The Attitudes Toward Reading And Reading Achievement Of Seventh Grade Students In A Sustained Silent Reading Program

Tarra Renee Taylor

University of Mississippi

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THE ATTITUDES TOWARD READING AND READING ACHIEVEMENT OF SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS IN A SUSTAINED SILENT READING PROGRAM

A Proposal of the Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Education Degree
The University of Mississippi

by

TARRA R. TAYLOR

May 2014
Davis and Neitzel (2010) and Patrick, Ryan, and Kaplan (2007) indicate that many students develop negative attitudes toward reading as they advance through school. Because students report that they enjoy independent reading time, providing this time to students in middle school is thought to be beneficial. Additional research is needed to determine whether providing independent reading time to middle school students using a range of texts will influence attitudes toward reading. The purpose of this study was to determine seventh grade students’ attitudes toward reading who participate in sustained silent reading (SSR). A secondary purpose was to determine if their reading attitudes impact their reading achievement. Quantitative data was collected for this study; the study employed a quasi-experimental design. Results showed there was no significant difference in students’ attitudes, reading achievement, or home literacy scores before and after treatment. Results also showed there was no significant relationship between students’ scores and teachers’ positive and negative log comments.
DEDICATION

To my dear husband, Reginald D. Taylor, I dedicate this dissertation to you. Thank you for your words of affirmation and acts of kindness. I am grateful for you bringing to my remembrance the reason I started this process. I dedicate this to my caring and supportive parents, U. Z. and Barbara Craigen. Thank you for being great parents, parents that instilled within me the importance of the fundamentals: hard work, values, and character. And to my sister, Sharon Conard, you are truly a role model and motivation. I appreciate you for being you.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I can truly say that in the absence of pain, there is no gain. I equate this journey to that of a pregnancy: long, uncomfortable, and unpredictable yet rewarding. There’s truly something special about giving birth to something you’ve created, carried, and cherished. With that, I would like to thank all of the people who assisted me during this journey. The completion of my degree would not have been possible without these individuals and their invaluable insight and encouragement.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Upon reaching middle school, children have identified themselves as readers or nonreaders, and Miller (2009) shows that students enter classrooms with many negative reading attitudes and experiences. Children who do not have the skills to center their attention and curb impulses, activity, or negative emotions will face bigger challenges adjusting to classroom demands and handling the independence and responsibility that comes with each grade (Morrison, Bachman, & Conner 2005). Attitudes are important to study and to develop in children because they have been shown to be related to, among other factors, how often students read (Corcoran & Mamalakis, 2009). Instructional strategies are needed that positively influence attitudes in reading (Nippold, Duthie, & Larsen, 2005). Providing blocks of class time each day followed by a discussion with a classmate is a strategy that may show promise with students.

The development of positive attitudes in students is important to educators (Edmonds & Bauserman, 2006). Students’ attitudes toward reading should be a concern of educators because attitudes toward reading are significantly related to the amount of reading children do (Corcoran & Mamalakis, 2009; Merisuo-Storm, 2006). Unfortunately, many studies show students’ attitudes toward reading decline as they progress through the grades, often beginning in early adolescence (Davis & Neitzel, 2010; Nippold et al., 2005; Patrick, Ryan, & Kaplan, 2007).

The need for instructional activities that will positively influence attitudes toward reading have been noted by Nippold et al., (2005); Hamilton (2009); Lenters (2006); and Williams (2004). Although little research has been conducted on pleasure reading in content
areas, teachers are increasingly recommending the use of reading for enjoyment in content areas (Hamilton, 2009; Miller, 2009; Nippold et al., 2005). Research examining the use of independent silent reading has found that using sustained silent reading gives students opportunities to connect with reading in unstructured situations (Gardiner, 2005a). According to Gardiner, there are numerous reasons to use sustained silent reading in language arts. By reading and responding to an array of examples of finely crafted texts, students can develop an appreciation of the traits of great readers as they are shown how quality literature skillfully weaves literary elements together.

According to Miller (2009), if students are to be engaged in the study of language arts, teachers should include a variety of books into their class libraries and allow time for students to read those books. Independent reading time offers a promising way to do this. Literary selections may include fiction, fantasy, mystery, biography, folktale and poetry. Although there are benefits to deeply reading one genre, reading widely increases a reader’s understanding of a range of texts. Miller adds that when students are allowed the freedom of book selection, it empowers and encourages them. Their self-confidence is strengthened, interests are rewarded, and positive attitudes are promoted toward reading because the students feel valued, giving them a level of control. Readers that don’t have the power of choice are unmotivated.

Students must believe they are readers and that learning to do it well is a worthy cause (Miller, 2009). Gambrell (2007) offers three principles of pleasure reading. These principles emphasize the importance of the teacher as the reading model, mentor, and motivator, supporting and nurturing the reading habit. She suggests that teachers can positively influence the reading attitudes of their students through these three principles.
The first principle is an indirect effect of student reading attitudes based on the notion that teachers of reading should be readers themselves (Gambrell, 2007). When teachers read, they serve as an active reading model for their students. Active reading models are not merely “seen” reading but talking with students about what he or she is reading. The second principle is a direct effect of student reading beliefs in which teachers incorporate a broad range of techniques to usher students into reading. Students who have trouble with selection can be directed according to his or her needs. Teachers exhibit supportive, caring relationships with students by means of discussing good books. The third principle is a direct effect of student motives for reading based on the idea that teachers encourage students to read a great deal. Time must be devoted for students to read for pleasure during the school day. Students are inspired on various levels when teachers share books and texts representing various genres and text types.

Providing independent reading time in middle grades and above is often recommended although few studies have examined the practice (What Content-Area Teachers Should Know About Adolescent Literacy, 2006). Research shows that sustained silent reading enhances the literacy of students by (a) building vocabulary, (b) connecting to writing, (c) developing an appreciation of the behaviors of great readers, (d) meeting needs that are unbeknownst to the teacher, and (e) providing students with unstructured situations to connect with reading (Gardiner, 2005).

Statement of the Problem

A thorough analysis of the reading attitude data collected within rural schools shows that large populations of students develop negative attitudes toward reading as they advance through school. This resistance leads students to reject “school texts,” which often causes them to miss out on the valuable role literature can play in identity information. Reeves (2004) suggests that
teachers should help adolescents access texts that could aid in shaping one’s identity. This is not without difficulty, as Reeves stated, “the secondary school curriculum is saturated with literature written by adults for adults, and leaves little space for adolescents’ interests that are often connected to the psychological work of becoming an adult” (2004, p.61). Given the understanding that “students develop as engaged, independent knowledge seekers when they perceive what they are learning to be personally meaningful and relevant to who they are and who they want to be” (Hinchman, Alvermann, Boyd, Brozo, & Vacca, 2004, p.306), a large-scale pruning of the literature cannon may well be indicated. Reeves pointed out that secondary English teachers naturally tend to be those who love reading and who have experienced success with it most of their lives. Therefore, they have a predisposed view of reading as something that all students will love, especially of the literary cannon, easily overlooking the irrelevance their students may perceive and the struggle they may experience.

Because students report that they enjoy independent reading time, providing this time to students in middle school is thought to be beneficial. Strommen and Mates (2004) reminds us that if literacy competence can be attained through reading for pleasure, then, “encouraging a child’s love of reading is a desirable goal” (p.199). By acknowledging students’ reading interests and building on them, teachers can help students expand those interests to related topics over time. According to Sainsbury and Schagen (2004), children need to browse, to make their own choices, and listen to literature read aloud in order to develop their involvement in reading.

Because young people reject literacy that is lacking in purpose and interest, it is imperative that educators become more aware of students’ personal uses of literacy and what is important to them. When reading is limited to textbooks and whole-class literature, teachers and students are limited as readers. In a study conducted by Pitcher, Albright, DeLaney, Walker, Seunarinesingh,
Mogge, Headley, Ridgeway, Peck, Hunt, and Dunston (2007), students expressed literacy preferences that closely aligned with interests and specific purposes. Having a wide variety of reading material available on these topics could make school reading a more pleasurable and purposeful experience for the students.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine seventh grade students’ attitudes toward reading who participate in sustained silent reading (SSR). A secondary purpose was to determine if their reading attitudes impact their reading achievement.

**Variables**

The dependent variable in this study was the reading attitudes of students, and the independent variable was participation in sustained silent reading (SSR).

**Research Questions**

Much can be done in school settings to encourage strong literacy habits in all students. According to Edmunds and Bauserman (2006), one way to increase children’s desire to read is to let them choose their own books. During a Conversational Interview, they found that students often discussed books they have chosen themselves, highlighting the importance of choice when attempting to positively affect children’s reading motivation. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers give children the opportunity to choose the books they would like to read. Nippold et al. (2005) suggest providing blocks of class time each day for sustained silent reading. Since many children show less interest in reading as a leisure activity as they transition into adolescence, providing this type of structured opportunity for them to read during the school day is beneficial. This study will be designed to answer the following research questions:
1. Does promoting pleasure reading from various texts (i.e., SSR) among seventh grade students enhance students’ attitudes about reading?

2. Does promoting pleasure reading from various texts (i.e., SSR) among seventh grade students enhance their reading achievement?

3. Does promoting pleasure reading from various texts (i.e., SSR) among seventh grade students enhance their home literacy environment scores?

4. To what extent will the nature of log comments of teachers participating in an SSR program relate to the reading attitudes, the reading achievement, and home literacy pre- and post-test scores of students in an SSR program?

5. What is the nature of parental demographics of parents/guardians of students participating in an SSR program described in this study?

**Research Hypotheses**

1. There will be no significant difference between the mean reading attitude scores of seventh grade students prior to and after their participation in an SSR program.

2. There will be no significant difference between the mean reading achievement scores of seventh grade students prior to and after their participation in an SSR program.

3. There will be no significant difference between the mean home literacy environment scores of seventh grade students prior to and after their participation in an SSR program.

4. There will be no significant relationship between the pre- and post-test scores of students participating in an SSR program and the positive and negative log comments of teachers participating in the same program.
Parental Demographics Data

The Home Literacy Environment Survey contained three questions that were analyzed in terms of data gathered about each of the questions. The results were presented in pie chart form for the number of parent/guardian responses to each question. Students were asked the following questions:

1. Did your parent(s) or guardian(s) read to you when you were a young child?
2. Who was the person who read to you the most?
3. What is the educational level of the parent or guardian with whom you spent the most time when you were a preschooler?

Significance of the Study

This research study was important and worthwhile to conduct because reading interest tends to decline as students transition into adolescence (Nippold et al., 2005). Resistant readers may become struggling readers; thus, many adolescent students enter the middle grades with a negative attitude towards reading. Reading as a leisure activity may decline as other free-time options compete for their attention; however, research is showing that reading is at least a moderately popular free-time activity for adolescent students.

In addressing the issue of negative attitudes toward reading in adolescents, the use of teachers is becoming a common choice. Patrick et al. (2007) point out that students are more likely to use self-regulatory strategies and engage in task-related interaction when they feel a sense of emotional support and encouragement from their teacher. “And it is a matter of encouraging students to bridge the supposed barriers between creative and critical work and to understand how pleasures in interpreting and creating texts of all kinds can connect to building pleasure in academic literacies” (Williams, 2004, p. 341). Though it is becoming a common
choice to utilize teachers to build pleasures in academic literacies, there is still more data needed to show if they are truly beneficial in influencing the attitudes of adolescents.

There are many teachers that have graduated from teacher preparation programs lacking the knowledge and skills to provide implicit reading instruction to readers and nonreaders (Barnyak & Paqurtte, 2010). Moreover, there are teachers in today’s educational setting that are not being provided with information and resources necessary to ensure that all children are widely read. This is possibly an indicator of why students obtain negative attitudes toward reading. Therefore, stakeholders within the school community need to be knowledgeable about the importance of providing independent reading time in each school day (Miller, 2009). Not only is it imperative for teachers and stakeholders to allow for independent reading time for adolescents in schools, but they also must be aware of how the use of this indirect instruction by teachers impacts readers and nonreaders life-long reading outcomes.

Today’s educational system encourages educators to implement instruction and teaching practices that will not leave any child behind. Thus, this study was also significant because a student’s lack of motivation to read could lead to a negative attitude towards reading (Bokhorst-Heng & Pereira, 2008). A negative attitude occurs due to disinterest, low self-esteem, frustration, lack of time, resources, no or little support, and the absence of value and appreciation. All of these variables coupled together can lead to negative attitudes of students that are struggling to be successful along their academic journey. It is essential for educational stakeholders that specialize in reading to do what is necessary to determine through research how to prevent lack of motivation and improve students’ academic performance (Helterbran, 2008).

This study offered findings about pleasure reading with the use of various texts in language arts on student attitudes about reading. It also provided researchers in language arts
with information on teaching techniques that may increase attitudes toward reading. In addition, this study offered insight about teacher reactions to the pleasure reading process as stated by teacher responses in teacher logs.

Limitations of the Study

Non readers that participate in SSR may have a lack of motivation, varied learning styles, poor behavior issues, poor socioeconomic background, and lack of parental involvement, and lack support at home which may attribute to poor literacy development (Miller, 2009; Lenters, 2006). Non readers that participate in SSR depend on length of exposure to independent reading experiences. To compensate for different teachers’ background knowledge and content knowledge on the effective implementation of SSR that may exist, those teachers participating in this study received a review regarding the implementation of SSR used in this study.

Delimitations of the Study

The findings of this study were limited to seventh grade language arts students at two middle schools in an urban school district. This study was conducted for only six weeks. This study focused on the use of various genres and pleasure reading as an instructional strategy.

Terms and Definitions

Definitions and/or explanations are given for the following terms used in this study:

Attitude: The preference for a topic, subject, or activity as reported by subjects on a given Likert scale.

Genre: Any category of literature.

Sustained Silent Reading (SSR): Recreational reading where students read silently in a designated time period every day. It may also be referred to as pleasure reading or independent reading. Students choose their own books.
Non-Reader: A student who can read but chooses not to.

The Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment Survey: An instrument used to measure attitudes toward reading.

The Home Literacy Environment Survey: An instrument used to measure attitudes toward reading.

The STAR Reading Test: A computerized adaptive standardized reading test for readers above first grade.

Teacher Logs: An instrument used to record progress and perceptions of the SSR program.

Summary/Conclusion

Children who are motivated to read will spend more time reading and Wang and Guthrie (2004) support the positive effect of increased reading on reading achievement. Children should be allowed to choose their own books. Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) highlight the importance of choice when attempting to positively affect children’s reading motivation. Within those choices, teachers are to provide a variety of books on different topics that have different characteristics that children will desire to read. Moreover, it is recommended that teachers provide opportunities for classmates to share what they are reading with one another. However, Sainbury and Schagen (2004) suggest that it could be argued that children need to browse and make their own choices in order to develop their involvement in reading. Through the use of sustained silent reading, motivation, and positive teacher comments, it is possible that readers and nonreaders strengthen their reading skills where deficiencies exist. Without exposure to pleasure reading, students may continue to develop and maintain negative attitudes toward reading, leading to low reading achievement. Reading is an essential skill because it contributes
to the overall academic progress and success of every student within the instructional environment. Reading is the foundation for all future learning. It is the most important skill students must master to become independent, lifelong, proficient, and advanced readers.

Organization of the Study

This study was organized in five chapters. Chapter one introduces the study. The introduction stated the problem to be studied, outlined the purpose of the study and research questions, described the limitations and delimitations of the study, described how the study was organized, and showed the significance of the study. Chapter two provides a review of the related literature in the educational field on sustained silent reading, the use of indirect instruction by teachers, and student attitudes toward reading. This study reviewed student questionnaires from the 2012-2013 school year to see if the treatment group benefited from the sustained silent reading due to their exposure of various texts and conversations with peers concerning those texts. Chapter three presents methodology, which consists of design, subjects, instrument, procedures, and data analysis procedures employed to validate the findings to be gathered during the experimental process of the mixed method study. Chapter four presents the results of the study. The final chapter, chapter 5, includes a discussion of the findings to show if the use of sustained silent reading that utilized indirect teacher instruction leads to the improvement of student attitudes toward reading.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The goal of this literature review was to investigate the effects of sustained silent reading on seventh grade students to improve their attitudes about reading in language arts classes. Literature included in this section focuses on attitudes toward reading, the use of various texts in instruction and promotion of pleasure reading to seventh grade students.

Theoretical Framework – Reading Attitudes

Student Attitudes toward Reading

Reading attitude has a critical role in the development and use of lifelong reading skills. Understanding the role of attitude in developing readers is essential to educators for two principle reasons: (a) attitude may affect the level of ability attained by a student through its influence on factors such as engagement and self-regulatory practices (Patrick, Ryan, & Kaplan, 2007) and (b) poor attitude may lead to the absence of reading when other options are available (Nippold, Duthie, & Larsen, 2005). Miller (2009) terms these students as underground readers. Although these students are gifted readers, they choose not to read because they see reading in school as totally disconnected from reading they would choose to do on their own. As a result, activities such as listening to music, watching television, playing video games or sports, and being on the computer are preferred (Nippold et al., 2005). Literacy, ‘able to read and write,’ is the optimal goal schools and educators hope to successfully instill in their students (Morrison, Bachman, & Conner, 2005).
Mental attitude, as defined by Blankson (2005), is a complex mental state that involves one’s (a) feelings, (b) beliefs, (c) values, and (d) disposition to act in a particular way. These attributes make up and shape one’s mental attitude, thus, affecting and controlling life’s experiences. According to Ajzen (2005), attitude is defined as “a disposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to an object, person, institution, or event” (p.3). He says attitudes are expressed by describing the objects of experiences in evaluative forms. He further notes an attitude is typically not viewed as a good or bad feeling but as something that is positive or negative. He believes attitude is not seen as a matter of opinion. Rather, it is seen as the truth until someone can refute it with arguments or new facts.

One of the most significant ideas in social psychology is that people don’t divide their different attitudes into various cognitive compartments. Instead, beliefs, feelings, and decisions about how to behave are organized in more general structures. According to Ajzen (2005), this can be simplified by categorizing attitude-relevant responses into different subgroups by distinguishing between: (a) responses directed at others and responses directed at self, (b) behaviors performed in public and behaviors performed in private, or (c) actions and reactions. Being inaccessible to direct observation, attitude must be inferred from measurable responses. Beyond this requirement, there are no limitations on the kinds of verbal or nonverbal responses that can be considered.

Through their research, Sainsbury and Schagen (2004) define reading attitude as the idea of intrinsic motivation in the form of “a positive-self-concept as a reader, a desire and tendency to read and a reported enjoyment of or interest in reading; and its opposite, a negative self-concept as a reader, a desire and tendency to avoid reading and a reported dislike of the activity.” Merisuo-Storm (2006) summarizes five factors that influence attitude toward reading:
(a) age, (b) gender, (c) reading and writing skills, (d) previous experiences, and (e) interests. She also highlights the purpose of reading as playing an important role. While a student may be reluctant to read in school, the student may read outside of school with great interest texts that are deemed of more importance. In addition, she adds the strong influence in which the home has on a child’s attitudes. A child develops an attitude toward reading based on the value of other family members.

Furthermore, the availability of appropriate and appealing reading material in the home is significant. In school the quality of the instruction depends on the teachers’ knowledge and the curriculum. The teacher’s love for literature and ability to find reading material of interest to the pupils are crucial.

As the child becomes older, the influence of peers increases. According to Pitcher et al. (2007), “students’ multiliteracies often involved friends and family members, who exerted considerable influence on what these adolescents read and write” (p.392). These influences transpire both through direct recommendations and through informal talk and sharing about books. Friends are recipients and senders of e-mail and instant messages, and they suggest and share books with each other. They sometimes discuss magazine articles read and school-assigned readings. A fundamental factor in the success of reading instruction is the student’s attitude toward reading (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Whittingham & Huffman; Hughes-Hassell & Lutz, 2006).

While conducting a conversational interview with teens, Pitcher et al. (2007) discovered five main themes of reading motivation: (a) discrepancies between students’ views of themselves as readers in school and out of school, (b) students’ use of multiliteracies, (c) the influence of family and friends on reading, (d) the role of teachers and instructional methods, and (e) the
importance of choice. The use of multiliteracies was overwhelmingly evident in the interview data. Electronic literacies were very frequently mentioned as a form of communication and a means of gathering information. Most students discussed the use of computers in the home to send e-mails and instant messages to friends and family members. Internet sites were used for informational text, personal purposes such as topics of interest, and to locate song lyrics, talk in chat rooms, role play, play games, and find game codes. Internet sites were also used as a ‘newspaper’ when students were asked about reading informational text. Moreover, students talked about reading magazines and actual newspapers. According to Sargent, Mwavita, and Smith (2009), “regular use of the Newspaper in Education Program seems to have a noteworthy influence on the reading attitude of boys and girls in the third, fourth, and fifth grades” (p. 234). In addition to the basal reader, the program tends to have a more positive attitude toward reading in general.

Educators wanting to motivate or stimulate positive attitudes toward reading may choose to implement the Newspaper in Education Program (Sargent, Mwavita, and Smith, 2009). Since this approach appears to motivate both, it is appropriate for both genders. The Killeen Herald (Newspaper in the Classroom Work, 2009) outlines additional reasons to incorporate the paper as an instructional tool: (a) students feel important when using a text used by ‘adults;’ (b) newspapers bridge the gap between school and the real world; (c) newspapers have something to appeal to everyone’s interest; (d) the information in the newspaper is up-to-date; and (e) the newspaper documents history as it happens. Therefore, the newspaper should be a natural choice for the classroom (Sargent, Mwavita, and Smith, 2009). Teachers want all students to learn to read but choosing to read is of more importance. Because one type of reading material is not
appealing to all students, the newspaper provides an alternative text that improves attitude toward reading for girls and boys.

By the time students reach middle school or junior high school, they are expected to have a handle on the basic skills of reading (GreatSchools Staff, 2012). Students must develop more difficult skills such as reading for speed and comprehension as well as interpreting texts. Just as they must adjust to multiple classes and more complicated assignments, adolescents must also adapt their reading skills. Content areas have their own vocabulary and structure. Thus, students shift from answering simple questions about content and plot to reading longer, more difficult texts that necessitate gathering and analyzing information. More difficult, content-rich materials include: novels, plays, textbooks, laboratory manuals, and technical texts. Students must learn to read lab reports in science classes while interpreting historical documents and understanding biographical information in history classes. According to Feldman (2012), adolescents’ literacy skills are more difficult to improve due to attitude. Many adolescents have developed negative attitudes about reading when they’ve been struggling with literacy. The reading behaviors of middle school students are determined largely by their attitudes toward reading.

Lesesne (2010) outlines four sturdy foundational pieces that are essential in the development of lifelong reading: (a) reading aloud, (b) access to books, (c) models of literacy, and (d) time to read. However, Reeves (2004) highlights the fact that middle school teachers lack the time and knowledge base to teach reading to their students. Reeves points out how teachers are even less prepared to assist struggling readers. Nevertheless, Miller (2009) adds there is hope for the developing reader, commonly referred to as the struggling reader. These students possess the ability to develop into strong readers. They simply need the support in where they are currently in their development in order to feel like a successful reader versus experiencing
reading failure. These students also need to immerse themselves in an abundant amount of reading coupled with reading instruction and strategies to transform them from nonreaders to readers. They understand the importance of reading and rely on their teachers to provide the kind of instruction that will improve their reading. According to Pitcher et al. (2007) and Edmunds and Bauserman (2006), the teacher has a significant role in the promotion of positive attitude development and maintenance. The teacher is just as important if not sometimes more important than instructional methods. In Pitchers et al.’s study, the interview participants talked about how teachers’ enthusiasm about reading, knowledge of a variety of authors, and enjoyment of certain books affected their own reading. Teachers were frequently sources for book recommendations. Some students reported that they discovered their ‘most interesting story or book recently read’ from a teacher. Based on the interviews, teachers’ excitement can have a remarkable impact on students’ reading habits and attitudes.

Not only is it important for teachers to determine students’ reading habits but the factors contributing to students’ reading and non-reading habits are equally important. Merisuo-Storm (2006) conducted a study with fourth grade students to determine their attitudes toward reading where they also identified different factors linked with the development of a love of reading. There were numerous findings from the study. Readers enjoyed reading books and visiting the library. In order to motivate students’ continuous reading habits, one must be cognizant of the texts that appeal to students. Girl readers read many types of text while male readers were more selective. Comics were not a highly valued genre of literature when it came to teachers but highly favored by the boys. Readers delighted in books which had a sequel or belonged to a series. At this age, students disliked the reading aloud process even if he/she was a skillful and
eager reader. Teachers’ allowance of the use of comics to improve reading skills may evoke enjoyment of more sophisticated literature.

Older students who do not have a desire to read must be motivated to improve their interest in reading (Paterson & Elliott, 2006). The Remedial Education Program (REP) was developed to assist teachers in addressing the questions of how to inspire students to read and what type of activities, assignments, or projects would improve students’ self-concept and enhance their chances at a more positive future. Using story books as the basic reading material, the tutoring project had several objectives: (a) improving reading attitudes, (b) increasing motivation and self-efficacy, and (c) providing authentic opportunities to perform strategically in a structured and supportive academic environment.

In this study conducted by Paterson and Elliot (2006) thirty students designated “struggling reader” by their school system participated in a yearlong tutoring project taking place within two remedial reading classes. One class tutored second graders while the other tutored third graders. Twenty-nine of the 30 students were ninth graders in an Iowa high school. One student was a 10th-grader. Of the 24 students whose scores were available, the average Standardized Test for Assessment of Reading (STAR) score, which approximates the grade level, was 6.3.

Eight weeks prior to the tutoring project, the high school students were provided daily instruction in a wide range of reading and strategy development utilizing 40 minutes of sustained silent reading (SSR) followed by time for journal entries. The results of the study concluded that the project inspired the students in the area of reading and improved their self-concepts and perceptions of themselves. Throughout the project, everyone participated in reading. Tutors examined their students’ needs and problems, applying and modifying strategies learned in their
reading class in authentic ways. Because of the shared community, the high school students reflected on their own academic potential, pinpointing the twofold exchange of learning and its lifelong effects. Even the resistant student, who initially opposed the program, concluded the importance of reading and knowing how to read (Paterson & Elliott, 2006).

A negative attitude toward reading can ruin the potential of any reading experience (Lenters, 2006). A number of studies indicate the existence of negative reading attitudes on the part of adolescents (Corcoran & Mamalakis, 2009; Twist, Gnaldi, Schagen & Morrison, 2004; Bokhorst-Heng & Pereira, 2008). However, others provide evidence that adolescent reading attitude changes with the context of the reading experience (Whittingham & Huffman, 2009; Davis & Neitzel, 2010; Davenport, Arnold & Lassmann, 2004). Attitude toward reading appears to lack uniformity and stability, and there appears to be conflicting evidence as to its nature. One area that has proven to have positive influences on children’s reading is home literacy environments (Park, 2008).

Student Attitudes and Home Literacy Environments

Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) conducted interviews in which students reported finding out about expository text they were reading from various family members, such as mothers, fathers, and cousins. Based on the children’s responses regarding expository text, it can be concluded that family members can also greatly influence what children are currently reading and affect their reading motivation. When describing the narrative text they were reading, various family members were mentioned. According to Saracho (2007), fathers can contribute to the literacy development and academic success of their children through literacy practices. Reviewing several studies, she found that fathers are capable of assuming the responsibility just as mothers. “They also can become literacy resources and meaning-makers in their children’s
family environment” (p. 409). Pitcher et al. (2007) also found similar result. While interviewing students, students talked about mothers and grandmothers suggesting and purchasing books and magazines for them. These students discussed and shared newspaper articles with their parents and emailed distant relatives. Further, adolescents reported reading to their younger siblings. This frequent mention of family showed that family had a positive effect on children’s reading motivation by exposing them to books.

Understanding home experiences and parents’ perspectives on literacy are important considerations in building connections between the home and school. Nickoli, Hendricks, Hendricks, and Smith (2004) conducted a study on college students’ attitudes and home literacy environments. A total of 402 college freshmen volunteered from two Midwestern universities. The results revealed that students exhibiting a positive attitude toward reading reported experiences in the home that include artifacts and events. This study also lends support to the notion that particular kinds of events contribute to positive attitudes toward reading. Events include but are not limited to things such as being read to as a child, visiting the library, discussing books or magazines with family or friends, and having parents who show an interest in what children are reading. When surveying high school students’ attitudes toward reading, Park (2008) found similar results. Findings suggest that the literary environment of the home is an important influence on the attitudes toward reading of fourth grade students. According to Pitcher et al. (2007), modes of instruction will lead to increased motivation for adolescents.

**Student Attitudes and Instructional Practices**

Several educators conducted research on the kinds of classroom activities that promote reading. Sainsbury and Schagen (2004) conducted a large-scale research project to determine student interest in middle school reading. The authors administered a questionnaire to 5076
fourth and sixth grade students in 74 schools in England. One question asked what reading material children read at home, allowing for multiple responses. Classification of data showed seventy-nine percent of sixth graders surveyed enjoyed reading comics or magazines. However, seventy-four percent liked reading silently to self as opposed to having a grown-up’s help. The third most favored activity was reading stories. Overall results indicated varied reading material and free time reading were the most favored activities for reading interest and school enjoyment. Sainsbury and Schagen saw the need for children to browse and make their own choices in literature selection as a means to enhance their involvement in reading. The use of a large sample and the strong preference for independent reading indicates an unexploited resource for changing attitudes of several older students.

The viewpoints and reflections of college students on their reading experiences provided similar perspective. Shankar, Dubey, Mishra, and Upadhyay (2008) surveyed 165 freshman and sophomore medical students to identify their reading habits. Although many students had little or no time to read outside of their course books, thirty-seven percent often read other books. Romantic fiction and science fiction were highly favored fiction while 33.3 percent chose to read a biography when reading nonfiction. Of high interest to both middle school and college, eighty-three percent of college students read magazines, journals, and periodicals. The students at this institution read a diverse range of books, magazines, and periodicals corresponding to the diverse nature of the student body and benefited greatly from leisure reading.

Pitcher et al.’s 2007 conversational interviews of middle school readers supported the complexity of literacy development for adolescent students. These interviews consisted of approximately 100 early and late adolescents from many different school settings in a variety of geographic areas of the United States. Pitcher et al.’s interviews with readers as well as
nonreaders showed reading attitude and performance were dependent on (a) students’
perceptions of reading and readers, (b) use of multiliteracies, (c) teachers and instructional
methods, and (d) choice. While students were reading many hours daily in multiple, flexible, and
varied ways and formats, they still did not see themselves as readers. Students often defined
reading as “a school-based activity,” viewing their out of school reading experiences as invalid.
Students need literacy that is closely aligned with interests and specific purposes. Schooling and
instructional practices have the potential to influence all ability levels and attitudes either
positively or negatively. These results confirm that reading difficulties remain a problem for
many adolescents, and there would be benefits from an environment that incorporates numerous
strategies when gaining information from texts.

Conclusions for Reading Attitudes

In summary, various ideas and concepts about students’ attitudes toward reading are
represented for elementary, middle, high school, and college students. Studies of elementary
students concluded that students have a generally positive attitude toward reading (Merisuo-
Storm, 2006; Sainsbury & Schagen, 2004; Knoester, 2009). However, the attitudes of students
decline as they move into upper grades. Few studies have been conducted on middle school
students and their attitudes toward reading. Concerning the ones that have been conducted,
students tended to have fairly positive attitudes toward reading. Although high school and
college students tend to maintain positive attitudes toward reading, they may struggle with
literacy. Sustained silent reading is one proven way to provide reading practice (Humphrey &
Preddy, 2008).
Sustained Silent Reading (SSR)

Steve Gardiner (2005a) and Jim Trelease (2006) define sustained silent reading as a period of time when a class or entire school reads quietly together. Students choose their own reading materials, such as books, newspapers, or magazines and read independently. Most programs encourage students to maintain reading outside of class and allows for a book change when interest is lost. Most important, through the use of SSR, adults model the behaviors, choices, remarks, and attitudes good readers develop. While most programs do not require traditional book reports, some do provide opportunities for students to discuss and write about their readings. Sustained silent reading programs share certain characteristics, but teachers have adjusted the broad concept to fit the particular needs of their students and schools.

The concept operates under a variety of pseudonyms. In its purest form, FVR (free voluntary reading) allows students to read books, comic books, magazines, newspapers, or any other material of their choosing. Programs include DEAR (drop everything and read), DIRT (daily individual reading time), LTR (love to read), SQUIRT (sustained quiet uninterrupted reading time), USSR (uninterrupted sustained silent reading), POWER (providing opportunities with everyday reading), FUR (free uninterrupted reading), IRT (independent reading time), WART (writing and reading time), SSRW (sustained silent reading and writing), and a host of other captivating acronyms and abbreviations (Gardiner, 2005a & Trelease, 2006).

According to Miller (2009), embracing the inner reader begins with students selecting their own books to read. Choice matters because it empowers and encourages them, strengthening their self-confidence. When conducting interviews with students, Pitcher et al., (2007) pointed out the importance of choice. When asked if teachers had ever done something with reading that they really enjoyed, several students mentioned teachers allowing them the
freedom to choose a book to read. Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) shared a similar view. When sharing the narrative text they were reading, eighty-four percent of the children discussed books they had selected themselves, while only sixteen percent discussed books that were assigned by the teachers. Further, choice rewarded their interests. Most important, it encouraged a positive attitude toward reading, placing value on the reader while giving him or her a level of power. Devoid of the power of choice leads to an unmotivated reader.

According to Gardiner (2005a), the idea behind SSR is that if students read and enjoy it more, they become better readers. Reading everyday allows readers to encounter new words, usage, sentence structures, and ideas. “Each day adds to their total experience and makes the next day better. With increased practice, reading becomes easier and – this is important – more enjoyable” (Gardiner, p. 17).

If sustained silent reading has an ultimate goal, it would be to create lifelong readers. SSR gives students the choices to explore authors, genres, and topics worth their reading time (Gardiner, 2005a). Krashen (2004) describes free voluntary reading as “reading because you want to”. For school-age children, FVR means no book report, no questions at the end of the chapter, and no looking up every vocabulary word. FVR means putting down a book you don’t like and choosing another one instead. It is the kind of reading highly literate people do obsessively all the time” (Krashen, p. x).

Turning students into “highly literate people” is exactly what silent reading programs are designed to do. “Free voluntary reading is one of the most powerful tools we have in language education,” Krashen says (2004, p.1). He continues, “It will not, by itself, produce the highest levels of competence; rather, it provides a foundation so that higher levels of proficiency may be reached. When FVR is missing, these advanced levels are extremely difficult to attain.”
Krashen believes silent reading programs are the most effective ways to teach reading proficiency and all the skills related to reading. Success through FVR is based on what he calls “the complexity argument.” Language, he says, “is too complex to be deliberately and consciously learned one rule or one item at a time” (2004, p.18). This argument applies to not only grammar but also vocabulary. “Not only are there many words to acquire, there are also subtle and complex properties of words that competent language users have acquired” (p.19). Minute differences in usage may cause words to have very different meanings, which presents a challenge that students are unable to meet by simply studying words from a vocabulary list.

To add to this complexity, “when we acquire a word we acquire considerable knowledge about its grammatical properties. With verbs, for example, this includes knowing whether they are transitive or intransitive, what kinds of complements can be used with and so on. Very little of this knowledge is deliberately taught” (Krashen, 2004, p.19). He points out that vocabulary teaching methods typically focus on teaching simple synonyms, and thus give only part of the meaning of the word, and none of its social meanings or grammatical properties. There is abundant evidence that literacy development can occur without formal instruction. Moreover, this evidence strongly suggests that reading is potent enough to do the entire job alone.

*SSR and Older Readers*

It is not easy to overvalue the significance of reading during childhood and adolescence, yet as children become older, their interest in reading as a leisure activity declines (Nippold et al., 2005). This curious lack of interest in adolescents may be due in part to other free-time options, competing for their attention; avoidance of all other kinds of reading; and language and literacy skills barriers. A wiser approach would be to promote the importance of reading by
encouraging the use of preferred reading materials while providing blocks of class time each day to read those materials. Sustained silent reading has the ability to maintain and expand adolescents’ excitement for reading when their individual needs and preferences are considered.

Sustained silent reading provides adolescent readers with a new perspective on reading, a form of recreation (Trelease, 2006). “Recreational reading has changed for teens in an era of eBooks and laptops and hours online, but experts and media specialists say there are signs of promise despite busy lives and research findings that show traditional book reading is down” (George, 2010, p.1). Because reading is equated with schoolwork, traditional book reading for pleasure is not priority for some students. Reading that is associated with assessment, pressure, and “drill and skill” is more likely to turn kids away from reading than entice them toward it (Hamilton, 2009). Free voluntary reading provides an opportunity for students to experience the joy of reading for reading’s sake. Void of interruptions, grades, or pressures connects reading with the concept of recreation. Kids see their peers and teacher reading, and they are afforded the privilege of quiet reading time. Further, it affords quality practice time in a supportive environment while focusing on individual needs and levels and enhancing comprehension and enjoyment. With “pleasure” being a concern in education, middle school teachers are encouraged to restore the sense of play and pleasure that has disappeared in adolescents (Williams, 2005). “If we offer students assignments and opportunities to recognize that what brings them pleasure is connected to experience, competence, and challenge, we can make a better case that the more experienced they become in reading and writing, the more pleasurable they will find the activities” (pp. 341-2). Given that many adolescents show less interest in reading as a leisure activity, sustained silent reading provides a structured opportunity for them to read during the school day (Nippold et al., 2005).
On the secondary level, SSR can result in positive changes in attitude toward the library and the importance of reading (Trelease, 2006). Howard and Jin (2004) conducted a study on eighth grade and eleventh grade students surveying their reading habits and library usage patterns in Nova Scotia. Results were positive, revealing that teens are frequent users of the public library. They appeared to be using the public library somewhat more than the national average. The library was primarily used to do research, to use the computers, or to borrow books. As a means to support leisure reading habits of teenagers, librarians, Hughes-Hassell and Lutz (2006) conducted a study on inner-city students. Those who were not interested in reading reported it being due to lack of interest in the available books. Additionally, teens are searching for good books, so librarians and teachers should provide materials that reflect students’ interests. Periodicals should become a part of the library’s collection to hook students. When libraries provide summer reading programs, students make the most of their free time while refraining from backsliding during vacation. Because books positively affect reading motivation, teachers should provide extensive classroom libraries and allow frequent access to school libraries (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006).

Sustained silent reading offers an opportunity for not only young readers but also adolescent readers to build vocabulary (Gardiner, 2005a; Trelease, 2006; Miller, 2009). Because vocabulary plays the most significant role in foreign language learners, students should acquire a great number of words and should know how to use and where to use them. Soltani (2011) explored the use of a wide range of short stories to teach male students between ages 17 - 27. The study centered on developing vocabulary knowledge through extensive reading. The results revealed that the students learned a wide range of vocabulary. The students recognized the meaning of learned vocabulary well when they came across those words several times in the
stories. Each time a word was repeated, this helped them fix the meaning of vocabulary in their mind. Further, they learned the use of vocabulary in context. According to Cain and Oakhill (2011), reading habits have specific and direct effects on vocabulary growth.

Because reading and writing are so heavily intertwined, SSR lends itself to writing at every grade level (Gardiner, 2005a). It provides a time for thinking. Students imagine a world outside of their own, creating and understanding new ideas, which is necessary for quality writing. Graham and Hebert (2011) conducted a study on students in grades one through twelve. The results revealed one potential means for improving students’ reading is writing. Students in grades two through twelve comprehension was enhanced when followed by a writing assignment. The results showed to be true for students in general as well as students who were weaker readers or writers. It also applied across expository and narrative texts and subject areas. Four types of writing activities were deemed effective: (a) extended writing, (b) summary writing, (c) note taking, and (d) answering/generating questions. Because reading is critical to students’ success in and out of school, writing is a powerful tool that facilitates reading.

“The benefits vary with the individual, but in its simplest form SSR allows a person to read long enough and far enough that the act of reading becomes automatic”(Trelease, 2006, p.85); therefore, it develops an understanding of the qualities of great readers. When a person stops to concentrate on each word, sounding it out and searching for meaning, fluency and meaning are lost. According to Project Read (2010), good readers grasp: (a) conventions, (b) comprehension, (c) context, (d) interpretation, (e) synthesis, and (f) evaluation. A recent study conducted by Macaruso and Shankweiler (2010) explored the simple view of reading, proposing that listening comprehension and decoding can account for all the variance in reading comprehension. Forty-eight community college students were used in the study. The results were
positive, revealing that listening comprehension and decoding are strong predictors of reading comprehension although listening comprehension and vocabulary are stronger predictors.

“Progress in reading is not determined by the number of hours one physically sits in reading class. It is dependent upon mastering each skill in the developmental process and being able to apply those reading skills to books, magazines, and newspapers’’ (Trelease, p. 9). Teachers play a significant role in the reading development of children (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006).

Teacher Attitudes toward SSR

The single most important factor in determining the success of a SSR program is the teacher’s attitude (Gardiner, 2005a). In order for SSR to be deemed sustained silent reading, the teacher, too, must participate in the full length of each session. In turn, habit forms, and the program begins to run itself in a matter of days. When a teacher outlines the program, enforces the guidelines, and sets the example, a winning silent reading program is developed.

Modeling silent reading means the teacher reads with the students every day, not only when it is convenient. It would be hypocritical to tell them they can’t do homework during SSR time, and then grade papers, check email, organize the desk, or complete countless other duties that could be fulfilled during that time. The students see that the teacher enjoys the reading enough to be involved daily, weekly, and monthly (Gardiner, 2005a).

Many high school SSR programs fail due to lack of teacher training (Lee, 2011). Unfortunately, it is the responsibility of high school faculty to create SSR and DEAR programs, putting them in the hands of teachers without teacher buy in, valuable resources, or professional training. However, there are a myriad of models in the literature devoted towards high school independent reading. For instance, Kasten and Wilfong (2005) offer an example of how
secondary teachers fashioned “Book Bistro” events to promote self-selected reading and student-led discussions.

Blackstone Academy, a small charter high school, recognizes the first step to becoming a better reader is to read frequently (Clarke, 2006). In spring 2004, a silent sustained reading program was put into place, requiring all students to read 20 minutes a day, four days a week. Knowing that they would face resistance, they gave students choices about what to read. They found that the teachers who motivated students to read independently were those who read themselves and who proactively talked with students about the need to read. They also found a trusting relationship as the key to conversations teachers have with students about their reading issues. Honest discussion about where students are as readers leads to more independent reading. Students often know when they are struggling readers but have limited chances to converse about it. Adolescents who are uncomfortable with their vulnerabilities require clear invitations to work on building their skills.

When implementing the silent sustained reading program on a third grade classroom, Ermitage and Sluys (2007) became aware of some opportunities for further growth and development. First, they realized the importance of all students clearly understanding the purpose of SSR. While many students acknowledged that reading independently taught them many things, many viewed it as a time to relax or have fun. “While we certainly want students to feel positively about the program, we’d also like them to develop a metacognitive understanding of what is happening when they read so that they can draw upon similar strategies throughout their reading futures” (p. 20). Regular conversations at various points in the year would aid students in the ongoing assessment and improvement of their own thinking and learning as they read.
Further, Ermitage and Sluys (2007) believed students could benefit from more regular forms of sharing their reading experiences with their peers. Making spaces for them to relate to their peers is important throughout the process if students are to recognize themselves as readers and become cognizant of their growth. Many adult book groups propose that adults take pleasure in reading more when they share the experience with others. The same can apply to students too, and while they cherish the silence that is present during SSR, it is evident that many have things they can’t wait to share after reading. Time for sharing also reinforces what has been read, allowing them to reflect upon their reading habits and preferences. Based on student interviews, time for sharing would be an enjoyable and educational experience for the children.

Lastly, important lessons were learned from interviewing the students during the process. Interviews invited responses to a number of questions. Diverse and honest responses were the result of allowing students time to think about their responses. While carefully explaining the purpose of the interviews to the students, Ermitage and Sluys (2007) realized the significance of knowing the benefits and challenges of the SSR experience.

Parr and Maguiness (2005) devised and implemented instructional conversations into their sustained silent reading context and found the process enjoyable and valuable. This small, qualitative study involved three teachers who helped develop a conversation model to use in SSR. The project took place in an inner-city secondary school in New Zealand. They, too, felt that their students benefited because the focus was on the purpose of SSR rather than sitting quietly for 20 minutes. Through the use of book talks, teachers also learned a lot about their students as readers, developing a common understanding that voluntary reading should include talk.
Creating opportunities for sharing ideas and discussions about text can be a powerful motivation for engaging readers. Therefore, teachers should carefully and consistently gauge and direct the emergent reading habits of their students. To overcome stumbling blocks such as reading books below their independent levels, choosing the same genre over and over, reading only chapter books, avoiding reading all together, and fake reading in traditional SSR, Kelley and Clausen-Grace (2006) designed R5 (read, relax, reflect, respond, and rap). Third grade students spent 10-25 minutes three days a week reading self-selected texts. Afterwards, they reflected in writing on their use of metacognitive practices taught throughout minilessons, guided reading, and read-aloud. Partners were invited to share each other’s responses with the whole class. At this time, teachers helped them identify metacognitive strategies being used. Students focused while reading so they could contribute in a meaningful way. Teachers found this to promote active listening, which diminished fake reading.

Sustained silent reading has been deemed inappropriate at some schools (Stapp-Gaunt, 2011). Teachers found it too complicated to implement. They would forget to support the silent reading, carrying on with the assigned lesson. As a result, students discussed the inconsistency, and the reading program died. When it comes to education, program longevity is hard to ensure (Humphrey & Preddy, 2008). Sometimes longevity has to do with learning more efficient instructional practices or adjusting to the growing needs of the next generation. “Often, however, SSR’s long-term failure has more to do with maintaining the interest, focus, training, and re-training of the educators involved” (p.30). The long-term loss of SSR programs has little to do with the program itself. Rather, detail must be given to the motivation and attention of those responsible for implementing the program. “We don’t need to spend a lot of money or design complicated programs to help students learn to enjoy reading; we just need to give them time to
learn that reading can be enjoyable” (Gardiner, 2005b, p.67). That is a matter of commitment on the part of the teacher. With the use of key SSR strategies, students will be in a better position to be successful readers (Humphrey & Preddy, 2008).

**Effective SSR Strategies**

Children of all ages enjoy independent reading time. Sustained silent reading has been practiced in homes and in schools for decades, and it is probably the most highly recommended activity for encouraging language and literacy growth (Chua, 2008 & Kwok, 2010). As students move from elementary to middle school, their reading habits change; therefore, it is clear that schools must respond to students’ resistance to reading (Davis & Neitzel, 2010; Nippold et al., 2005; Patrick et al., 2007). Schools have been trying new methods to teach reading followed by testing of comprehension and reading skills; however, nothing has solved the problem entirely. Data has shown how we might solve this crisis. Several studies of children from widely diverse backgrounds who learned to read easily and remained good readers throughout their school years all have something in common. They all have been read to regularly from childhood and have models who read for pleasure. Based on research, simply providing independent reading time on a daily basis improves children’s reading skills and interests (Hughes-Hassell, 2006; Pitcher et al., 2007; & Edmonds, 2006).

Donalyn Miller (2009), in her book, *The Book Whisperer*, explains that children “who do not read see reading as a talent that they do not have rather than as an attainable skill” (p. 24). If children feel they lack the talent, motivation will decline, and they will find learning to read difficult. The experiences found in books like structuring of sentences, proper use of punctuation, vocabulary in context, spelling, and increased background knowledge will be enhanced for the child who reads for pleasure.
Miller (2009) describes several needs of reading. One of these is validating students’ reading choices. Books with the best reviews are not always widely read. Similarly, texts of great literary value are not read by many readers. Readers travel through the worlds of high art and popular culture. By allowing and encouraging students to read what they want, their culture and interests are endorsed. “Teachers lose credibility with students when they ignore the cultural trends and issues that interest them and instead design classroom reading instruction around books that are ‘good for you’” (p. 85). Student reading choices are preferred to not reading at all. When they receive approval for reading books of their choice, it is easier to move them to suggested texts. Howard Gardiner (2005a) agrees with another of Miller’s needs of reading. In his book, *Building Student Literacy Through Sustained Silent Reading*, he suggests the most important job in the classroom involves modeling how adults participate in reading and talk about reading. When adults participate in the process, habit forms, and reading becomes automatic.

When space and time for independent reading is created and students are mentored, lifelong readers are formed (Lee, 2011). While being passionate about students reading classic literature, teachers should be just as passionate about them exploring their own reading interests. Assisting students sustain and build stamina for reading is an essential element of English programs for older students. Lee advises teachers to take action by getting colleagues, parents, and students involved.

Nippold et al. (2005) believes that independent reading is important in all grades, and teachers should provide blocks of class time each day for sustained silent reading. During SSR, vocabulary, spelling, grammar, writing, and reading are improved (Gardiner, 2005a). It gets students into the mindset of working with words and ideas. Nippold et al. suggests that we
provide children the opportunities to engage in conversation about what was read. Through socialization and peer interaction, meaning develops, and students begin to see how reading provides enjoyment.

Teacher preparation for SSR programs includes educating oneself by obtaining practical information about creating a meaningful program (Lee, 2011). According to Gardiner (2005a), several educators have discovered the power of videotaping themselves and viewing the tape to see precisely what is happening in their classrooms. It helps them recognize their actions and reactions of their students. When implementing the SSR program school wide,

I presented evidence that silent reading was linked to improved literacy in reading, writing, and spelling. I attended a professional development run by U CAN READ: Literacy Intervention Years 3-10 which inspired my determination to support the return of silent reading in our school. I focused the school toward a reading challenge and our school entered the Chief Minister’s Reading Challenge (Stapp-Gaunt, 2011, p.42).

If made a priority, a reading program can work at any school.

According to Humphrey and Preddy (2008), there are nine strategies and tools needed for the successful maintenance of a SSR program: (a) administration, (b) SSR/literacy committee, (c) staff commitment, (d) classroom bookshelves, (e) SSR lending library, (f) school library media center, (g) SSR time, (h) culture of reading, and (i) sustained momentum. “Sustained silent reading programs built on research-based factors create opportunities for students to read and for teachers to mentor them as readers” (Lee, 2011, p.217).

Research has demonstrated that the most effective independent readings are those in which children are allowed self-selection, attention to characteristics, personal interests, access to books, and active involvement of others (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006). One way that teachers
can aid in this process is through the use of student surveys (Miller, 2009). Interest surveys are used to gain insight into the preferences and personalities of students, but the information can also be used to assist the teacher in encouraging students to read. Learning about their past reading experiences and their interests allows the teacher to make personal reading recommendations to the students.

It is important to have goals or rights for the effective independent reading sessions (Miller, 2009 & Lee, 2011). Recording reading goals and keeping track of text read and/or abandoned teaches students what readers do. When a book is not interesting, students have permission to stop reading it and select something new. Along with this right of the reader, Pennac (2006) outlines the right to: (a) skip pages, (b) not finish, (c) to reread, (d) read anything, (e) escapism, (f) read anywhere, (g) browse, (h) read out loud, and (i) not to defend your tastes.

A study conducted by Chua (2008) showed how a well-structured sustained silent reading program can cultivate students’ habits and attitudes in reading books for leisure. A time-series design was used that measured students’ reading habits and attitudes three times in twelve months. If the program created positive effects, significant improvements would appear during implementation. The results supported this expectation. After some months, the number of students reading books for pleasure increased. The number of students who agreed that reading books for leisure was enjoyable increased as well.

A case study conducted by Lee (2011) also showed how a well-structured sustained silent reading program can encourage students to read for pleasure. Using her class, she examined what would happen when she implemented SSR on a lower level, junior English class of 20 students. She used Pilgreen’s factors, the problems she encountered, and her students’ reading interests. The results indicated dramatic changes in students’ reading motivation and self-efficacy.
Students learned how to pursue texts related to their interests and determine if a text was interesting to them. Additionally, they developed inherent reasons for reading and established a practice of reading for their own enjoyment.

**SSR and Achievement**

A powerful predictor of student achievement is reading enjoyment. Given this evident link, “even a purely utilitarian understanding of education should place a premium on reading enjoyment, if only to increase the proportion of students who can boast solid test scores” (Aldana & Wilks, 2011, p. 1). However, the education system and culture that surrounds it continues to marginalize the space for reading, forgetting the profound psychosocial benefits that derive from being critically engaged with the written word. In an article from *Reading Today*, IRA President Timothy Shannon (2006) suggested that SSR is “probably not such a good idea” (p.12) since research doesn’t show that encouraging reading improves reading. Much of his research on SSR didn’t demonstrate but claimed benefits off SSR. However, there are advocates of silent reading in the classroom. Krashen (2005) argued that the National Reading Panel erred in its analysis of the research; researchers missed some important studies on the effects of SSR. He condemned the findings of the National Reading Panel: “I have concluded that long-term studies are more likely to show positive results for school reading” (p.445). Krashen continued that the case for SSR relies on more experimental studies and that it continues to be a valuable program.

“Debate and considerable research continue to be associated with reading instruction and the development of literacy in children of diverse achievement in urban and suburban school” (Reis, Eckert, McCoach, Jacobs, & Coyne, 2008, p. 299). They conducted a study of students in grades 3-5, examining different instructional practices affecting reading fluency and achievement. After 14 weeks, the Schoolwide Enrichment Reading Model (SEM-R) treatment
group, which included blocks of independent reading, scored statistically significantly higher than the control group. These results indicated the need for a student-centered, enrichment-based reading program coupled with independent reading. There were no significant differences in reading comprehension during the 14-week intervention, suggesting that most of the grouped instruction could be eliminated without damaging students’ reading comprehension scores.

Rasinski, Samuels, Hiebert, Petscher, and Feller (2011) conducted a study on the effects of a silent reading fluency and proficiency intervention system on comprehension and overall achievement of students in grades four through ten in a large urban school district. Results indicated students who participated in the program for at least 40 lessons or 20 hours of instruction for greater than six months made considerably greater gains on criterion-referenced and norm-referenced reading tests. Students participating in the program also demonstrated gains on the criterion-referenced reading test at the state and district level. In a study conducted by Topping, Samuels, and Paul (2008) they explored the different balances of reading volume, reading comprehension effectiveness, fiction/non-fiction reading, and book difficulty as a means to explain differences in reading achievement amongst girls and boys. There were 45,670 pupils in grades one through twelve. The results indicated that girls had higher average percent correct than boys at all grade levels. Reasonable levels of challenge were positively linked with reading achievement. Moreover, the achievement of boys, relative to the girls, declined in the higher grades. There were differences between classrooms in successful comprehension of independently read non-fiction, which suggests those differences to lie in the teaching methods.

In addition to instructional methods, teachers’ enthusiasm has a tremendous impact on students’ reading habits and attitudes Pitcher et al., 2007).
Reading Attitudes and Academic Achievement

A primary issue in young adolescents’ learning and achievement in school is motivation or the lack thereof. Traditionally, it is a challenge to motivate middle school students to care enough to learn and then to demonstrate that learning on measurable assessment (Daniels, Marcos, & Steres, 2011). For many years, engagement and achievement decline as students transition to middle school (Malaspina & Rimm-Kaufman, 2008), which adds to the difficulty for teachers of those students. It is imperative that middle school teachers create classroom environments where students feel compelled to engage and learn. The context of middle school plays a role in the academic choices of young adolescents (Daniels, 2010). Davenport, Arnold, and Lassmann (2004) conducted a study which measured the impact of attitudes of fifth grade special education and kindergarten students in a cross-age tutoring program. The results indicated that students were successful in tutoring their younger peers. The surveys supported the fact that the attitudinal impact of the program on recreational and academic reading was positive for all students involved. Before implementation of the tutoring program, both groups revealed an overall positive attitude towards reading. “The academic gains made by special education students in reading imply that the opportunities provided by the tutoring program have a functional relationship to academic performance” (p. 10). When increased time was provided for actively engaged reading opportunities and other literacy-related activities, reading growth was promoted for many students. In a study conducted by Martinez, Arick, and Jewell (2008) 76 fourth grade students were used to determine the reading attitude and achievement relationship. The results indicated that girls had more positive reading attitudes than boys. In addition, there were significant positive relations among reading attitudes in fourth grade and reading ability in grades 4 and 5. When comparing good and poor readers’ attitudes toward reading, no differences
were revealed. Four months later, evidence was provided of a temporal interactive casual influence of reading attitude on reading achievement.

The main purpose of schools is to improve the academic performance of all students (Kaniuka, 2010). In his study, a school in a suburban area implemented a research-based remedial reading program for a 3-4-5 school whose students were historically low-achieving. The results revealed that the students involved in the program had significantly higher scores when it came to attitude toward reading and reading self-esteem. This suggests the idea that a greater level of reading self-esteem produces a better overall general attitude toward reading. According to Daniels et al. (2011), “student engagement can be increased if middle school administrators actively create and foster a school-wide reading culture” (p. 16). Students learn more when they are engaged. With the ability to positively influence students’ engagement, middle school teachers have yet another means of reaching all students.

Summary

The review of literature included research that supports the importance of teachers understanding student reading attitudes in general, student attitudes and home literacy environments, student attitudes and instruction, using SSR for instruction, teacher perspectives towards SSR, and SSR and achievement. The benefits according to the research include increased interest in instructional activities that promote reading, increased comprehension of complicated concepts, and a readiness to read independently.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

This study investigated the effects of attitudes of seventh grade school students using sustained silent reading and various texts. In order to investigate the research questions, data was collected using attitudinal surveys. The data from the surveys were analyzed by the Paired Samples T-test (SPSS, Version 16) and Pearson –r Correlation (effect size).

Statement of the Problem

Davis and Neitzel (2010) and Patrick, Ryan, and Kaplan (2007) indicate that many students develop negative attitudes toward reading as they advance through school. Because students report that they enjoy independent reading time, providing this time to students in middle school is thought to be beneficial. Additional research is needed to determine whether providing independent reading time to middle school students using a range of texts in grades six to eight will influence attitudes toward reading.

Research Questions

This study was designed to answer the following questions:

1. Does promoting pleasure reading from various texts (i. e., SSR) among seventh grade students enhance students’ attitudes about reading?

2. Does promoting pleasure reading from various texts (i. e., SSR) among seventh grade students enhance their reading achievement?
3. Does promoting pleasure reading from various texts (i.e., SSR) among seventh grade students enhance their home literacy environment scores?

4. To what extent will the nature of log comments of teachers participating in an SSR program relate to the reading attitudes, the reading achievement, and home literacy pre- and post-test scores of students in an SSR program?

5. What is the nature of parental demographics of parents/guardians of students participating in an SSR program described in this study?

**Research Hypotheses**

Based on the above research questions, this study generated the following research hypotheses.

1. There will be no significant difference between the mean reading attitude scores of seventh grade students prior to and after their participation in an SSR program.

2. There will be no significant difference between the mean reading achievement scores of seventh grade students prior to and after their participation in an SSR program.

3. There will be no significant difference between the mean home literacy environment scores of seventh grade students prior to and after their participation in an SSR program.

4. There will be no significant relationship between the pre- and post-test scores of students participating in an SSR program and the positive and negative log comments of teachers participating in the same program.
Research Design

This study employed a quasi-experimental design. The quasi-experimental design was chosen because random assignment of two groups is not possible. However, this type of study, if carefully designed, yields useful knowledge (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). A pretest consisting of the Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment Survey and the STAR Reading Test was administered before treatment begins. A post-test of the same instruments was used after the treatment ends. The Paired Samples t-test was used to analyze means of pre- and post-test comparison of students at similar grade levels for schools in this study. Therefore, this study generated quantitative information concerning the reading attitudes of seventh graders in language arts on the pre- and post-test. At the conclusion of the study, the pre-test and post-test scores were statistically examined by comparing reading attitudes means to determine if there was a difference in students’ reading attitudes before and after treatment. To determine if students in each class were initially the same before the SSR treatment, each class was randomly split into approximately equal groups and a comparison of mean scores of attitudes, achievement, and home literacy environment scores were calculated. No significance in the groups indicated group equivalence before the treatment.
Table 1

Independent T-Tests Results*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rhody</th>
<th>STAR</th>
<th>Home</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T (DF) =</td>
<td>T (DF) =</td>
<td>T (DF) =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 1</td>
<td>.245, p = .810</td>
<td>.417, p = .684</td>
<td>-.628, p = .541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.258, p = .802</td>
<td>.422, p = .680</td>
<td>-.617, p = .549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 2</td>
<td>.195, p = .848</td>
<td>.257, p = .801</td>
<td>-1.55, p = .144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.193, p = .850</td>
<td>.269, p = .793</td>
<td>-1.50, p = .167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 3</td>
<td>-.691, p = .509</td>
<td>-.581, p = .577</td>
<td>.530, p = .610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-.691, p = .520</td>
<td>-.581, p = .588</td>
<td>.530, p = .610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 4</td>
<td>.952, p = .358</td>
<td>-.492, p = .631</td>
<td>-.296, p = .772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.958, p = .356</td>
<td>-.511, p = .619</td>
<td>-.306, p = .765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 5</td>
<td>-1.70, p = .123</td>
<td>1.65, p = .132</td>
<td>-1.91, p = .089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-1.67, p = .134</td>
<td>1.65, p = .135</td>
<td>-1.89, p = .093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 6</td>
<td>2.42, p = .038</td>
<td>.542, p = .601</td>
<td>.781, p = .455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.26, p = .070</td>
<td>.568, p = .585</td>
<td>.828, p = .432</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Values for variance assumed and not assumed, respectively

As shown in the results for Classes 1-6 in Table 1 above, all of the classes were equivalent prior to receiving the SSR intervention to improve their attitudes toward reading, reading achievement, and home literacy.
Participants

The participants from which the sample for this study were drawn consisted of seventh grade students from six intact language arts classes in two middle schools in Desoto County. The student body of School A was composed of approximately 78% Caucasian, 4% Hispanic, 17% African-American, and 1% other. The student body of School B was composed of approximately 61% Caucasian, 7% Hispanic, 31% African-American, and 1% other.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Assignment</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Posttest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (7th) Selective</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td>SSR</td>
<td>Surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (7th) Selective</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td>SSR</td>
<td>Surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (7th) Selective</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td>SSR</td>
<td>Surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (7th) Selective</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td>SSR</td>
<td>Surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 (7th) Selective</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td>SSR</td>
<td>Surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 (7th) Selective</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td>SSR</td>
<td>Surveys</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instrumentation

The instrumentation in this study consisted of the Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment Survey (Tullock-Rhody & Alexander, 1980), the Home Literacy Environment Survey (Kubis, 1994), and the STAR Reading Test (Advantage Learning Systems, 1997). Test-retest reliability of the Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment Survey scale was determined to be 0.84. Validity of the survey was established by putting together items created from secondary students’ comments. Twelve teachers designated five students with the most positive attitudes toward reading and the most negative attitudes toward reading. The results
indicated discrimination among students perceived as having positive attitudes and those perceived as having negative attitudes. Items kept on the final scale correlated at an adequate level with the total scale. (Tullock-Rhody & Alexander). The survey consisted of 25 statements, allowing students to respond with a five point Likert scale, which indicates choices for students. A very positive attitude score equaled five while a very negative attitude score equaled one. Thus, reading attitude scores range from 25-125.

The Home Literacy Environment Survey, Kubis (1994) was used to determine the literary richness of the environment from which the student has come. The survey consists of 30 questions; yes/no responses where 1 = no and 2 = yes; alternatives, such as multiple choices, are required in six questions and subjective answers are required of four answers. Kubis field-tested the survey using two freshman English classes and two senior-level Advanced Learning Program classes. After the field-testing, no items were altered on the survey. A high “yes” score verses a lower “no” score indicates literacy richness in a student’s home environment.

To facilitate a comparison between the students’ reading attitudes and home literacy environment and for cohesiveness in responding, the two instruments (The Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment Survey and the Home Literary Environment Survey) were retyped and combined. Questions that are considered irrelevant to the investigation were eliminated from the Home Literary Environment Survey. For example, response items related to titles of magazines, critical reading event, birth order, “real” readers, and parents’ restriction of television viewing will be removed.

STAR Reading (Advantage Learning Systems, 1997) is a computerized norm-referenced reading test for readers in second grade and beyond. It constantly modifies each student’s test to his or her reading achievement level based on responses to previous test items. It includes an
item bank that can be used repetitively throughout the year to measure student, class, or school progress. It yields grade equivalent, percentile, and normal curve equivalent (NCE) scores. NCE is a standardized score, based on an equal interval scale, thus, the most appropriate for aggregated statistical analysis. STAR Reading test-retest reliabilities range by grade from 0.85 to 0.95, with an overall reliability of 0.94. Split-half reliabilities range from 0.89 to 0.93. Star Reading correlates with other standardized tests, including the Iowa Test of Basic Skills and the Stanford Achievement Test, Ninth Edition (Renaissance Learning, 2003).

Teacher Logs

Teachers kept six weekly logs provided by the researcher. Each day teachers recorded the progress of their perceptions (positive or negative) of the sustained silent reading process. Teachers also indicated if changes were made to the process.

Instructional Materials

Students read books (including comics), magazines, and newspapers using modes such as hard copy, eBook, Nook, or Kindle. Genres of the books included poetry, fiction, nonfiction, and traditional literature. Texts were selected from the classroom library, school library, public library, bookstore, family, friends, and other teachers.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher obtained permission from the Institutional Review Board for Human Subject Research at the University of Mississippi and the Desoto County Schools district to conduct this study. A letter requesting consent to participate in the study was mailed out to English/Language Arts teachers and principals of two middle schools. Copies of a letter requesting consent to participate in the study was sent to parents and guardians, and assent forms
were read and discussed with the students selected for the study. Data was collected only for those students whose parents or caregivers gave consent and students who gave assent.

**Teacher Training**

Prior to the beginning of the study, all teachers were trained by the researcher on the sustained silent reading process, the administration of surveys and tests and documenting teacher logs. Teachers were given a copy of the district curriculum guide and recommended reading list for the grade level taught. Teachers were informed that monitoring by the researcher would take place during the process.

**Administration of Pre-test Instruments**

The data collection phase began after IRB approval. The combined Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment Survey and Home Literacy Environment Survey and the STAR Reading Test were given as pre-tests to all classes during their regular English/Language Arts periods. Early-March, post-tests were given to students.

**Procedure for First Sustained Silent Reading Session**

At the beginning of the first sustained silent reading session, the teachers in the study engaged the students in an informal discussion about books. This discussion established rapport and activate prior knowledge of reading.

**Procedures for All Sustained Silent Reading Sessions**

At the beginning of each sustained silent reading session, the teacher displayed the amount of time allotted. When the time expired, the teacher allowed students five minutes of share time with a partner.
Specific Procedures for Friday Sustained Silent Reading Sessions

At the end of each Friday sustained silent reading session, the teacher presented a book commercial by giving the title, author(s), and a brief testimonial of a book he/she has read and enjoyed. Following, students were asked to recommend books to the class. At the time of a book commercial, the students stood next to his/her desk or at the podium to informally share the book. Students who have read the same book were asked to add their opinions of it. Students were asked to record any books that interest them in a special place.

Procedures for Teacher Logs

The researcher explained the procedure for the teacher logs prior to the implementation of the study. The researcher provided new logs every two weeks. Logs for each of the sustained silent reading sessions of each class were kept in a folder in a file drawer in the classrooms. Teachers completed the logs each day for the duration of the study and returned them to the folders. The researcher monitored this activity. Every other Friday, the researcher collected the teacher logs from the folders and replaced them with new ones for each sustained silent reading session. By April 16, 2013, teacher logs were collected from study participants.

Administration of Post-test Instruments

On March 4-8, 2013 the combined Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment Survey and Home Literacy Environment Survey, and separately, the STAR Reading Test were administered again by the teachers.

Data Analysis Procedure

Mean scores of the Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment Survey, the Home Literacy Environment Survey, and STAR Reading Test were examined to determine if significant differences in attitude toward reading and achievement existed before and after treatment using
the p = .05 level of significance. With regard to computing an effect size statistic, “SPSS computes the Pearson’s correlation coefficient and an index of effect size” (Green, Salkind & Akey, 2000, p.235). SPSS also indicates that “correlation coefficients of .10, .30, and .50, irrespective of sign, are typically interpreted as small, medium, and large effect sizes, respectively” (Green, et al., 2000, p.236). Positive and negative literacy in home environments were calculated using frequencies of positive and negative responses on the Home Literacy Environment Survey. A Pearson-r Correlations test was used to determine whether significant relationships existed between students’ scores and teachers’ positive and negative comments.

To explore teachers’ attitudes toward SSR, teacher log comments (i.e., total positive and negative comments) were analyzed to reveal what teachers thought about the effectiveness of the sustained silent reading process. Positive and negative comments were categorized. Their comments were analyzed to determine any changes they felt might impact the efficiency of the sustained silent reading experience. Means and standard deviations for the tests conducted in this study were reported in tables.
CHAPTER 4
ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The major purpose of this study was to determine older students’ attitudes toward reading who participate in sustained silent reading (SSR). Research indicates that many students develop negative attitudes toward reading as they advance through school (Davis & Neitzel, 2010; Patrick, Ryan, & Kaplan, 2007). Other authors report that sustained silent reading has the ability to maintain and expand adolescents’ excitement for reading and that teens are searching for good books (Nippold et al., 2005; Hamilton, 2009; Hughes-Hassell & Lutz, 2006). The focus of this study was to determine if providing independent reading time to seventh grade students using various texts influences their attitudes toward reading.

The first section of this chapter provided a rationale for the present study, while the subsequent sections of the chapter is organized according to research questions developed in this study, where appropriate, hypotheses that were statistically tested. Finally, a general summary of the results is offered for each research question examined in this study.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question 1: Does promoting pleasure reading from various texts (i.e., SSR) among seventh grade students enhance students’ attitudes about reading?

Null Hypothesis: There will be no significant difference between the mean attitude scores of seventh grade students prior to and after their participation in an SSR program.
Research Question 2: Does promoting pleasure reading from various texts (i.e., SSR) among seventh grade students enhance their reading achievement?

Null Hypothesis: There will be no significant difference between the mean reading achievement scores of seventh grade students prior to and after their participation in an SSR program.

Research Question 3: Does promoting pleasure reading from various texts (i.e., SSR) among seventh grade students enhance their home literacy environment scores?

Null Hypothesis: There will be no significant difference between the mean Home literacy Environment scores of seventh grade students prior to and after their participation in an SSR.

Research Question 4: To what extent will the nature of log comments of teachers participating in an SSR program relate to the reading attitudes, the reading achievement, and home literacy pre- and post-test scores of students in an SSR program?

Null Hypothesis: There will be no significant relationship between the pre- and post-test scores of students participating in an SSR program and the positive and negative log comments of teachers participating in the same program.

Research Question 5: What is the nature of parental demographics of parents/guardians of students participating in an SSR program described in this study?

To address Research Questions 1 through 5, 77 students at two middle schools were given the Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment Survey, the Home Literacy Environment Survey, and the STAR Reading Test (see Appendix) before treatment and again after the sustained silent reading treatment.
Shown below is the descriptive data for each school:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School A</th>
<th>School B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class 1, N= 15</td>
<td>Class 4, N = 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 2, N = 15</td>
<td>Class 5, N = 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 3, N = 10</td>
<td>Class 6, N = 11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Statistical Findings**

Hypothesis 1 stated that there would be no significant difference between the mean reading attitude scores of seventh grade students prior to and after their participation in an SSR program. Students’ reading attitude scores from the Rhody Secondary Attitude Assessment Survey were compared using means calculated from pre- and post- test administrations. The paired samples t-test (SPSS, Version 16.0) helped to determine if any significant difference existed between the mean scores at the p = .05 significance level. The results of the paired samples t-tests for each of the classes, as shown in Table 2, indicated there was no significant difference between the means. Shown in Table 3, the Pearson- r correlations indicated a weak to moderately inverse set of relationships between pre- and post- test means across Classes 1 – 6. None of the relationships were significant at the p = .05 level.
Table 2 Rhody Pre-Test v. Post-Test Comparison of Means for Classes I – VI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>T =</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Sig. P =</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C 1-Pre</td>
<td>67.333</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.433</td>
<td>-.770</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>.454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>69.400</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6.759</td>
<td>-.770</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>.454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 2-Pre</td>
<td>70.800</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6.143</td>
<td>.142</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>.889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>70.533</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6.104</td>
<td>.142</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>.889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 1-Pre</td>
<td>71.400</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.221</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>68.800</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.493</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 4-Pre</td>
<td>67.400</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6.068</td>
<td>-.376</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>.713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>68.133</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.580</td>
<td>-.376</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>.713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 5-Pre</td>
<td>68.909</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.647</td>
<td>-.331</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>69.545</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.655</td>
<td>-.331</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 6-Pre</td>
<td>70.636</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.294</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>70.636</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.371</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hypothesis 2 stated that there would be no significant difference between the mean reading achievement scores of seventh grade students prior to and after their participation in an SSR program. Students’ reading achievement scores from the STAR Reading Test were compared using means calculated from pre- and post-test administrations. The paired samples t-test (SPSS, Version 16.0) helped to determine if any significant difference existed between the mean scores at the p = .05 significance level. The results of the paired samples t-test for each of the classes, as shown in Table 4, indicated there was no significant difference between the means. Shown in Table 5, the Pearson-r correlations indicated a moderately strong to very strong set of relationships between pre- and post-test means for Classes 1 – 6. All of the correlations were significant at the p = .05 to .001 levels of significance.
Table 4 STAR Pre-Test v. STAR Post-Test Comparison of Means for Class I – VI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Sig. P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C 1-Pre</td>
<td>65.400</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12.287</td>
<td>1.559</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>.141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>62.333</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13.683</td>
<td>1.559</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>.141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 2-Pre</td>
<td>54.333</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12.976</td>
<td>1.751</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>.102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>51.000</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10.549</td>
<td>1.751</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>.102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 3-Pre</td>
<td>35.400</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14.660</td>
<td>1.570</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>29.700</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15.570</td>
<td>1.570</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 4-Pre</td>
<td>36.800</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15.974</td>
<td>.509</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>.618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>35.400</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16.207</td>
<td>.509</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>.618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 5-Pre</td>
<td>58.636</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10.230</td>
<td>-1.18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>61.545</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7.2988</td>
<td>-1.18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 6-Pre</td>
<td>52.636</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15.951</td>
<td>-.162</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>53.181</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12.424</td>
<td>-.162</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.875</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5 STAR Pre-Test v. Post-Test Correlations for Classes I – VI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pearson-r Correlation</th>
<th>Direction</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C 1</td>
<td>.833</td>
<td>very strong</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 2</td>
<td>.823</td>
<td>very strong</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 3</td>
<td>.713</td>
<td>mod. strong</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 4</td>
<td>.781</td>
<td>mod. strong</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 5</td>
<td>.610</td>
<td>mod. strong</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 6</td>
<td>.716</td>
<td>mod. strong</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*= .05 level of significance

**= .01 level of significance

Hypothesis 3 stated that there would be no significant difference between the mean Home Literacy Environment scores of seventh grade students prior to and after their participation in an SSR program. Students’ home literacy scores from the Home Literacy Environment Survey were compared using means calculated from pre- and post-test administrations. The paired samples t-test (SPSS, Version 16.0) helped to determine if any significant difference existed between the mean scores at the p = .05 significance level. The results of the paired samples t-test for each of the classes, as shown in Table 6, indicated there was no significant difference between the means. Shown in Table 7, the Pearson-r correlations indicated a weak to moderately strong relationship between pre- and post-test means for Classes 1 – 6. Only Classes 5 and 6, however, showed significant correlations between Home Literacy Pre- and Post-Test scores at the p = .05 level (Class 6) and at the p = .01 level (Class 5).
Table 6 Home Literacy Pre-Test v. Post-Test Comparison of Means for Classes I – VI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>T =</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Sig. P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C 1-Pre</td>
<td>28.133</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.979</td>
<td>-.746</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>.468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>29.400</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.699</td>
<td>-.746</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>.468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 2-Pre</td>
<td>30.066</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.305</td>
<td>-.293</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>.774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>30.466</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.159</td>
<td>-.293</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>.774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 3-Pre</td>
<td>30.000</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.431</td>
<td>.387</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>29.500</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.064</td>
<td>.387</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 4-Pre</td>
<td>28.466</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.833</td>
<td>.180</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>.860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>28.266</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.673</td>
<td>.180</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>.860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 5-Pre</td>
<td>28.727</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.149</td>
<td>-.962</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>29.545</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.297</td>
<td>-.962</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 6-Pre</td>
<td>26.909</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.625</td>
<td>-.974</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>28.727</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.149</td>
<td>-.974</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.353</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hypothesis 4 stated that there would be no significant relationship between the pre- and post-test scores of students participating in an SSR program and the positive and negative log comments of teachers participating in the same program. Hence, as shown in Table 8, only one of the correlations was significant at the $p = .05$ level (STAR Post-Test Reading scores correlated with teacher positive comments, $r = .893, p= .017$).
Table 8 Bivariate Correlation Results for Pre- and Post-Test Scores and Teacher Positive and Negative SSR Comments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R Pre x T Pos. C</td>
<td>.566</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R Pre x T Neg. C</td>
<td>.648</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R Post x T Pos. C</td>
<td>-.318</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R Post x T Neg. C</td>
<td>-.644</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S Pre x T Pos. C</td>
<td>-.681</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S Pre x T Neg. C</td>
<td>-.294</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S Post x T Pos. C</td>
<td>-.893</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.017*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S Post x T Neg. C</td>
<td>-.560</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H Lit Pre x T Pos. C</td>
<td>.392</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H Lit Pre x T Neg. C</td>
<td>.252</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H Lit Post x T Pos. C</td>
<td>-.701</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H Lit Post x T Neg. C</td>
<td>-.645</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.166</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = .05 level of significance
Parental Demographics Data

Research Question 5 inquired concerning the nature of parental demographics of parents/guardians of students participating in an SSR program described in this study. Three questions from the Home Literacy Environment Survey were compared using pre- and post-test results from each class. Figures 1 – 18 show the results of the reading influence of parents, the reading relationship of parents, and the educational level of parents for 6 classes.

Figure 1, Home Literacy Post-Test results indicated a higher percent of parents read to their children (sometimes, 67%) than at the Pre-Test (sometimes, 53%) for Class 1, Q. 1.

Figure 2, Home Literacy Pre-Test results indicated that the percent of times read to by a parent was highest for female parents (60%), for other parental types (40%), for Class 1, Q. 2.

Figure 3, Home Literacy Pre-Test results indicated a higher percent educational level of parents (college graduate, 60%) than at the Post-Test (college graduate, 27%) for Class 1, Q. 3.

Figure 4, Home Literacy Post-Test results indicated a higher percent of parents read to their children (often, 53%) than at the Pre-Test (often, 33%) for Class 2, Q. 1.

Figure 5, Home Literacy Pre- and Post-Test results indicated that the percent of times read to by a parent was highest for female parents (67%) for Class 2, Q. 2.

Figure 6, Home Literacy Post-Test results indicated a higher percent educational level of parents (don’t know, 53%) than at the Pre-Test (don’t know, 20%) for Class 2, Q. 3.

Figure 7, Home Literacy Post-Test results indicated a higher percent of parents read to their children (sometimes, 70%) than at the Pre-Test (sometimes, 67%) for Class 3, Q. 1.

Figure 8, Home Literacy Post-Test indicated that the percent of times read to by a parent was highest for female parents (70%), for other parental types (30%), for Class 3, Q. 2.
Figure 9, Home Literacy Pre- and Post-Test results indicated the highest percent educational level of parents to be high school graduate (30%) for Class 3, Q. 3.

Figure 10, Home Literacy Pre-Test results indicated a higher percent of parents read to their children (sometimes, 60%) than at the Post-Test (54%) for Class 4, Q. 1.

Figure 11, Home Literacy Pre-Test results indicated that the percent of times read by a parent was highest for female parents (80%), for other parental types, (20%) for Class 4, Q. 2.

Figure 12, Home Literacy Pre-Test results indicated the highest percent educational level of parents to be (don’t know, 33%) for Class 4, Q. 3.

Figure 13, Home Literacy Pre-Test results indicated a higher percent of parents read to their children (often, 55%) than at the Post-Test (often, 27%) for Class 5, Q. 1.

Figure 14, Home Literacy Post-Test results indicated a higher percent of times read to by a parent (female, 73%) than at the Pre-Test (female, 55%) for Class 5, Q. 2.

Figure 15, Home Literacy Pre- Test results indicated the highest percent educational level of parents to be (high school graduate, 28%) for Class 5, Q. 3.

Figure 16, Home Literacy Post-Test results indicated a higher percent of parents read to their children (often, 55%) than at the Pre-Test (27%) for Class 6, Q. 1.

Figure 17, Home Literacy Post-Test results indicated a higher percent of times read to by a parent (female, 73%) than at the Pre-Test (female, 55%) for Class 6, Q. 2.

Figure 18, Home Literacy Pre-Test results indicated the highest percent educational level of parents to be (college graduate, 37%) while the Post-Test yielded the same percent (advanced degree, 37%) for Class 6, Q. 3.
Figure 1
Reading Influence of Parents

Percentage Read to as a Young Child

- Never 7%
- Sometimes 53%
- Often 40%

Home Literacy Pre-Test
Class 1, Question 1

Figure 2
Reading Relationship of Parents

Number of Times Read to by Parent

- Female 60%
- Male 20%
- Grandparent 20%
- Other

Home Literacy Post-Test
Class 1, Question 1

Home Literacy Post-Test
Class 1, Question 2
Figure 3

Educational Level of Parents

![Pie chart showing distribution of educational levels of parents.]

- 60% Some high school
- 40% High school graduate
- 0% Some college
- 67% College graduate 60%
- 33% Advanced degree
- 40% Don't know

Home Literacy Pre-Test
Class 1, Question 3

![Pie chart showing distribution of educational levels of parents.]

- 33% Some high school
- 27% High school graduate
- 20% Some college
- 20% College graduate 27%
- 40% Advanced degree
- 33% Don’t know

Home Literacy Post-Test
Class 1, Question 3

![Pie chart showing distribution of educational levels of parents.]

- 7% Some high school
- 40% High school graduate
- 53% Some college
- 27% College graduate 27%
- 20% Advanced degree
- 33% Don’t know

Figure 4

Reading Influence of Parents

![Pie chart showing distribution of times read to as a young child.]

- 0% Never
- 33% Sometimes 67%
- 67% Often 33%

Home Literacy Pre-Test
Class 2, Question 1

![Pie chart showing distribution of times read to as a young child.]

- 7% Never
- 40% Sometimes
- 53% Often

Home Literacy Post-Test
Class 2, Question 1
Figure 5

Reading Relationship of Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Times Read to by Parent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female 67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male 13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male 13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other 7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Home Literacy Pre-Test
Class 2, Question 2

Home Literacy Post-Test
Class 2, Question 2

Figure 6

Educational Level of Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Educational Levels of Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some high school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Home Literacy Pre-Test
Class 2, Question 3

Home Literacy Post-Test
Class 2, Question 3
Figure 7
Reading Influence of Parents

Number of Times Read to As A Young Child
- Sometimes 20%
- Sometimes 20%
- Often 60%

Home Literacy Pre-Test
Class 3, Question 1

Figure 8
Reading Relationship of Parents

Number of Times Read to by Parent
- Female 40%
- Male 20%
- Grandparent 20%
- Other 20%

Home Literacy Pre-Test
Class 3, Question 2

Number of Times Read to As A Young Child
- Never 20%
- Sometimes 70%
- Often 10%

Home Literacy Post-Test
Class 3, Question 1

Number of Times Read to by Parent
- Female 70%
- Male
- Grandparent 10%
- Other 20%

Home Literacy Post-Test
Class 3, Question 2
Figure 9
Educational Level of Parents

Number of Educational Levels of Parents
- Some high school 10%
- High school graduate 30%
- Some college 30%
- College graduate 30%
- Advanced degree 30%
- Don't know 30%

Home Literacy Pre-Test
Class 3, Question 3

Figure 10
Reading Influence of Parents

Number of Times Read to As A Young Child
- Never 7%
- Sometimes 60%
- Often 33%

Home Literacy Post-Test
Class 4, Question 1

Number of Educational Levels of Parents
- Some high school 10%
- High school graduate 30%
- Some college 30%
- College graduate 20%
- Advanced degree 40%
- Don't know 40%

Home Literacy Post-Test
Class 3, Question 3

Number of Times Read to As A Young Child
- Never 13%
- Sometimes 54%
- Often 33%

Home Literacy Post-Test
Class 4, Question 1
Figure 11

Reading Relationship of Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Times Read to by Parent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female 80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male 13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandparent 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other 7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Home Literacy Pre-Test

Class 4, Question 2

Figure 12

Educational Level of Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Educational Levels of Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some high school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college 7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College graduate 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced degree 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know 33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Home Literacy Post-Test

Class 4, Question 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Times Read to by Parent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female 67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male 6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandparent 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other 7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Home Literacy Post-Test

Class 4, Question 3
Figure 13
Reading Influence of Parents

Class 5, Question 1

Number of Times Read to As A Young Child
- Never 55%
- Sometimes 45%
- Often 55%

Home Literacy Pre-Test

Figure 14
Reading Relationship of Parents

Class 5, Question 2

Number of Times Read to by Parent
- Female 55%
- Male 9%
- Grandparent 36%
- Other 9%

Home Literacy Pre-Test

Class 5, Question 2

Number of Times Read to As A Young Child
- Never 73%
- Sometimes 27%
- Often 27%

Home Literacy Post-Test

Class 5, Question 1

Number of Times Read to by Parent
- Female 73%
- Male 18%
- Grandparent 9%
- Other 9%

Home Literacy Post-Test
Figure 15
Educational Level of Parents

![Number of Educational Levels of Parents]

- Some high school: 28%
- High school graduate: 27%
- Some college: 9%
- College graduate: 27%
- Advanced degree: 9%
- Don't know: 27%

Home Literacy Pre-Test
Class 5, Question 3

Figure 16
Reading Influence of Parents

![Number of Times Read to As A Young Child]

- Never: 73%
- Sometimes: 27%
- Often: 73%

Home Literacy Pre-Test
Class 6, Question 1

Number of Educational Levels of Parents

- Some high school: 36%
- High school graduate: 18%
- Some college: 46%
- College graduate: 36%
- Advanced degree: 18%
- Don't know: 46%

Home Literacy Post-Test
Class 5, Question 3

Number of Times Read to As A Young Child

- Never: 55%
- Sometimes: 45%
- Often: 55%

Home Literacy Post-Test
Class 6, Question 1
Figure 17
Reading Relationship of Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Times Read to by Parent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandparent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Home Literacy Pre-Test
Class 6, Question 2

Figure 18
Educational Level of Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Educational Levels of Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some high school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Home Literacy Pre-Test
Class 6, Question 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Times Read to by Parent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandparent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Home Literacy Post-Test
Class 6, Question 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Educational Levels of Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some high school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Home Literacy Post-Test
Class 6, Question 3
Conclusion

In conclusion, the paired samples t-tests showed that there was no significant difference in reading attitudes, reading achievement, or home literacy as measured by a comparison of mean scores from pre- and post-test administrations for students in grade 7. Chapter 5 details the conclusions of the study and presents results of the study with study recommendations and suggestions for further research.
CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Chapter 5 presents a summary of the study and recommendations based upon students’ attitude toward reading, reading achievement, and home literacy scores. Presented first is a summary of the study, followed by conclusions from study results in the context of related literature reviewed, and third, a list of recommendations for further study is presented.

Summary of Results

The purpose of this study was to determine seventh grade students’ attitudes toward reading who participate in sustained silent reading (SSR). A secondary purpose was to determine if their reading attitudes impact their reading achievement. Davis and Neitzel (2010) and Patrick, Ryan, and Kaplan (2007) indicate that many students develop negative attitudes toward reading as they advance through school. Because students report that they enjoy independent reading time, providing this time to students in middle school is thought to be beneficial. It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference between the mean attitude scores of seventh grade students prior to and after their participation in an SSR program. It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference between the mean reading achievement scores of seventh grade students prior to and after their participation in an SSR program. It was hypothesized that there would be no significant relationship between the
pre- and post-test scores of students participating in an SSR program and the positive and negative log comments of teachers participating in the same program.

Research Question One

Paired T-tests were applied to Rhody Reading Attitude Survey data and results indicated for all classes no statistical differences in pre- and post-test means.

Research Question Two

Paired T-tests were applied to STAR Reading Test data and results indicated for all classes no statistical differences in pre- and post-test means.

Research Question Three

Paired T-tests were applied to Home Literacy Survey data and results indicated for all classes no statistical differences in pre- and post-test means.

Research Question Four

Pearson-r correlations using pre- and post instrument scores (i.e., Rhody, STAR, Home Literacy) were separately correlated with positive and negative teacher log comments. Results indicated that two classes out of six produced significant correlations. Only STAR Reading Pre- and Post-Test scores in all six classes (Table 5) produced significant correlations at and above the p = .05 level. Also, Home Literacy Pre- and Post- Test scores produced significant correlations at both the p = .05 level (Class 6) and the p = .01 level (Class 5). With the exception of one correlation, none of the correlations were significant between teacher positive and negative log comments and the pre- and post-test scores on the Rhody Attitude Survey, STAR Reading Test, and the Home Literacy Survey. STAR Post-Test Reading scores and Teacher Positive Comments produced significant correlation at the p = .05 level (Table 8).
Research Question Five

Pie charts were analyzed for three questions on the Home Literacy Environment Survey. Overall, Home Literacy Post-Test parental demographic results indicated a higher percent of parents read to their children sometimes and often, Question 1. Home literacy Pre- and Post-Test parental demographic results indicated that the percent of times read to by a parent was highest for female parents, Question 2. Home Literacy Pre-Test parental demographic results indicated that the educational level of parents ranged from high school graduate to college graduate, Question 3. With this level of education present in the homes of children in this study, it is not clear why there was not a higher percentage for parents reading to their children.

Conclusion

The Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment Survey, the Home Literacy Environment Survey, and the STAR Reading Test were used to assess students’ reading attitudes, reading environment, and reading achievement. To facilitate a comparison between the students’ reading attitudes and home literacy environment and for cohesiveness in responding, the two instruments (The Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment Survey and the Home Literacy Environment Survey) were combined. The results of the present study were based on seventy-seven students’ pre- and post-test scores and six teachers’ positive and negative log comments. Results showed no significant difference in pre- and post-test scores. However, unexpectedly high participant mortality contributed to a lower overall sample population. In turn, small samples often negatively impact the outcome of statistical testing.
Recommendations for Further Study

1. Extend the sustained silent reading process for longer than six weeks. “If we offer students assignments and opportunities to recognize that what brings them pleasure is connected to experience, competence, and challenge, we can make a better case that the more experienced they become in reading and writing, the more pleasurable they will find the activities” (Williams, 2005, pp. 342-2).

2. Implement and evaluate the Sustained Silent Reading Program in other settings and with students of other age groups. On the secondary level, SSR can result in positive changes in attitude toward the library and the importance of reading (Trelease, 2006).

3. Allot more time for training the teachers on SSR. Many high school SSR programs fail due to lack of teacher training (Lee, 2001).

4. Focus future studies on involving parents more in SSR programs by making parents more aware of the positive influence on reading development and attitude toward reading produced by parents who read to their children (Pitcher, et al., 2007; Nickoli, et al., 2004).
BIBLIOGRAPHY
(Wisconsin Rapids, WI, ALS).


and achievement in an urban school setting. *Reading Psychology*, 32, 75-97. doi: 10.1080/02702710903346873


Renaissance Learning (2003) *STAR Reading technical manual* (Wisconsin Rapids, WI, Renaissance Learning, Inc.).


APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL
From: Tarra Craigen
Sent: Mon 6/24/13 2:21 PM
To:

------------- Forwarded message ------------
From: Jennifer Caldwell <jrb@olemss.edu>
Date: Wed, Jan 2, 2013 at 8:39 AM
Subject: Approval of IRB Protocol 13X-163
To: Tarra Craigen <

Ms. Craigen:

This is to inform you that your application to conduct research with human participants, “The Attitudes Toward Reading and Reading Achievement of Seventh Grade Students in A Sustained Silent Reading Program” (Protocol 13X-163), has been approved as Exempt under 45 CFR 46.101(b)(1).

Please remember that all of The University of Mississippi’s human participant research activities, regardless of whether the research is subject to federal regulations, must be guided by the ethical principles in The Belmont Report. Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research.

It is especially important for you to keep these points in mind:

• You must protect the rights and welfare of human research participants.

• Any changes to your approved protocol must be reviewed and approved before initiating those changes.

• You must report promptly to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or others.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call the IRB at (662) 915-7482.

Thank you,
Jennifer Caldwell, Ph.D., CPIA
Research Compliance Specialist, Research Integrity and Compliance
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
The University of Mississippi
100 Barr Hall, P.O. Box 907, University, MS 38677
Tel: (662) 915-5006 Fax: (662) 915-7577
askiac.uc@olemss.edu | www.olemss.edu

This message is the property of The University of Mississippi and is intended only for the use of Addressee(s) and may contain information that is
APPENDIX B: DESOTO COUNTY SCHOOLS APPROVAL
Fwd: Permission
2 messages

Sun, Nov 11, 2012 at 6:20 PM

To:

----- Forwarded message from rob.chase@desotocountyschools.org -----  
Date: Wed, 07 Nov 2012 14:41:04 -0600  
From: rob.chase@desotocountyschools.org  
Reply-To: rob.chase@desotocountyschools.org  
Subject: Permission  
To: Craigen Tarra <  

Mrs. Craigen is a Certified English Teacher at Hernando Middle School. She has a passion for education that she shares with her students each and every day. She is also very dedicated to not only Hernando Middle, but to Desoto County Schools. Because of this dedication, I give sole permission to Tarra Craigen to use Hernando Middle School data in her research.

Sincerely,

Robert Chase, Principal  
Hernando Middle School

----- End forwarded message -----
Forwarded message from jerry.floate@desotocountyschools.org

Date: Tue, 06 Nov 2012 16:51:28 -0600
From: jerry.floate@desotocountyschools.org
Reply-To: jerry.floate@desotocountyschools.org
Subject: Re: Research Permission

To:

Mrs. Craig,  
As the principal of Olive Branch Middle School, I give you my permission to perform your study at our school. Please let me know if I can further assist.

Jerry W. Floate  
OBMS Principal

Quoting:

Dr. Floate,  
Thank you again for allowing me to use your school to perform my study. I know that you have orally consented, but I have to have something written. I have been informed that email is acceptable. Something short and to the point will work just fine. Please email me something at your earliest convenience.

Thanks,  
Miss Craig

---  
Jerry W. Floate, Ed.D.  
OBMS Principal

--- End forwarded message -----

1 of 2

4/9/2014 4:34 PM
CONSENT FORM

Consent to Participate in a Quasi-experimental Study

Title: The Attitudes Toward Reading and Reading Achievement of Seventh Grade Students in A Sustained Silent Reading Program

Investigator          Sponsor
Tarra R. Craigen, M.A. Nichelle Boyd, Ed.D.
Teacher
700 Dilworth Lane
Hernando Middle School
Hernando, MS 38632
(662) 429-4154

Description

We want to know whether promoting pleasure reading from various texts among seventh grade students enhance students’ attitudes about reading. We also want to know whether the reading attitudes of those same students will impact their reading achievement. In order to answer our questions, we are asking you to take a short test and questionnaire. The questionnaire will be broken into two parts and will ask you a series of questions related to your reading experiences. The short test will be computerized and will assess your reading achievement level. It will take you about 15 minutes to finish the test and questionnaire. We will explain the experiment to you and you can ask any questions you have about the experiment.
**Risks and Benefits**

You may feel uncomfortable because you cannot do as well on a test as you would like. We do not think that there are any other risks. Also, we will talk with you about our experiment, and we think you may learn about how scientists do research projects.

**Cost and Payments**

The tests will take about 15 minutes to finish. There are no other costs for helping us with this study.

**Confidentiality**

We will not put your name on the test or questionnaire. The only information that will be on your materials will be your gender (whether you are male or female) and your age. Therefore, we do not believe that you can be identified from any of your materials.

**Right to Withdraw**

You do not have to take part in this study. If you start the study and decide that you do not want to finish, all you have to do is to tell Ms. Craigen or Dr. Boyd in person, by letter, or by telephone at the Department of Teacher Education, 5197 W. E. Ross Parkway, The University of Mississippi DeSoto Center, Southaven, MS 38672, or 393-9290. Whether or not you choose to participate or to withdraw will not affect your grade in any way. The researchers may terminate your participation in the study without regard to your consent and for any reason, such as protecting your safety and protecting the integrity of the research data.

**IRB Approval**

This study has been reviewed by The University of Mississippi’s Institutional Review Board.
The IRB has determined that this study fulfills the human research subject protections obligations required by state and federal law and University policies. If you have any questions, concerns, or reports regarding your rights as a participant of research, please contact the IRB at (662) 915-7482.

**Statement of Consent**

I have read the above information. I have been given a copy of this form. I have had an opportunity to ask questions, and I have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

__________________________________________________________________________
Signature of Participant Date

Signature of Parent/Guardian Date Signature of Investigator Date

**NOTE TO PARTICIPANTS**: **DO NOT SIGN THIS FORM**

**IF THE IRB APPROVAL STAMP ON THE FIRST PAGE HAS EXPIRED**
APPENDIX D: LETTER OF ASSENT
CHILD ASSENT

I would like to ask you to help me with a project that I am doing for one of my classes at The University of Mississippi. If you agree, you would answer some questions about your attitude towards reading. It will take about 15 minutes.

What questions do you have about what you will do for me?

Will you do this?

Name: ____________________________________________

Date: ______________ Response:  □ YES □ NO
University of Mississippi

Cover Letter

**Principal Investigator:** Tarra Craigen

**Advisor:** Dr. Nichelle Boyd

**Title of Study:** The Attitudes Toward Reading and Reading Achievement of Seventh Grade Students in A Sustained Silent Reading Program

You are invited to participate in this survey of reading attitudes. I am a graduate student at the University of Mississippi, and I am conducting this survey as part of my course work. I am interested in finding out whether promoting pleasure reading from various texts among seventh grade students enhances students’ attitudes about reading. I am also interested in finding out whether the reading attitudes of those same students impact their reading achievement.

Your participation in this study will require completion of the attached questionnaire. This should take approximately 15 minutes of your time. Your participation will be anonymous and you will not be contacted again in the future. You will not be paid for being in this study. This survey does not involve any risk to you. However, the benefits of your participation may impact schools by helping increase knowledge about the reading attitudes of middle school students.
You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to be. You do not have to answer any question that you do not want to answer for any reason. We will be happy to answer any questions you have about this study. If you have further questions about this project or if you have a research-related problem, you may contact me, Tarra Craigen at (662) 429-4154 or my advisor, (662) 393-9290. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant you may contact the University of Mississippi Institutional Review Board at (662) 915-7482. The IRB is a group of people who review research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research participants.

Please complete the attached survey and return it by November 30, 2012. Thank you.

Tarra Craigen
trcraige@go.olemiss.edu

Nichelle Boyd
ncboyd@olemiss.edu
Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment

Part A

Directions: This is a test to tell how you feel about reading. The score will not affect your grade in any way. Read each statement silently as I read them aloud. Then put an X on the line under the letter or letters that represent how you feel about the statement.

SD- Strongly Disagree
D- Disagree
U- Undecided
A- Agree
SA- Strongly Agree

1. You feel you have better things to do than read. ____ ____ ____ ____ ____
2. You seldom buy a book. ____ ____ ____ ____ ____
3. You are willing to tell people that you do not like to read. ____ ____ ____ ____ ____
4. You have a lot of books in your room at home. ____ ____ ____ ____ ____
5. You like to read a book whenever you have free time. ____ ____ ____ ____ ____
6. You get really excited about books you have read. ____ ____ ____ ____ ____

101
7. You love to read.  
8. You like to read books by well-known authors.  
10. You like to stay home and read.  
11. You seldom read except when you have to do a book report.  
12. You think reading is a waste of time.  
13. You think reading is boring.  
14. You think people are strange when they read a lot.  
15. You like to read to escape from problems.  
16. You make fun of people who read a lot.  
17. You like to share books with your friends.  
18. You would rather someone just tell you information so that you won’t have to read to get it.  
20. You generally check out a book when you go to the library.  
21. It takes you a long time to read a book.  
22. You like to broaden your interests through reading.  
23. You read a lot.
24. You like to improve your vocabulary so you can

use more words.

25. You like to get books for gifts.

Literary Environment Survey

Part B

Directions: Please answer the following questions by circling the best answer.

1. Did your parent(s) or guardian(s) read to you when you were a young child?
   a. Never    b. Sometimes    c. Often

2. Who was the person who read to you the most?
   Female parent or guardian    Male parent or guardian
   Grandparent                 Other: ______________

3. Did more than one person read to you on a regular basis?    Yes    No

4. Did your primary care-giver work outside the home before you
   began kindergarten?    Yes    No
5. Did you visit the public library when you were young?  
   Yes  No

6. Did you attend story hours or other programs at the public library?  
   Yes  No

7. Do you presently have a public library card?  
   Yes  No

8. Do you and your family members give each other books as gifts?  
   Yes  No

9. Does your parent(s) or guardian(s) have a collection of books they own at home?  
   Yes  No

10. Do you have a library of your own books at home?  
    Yes  No

11. Does your parent(s) or guardian(s) show interest in what you read?  
    Yes  No

12. Does your parent(s) or guardian(s) often ask you what you learned in school?  
    Yes  No
13. Do you ever discuss books or magazine articles with your parent(s) or guardian(s)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

14. Does your parent(s) or guardian(s) subscribe to magazines which are mailed to your home?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

15. Do you have your own magazine subscriptions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

16. Do you remember having magazine subscriptions as a child?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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</table>

17. Is there a newspaper coming to your home on a daily basis?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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</table>

18. Do your friends like to read books and/or magazines?

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<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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19. Do you discuss books you’ve read with your friends?

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<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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</table>

20. Do you and your friends recommend good books to each other?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

21. Did your parent(s) or guardian(s) restrict the number of viewing hours or the shows you watched on TV when you were young?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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</thead>
</table>
22. What is the educational level of the parent or guardian with whom you spent the most time when you were a preschooler?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some high school</td>
<td>High school graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College graduate</td>
<td>Advanced degree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX F: TEACHER LOG
### TEACHER LOG

School: A or B  
Teacher: 1 2 3

Week of ______________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive/Negative Feelings</th>
<th>Student Responses</th>
<th>Changes In Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
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<td>Wednesday</td>
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<td>Thursday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Comments:
Tarra Renee Taylor was born in Memphis, Tennessee on November 2, 1979. She graduated from Hernando High School in May 1998. Upon graduating from high school, Tarra started her life in Oxford, MS the fall of 1998. She received a Bachelors of Education Degree in Elementary Education from the University of Mississippi May 2002. Immediately following this degree, she applied and was accepted into the Graduate School at Ole Miss. In December 2004, Tarra received a Masters of Education Degree in Elementary Education as well. After much thought and careful consideration, she decided to enter the Doctorate of Education Degree Program in Elementary Education at Ole Miss. In May 2014, Tarra graduated and received her Doctorate of Education degree.

Tarra is presently employed in the Desoto County Schools school district as a 7th grade language arts teacher. Tarra has also taught 8th grade language arts in her current school district. Tarra holds an educator license in Mississippi.

Tarra lives in Horn Lake, Mississippi with the husband, Reginald.