). Technology can serve as a motivating resource for struggling readers (cited in Melekoglu, 2011).

Additionally, offering students choices in reading materials and having daily independent reading time are also essential components to increasing motivation (cited in Melekoglu, 2011). Students' curiosity is developed and their willingness to read grows (cited in Melekoglu, 2013). As a result, reading endurance increases. Although students should have choice, teacher support must also be provided to see through the successful completion of assignments (Melekoglu, 2011). Teacher feedback for individual students allows students to recognize personal growth in regards to reading gains without comparison among peers. Melekoglu (2013) declared,

If a teacher creates a competitive environment in the classroom, only a small number of students will be considered successful and many students won't exhibit motivation to excel in reading classes. However, if the teacher regards the reading gains of each student individually and does not compare them to each other, everyone can enjoy success and can become motivated readers.



Engaging activities that captivate students' interests also increase motivation (cited in Melekoglu, 2013). Teachers can have students work on projects that are interesting and engaging for them (cited in Melekoglu, 2013). When those activities are completed without many challenges, those achievements serve as confidence boosters and raise motivation.

Like many things in the education field, there is no simple solution. Teachers must utilize a combination of practices in order to improve student motivation. Motivation is necessary for student success, because without it struggling readers will continue to struggle. They are "usually reluctant to improve their reading and do not acquire the necessary skills to become proficient readers," "while students who are motivated to read readily and autonomously enhance their reading performance and comprehension skills" (Melekoglu, 2013, p. 87). Motivation is a major factor in relation to gains and growth and should not be overlooked.

Zhu, Loadman, Lomax, and Moore (2010) evaluated intervention effects of READ 180 on low-achieving incarcerated youth. A longitudinal study from October 2006 to November 2008 was conducted to see if READ 180 has a long-term impact on reading proficiency. Through the Ohio Department of Youth Services, 609 students were assigned to the READ 180 program and 540 students were assigned to a traditional English classroom. It was found that READ 180 had a significant positive impact on the reading proficiency of low-performing incarcerated youth. Compared to subjects in the comparison group, the students in READ 180 gained more SRI points. Sizes for the READ 180 program were generally small, which might have caused the differences in SRI gains. Still, on average READ 180 students outperformed youth in the traditional English classroom. Although significant reading progress was achieved, the typical youth in READ 180 did not read at grade level.

## **PREPARATION FOR STATE STANDARDS**

READ 180 launched in 1999, yet students are expected to meet the expectations of the Common Core Standards today (Scholastic, 2013). READ 180 Next Generation was released in 2011 after the READ 180 Enterprise Edition to help meet those Common Core Standards and better prepare students for college and careers after high school (Scholastic, 2013). According to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in 2010:

The impact that low reading achievement has on students' readiness for college, careers, and life in general is significant. . . Being able to read complex text independently and proficiently is essential for high achievement in college and the workplace and important in numerous life tasks.

Scholastic (2013) reported that READ 180 Next Generation is “aligned to Common Core, includes the critical analysis and synthesis of texts that reflect the literature found in the real world,” and is presented with more complex texts (p. 4). This updated version of the program also offers a variety of informational texts aligned with Common Core State Standards (Scholastic, 2013). The informational texts are accompanied by text-based comprehension questions that aim to build higher order thinking skills “that accelerate students to grade level” (Scholastic, 2013, p. 4). Regardless if students are economically disadvantaged, low performing, have a disability, or are incarcerated, according to the literature reviewed READ 180 has shown positive effects in pushing students to grade level both in schools and in after-school programs in urban to suburban school districts.

In contrast, some teachers believe no one curriculum can meet every child's needs. Joseph (2006) investigated how teachers can effectively tailor literacy instruction to meet student needs despite federal, state, and local mandates to follow scripts. Case studies were conducted with six teachers who use scripted literacy curriculums in their classrooms in a large

urban district in California. Observations, interviews, and document gathering were the methods used to gather data. All six teachers shared the belief that “student learning occurs best when students support each other in their learning, and teachers serve as facilitators as well as instructors” (Joseph, 2006, p. 94). Thus, their class settings included components similar to that of READ 180 such as small groups and interactive whole group. Results showed that the teachers believe there is no one curriculum that is able to meet every need of every student in classrooms so they made significant “modifications to the curriculum’s instructional, content, and organizational approach” by rearranging desks, incorporating enrichment opportunities, and integrating meaning and daily writing (Joseph, 2006, p. 93). They believe scripted literacy programs like every curriculum has flaws as well as strengths. Although specific strengths were not specified, flaws included isolated skills, seating arrangements not allowing for collaboration, assumptions made that all students have had the same experiences or the same prior knowledge, and an unequal focus on reading and writing (Joseph, 2006).

Joseph (2006) recommends we honor the roles of experienced, creative, professional teachers by supporting their creation of appealing lessons that fit their particular group of students. Unique student interests should be captivated and pushed with high-quality instruction which can not be attained without respecting the individuality of committed teachers who strive to share their knowledge while meeting students needs.

## **GAPS IN LITERATURE**

The literature reviewed highlighted: the cost of implementation, causes of reading difficulties, how the READ 180 program addresses students needs, responding to diverse groups of students, influences on student growth, and the program’s alignment to national standards.

There was a lack of research that focused on READ 180's implementation and impact on teachers and students specifically in Louisiana. There was also a lack of research that explored why there remains a higher percentage of middle schools that utilize the program, more than elementary and high schools.

There was an absence of literature that followed student progress once they have tested proficient or have been moved on from the typical two-year program time frame. Tracking students who have exited the program who have and have not been brought up to grade level might inform next steps for traditional English teachers.

#### **IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Future research could include studies that examine the progress of READ 180 in urban versus rural schools to help better understand gaps between two different settings. In addition, future research could explore the impact of student race on growth and progress. Also, an investigation on how READ 180 could be adapted and used in other countries while analyzing its effectiveness would further inform cultural relevancy of the program.

#### **OVERALL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LITERATURE**

In 2011 the U.S. Department of Education revealed that “nearly six million U.S. high school students read below grade level, and 3,000 students drop out of high schools every day” (cited in Cleveland, 2013, p. 6). The literature reviewed indicated there is a need to teach students basic reading decoding and comprehension skills as a great deal of middle and high school students continue to read below grade level. However, there are opposing views on how that should be achieved, because teachers must employ a combination of strategies to build stronger readers. From the literature, the factors solidifying a foundation of basic reading skills

in students, providing scaffolding, and encouraging student ownership in learning, foster an investment in improving reading. Other elements such as offering students choice in reading materials, administering engaging activities that captivate interests, and revealing value in what students are doing increases motivation. Yet, because general education teachers do not receive adequate training to help struggling readers, individual schools must determine their school's needs, and discern whether or not the READ 180 program will fit within their school's budget. Having adequate funding, resources, support, and professional development for teachers, principals, and district leaders is integral to ensuring the success of a program aligned to prepare students for Common Core standards.

## **CHAPTER 3: MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **RATIONALE FOR RESEARCH METHOD**

My research consisted of examining teacher's attitudes about the scripted curriculum of the READ 180 program. I conducted classroom observations which were approximately 6-8 hours in total, and audio-recorded six interviews of new and veteran teachers. In order to explore teachers' feelings toward the READ 180 program, I conducted a qualitative research study. I found Creswell's (2015) approach to qualitative research, specifically methods of collecting data, to fit my study: "Qualitative data collection consists of collecting data using forms with general, emerging questions to permit the participant to generate responses, gathering word (text) or image (picture) data, and collecting information from a small number of individuals or sites" (p. 204). By interviewing multiple teachers using open-ended questions, I was able to evaluate individual ideas to create and interpret broader meanings and an understanding of teacher's attitudes and experiences with the READ 180 program.

I agree with Creswell (2015) who notes, "In qualitative research, our approach relies on general interviews or observations so that we do not restrict the views of participants" (p. 204). Therefore, a qualitative research approach was the best fit for my study because I carried out interviews and classroom observations. With this research design I was able to take notes on classroom events and arrangement, and audio-record while listening to teachers' ideas. A qualitative approach opened up possible answers I might not have thought of. With a quantitative approach, using methods such as surveys and questionnaires would have limited my participants' responses.

A description of each school and teacher is provided below to better understand who the participants are, the resources they have available, and the classroom arrangement in which they work.

## **SETTING/CONTEXT**

The study took place in six various school sites in Southern Louisiana. The classroom makeup of the five middle school classes and one high school class observed consisted of predominantly African-American students with few ELL and White students. All teacher interviews took place in the classroom where observations were conducted.

In order to get an idea of the schools, I researched demographics of each school. According to data from startclass.com, all six of the schools have high populations of disadvantaged students. Percentages of free and reduced lunch were provided as one factor to highlight the high populations of disadvantaged students.

In school A, 1,159 students were enrolled where the population make up of students was 77.2% African-American, 9.1% White, 7.5% Asian, and 4.8% Hispanic. The gender distribution was roughly equal as the population was 51.5% male and 48.5% female. Free lunch was available for 70.1% of the population and 5.4% was eligible for reduced lunch. In the READ 180 classroom every child was an African-American student along with the teacher, who was a male. At school A, students who were placed in READ 180 were in the READ 180 class for two class periods. The total class time was two hours long, and READ 180 replaced the two electives each student had in their schedules.

In the classroom rules and expectations were posted for students, teachers, parents, and visitors to see. Consequences were not posted in the room, but it was known by the

teacher and students that school wide and district-wide tracking forms were available. Tracking forms recorded students' misbehavior, and actions teachers used to address the behavior. Warnings were given as well as phone calls home to parents. Teachers used the forms as a classroom management tool to eliminate misbehavior.

Every READ 180 book was classified as either a level one, level two, level three, or level four book based on text complexity. For classroom organization the teacher had books separated by level on a shelf. As levels increased, so did book length and complexity. Above the bookshelf the teacher had a sign posted, informing students to choose books within the suggested Scholastic range of 50 points above or 100 points below their Lexile. Quickwrites and Graphic Organizers were in crates for students to obtain themselves, and the teacher printed them when they were needed. Quickwrites and Graphic Organizers were worksheets that students completed that were tailored to their specific independent reading books to aid in reading comprehension.

The teacher in school A also had binders and eBooks separated on a shelf. The classroom had six desktop computers aligned along a wall, a Smart Board at the front of the room with a stopwatch on its screen, and the teacher's desk off to the right side of the classroom. A whiteboard was also at the front of the class. The classroom had an open-faced concept, spacious for the 15 students present. The class was large enough to where the students working on the computers were far from the students in small group and independent reading. However, the tables for independent reading and small group were close in proximity.

In school B, 550 students were enrolled where the population make up of students was 98.6% African-American, 1.1% Hispanic, and 0.4% White. The gender distribution was roughly



equal as the population was 51.3% male and 48.7% female. Free lunch was available for 93.7% of the population and 1.6% was eligible for reduced lunch. In the READ 180 classroom all but one student identified as African-American along with the teacher, who was an African-American female. There was one Hispanic student in the class.

For classroom organization and management in the READ 180 class in school B, every computer was numbered and aligned along the wall open-faced to the rest of the class. Every computer had a set of headphones with a mic. Along another wall the teacher had couches and sofas for students to sit on while independently reading. Next to the couches were books stacked in bins on a table and separated by level. Workbooks and binders were also separated on a shelf. Desks were in the middle of the class in groups of four or pairs of two. A whiteboard was mounted at the front of the room and the teacher's desk stood to the right of the whiteboard. The classroom size was large and spacious.

In school C, 929 students were enrolled where the population make up of students was 85% African-American, 10.3% White, 2.4% Hispanic, and 1.8% Asian. The gender distribution was roughly equal as the population was 52.5% male and 47.5% female. Free lunch was available for 73.7% of the population and 10.4% was eligible for reduced lunch. In the READ 180 classroom all eight students present were African-American along with the teacher, who was an African-American female.

In school C, classroom rules and expectations were posted. The same classroom mantra was also displayed everyday on the whiteboard at the front of the class to the left of the timer, also displayed at the front of the room. Student work was posted on the walls in addition to student-made rubrics, and charted Lexile goals and growth made. Binders were in a corner on a

tall shelf. Computers were on a back wall and leveled books along another wall. There was a rug for students to sit on while independently reading and one broken lawn chair.

In school D, 929 students were enrolled where the population make up of students was 82.3% African-American, 7.4% White, 6.2% Hispanic, and 3.0% Asian. The gender distribution was roughly more males than females as the population is 53.1% male and 46.9% female. Free lunch was available for 85% of the population and 5.9% was eligible for reduced lunch. In the READ 180 classroom, all but two of the 13 students present were African-American along with the teacher who was an African-American female. Two students were Hispanic.

In the READ 180 classroom in school D, students had individual desks lined in rows. Computers were aligned on two back walls open-faced to the large room. There was a round small group table off to the right of the room and two sofas four steps behind it in a corner. Leveled books were stacked in front of the small group table off to the right. A timer was projected on the screen at the front of the class and off to the right, in front of the leveled books stood the teacher's desk. Data of SRI scores were posted on a wall.

In school E, 262 students were enrolled where the population make up of students was 97.7% African-American and 2.3% White. The gender distribution was roughly more females than males as the population is 42.4% male and 57.6% female. Free lunch was available for 77.5% of the population and 9.2% was eligible for reduced lunch. In the READ 180 classroom desks were in groups and no couches were spotted. I did not observe the class, but an interview was conducted with the teacher who was a White female.

In school F, 1,015 students were enrolled where the population make up of students was 63.2% African-American, 25.5% White, 5.3% Hispanic, 3.3% Asian, and 2.6% two races. The

gender distribution was roughly more males than females as the population was 55.2% male and 44.8% female. Free lunch was available for 66.4% of the population and 9.9% were eligible for reduced lunch. In the READ 180 classroom there were two Hispanic students, seven African-American students, and three White students present. The teacher was an African-American female.

Spatially the READ 180 classroom in school F was huge. There were 11 computers in total that lined two walls in the classroom. Students' desks were in rows facing the front of the class and two couches were in the back corner of the class. There was a data wall showing SRI growth and many leveled READ 180 books. The small group table was positioned at the front of the class. The teacher sat on one side while students sat on the other side glancing every-now-and-then at the rBook page projected on the screen in front of them, behind the teacher. Rules, consequences, and expectations were posted.

There were obvious commonalities and differences in physical appearance and arrangement of each of the six classrooms. Some classrooms had couches, sofas, and rugs for the independent reading area while others did not. All classrooms had desktop computers and books labeled by level. How desks were arranged and the projection of timers varied as well as the teaching style and demeanor of the teachers.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

My chosen participants for this study were based on what schools in a Southern Louisiana county had the READ 180 program and which principals and teachers agreed to have me conduct a classroom observation and interview. Students included struggling readers in middle and high school who were exposed to the READ 180 program. "Struggling readers" were

defined as students who scored below current grade level on the Scholastic Reading Inventory Test.

Yet, teachers were the target of the study. A total of six teachers from one high school and five middle schools in Southern Louisiana participated in the study.

Classroom A was led by an African-American male teacher, Mr. Anderson. He was in his eighth year of teaching READ 180 and 23<sup>rd</sup> year of total teaching years. He taught traditional English before READ 180. In the READ 180 class, the teacher did not read directly from the script. He constantly walked the room and visited his desk occasionally. Mr. Anderson had a welcoming and warm spirit toward me and the students. I felt comfortable in the class and the students appeared to share my same sentiments. He showed a genuine care and concern for what the students were doing and the tasks they were working to complete. The teacher motivated students by comments like “If you don’t do the work, you’re going to be in here next year!” He also made comments such as, “This is serious business, you don’t want your grade to drop.” Many of the students did not like that READ 180 replaced two electives in their schedule. Students were held accountable for their work as actions from Mr. Anderson would from time-to-time remind students to stay on task. He told students to sit up, woke one student from sleeping, and told another student to “Pull up your pants.” He pushed a sense of urgency to log on to the computers by saying, “Hurry, you should be logged in by now.”

Classroom B was led by an African-American female teacher, Ms. Baker. She had been teaching READ 180 for 10 years with 25 total teaching years. Ms. Baker taught traditional English before READ 180. She had high expectations for her students and was stern in demeanor. She told students to “Sit up, get up, and walk around if you need to” if they were to

put their heads down on the desks. She would make remarks like “Wake up guys, you stayed up too late last night.” Ms. Baker had set routines for the kids and did not have to silence students when class began. If work was done incorrectly, with a strong and firm tone she would tell students they were going to have to write it over.

Classroom C was led by an African-American female teacher as well, Ms. Conway. Of the seven years she had been teaching, three of the years were dedicated to READ 180. She had students read the objective for the day and memorize and recite the class mantra:

Ms. Conway’s class is keeping it 100

I will give 100% attention, focus, effort, understanding, and courtesy

I will give 100%

Success starts when you believe in yourself

She was supportive in assisting students with tasks, but also held them accountable by re-directing misbehavior. Ms. Conway followed her principal’s instruction to make it harder to fail than to pass. So for students’ failed tests, students took them over until they passed.

Classroom D was led by an African-American female teacher, Ms. Dillard. Like Ms. Baker, she was strong and firm in demeanor. Students were held accountable as they knew the expectation was to raise their hands when wanting to speak. If a hand was not raised, the teacher asked, “What didn’t you do?”

In whole group instruction Ms. Dillard pushed students to think about questions like “Why is it [the answer] not C?” and “Where does it say that in the text?” During the rotations 100% of the students were on task working on projects, writing in their rBooks, and engaging with computer software.

I was unable to observe the teaching style of Ms. Evans due to scheduling conflicts. However, I was able to spend a great amount of time in Ms. Fuller's classroom. Ms. Fuller was an African-American teacher who had been teaching READ 180 for four years with ten years of total teaching experience. Like Ms. Dillard, she projected the rBook page on a screen while students were working on that particular page in their books. She gave students candy for passing formative assessments at the end of the week. Ms. Fuller had a fun and caring personality, but was serious when it was time to work. She thanked students for engagement, but also addressed off-task behaviors. To sit and read on the couch was a privilege. If students did not follow directions, they were told to move back to their desks. Ms. Fuller followed up by saying, "Don't take a negative attitude, because negative attitudes make our troubles worse."

## **RESEARCH PHASES**

The first phase of research required that I identify participants and sites that would help me understand my study. I emailed every school principal in a Southern Louisiana county to see if they had READ 180 at their school and if they would be willing to let me conduct my study. Once I received the principals' responses, I sent reply emails to those who had READ 180 in their school and who were willing to allow me to conduct research. Some principals forwarded me to other personnel to set up dates and times for visitation, while others instructed me to contact the READ 180 teacher directly. Before some observations I also made phone calls to the school to confirm teacher planning period times and times at which they teach. Once I made appointments with the appropriate personnel, this informed my second phase of research.

My second phase of research was driven by my research data points: observations and field notes, interviews, and document analysis. I provided consent forms for both

administrators and teachers to sign in order to obtain permission to gain access to observe classrooms. On observation days I recorded field notes of class interactions and classroom setup on my observation guide (see Appendix D). The observation guide was divided into three categories: Classroom Management/Organization, Student Behavior, and External Interruptions. In detail, the observation guide highlighted the following:

- Teacher's objective for the lesson
- Physical arrangement of the classroom
- Tone of the classroom
- Factors that contribute to an effective learning environment
- Class Interruptions

Some teachers provided me with lesson plans and handouts throughout the observation, and others provided documents during interviews. The recorded field notes from the observations informed additional questions I wanted to ask during the interviews.

Interviews always followed the observations and took place in the teachers' classrooms.

First, observations were conducted to see how teachers implemented the READ 180 program in their classroom. In addition, I took note of various classroom arrangements. This provided insight on best practices for classroom management and how students respond. I was able to see typical behaviors of students in relation to the demeanor, tone, and personality of the teacher leading the class.

Next, I utilized interviews to allow teachers to freely express themselves in connection with the READ 180 program. Providing open-ended questions was my primary goal in order to obtain true responses. All teachers were asked the same questions as I followed the interview

guide (see Appendix E). For example, the question was asked, “How do you feel about teaching a scripted curriculum?” Based on teachers’ responses, I could gather an idea of how teachers’ feel. This question granted me the opportunity to evaluate the positive and negative aspects of teaching READ 180 in regards to what typically goes well and what is challenging, and the benefits and drawbacks for both teachers and students. I also asked if teachers follow the scripted curriculum word-for-word and why, because I believe there is an assumption that surrounds scripted curriculums that all teachers stand at the front of the room and read directly from the script. So I asked teachers as well if they would rather teach from a scripted curriculum or have to create their own lesson plans. This question would highlight many factors that weigh on and affect the teacher’s decision between preferring to have a script or not.

Lastly, document analysis served as a guide to support three lines of research:

- (1) to see how closely teachers followed the lesson plan they were provided
- (2) to be made aware of supplemental handouts that are being used by teachers to enrich learning
- (3) to analyze how the materials are written to address what research says struggling readers need

I collected the following enrichment documents:

- rBook lesson plan – script included
- A class-made magazine – focused on various topics
- Cooperative Group Role Cards - highlighted duties of the Leader, Recorder, Time Keeper, Presenter, Errand Monitor, Researcher



- Cooperative Learning/Small Group Checklist – evaluated if students are on time to the group, prepared, and participated
- Worksheets with final project ideas – students could make a poster, write a book review, write a front page news article, write a letter to an author, create a timeline, or create a book cover
- Stay Connected worksheet – required students to fill in a chart by connecting the text to their life, to media, to another text, or to the world

The collected documents below aid in student tracking and reading comprehension:

- Summary, Reflection, and Recommendation form – students could write a summary of the book, thoughts about the book, and whether they would recommend it
- Daily Reading Log – students record the day of the week they read, what was read, and the page they started on and ended
- Chapter Summary Log – after each chapter students could write the main idea and a summary of the chapter
- Reader Response – students could record reactions, ideas, or problems while reading
- Daily Reflection Journal – students could write about an interesting thing they learned, a question they may have, and what they did in class that day in each rotation
- New Vocabulary Log – in a chart, students could list new words they came across, write the definition, and a sentence using the word
- Do Now worksheet – for each day of the week students could record their Do Now and Wrap Up responses

## **DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED**

Scheduling observations and interviews was an unexpected difficulty as I was still teaching myself and needed to be present as much as possible for my own students. Although I contacted principals who agreed to allow me visit their school, I should have also contacted all of the READ 180 teachers directly. I was under the assumption there would be communication from the principal to the teacher about my study, yet on the day of some visits I realized that had not always been the case. Some teachers were surprised by my visit and upon my entrance their face showed it, but were still welcoming. After explaining why I had come, the teachers were willing to participate.

As I went along I tried to schedule two interviews and two observations in one day to minimize my absence from my students. I called schools in the morning to check the time teachers had planning periods and what times they taught classes. I attempted to schedule accordingly and mapped out driving routes. While taking this approach, I ran into the issue of teachers wanting me to view certain classes. If I could go back and change one aspect of my research, my upfront planning would have been much more organized and laid out as I learned it is pivotal to being efficient and saving time.

Also, I wish I had taken a count of how many boys versus girls were in each class. This would inform further research to examine the possibility of an unequal distribution of male and female students in the READ 180 program. I also wish I had taken pictures of how different classrooms were set up on the day of my visits. Having pictures of available classroom resources and how classes were arranged would play a role in both teacher satisfaction and student learning. Moreover, I wish I would have had time to interview and observe both

teachers and students over the span of one complete school year. This would allow me to see how participants' feelings change and evolve over the course of time.

## **ETHICS**

A challenging part of this study was having to listen without voicing my own opinion. I tried not to show any bias as I knew it was important to remain as neutral as possible in response to teacher interview answers. It was also my responsibility to represent my colleagues as professionals, and at the same time be truthful and authentic in my research i.e. what I was seeing during classroom observations and hearing in interviews. Nonetheless, I hold a great respect for all educators as I know the job of an educator is not easy.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### RESTATEMENT OF THE PURPOSE

The purpose of my research was to examine new and veteran teacher's attitudes on the READ 180 program in six Southern Louisiana schools. Below Table I illustrates the range of teaching experience of each teacher. Many of the teachers taught ELA or Special Education classes prior to teaching READ 180. Teacher prep programs ranged from summer or alternative programs to university certifications.

Table I. Teaching Experience

| Teacher      | Setting       | Total Teaching Years | Number of Years Teaching READ 180 |
|--------------|---------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Mr. Anderson | High School   | 23                   | 8                                 |
| Ms. Baker    | Middle School | 25                   | 10                                |
| Ms. Conway   | Middle School | 7                    | 3                                 |
| Ms. Dillard  | Middle School | 12                   | 7                                 |
| Ms. Evans    | Middle School | 3                    | 1                                 |
| Ms. Fuller   | Middle School | 10                   | 4                                 |

### DATA ANALYSIS

I used three methods in order to evaluate the following: the advantages and disadvantages of using the READ 180 scripted curriculum in today's classrooms, teacher feelings and views on the READ 180 scripted curriculum, and how teachers implement the scripted curriculum into their classroom practices. This research was considered a qualitative study

because it drew upon audio-recorded teacher interviews, observations with written field notes, and document analysis which included lesson plans and handouts.

Qualitative data was collected in the form of audio-recorded, structured teacher interviews. Interview questions were open-ended and asked teachers to describe the READ 180 program, express feelings and practices about having to teach a scripted curriculum, and share student experiences within the program. More specifically, the structured interview included questions such as what they consider to be more effective - having to create lesson plans or have a scripted curriculum be given to them. Teachers were also given an opportunity to reflect on changes they would make to the program. Observations with written field notes highlighted classroom management and organization, student behavior, and external interruptions. Document analysis included teacher's lesson plans and supplemental materials.

I utilized the Maykut and Morehouse research approach for data analysis. First, all interviews were transcribed then coded. While coding interviews, I noticed the six teachers expressed and shared multiple commonalities. Based on coding, I wrote down a list of common trends which can be found below in Table II. Then I used Table II to develop a list of themes with subcategories. I themed the data to make it more manageable to determine trends and patterns. Next, I highlighted specific field notes taken from each observation. Field notes as well as documents were categorized and connected with the according theme. Documents were analyzed with attention to scaffolding of the material. Propositional statements in Table V were grounded in teachers' responses from interviews which ranged from 30 minutes to over an hour.

Table II. Categories Generated in Opening Coding

| Noticeable Patterns in Coding  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent Reading is typically the most challenging part of the day</li> <li>• Bell schedules affect the traditional timing of the program</li> <li>• Creative teachers would be limited in their ideas to create original lesson plans</li> <li>• Teachers believe the type of students need routine and structure</li> <li>• Initially students are not excited about the class, over time some feelings change, some do not</li> <li>• The instructional model differentiates learning to fit various learning styles</li> <li>• Both students and teachers are excited by the onset of Lexile growth</li> <li>• Teachers have the flexibility to add or take away from the script, most teachers add, few take away</li> <li>• Scripted curriculums allow for more personal time</li> <li>• Minimal stress around lesson planning</li> <li>• Students express boredom</li> <li>• The computer program meets students where they are</li> <li>• Teachers use supplemental materials to make learning engaging and relevant to students' lives</li> <li>• Teachers hold the belief that the research-based program works</li> <li>• Teachers do not follow/read the script word-for-word, they sometimes veer from the script to meet students where they are</li> <li>• Teachers explain why the students must be in the class</li> <li>• READ 180 is considered an elective class and oftentimes replaces more "fun" electives</li> <li>• The program provides students with basic skills to aid them in other classes and on standardized tests</li> <li>• Short attention spans, labeled as problem kids for behavior</li> <li>• Expected to be implemented with fidelity</li> <li>• There's no trial and error</li> <li>• Teachers must constantly monitor all students' actions in different groups</li> <li>• With increased experience with the program, teachers become more familiar with the script</li> <li>• Students are grouped according to Lexiles</li> <li>• The teacher sets the tone and culture for the class</li> </ul> |

Following the analysis of all forms of data collection, trends were noted that suggested certain themes yielding results of the study. These themes addressed individually below, include the limits of not knowing the history and backgrounds of the students involved.

Each of these themes emerged in some form from the analysis of one or more of the data collection methods used in the study.

- Improving Basic Skills
  - Adequate Resources
- Teacher Profile
  - Teachable Moments in the Script
  - The Limiting of Creativity
- Less Pressures of Lesson Planning
- The Need for Structure and Routine
  - Student Engagement
- Classroom Management is Key

The findings considered how the READ 180 program is used to increase prior knowledge, and basic reading and writing skills of students. There were also themes of how the curriculum may restrict or stifle teacher creativity, the lack of pressure surrounding lesson planning, how structure and routine are seen as a necessity, and the importance of classroom management.

### **IMPROVING BASIC SKILLS**

The goal of the READ 180 program is to improve the reading skills of students who are reading two or more years below their grade level. For that reason, Mr. Anderson believed READ 180 is a really good program as it improves reading deficiencies according to increased scores on the SRI Test. Mr. Anderson highlighted how students can increase their reading ability by at least two grade levels:

You can pick up a student who is reading maybe on a third-grade level and actually pick them up to at least a fifth or sixth-grade level. So it's a good program. It picks them up at the level that they're on.

The computer program meets students where they are academically. It gives them opportunities to practice their fluency with read-alouds and automatically differentiates based on the student's level. For example, in the Spelling Zone some students may have lower level spelling words; eventually the difficulty of the words will increase and get harder as the student shows mastery with those words. According to Ms. Fuller, the computer is also great because for those tactile students who need to touch, and see, and interact with what they are doing, it is good for them. Furthermore, lower level students are able to go at a slower pace according to how the program moves which really helps ELL and 504 students. Ms. Dillard made a point that ELL students tend to do well in the program, based on the notion that students from other countries come wanting to read, while students whose first language is English lack apathy and are more reluctant; they do not want to read. This was seen in the high school classroom as students took their time logging on to the computer and one student logged out early, yet in the middle school classroom of Ms. Evans, she said computers are their favorite part. The computer software is an asset not only for students but also teachers because it collects and shows student data. Teachers can immediately see how students are doing in areas such as spelling, using context clues, reading comprehension, and vocabulary.

In order to achieve mastery and improve basic skills led by the teacher, READ 180 teachers are given a script. Mr. Anderson stated that school leaders want READ 180 teachers to follow the script word-for-word and that he tries as much as possible to do so. Yet he also believes sometimes teachers have to get away from the script due to various reasons. He



stated, “I have some Special Ed kids that are way lower level than some regular ed kids on a lower level and the script sometimes, the vocabulary on certain things, they won’t even understand the directions.” Therefore, Mr. Anderson frames directions in a way his students will understand. A challenging part I noted about the READ 180 class is that teachers teach an academically diverse group of students. It is important to know there are some kids who probably should not be in READ 180 because they are actually on a higher level, but just did not try or take the SRI Test seriously. There are also students who are truly on a 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, or 4<sup>th</sup>-grade level in high school, and your job as the READ 180 teacher is to reach every student.

Nonetheless, Mr. Anderson believes for students the class remains beneficial as it helps them in all their other classes because lessons are done in science, history, and of course English and reading. For example, in READ 180 students write paragraphs; in traditional English students write essays. Ms. Evans mentioned when students sit in traditional English and do not know what to write or how to get started, they are missing basics that are talked about in READ 180. She feels they go well together and breaking everything down into small pieces helps students. READ 180 prepares students for standardized tests, as they practice test-taking measures and strategies. Ms. Dillard would add that the program is an intervention needed not only in order to be successful especially on standardized tests, but also in life in general.

According to my participants, the strategy of students seeing and tracking their own data in their binders and on the computers helps. The more students are involved, the better the program works. So students monitor their own progress. Data is tracked in their binders and on the computer software they can see how they are doing on the student dashboard. In Ms. Conway’s class “whenever they have to take a book quiz and pass their book quizzes, they

have to graph that data in their own binder. They have to know what their Lexile levels are at all times. If they don't memorize them, at least they need to know where to find it." It is when Mr. Anderson gives feedback, that he notices that his students tend to do better.

The READ 180 program has been defined as innovative and effective, which solves a problem of having a large class with one teacher needing to differentiate because the program itself is differentiated. In Ms. Conway's interview she highlighted the growth she has seen:

The Lexiles went up. I only had a couple of students move out of the program, get their Lexiles up high enough. But everybody improved over 65% of my students improved their Lexiles between more than 150. It was really huge; it was really good.

She says she always encourages them and talks to them about how important it is to show what they know - to express themselves intellectually. She states "You're a number, your numbers are how other people are going to see you. Every test, every result, everything recorded. Somebody's over there looking at it, reading it. They see your name, they see your percentage correct." Ms. Conway is honest with her students about the reports that are pulled.

Many READ 180 teachers use the computer generated collected reports from the Scholastic Achievement Manager (SAM) to determine students' needs or what they are struggling with. For instance, teachers may notice a weakness in the knowledge of sequence of events, subject-verb agreement, main idea and details, or grammar in three or four students with that same problem. That teacher would then print a particular worksheet to help them. In regards to the program as a whole Ms. Evans says "I think it helps kids build the basic foundation for reading and writing, and it also helps teachers build those same skills too in how to teach it."

Ms. Baker is in agreement that READ 180 is a “wonderful program for students who are struggling to read.” She enjoys teaching it because for the past ten years her students have shown fantastic gains and growth:

I enjoy working with struggling readers and I enjoy the scaffolding here, how everything builds on everything else. And just seeing them the way they are when I first get them in my classroom to the way they are at the end of the classroom they get to see their growth.

Whether students thrive or struggle she believes depends on the teacher’s presentation and the culture within the classroom. She explains to students why they are there and where the district says they should be by the end of the year. So she tells them, “Help me get you there.”

Ms. Fuller created a culture of supportive students, as I observed many acts of kindness. A male student gave another student his dictionary and went to get another one. A female student willingly helped a lower level student write correct grammar and punctuation in her rBook, and a different male student helped her log onto the computer. The teacher explained that the culture was created by her expectations and what she allowed and did not allow.

## **ADEQUATE MATERIALS**

Resources are essential to the overall success and effectiveness of the READ 180 program. In order to see growth, adequate materials play a critical role. Mr. Anderson says, “it’s not a bad setup.” However, he is missing furniture or sofas to make an actual reading-like center. “Of course I’d like to have some furniture, like sofas for my reading center.” Having that available resource would help. Additionally, in Ms. Dillard’s classroom, there is a need for more and better books. She stated,

A lot of the students who’ve been in the program for “x” amount of years, generally after the second year we go ahead and exit them out, however those who have been in here at least a year and a half a lot of them have already gone

through the reading material and some of them who are getting on those higher levels, they want a challenge. And a lot of our books aren't challenging them right now. And we just need a better selection of books.

Ms. Conway mentioned the use of audiobooks which is another component of the program:

We were using the audiobooks very well, unfortunately until some things came up missing. There are no more earbuds. They just disappear so I have to get more. But usually audiobook is a good alternative. They like them, because they get the sense of having a challenging book along with it.

Students are able to follow along while texts are being read to them. However, audiobooks require earphones and cd players which schools must have the funds to accommodate.

Money is not needed to access all aspects of the READ 180 program. Ms. Conway states,

It's so much to know, so much to master, and I fear that I'm not there yet. I don't know how many years it takes some other people to really use all of the wonderful resources READ 180 has. There's so much, but I'm still finding out new things. Every, every month I find out this or oh I needed to do that.

From targeted worksheets to project ideas READ 180 provides a community for teachers to use materials to build and stretch students. Teachers shared with me an assortment of handouts that required students to write book reviews, front page news articles, and letters to authors. Creatively, projects required that students produce book covers and posters of finished books. In Ms. Fuller's class she assigned a Timeline project so students who wanted to draw, they could. For linguistic learners, there was a writing portion, and if a student was a spatial kid, an actual line of sequence of events would help with the particular reading skill, sequencing. Ms. Conway displayed the magazine her class created which included a student advice column, interviews with school staff members, a fashion report, and a snack page that shared foods the students liked to eat.

## TEACHER PROFILE

When asked what type of teacher would best fit teaching READ 180 these were the characteristics given by participants:

- A lot of patience, energy, and able to adapt quickly
- Flexible
- Open-minded
- Positive attitude toward teaching
- Determined to help a struggling reader
- Strong Mindset
- Dedicated
- Tough Skin
- Stern
- Strong Disciplinarian
- Cannot be soft-spoken
- Compassionate
- Caring
- Struggles with planning
- Has a hard time being organized
- Possesses strong management skills
- New teachers
- Emotionally stable
- Has a plan but is not necessarily married to it

Mr. Anderson stated, “This program is not for every teacher.” That is evident as the scripted curriculum is boring for Ms. Dillard. Yet, Ms. Conway feels confident in the script, confident in the curriculum, and feels very comfortable using it.

### **TEACHABLE MOMENTS IN THE SCRIPT**

The READ 180 program is intended to be implemented with fidelity. Yet, many of the teachers do not read the script word-for-word. During classroom observations all teachers had the script or teacher’s edition of the rBook with the lesson plan in front of them. All teachers said they follow the script for the most part, but some phrases might not be framed the exact same way it was written. Ms. Baker stated in regards to her students, “Sometimes they don’t understand, sometimes their background knowledge – a lot of it may not be there and I’ll have to go off script, and I do.” Ms. Conway gave two reasons as to why every lesson is not read word-for-word in her class: if a teacher is being observed and evaluated and they are standing, holding a book, just reading from it the whole time, they are going to be considered a one teacher. She went on to say, “Sometimes things happen where you just cannot stay on the script as the moment is just too ripe for something innovative to happen, and you seize it.” Many of the teachers referred to these instances as “teachable moments” that they do not dismiss. They visit them and return back to the script. Ms. Dillard believed kids know when teachers are reading and they do not like that – they like to be talked to. It is natural for both the teacher and students when lesson plans are not read word-for-word. Ms. Dillard has been teaching READ 180 to the point where she already knows what the book is going to say, so she does stray slightly from the script.

Like Mr. Anderson, Ms. Baker taught ELA before teaching READ 180. So when all teachers were asked about their preference in teaching a scripted course versus a non-scripted course, Table III below shows how they responded:

Table III. The Choice of Having to Create Lesson Plans

| Would you rather create your own lesson plans? |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| Teacher  | Yes | No |
| Mr. Anderson                                   |     | X  |
| Ms. Baker                                      |     | X  |
| Ms. Conway                                     | X   |    |
| Ms. Dillard                                    | X   |    |
| Ms. Evans                                      | X   |    |
| Ms. Fuller                                     |     | X  |

Although Ms. Baker created lesson plans for many years as an ELA teacher, she preferred the developed READ 180 plans highlighting the fact that she is free to make occasional changes. She says for example,

Sometimes I don't do 3 reads. If my kids don't need 3 reads, I'll do two. All of those React and Write activities, sometimes I shorten those. But each workshop I only do one where I hand out the React and Write activity and we focus on that. So some of the reads I decrease on, that kind of thing. If they don't need it, I don't do it. We move on to something else. And I'm still following the program with fidelity, but I'm just tweaking it.

In contrast, Ms. Dillard would rather create her own lesson plans, be creative and be challenged. She stated, "I'm that teacher who likes to do things a certain way and this program I love it, but it's getting to the point where I need a challenge." At the beginning of her class she showed the school's student-run podcast which included the topics: sports, weather, history,

and pop events which both the teacher and students agreed it was the best one yet. Ms. Dillard also adds to the script, but she does not take away.

Ms. Evans finds parts of the script repetitive at times. Although her students like to talk and read aloud, with the re-reading of passages and choral readings she has experienced annoyed students. Yet she understands the *why* behind it. She stated, “I know that’s how they learn those words, the repetitiveness is what makes it work like seeing words, saying them over and over is what makes it work.” Sometimes Ms. Conway does not do three reads as well, stating “if my kids don’t need 3 reads, I’ll do two.”

Teachers tailor the script to fit the needs of their students. Therefore, many of the teachers add to the script. Ms. Conway brings in outside videos on topics. Ms. Baker reads aloud to her students for four minutes every day to model what a fluent reader sounds like. The students are excited and love sitting, listening, and relaxing, but this is not embedded in the READ 180 curriculum. She saw the great influence reading to her students had on improving motivation when she was told students went to the library themselves and scored 100% on the Accelerated Reader test for that book. Furthermore, one student traveled with her dad to the library to check out the sequel to the book and brought it in for Ms. Baker to read to the class. At the time of reading another book she had some concerns about continuing and thought to stop, as the school lost a student due to gun violence. The book included gun violence and how it affects the family, so Ms. Baker asked students how they felt. They wanted her to continue to read - she did. She attributed those successes to the books being relevant to the kids lives, as “it has them excited, interested in what they’re reading.”



## LIMITING OF CREATIVITY

Most of the teachers interviewed stated that teaching a scripted curriculum can be restrictive, especially to creative teachers. Ms. Baker expressed, "Sometimes we just may want to continue in those teachable moments and we can't – everything is scripted and timed. So I have to come right back and so there are little stifled that way." The program can be constricting. As Mr. Anderson stated, "You don't get to use some of that creativity sometimes because you have to follow this script and if you get away from the script too much you might get penalized." Teachers must find a balance between meeting students where they are i.e. meeting their needs and fulfilling interests, but still implementing the program with fidelity. According to Mr. Anderson, following the script can get "stale and boring sometimes when you do the same things over, so you have to make it creative." It can get monotonous for both teachers and students. Ms. Baker has heard people say "well I get tired of reading the same thing over and over again." She does not get tired like Ms. Fuller, because a lot of times they do not have the same kids. The students change every year and so do their needs or the same kids that the teacher did have move to a different level.

Likewise, the students need variety and doing the same things every day may lead to frustration for both the students and teacher. Hence, Mr. Anderson uses many READ 180 supplemental materials, and credits a big plus is that he can add to or take away from lesson plans according to what his students need. He says, "I enjoy the script because I have flexibility to add something or take away from it." The materials are already there and made available for the teacher.

## LESS PRESSURES OF LESSON PLANNING

With a script serving as a blueprint, teachers were not stressed over lesson plans. Because everything is laid out for the teacher, stress levels were very low around planning. Ms. Fuller says it “offers the teacher extreme guidance in teaching her class. The guessing game is out of the window.” Ms. Conway adds, “You don’t have to stay up at night.” This would be advantageous for new teachers learning to juggle teacher responsibilities or any teacher who is not big on creating lesson plans or great with organization. Ms. Evans stated,

My first year teaching I literally had nothing, I had no materials, no textbooks, no projector, no internet, so to have something like this then would have been amazing. In the same way I think it helps kids build the basic foundation for reading and writing, and it also helps teachers build those same skills too in how to teach it.

Because Ms. Evans also taught 6<sup>th</sup> grade ELA while teaching READ 180, time management wise the READ 180 scripted curriculum helped due to the amount of planning and prep required for her ELA classes. The READ script can serve as not only an organizational tool for new teachers, but also a guide to improving personal lesson plans. Ms. Evans stated,

This is the first time I’ve ever worked with a scripted curriculum so in some ways it’s easy. It frees up a lot of time. It helps me with some of my other classes, with questioning like I’ve learned a lot from it. Everything is really clear like the objectives are all laid out, the things I’m supposed to say are all scripted, they’re right there, so you can basically read them. It makes a lot of things a lot easier. I’m glad that I teach both classes, because I have that creative part of me that wants to create and experiment, so I get to do that with the other class. It is a good balance. I think the classes kind of feed off of each other. I learn a lot about teaching and questioning, pacing, from teaching the scripted curriculum that I can use in my other class.

Because the script has helped Ms. Evans become better at questioning, she believed in return the program helps individuals become better teachers as it allows teachers to see what works and what does not.

Ms. Dillard reiterated how everything is done for you stating, “There is no room for error, you have all lesson plans, you have everything that you need, all the materials. You have all of that available and ready for you.” Time management wise it is easier for lessons to be scripted and planned. This also allows for instance, Mr. Anderson to spend more time with teaching than planning. Yet, he did not dismiss the fact that the script itself is not enough. He said, “I mean you still plan, because even though it’s a scripted lesson plan, that doesn’t mean that lesson plan is going to work for every child.” For example, within the scripted lesson plan Do Now’s are provided. On the day of my observation Mr. Anderson created an original Do Now centered on the approaching Thanksgiving holiday. He believed you can sometimes get away from the script, but still stay on task.

For Ms. Baker the best thing about teaching a scripted curriculum is that the research in particular with READ 180 is already there – it’s proven. As a READ 180 teacher she does not have to figure out what works, she firmly believes it works. There is little trial and error because it consists of research-based questions and dialogue directed towards students to scaffold learning, which enables her to reach them where they are and move them effectively through research-based questioning to greater reading growth. However, like Mr. Anderson she did not fail to mention that she also has the ability to veer from the script a little to make real-life connections and dive into teachable moments. Yet, she goes right back to the script so the scaffolding is there. Her actions are rooted in the belief that “you have to make it relevant to them so that they can connect it to their real lives.” She just hopes publishers will create an additional book beyond the current workbooks for students to grow into.

Because a script, lesson plans, and supplemental materials are already provided for READ 180 teachers, Ms. Conway acknowledged the point of how some other colleagues may view READ 180 teachers. She compared it to being “sort of like being a special ed teacher.” She went on to say, “Some teachers don’t respect it. They feel, well you’re not working, you’re just reading a form.” Judgments are made looking from the outside-in, not having been in the shoes of a READ 180 teacher. Ms. Conway made clear, “just because it’s scripted makes it easier, but it also presents its own challenges.” Still, READ 180 teachers may be viewed as less than peers.

#### **THE NEED FOR STRUCTURE AND ROUTINE**

Many of the teachers characterized the Instructional Model as “extremely structured.” Mr. Anderson claimed the students are not initially used to routine, but with a script, students basically do the same things every day. Consistency accompanies routine. Routine and structure for students eliminate confusion. Any teacher without a solid plan and set expectations will lose students. Mr. Anderson says, “If you’re coming in trying to feel your way, you’re going to lose them. So they need structure when they come in. They already know what to do to.” Initially, some READ 180 students are not accustomed to having structure and routine. By having a structured program, students already know what to do every day and what to expect. One drawback to the structure is that teachable moments may be cut short, because everything is timed, and for the sake of fidelity and sticking to the script. Still, Mr. Anderson feels the majority of the kids thrive under the curriculum because they are looking for structure and READ 180 has just that. He believes the kids need structure and routine. Without it, students

will likely be off-task. Table IV below summarizes from interviews what typically goes well and what does not go well in these teachers' classrooms.

Table IV. What Typically Goes Well and What is Typically Challenging in the Classroom

| Day-to-day lessons |  |   |  |
|--------------------|--|---|--|
| Teacher            | What goes well?  | What is challenging?                            | What would you change?   |
| Mr. Anderson       | Small Group - a lot of one-to-one, students enjoy the help   | Trying to maintain all 3 groups                 | The time period instead of 2 hours, an hour and 30 minutes<br>Reading time - hard for students to do for 20 non-stop minutes |
| Ms. Baker          | Four minute read-aloud   | External interruptions i.e. weather or visitors | No changes   |
| Ms. Conway         | Transitions  | Attitude and behavior                           | No changes   |
| Ms. Dillard        | Everything - having strong management skills   | Independent Reading                             | How writing is guided  |
| Ms. Evans          | Computer Time  | Independent Reading                             | No changes - has nothing to compare it to  |
| Ms. Fuller         | Whole Group and Small Group, students like being able to display their knowledge and receiving individual help | Independent Reading                             | Does not have much that would change - no downside to a scripted class   |

From the observations, most students were on task in the computer software groups, but there was talking in the independent reading groups. Ms. Evans mentioned how the computer headphones help to isolate distractions, still many of the teachers specifically stated independent reading was the most challenging part. In Ms. Baker's class she had to repeatedly stop small group for independent reading questions. For some students it is hard to sit and

actually read for 15 - 20 non-stop minutes. Students get bored fast and attention spans are short. According to Mr. Anderson, “They don’t want to just work for the 90 minutes or 2 hours. They’re used to regular classes being 50 minutes and getting out.” In many schools READ 180 is a course that replaces students’ electives, as it is considered an elective itself. Mr. Anderson often hears students say is “they want to be in the other elective.”

On the other hand, Ms. Evans attributes the occurrence to individual learning styles or learning differences noting kinesthetic learners or auditory learners are oftentimes the kids who end up in READ 180. They struggle with reading and writing (visual things). Kinesthetic learners have to move around and have to do certain things. They have trouble sitting and reading, or focusing on a task quietly by themselves. It is not their style. Ms. Evans discussed her students’ love for the computers. When asked if it is because of high-interest content or being able to see growth she responded, “I think it may be a little of both. They like to see themselves grow. I think having the headphones helps to isolate so they can focus more.”

Mr. Anderson teaches READ 180 for two hours. Although it benefits him to get everything done, he believes it’s a little bit long for these kids.” When asked what he would change about the curriculum if anything, he responded: “Instead of maybe two hours, just enough time to get in all three rotations, maybe an hour and 30 minutes.” The READ 180 Instructional Model is designed for 90-minute classes, although schools are allowed to adapt the model to fit their bell schedule.

Ms. Baker had her students in a routine. She says, “They know the routine. They know what I expect, very positive, high expectations for them and they pretty much give me what I expect pretty much.” From the observation, students know to pass out binders and rBooks,

they know that if there is no space to sit on the couch they must sit at their desk, and they know where their books are located on the shelf and could pull them. If students did not adhere to Ms. Baker's expectations, she utilized tracking forms to record minor classroom offenses such as excessive talking, being off-task, not bringing materials to class, and disrespect.

Within the routine Instructional Model students know they will meet with the teacher in small group. Small group typically goes well in Mr. Anderson's class because it's a lot of one-to-one. The students enjoy the help, because in regular classes teachers may have 30 to 1 in classes. Ms. Baker echoed the value in having that one-on-one time. Small Group allows teachers to meet with a group of five or six to better understanding. However, in Ms. Conway's class, she allows the students to lead small group; each of them has a role and they know what to do. The leader focuses the work around the learning task and makes sure every voice is heard. The recorder writes and compiles group members' ideas. The time keeper encourages the group to stay on task and announces when time is halfway and nearly up. The presenter presents the group's finished work to the class. The errand monitor retrieves supplies, and requests help from the teacher when needed. Lastly, the researcher accesses information from diverse mediums in order to assist the group in answering questions and gaining new knowledge.

Students are likely to be divided based on their Lexile, and Ms. Fuller says, "the thought behind that, is that their understanding is on the same level, and so if they're going to struggle with anything they would struggle together as a group and I would be able to help them." This allows auditory and linguistic learners to learn by writing, seeing, and doing while practicing in Small Group.

All in all, the teachers love the instructional model. Ms. Conway even went on to say,

I don't think there's a better model. Because you need to break the children up. What child wants to sit there and listen to you talk all day, they can't be still. They need to get up and move. They need to stretch out sometimes. They definitely need to be on the computer. They definitely need to get to talk.

She believed any teacher would benefit from the model regardless of what the curriculum is.

Breaking them up into three groups is easier to control, especially when you get them sold onto to the idea of who is doing what job and being serious about their responsibilities.

In some schools there are barriers to creating a system of routine. In Ms. Evans's school They have only 60-minute classes on an A-Day, B-Day schedule. As a result, the teacher must divide the rotations. Typically, whole group is one day and the other two rotations are the next day. The class meets every other day so it takes students a week to go through all rotations. Because the kids do not go through the rotations as often, Ms. Evans says kids "are like what do I do?" It is not as routine. Nonetheless, despite not doing the rotations as often, Ms. Evans stated, "Amazingly their scores have gone up a lot. Like more than the 150 that they're supposed to."

## **STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

Ms. Dillard stated how reading is not being done at home, so if students are not seeing it at home they are less likely to want to do so at school. This could be one contributing factor to student disengagement. Yet, there seems to be a disconnect between what the teachers believe the students are experiencing and the students' actual reality. Students' feelings are important to consider when evaluating the usefulness of the READ 180 program.

Most of the teachers stated that initially the READ 180 class is viewed negatively by students. Students are not eager to be in the class as they think it is for "slow" kids or that it is



“the stupid or special class.” Students’ mindsets change once they experience success. Most teachers agreed that students love to take the SRI test to see growth. Ms. Evans stated,

The moral has changed because they’ve seen their Lexile scores go up so much. I think that they’re a little bit more motivated now that they’ve seen such improvement. But still, they’re kind of bummed to be in a READ 180 class. I mean they would rather be in another elective like doing something fun.

In contrast, some teachers like Ms. Dillard have some students who want to be in READ 180. They ask to be in the class, but she shares that it is not made for them. Table V below lists propositional statements in regards to students’ feelings based on examples from the data.

Table V. Propositional Statements Developed from Categories with Examples

| Propositional Statements   | Examples from Data  |
|--|---|
| Teachers isolate what the READ 180 program can do for kids ignoring students’ verbal expressions of unhappiness. | <p>Mr. Anderson: Majority of the kids say they’re going to say they hate the class, they can’t stand the teacher and the program but they actually enjoy the class because it’s a lot of hands-on. They get to work on the computer (even though some say they don’t like the computer).</p> <p>Mr. Anderson: I would say 90% of the kids they actually enjoy the program, they just won’t say it every day.</p>  |
| READ 180 does not have a positive name among students and unfamiliar teachers.                                   | <p>Ms. Baker: Now when students first get in here, they think they don’t want to be in here. I think sometimes they here other kids tease until they get in here and I explain to them why they’re in here. That everything we do in here will help you in all of your other classes. And everything we do in here will help you come testing time. So once we get past that then they enjoy coming here.</p> <p>Ms. Evans: in the beginning, they were like “Oh this is the stupid class, like I’m in here because we scored the lowest.” So they were kind of bummed they were in this class to begin with.</p> |

(Table V. Continued)

| Propositional Statements  | Examples from Data   |
|---|--|
| Teachers believe that student motivation and engagement are good. | Ms. Baker: On a typical day student motivation and engagement is good. On a daily basis it's good.   |
| The more students are involved, the greater the positive results. | Ms. Evans: Most of the time they're engaged. They want to know what we're doing, they want to know who's using the computers. They get stars for doing the worksheets that go with the books and taking the quizzes online. So they want to do all that. There's people that like to read aloud, so they can't wait to read aloud. It's just the personality type. So there are the kids that have to be talking, have to be moving. So there's never a quiet day. It's always "I want to do this, I want to do that. It's my turn. I want to pass out the binders. I want to write on the board." |

During an observation a student's head was down when he was supposed to be reading. Toward the end of that class more students became disengaged. From the literature reviewed, motivation is an essential aspect to engaging students. To motivate students Ms. Conway gives a football or track analogy. She says, "When you work really hard, you throw up, get a headache, you want to be on the team don't you? Don't you show up to practice the next day?" The class responds, "Yes." So she goes on to say,

"Ok, well reading is the same thing. Reading makes you smarter, reading increases your intelligence and it strengthens neuro-pathways. It makes you smarter! Makes you think, and you learn more vocabulary. It makes you think in ways you probably wouldn't have before. You're going to get a headache, you're going to get sleepy, your eyes are going to get watery and blurry when you read a lot, because it's just exercise. It's just part of the package. But look on the bright side, you won't get nauseated, you won't get shin splints, and you won't pass out. You won't sweat."

Still she believes student motivation is also dependent upon whether or not the teacher has bought into the program. Although she is still working on winning some of them over into the culture and the class, she is convinced the energy a teacher puts out is going to reflect on the students.

### **CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT IS KEY**

Due to the design of the READ 180 Instructional Model students are responsible for completing tasks both with and without the teacher. While the teacher leads Small Group, students in Independent Reading and students working on the computers are expected to be on task. Ideally students would read without falling asleep and work on the computer without having YouTube on a hidden screen, but that is not always the case. Most teachers had computers numbered. Students were assigned to a specific computer so transitions were smooth and students know where to go. Also, issues with computers could be traced back to particular students.

Attitude and behavior are also two main challenges as Ms. Conway described some of her students can be loud and undisciplined in their demeanor and conversation. However, in any READ 180 class there could have a student throwing an object across the room at another student, side conversations not about the coursework, horseplay at the back of the room, distractions with cell phones, or profanity. To prevent those instances, teachers work to ensure that all students stay on task.

Trying to maintain all three groups can be difficult while leading Small Group. Teachers must make sure the reading group is actually reading and that the computer group is not on

other websites other than the READ 180 software. Below are suggestions from four of the teachers:

Mr. Anderson - "Though you're working with a small group you got to keep your eyes moving. Move about every now and then. The kids, keep them happy and you'll get more work done that way. They'll do more work for you I should say, if you try to be flexible with them. Be strict on them but flexible and fair."

Ms. Conway – "We had done so much work on getting it well-oiled like really good rotations. Really defined roles and responsibilities and the students really understood and cared about their room, their class, the culture."

Ms. Dillard – "As far as like computer time, if your kids are straying off of the software, that's something that needs to be addressed. You need to have some type of consequences in play children will have to serve if their not doing what they're supposed to be doing."

Ms. Fuller – "They're so far away from me, I can't keep my thumb on them, because I have to be up here with my Small Group working with them. So what I try to do is, I try to make eye-contact, and I do call out names and I know it's not the best thing to do, but it works for me. Just to let I know, you know, we know together, change this course of action. Or I'll try to throw some dates on them – 'Well you know my grades are due tomorrow.' And maybe some self-motivation will kick in or anything I can do to get them together."

Different teachers had different ways of achieving structure and routine in their respective classrooms. Ms. Baker utilized tracking forms, and stopped loud transitions to make students do it over. Ms. Conway focused on repetitiveness and implemented praise. Admittedly Ms. Conway said, "At first it was very drill instructor, it was not pleasant." Then she would

shower them with compliments like “see how wonderful you look. You’re wonderful, you’re fabulous.” As she praised them like they were the greatest thing since sliced bread, eventually transitions became like clockwork. Students felt a sense of accomplishment and success from Ms. Conway making it such a big priority. As Ms. Fuller said, “the great thing about this class is, it does help them [students] experience success. Even if they’re failing everywhere else, they can experience success here.”

## **CONCLUSION**

Key insights can be drawn by analyzing teacher interviews, observation field notes, lesson plans, and handouts of READ 180 teachers. The program itself meets students where they are academically to improve basic skills. However, many of the teachers veer off the script in order to reach kids where they are both academically and culturally. Teachers are held to the expectation that they are to implement the READ 180 program with fidelity in order to grow students who are behind grade level. They may make connections, share a story, and allow students to do the same with the intent that learning is made purposeful for students without dismissing research-based content, strategies, and practices. The content is not always culturally relevant to every child as some students experience boredom, yet READ 180 is said to include high-interest books and materials. In some schools there is a need for more books and more resources. It can be seen from observations and field notes how school funding impacts available resources which in turn affect book selection and other available resources.

READ 180 teachers in South Louisiana are working to make the curriculum relatable and creative in order to avoid student disengagement. Some students have short attention spans as independent reading is the most challenging part to maintain. For this reason, having routine,

structure, and consequences is essential to effective classroom management and optimizing learning. Although the program can be repetitive for some teachers and students, most teachers are fortunate to teach the curriculum as having a script saves time and there is no testing to see what works. The research of the program has been proven and teachers thrive on seeing student growth.

In interviews some teachers would state they do not think there is a negative to the scripted curriculum and there is nothing they would change, but would then go on to explain suggestions for how the program could be improved. There is always room to become a better educator. READ 180 teachers are charged with a challenging task every day to motivate the unmotivated, encourage the less confident, and grow those who have been left behind.

## **CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

After having conducted this research study I am brought back to the idea that whether you are a READ 180 Teacher or not, you will have challenges. Because of the design of the READ 180 program, the teacher's challenges may look different from general education teachers, but those challenges still exist. Every educator will experience a struggle at some point in his or her career, it may just be in a unique package. I am grateful to have been able to talk to and observe other READ 180 teachers, because I was given insight into new ideas but also reassurance that I am not alone in my struggle to making reading meaningful and productive for students.

I believe in order for the READ 180 program to be successful and work in the way it was intended, first the necessary resources have to be available. Some schools are afforded large classrooms, numerous computers, and sofas for reading. Yet other schools are forced to make adjustments to the program to fit bell schedules and improvise when there is an absence of program materials. Teachers must be supported with adequate resources to help students reach bold expectations.

Oftentimes, struggling readers do not want to read because it is a challenge. They may sit there, look around the classroom, pretend to read, or may even fall asleep. Students are more apt to read when they have choice in what they are reading and when those choices spike their interest. Lyon (2003) advised, "allow students to choose books about topics that are reflective of the student's own interest" (cited in Stuart, 2008, p.16). Interesting and relevant books are needed in today's schools to not only motivate students to read, but to also keep them interested in wanting to continue to read. Offering students choices in reading

materials is an essential component to increasing motivation (cited in Melekoglu, 2011). I believe with this, students will begin to ask with eagerness, “Can I keep reading?”

From my own experience I also believe that solely following the READ 180 script and expecting significant gains is not enough. The script should be used as a guide or map, but ultimately teachers know their students best. From the READ 180 software and materials, teachers are able to determine students’ needs. Yet to make learning purposeful for students, relevant supplemental materials that address students’ interests are a necessity. If that means bringing in outside articles and videos to deepen learning, it should be done. Also, so that I am not simply a responder to the script, personal learning and professional development would empower me and assist in furthering decisions within instruction.

Thus, my primary goal of this study was to evaluate the READ 180 program in combination with teachers’ views to answer the research questions below:

- How do teachers view the READ 180 scripted curriculum and overall program?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of using the READ 180 scripted curriculum in today’s classrooms?
- How do teachers implement the READ 180 scripted curriculum into their classroom practices and what are the effects on student learning?

## **HOW TEACHERS VIEW THE READ 180 CURRICULUM**

Overall, teachers feel there are few changes that need to be made to the script. They are expected to implement the script with fidelity and they strive to do so. Some even went on to say that there is no downside to teaching it. They feel the class is awesome for all types of kids and all types of learning abilities. Depending on the teacher, some may get bored with the



repetitiveness of the script while others feel it remains new with different students, new classes, distinctive needs, and various personalities. Teachers believe students thrive under the curriculum because students are provided with structure. Students who do struggle, tend to have extreme attention and behavioral problems. I have found that the occasional phone call home, oftentimes corrects misbehavior.

Nonetheless, most READ 180 teachers appreciate having pre-made lesson plans and look forward to continuing teaching the program. Having already made plans allows for more time to fulfill other responsibilities inside and outside of the school. Teachers believe there is no trial and error with the program because the research has been done and tested. They believe the research-based program works largely due to an increase of growth made by students on the SRI Test.

#### **ADVANTAGES OF USING THE READ 180 SCRIPTED CURRICULUM**

One overarching advantage to the READ 180 program is that students learn strategies that are able to be used in core classes and on standardized tests. The program is an intervention that provides basic, foundational skills that are needed to excel at more challenging level work. In developing those skills, the program provides scaffolding as seen on many documents, as content is designed to be broken down in a language so that lower level learners can understand. Ultimately, with effort from both teachers and students, all children can experience success. According to Scholastic (2013), to get students there “texts are accompanied by text-based comprehension questions that aim to build higher order thinking skills ‘that accelerate students to grade level’ (p. 4). Based on the data, by improving

foundational skills and base knowledge, students are put in better positions to complete grade level work in general education classes and beyond.

Another benefit for students is that the program is one class where students do not have to struggle in a classroom full of their peers who are academically ahead of them. With a supportive culture created by the teacher, students avoid feelings of embarrassment, being ashamed, or the possibility of being labeled “the slow one” or the student who does not know an answer. Students can all learn together and ask questions in a safe haven, set by the tone of the teacher in the READ 180 classroom.

Within the READ 180 Instructional Model specifically, students are provided another benefit found in routine and structure. Some students are not accustomed to having structure in their lives, so routine and structure establishes consistency for them in each of the three rotations. Students know what to expect. The computer software meets students where they are academically by providing words and passages that match the grade level individual students are on, but all the while also challenging them to push toward being on grade level. The software also makes viewable to students their progress which proves to be helpful as seen in the Bruhn and Watt (2012) study. Student behavior is improved by self-monitoring, so having students track their own data in their binders and on the computer plays a pivotal role in academic and behavioral outcomes. Independent reading time enables students to feel accomplishment in not only reading, but more importantly finishing books. Small group allows for one-on-one time with the teacher and discussion among peers.

The program is advantageous for teachers as data is automatically collected for the teacher from the computer software. Teachers can identify students’ needs and weaknesses,

and can provide them with the appropriate supplemental materials. Additionally, teachers benefit from teaching the READ 180 program by having minimal stress around lesson planning. A scripted lesson plan grants teachers more time to do other things professionally and personally. From having extra time teachers can determine what they need to add or take away from the lesson to maximize learning for their particular students.

The program benefits both students and teachers in a way that reading growth on the SRI Test can be seen from both parties' efforts. As a result, students become better readers and teachers receive the joy of having guided students to becoming better readers.

#### **DISADVANTAGES OF USING THE READ 180 SCRIPTED CURRICULUM**

One disadvantage of the READ 180 program is that it can be repetitive for both students and teachers. Reading the same passage numerous times and participating in the same tasks every day can be monotonous. As a result, students experience boredom and express a lack of interest or engagement. Furthermore, students are not happy that the READ 180 class replaces an elective class. Students interests and skills beyond academics such as a cooking class is sacrificed for the READ 180 program. In our efforts to develop holistic students we should not devalue or underestimate the impact other elective classes can have on teaching students life-long skills and preparation for non-academic professions as well.

Also, requiring that creative teachers follow a script would be a disadvantage. Teachers would feel constricted and stifled in their professional growth and it would be a disservice to students to be unable to experience teachers' creative ideas and activities. Within the scripted lesson plans, content is not always culturally relevant to the students being taught, so teachers veer off to make those connections with handouts and conversation. This was also reflected in

the research by Joseph (2006) who pointed out in regards to a curriculum similar to READ 180, teachers made significant “modifications to the curriculum’s instructional, content, and organizational approach” by incorporating enrichment opportunities, and integrating meaning and daily writing (p. 93). It is a disadvantage to not make learning applicable to real-world and life experiences. Students need to see how what they are learning applies to their life.

Lastly, READ 180 is created to fit 90-minute class periods. If bell schedules are not 90 minutes, teachers must make alterations on how the program is run. Based on funding, some teachers are not put in positions to successfully maximize all of what the READ 180 program has to offer and implement with fidelity due to inadequate materials. Teachers must modify program implementation when there is a lack of resources. Consequently, the program is not implemented in the way it was intended. Teachers must change how and when they implement rotations which could negatively affect growth gains and results.

### **HOW TEACHERS IMPLEMENT THE READ 180 CURRICULUM**

Classroom management is the most important aspect to implementing the READ 180 program. Teachers constantly monitor all students’ actions in each of the three groups which are grouped according to Lexile scores. Grouping by Lexiles allows students to struggle and learn together at a similar pace with their group members. The most challenging part is keeping students on task in the independent reading group. Students tend to have short attention spans and trouble reading for 15 consecutive minutes. Still, implementation by teachers remains rooted in fidelity, structure, and routine.

With increased experience with the program, teachers become more familiar with the script. There is less of a need to read the script word-for-word as teachers are familiar with

what is to come next. Finally, the teacher's actions set the tone and culture for the class. His or her presentation and delivery informs students' thoughts and feelings every day. The energy from the teacher will be given back from the students.

## **IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

READ 180 teachers are still very necessary in a scripted curriculum. However, because a script is given, READ 180 teachers are oftentimes not viewed with the same respect as general education teachers by their peers. Managing behavioral problems and working to improve reading deficiencies are challenging tasks. Teachers help to keep students engaged. Challenges still exist; they look differently from general education classrooms.

Therefore, classroom management is important in a class like READ 180 because kids have different roles. They are moving around and are sometimes independent. Teachers must be able to monitor all activity vigilantly, observe students' behavior, and notice who is working and who is not.

One aspect of the READ 180 program to look at in the future is that the program does not change from year to year. With the fast pace of technology and current events that happen every day, the content of READ 180 does not change. Content that was relevant in the early 2000's may or may not be interesting to today's kids; they are a new generation. Because one middle school teacher explained how her kids love the computers, but in the high school classroom students took their time logging on and one student logged out early, another aspect would be looking into why high school students are less engaged on the computers. This partially supports the words of Melekoglu (2013) that "technology-based reading instruction

can improve students' motivation to read because user-friendly computer programs make teaching easier for educators and instruction more enjoyable for students" (p. 86).

Furthermore, for the students who need to be in the program for two or three years, or beyond should see new materials and relevant information every year. Students are typically exited out of the program after two years contingent upon proficient lexiles, and teacher and literacy specialist recommendations. So what is next for them? For the student who has improved but is still not on grade level to the student who has tested out of the program, steps should be taken to analyze how to best continue and ensure those students' success. Teachers can make changes for the students who need the program for more than one year, but must be mindful as they do still have a script they are expected to follow.

There can be students who are misplaced into READ 180, due to lack of effort on the SRI Test. Those students will get bored because they already know the material. Teachers also do not want those students to develop bad habits or become distracting to other students due to boredom and an absence of challenge. Therefore, once a student has tested on grade level, it is suggested to move that student out of the READ 180 program. Keeping them in the environment will not extend their learning.

Lastly, it is up to school leaders to determine whether or not the advantages outweigh the disadvantages of having the READ 180 curriculum implemented in the classroom. Leaders should consider costs, students' needs, and teacher views. Having access to scripted curriculums may lower high teacher turnover rates in some school districts.

## HOW THIS RESEARCH WILL AFFECT MY TEACHING

From this research I have realized the importance of setting expectations at the beginning of the year and sticking to those expectations, especially for the READ 180 program. Because students are accustomed to a certain way of doing things. It is hard to change systems and routines mid-year, but it is not impossible. I have seen how well-oiled, routine classrooms can run, and it provides consistency for kids. They know what to expect and what to do, but it must be repeated and practiced. However, those expectations start with the teacher as my presentation and delivery affects and reflects on my students. To keep class interesting I will view lessons early to allow myself time to search for culturally relevant videos and articles. Because Melekoglu (2011) advises that teachers make known the importance of reading for students' lives to increase motivation, I will make connections from the script to new found supplemental materials.

Although students may complain, I realize that they learn from the videos they watch, the books they read, and the discussions around the rBook text. I plan to use this research to grow into the teacher I should be. First, I cannot and will not assume that students have certain knowledge. I have been guilty of thinking the work is too easy for students, only to find out the students struggle. It is not easy for them so I will provide as much assistance as possible.

I will also give all students a chance to feel success by celebrating the small achievements. I have to be mindful that I am working with students who may have trouble reading for 15 consecutive minutes and who do not experience success as a normal part of their lives. They may get frustrated and that frustration may get taken out on me as the teacher. I must be mindful of where that frustration may be coming from, how to re-direct it, and channel

that into more positive energy. I will create a class culture that is not intimidating by modeling support and approachability, where students know and understand that we all struggle with something. We all have weaknesses, and will work together to develop them into strengths.

I will consistently employ expectations with an understanding heart to achieve a better balance of being a caring and stern teacher. Students test their boundaries and sometimes overwhelmed feelings push thoughts of throwing in the towel. I must possess an unwavering and strong mindset as it is essential to being a READ 180 teacher. In conclusion, I will use this research to stay grounded and serve as a reminder of why I wanted to enter in the field of education to begin with – to positively influence students like one teacher did for me.



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## APPENDIX A: SRI LEXILES BY GRADE

### Scholastic Reading Inventory SRI Lexile Scores for Grade Level Performance

Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI), Lexiles by Grade

| Grade | Below Grade Level <sup>1</sup> | At Grade Level <sup>1</sup> | Above Grade Level <sup>1</sup> | College & Career Ready Expectations <sup>2</sup> |
|-------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| 1     | 99 and Below                   | 100-299                     | 300 and Above                  | N/A  |
| 2     | 299 and Below                  | 300-499                     | 500 and Above                  | 450-790  |
| 3     | 499 and Below                  | 500-599                     | 600 and Above                  |  |
| 4     | 599 and Below                  | 600-699                     | 700 and Above                  | 770-980  |
| 5     | 699 and Below                  | 700-799                     | 800 and Above                  |  |
| 6     | 799 and Below                  | 800-849                     | 850 and Above                  | 955-1155   |
| 7     | 849 and Below                  | 850-899                     | 900 and Above                  |  |
| 8     | 899 and Below                  | 900-999                     | 1000 and Above                 |  |
| 9     | 999 and Below                  | 1000-1024                   | 1025 and Above                 | 1080-1305  |
| 10    | 1024 and Below                 | 1025-1049                   | 1050 and Above                 |  |
| 11    | 1049 and Below                 | 1050-1300                   | 1301 and Above                 | 1215-1355  |

NOTE: By the end of the 11th grade, students should reach the college- and career-ready reading level (1300 Lexiles). For this reason, grade level performance is not defined for 12th graders.

#### Lexile Scores for Grade Level Performance

| Gr 1    | Gr 2    | Gr 3    | Gr 4    | Gr 5    | Gr 6    | Gr 7    | Gr 8    | Gr 9      | Gr 10     | Gr 11     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 100-299 | 300-499 | 500-599 | 600-699 | 700-799 | 800-849 | 850-899 | 900-999 | 1000-1024 | 1025-1049 | 1050-1300 |

The width of the bar varies by the size of the numeric range for the grade level band. For example, Grade 3 has a 100 point range, and is half the width of Grade 2, which has a 200 point range.

|                   |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Gr 9<br>1000-1024 | Gr 10<br>1025-1049 |
|-------------------|--------------------|

<sup>1</sup>Scholastic Inc. (2007). Scholastic Reading Inventory Technical Guide. New York: Scholastic Inc. Education Group.

<sup>2</sup>National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers. (2010). Common Core State Standards (English Language Arts, Appendix A). Washington, D.C.: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers.

## APPENDIX B: READ 180 TIMELINE



Adapted from Scholastic (2013). Compendium of READ 180 Research: 15 Years of Evidence-Based Results for America's Struggling Readers. 2-94.

## APPENDIX C: CHARACTERISTICS OF STRUGGLING AND SUCCESSFUL READERS

### Word Study

| Successful Readers   | Struggling Readers   |
|--|--|
| <p>Read multisyllabic words and use strategies to figure out unknown words.</p> <p>Make connections between letter patterns and sounds and use this understanding to read words.</p> <p>Break unknown words into syllables during reading.</p> <p>Use word analysis strategies to break difficult or long words into meaningful parts such as inflectional endings, prefixes, suffixes, and roots.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May read single-syllable words effortlessly but have difficulty decoding longer multisyllabic words.</li> <li>• May lack knowledge of the ways in which sounds map to print.</li> <li>• Have difficulty breaking words into syllables.</li> <li>• Often do not use word analysis strategies to break words into syllables.</li> </ul> |

### Fluency

| Successful readers  | Struggling readers  |
|---|---|
| <p>Read 100-160 words per minute (at the middle school level), depending on the nature and difficulty of the text.</p> <p>Decode words accurately and automatically.</p> <p>Group words into meaningful chunks and phrases.</p> <p>Read with expression.</p> <p>Combine multiple tasks while reading (e.g., decoding, phrasing, understanding, and interpreting).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read slowly and laboriously.</li> <li>• May continue to struggle with decoding or may decode correctly but slowly.</li> <li>• May not pause at punctuation or recognize phrases.</li> <li>• Often lack voice or articulation of emotion while reading.</li> <li>• May lack proficiency in individual skills that result in dysfluent reading and limit comprehension.</li> </ul> |

Adapted from Boardman, A. G., Roberts, G., Vaughn, S., Wexler, J., Murray, C. S., & Kosanovich, M. (2008). Effective instruction for adolescent struggling readers: A practice brief. Portsmouth, NH: RMC Research Corporation, Center on Instruction.

## Vocabulary

| Successful readers  | Struggling readers   |
|---|--|
| <p>Are exposed to a breadth of vocabulary words in conversations and print at home and at school from a very early age.</p> <p>Have word consciousness.</p> <p>Understand most words when they are reading (at least 90%) and can make sense of unknown words to build their vocabulary knowledge.</p> <p>Learn words incrementally, through multiple exposures to new words.</p> <p>Have content-specific prior knowledge that helps them understand how words are used in a particular context.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have limited exposure to new words.</li> <li>• May not enjoy reading, and therefore do not select reading as an independent activity.</li> <li>• May lack word consciousness, including an awareness of the complex and varied nature of words in written and oral language.</li> <li>• Are unable to comprehend consistently what they read or to learn new words from reading.</li> <li>• Lack the variety of experiences and exposures necessary to gain deep understanding of new words.</li> <li>• Often have limited content-specific prior knowledge that is insufficient to support word learning.</li> </ul> |

## Motivation

| Successful readers   | Struggling readers   |
|--|--|
| <p>Interact with text in a motivated and strategic way.</p> <p>Have improved comprehension and reading outcomes when engaged with text.</p> <p>Read more and thus have more access to a variety of topics and text types.</p> <p>Are interested and curious about topics and content in texts and read to find out more.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May engage in reading as a passive process without giving effortful attention to activating prior knowledge, using reading strategies, or employing other strategic thought processes.</li> <li>• Often have low comprehension of text.</li> <li>• Fail to access a variety of wide reading opportunities. Given the choice, prefer not to read.</li> <li>• May not be interested in or curious about exploring topics or content through reading.</li> </ul> |

Adapted from Boardman, A. G., Roberts, G., Vaughn, S., Wexler, J., Murray, C. S., & Kosanovich, M. (2008). Effective instruction for adolescent struggling readers: A practice brief. Portsmouth, NH: RMC Research Corporation, Center on Instruction.

## Comprehension

| Successful Readers  | Struggling Readers  |
|---|---|
| <p>Monitor reading for understanding. Consider the writing from the author's view, interacting with text during and after reading.</p> <p>Link content with their prior knowledge.</p> <p>Use a variety of effective reading strategies before, during, and after reading.</p> <p>Set a purpose for reading and adjust their rate and strategy use depending on the text and content.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fail to use metacognitive strategies as they read.</li><li>• May not be aware when understanding breaks down.</li><li>• Do not question or interact with the text during or after reading.</li><li>• May lack subject-specific prior knowledge.</li><li>• Do not readily make connections between what they are learning and what they already know.</li><li>• Have limited knowledge and use of strategies for gaining information from text.</li><li>• May fail to read with purpose or goals.</li><li>• Often do not enjoy reading and lack understanding of the utility of reading.</li></ul> |

Adapted from Boardman, A. G., Roberts, G., Vaughn, S., Wexler, J., Murray, C. S., & Kosanovich, M. (2008). Effective instruction for adolescent struggling readers: A practice brief. Portsmouth, NH: RMC Research Corporation, Center on Instruction.

## APPENDIX D: OBSERVATION GUIDE

Observation Guide for the Project:  
“Examining Teachers Use of Scripted Curriculums in English Language Arts Classrooms”

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Name of Observer             |  |
| Date of Observation          |  |
| Time of Observation          |  |
| Person and/or Event Observed |  |
| Grade Level and Subject      |  |
| School                       |  |

Do you think the teacher accomplishes the objectives for the lesson? Why or why not?

### Classroom Management/Organization

What routines (i.e., taking attendance, turning in papers, student grouping, late work, etc.) do you observe in this lesson?

What does the teacher do to organize these routine tasks?

How does the physical arrangement of the classroom (i.e., arrangement of student desks; position of teacher desk, Smart Board, etc.) help or hinder classroom routines?

### Student Behavior

What things does the teacher say or do to establish the "tone" of the classroom? Are behavior expectations posted? Are they enforced?

What factors contribute to making the classroom an effective learning environment?

If an "event" occurs -- how did it develop? What did the student(s) do? What did the teacher do/not do?

### External Interruptions:

How many interruptions occur during the lesson? For what? By whom?



How much instructional time becomes "non-instructional" time due to interruptions? How does the teacher deal with these interruptions?

## **APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW GUIDE**

### **Interview Guide for the Study: “Examining Teachers Use of Scripted Curriculums in English Language Arts Classrooms”**

#### **Interview Protocol with Teachers**

Thank you for agreeing to interview with me as part of this study. On the consent form, I indicated that any personal information you may reveal about yourself will be kept confidential unless its release is legally compelled. This interview will be audio-recorded and you can choose to end this interview at any time without penalty or loss of any benefit to which you might otherwise be entitled.

\*Please answer the following questions as honestly as possible.

1. How long have you been teaching?
2. Why did you become a teacher?
3. Talk about the teacher prep program that you attended.
4. Describe the program that you teach.
5. Describe the type of curriculum you use.
  - a. How did you end up with this curriculum? Did you choose it? Was it a decision by your school’s English department or was it mandated by the school district?
6. How would you define READ 180?
7. How would you define a scripted curriculum?
8. How do you feel about teaching a scripted curriculum?
9. What is the best thing about teaching a scripted curriculum?
10. What is the worst thing about having to teach a scripted curriculum?
11. What typically goes well in your day-to-day lessons with the students?
  - a. What factors contribute to this success?
12. What is typically challenging during your day-to-day lessons with the students?

- a. What factors contribute to these challenges?
13. What would you change about the scripted curriculum that you teach?
14. Is there anything that you did today during your instruction that you would have done differently if you did not have to follow a scripted curriculum?
- a. If so, what? Why?
15. Would you rather teach from a scripted curriculum or have to create your own lesson plans?
16. Do you follow the scripted curriculum word-for-word?
- a. Why?
17. What are the drawbacks for kids and student learning within a scripted curriculum?
18. What are the benefits for kids and student learning within a scripted curriculum?
19. What are the drawbacks for teachers who use scripted curriculums?
20. What are the benefits for teachers who use scripted curriculums?
21. Do you believe certain types of kids thrive under a scripted curriculum and certain types of kids struggle?
- a. Please explain.
22. What kinds of teachers would best fit teaching a scripted curriculum?
23. How is student motivation and engagement on a typical day with the READ 180 program?
24. How do your students feel about this program? How do you know?

## APPENDIX F: CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION



## **VITA**

Shanell Dowling, a native of Henrico, Virginia, received her bachelor's degree at James Madison University in 2012. Thereafter, she joined Teach For America and taught in a low-income school in Southern Louisiana. As she sought to continue her education, she made the decision to enter graduate school in the College of Human Sciences and Education at Louisiana State University. She anticipates graduating with her master's degree in May 2016 and plans to use all she has learned in her future endeavors.