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COMPUTER ADAPTIVE INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT:
THE STORY OF PRESCRIPTIVE CURRICULUM IN ONE RURAL MISSISSIPPI SCHOOL

By
Mary Simpson Stone

A thesis submitted to the faculty of The University of Mississippi in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College.

Oxford, MS
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Approved By:

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DEDICATION

To Polly McReynolds Stone, my aunt, and Sarah Doxey Tate, my grandmother, who would have been more interested in this research than anyone else in my family—two Mississippi women who valued education and held much respect in their communities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge my mama who has always said the only thing she ever really knew she was doing right as a parent was reading out loud to me and my sisters. I am more literate, more imaginative, and more compassionate because of the stories she gave me to store up in my heart. I would like to acknowledge my dad who gave me the volume and confidence it takes to be an effective teacher and leader. I would like to acknowledge Sarah who has modeled hard work and faithfulness to an often thankless profession for many years now. I hope to love and serve my students as well as she does her patients. I would like to acknowledge Katherine who has taught me that intelligence, conviction, and contentment combine to be much more valuable than a college degree ;) I will be a more effective teacher because of the diversity of thought, lifestyle, and culture to which she has exposed me. Finally, I would like to acknowledge Ellen Shelton who advised my research and the writing of this thesis. She is a wonderful example to me of a lifelong learner and career educator. I hope to be half as educated and half as motivated to build for the future of public education when I am as far along in my career as she.

ABSTRACT

MARY SIMPSON STONE: Computer Adaptive Instruction and Assessment:
The Story of Prescriptive Curriculum in One Rural Mississippi School
(Under the direction of Ellen Shelton)

The aim of this study was to discover the impact iReady, a computerized instruction and assessment software, and Ready, the software's printed counterpart, have had on English/Language Arts teachers at School D (pseudonym). School D is part of the Achieving Success School District (pseudonym) which is located in Town X (pseudonym) in rural Mississippi. This study uses a mixed methods approach to understand teachers' perceptions of iReady software and Ready curriculum in general as well as teachers' perceptions of how the implementation of the program affected themselves and their students. The findings and implications recorded in this study are a result of data collected from ethnographic research, surveys, and interviews.

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Introduction

iReady is a computerized instructional tool and assessment system designed to provide ELA teachers with accurate data regarding their students' grade level proficiency by assessing phonological awareness, phonics, high-frequency words, vocabulary, comprehension of literature, and comprehension of informational texts. Curriculum Associates (CA), the creators of iReady, are on a mission to “provide classrooms with the most innovative instructional materials possible” in order “to make the classroom better for teachers and students” (Curriculum Associates, 2022). CA describes their program this way:

A comprehensive solution that combines diagnostic assessments with individualized, technology-enabled instruction (I-Ready) and print-based education tools designed for whole group and small group instruction (Ready).

The system's formula for success is encouraging students to spend between 30 and 45 minutes completing lessons on their “Green Path” which is differentiated for each student based on the diagnostic test they take at the beginning of each semester. The students' Green Path is altered automatically by the program or manually by the teacher depending on the students' success on each lesson. If the student tests below grade level on the diagnostic test, the teacher can use other strategies to determine if the score is due to lack of effort or lack of understanding and adjust the students virtual instruction and practice accordingly.

Researcher and current principal at School C, Dr. Sarah Smith (pseudonym), published her dissertation in 2018 with findings related to the implementation of a blended learning model including station rotations using iReady in the “Achieving Success School District” (pseudonym). She was instrumental in researching, devising, and carrying out an action plan for successfully using iReady, Ready curriculum, and a blended learning model. The choice for the Achieving Success School District (ASSD) to use iReady software and Ready curriculum was born out of administrators, including Dr. Smith, asking teachers what they believed they needed to improve “student success,” otherwise known as standardized test scores (Fonte, 2018). Because standardized test scores are the measure by which student achievement is calculated in the eyes of the state, teachers asked for curriculum, software, or other support that would improve student test scores or at least give teachers accurate data as to how their students were projected to score. Dr. Smith, the curriculum coordinator for the district at that time, researched, outlined, and implemented a blended learning model which included iReady software and Ready curriculum.

At the time of implementation, School C was a D rated school according to the state's accountability model. After the first year of implementation, school C increased by 26 points moving to a C rating. The following school year, School C increased to a B. Under Dr. Smith's (pseudonym) leadership as Head Principal this school year (2021-2022), school

C is projected to receive an A rating. The implementation of iReady in the “Achieving Success School District” began in grade 4 at School C, a school serving grades 4 and 5, in 2016, and since then, the curriculum has been implemented in grades 5-8 as well.

This data suggests that iReady can increase ELA proficiency in students grades 4-8. However, data collected since March of 2020 concerning the impact of iReady on students’ proficiency in ELA cannot be considered wholly accurate due to the unforeseen circumstances of distance learning, excessive absences after returning to a school setting due to quarantine requirements, and the inability to do small group instruction and station rotation due to social distancing. With these considerations in mind, my thesis research focuses on the impact iReady has had on education professionals rather than students.

Dr. Smith led focus groups with teachers in School C during the first year of implementation and surveyed the same teachers at the end of their first year using iReady software and Ready Curriculum. The qualitative data she gathered from the focus groups and surveys was overall positive. As the implementation of the software and curriculum was Dr. Smith’s research for her dissertation and was intended to yield her data for her dissertation, she presumably took great care to ensure that the iReady software and Ready curriculum were being implemented with fidelity. Because an administrator with expert knowledge of the software and curriculum and an excellent understanding of the benefits and challenges of the blended learning model oversaw the implementation in School C, teachers’ perceptions of the program were positive and the students’ scores showed growth in many of the areas which the action plan intended to target.

At school D, the iReady software and Ready curriculum were implemented in October of the 2017-2018 school year. This caused teachers to stop teaching in the middle of units, quickly learn a new curriculum and, in some cases, a whole new teaching style, and redesign their classroom environment, culture, and expectations to accommodate the changes passed down by the district. Although the curriculum produced growth in most of the areas which the action plan targeted, teachers at School D either did not perceive the software and curriculum positively from the beginning or have grown to have a negative perception of the way it is used in School D currently.

Similarly to students, teachers have been profoundly impacted by virtual learning and changes made to schools due to the pandemic. This investigation is concerned with how the implementation of the iReady curriculum and assessment system has impacted teachers’ autonomy, professionalism, and creativity. By surveying 6th through 8th grade ELA teachers and interviewing at least one from each grade in School D, I will analyze and summarize the impact iReady has had on teachers in School D.

In addition to survey and interview data, I will utilize ethnographic data taken during my time as a student teacher at School D to communicate how “highly variable and locally specific” the use of iReady can be in schools (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010, p.1). The conclusions and implications resulting from the research done in School D will not be universally applicable due to the socioeconomic, cultural, racial, and achievement differences among schools. However, the interview and survey answers from the teachers as well as the ethnographic data will be universally available to administrators and educators who are interested in the iReady curriculum and assessment system. These education professionals can use this research as one resource of many while assessing if iReady will

increase the achievement of their students and improve the satisfaction and motivation of their teachers.

Literature Review

Federal Education Legislation

In the sphere of public education, the autonomy of classroom teachers, their agency to be creative and allow their students to do the same, has been startlingly diminished over the past two decades in the wake of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), officially known as Public Law 107-110 and abbreviated as P.L. 107-110, voted on and passed in 2001 under the Bush administration. This act was the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1865, officially known as Public Law 89 and abbreviated as P. L. 89. NCLB emphasized the importance of closing the achievement gap between middle to upper class white students and students in poverty, students of color, students receiving special education services, and English Learners. This piece of legislation tied federal funding of schools to each school's academic progress.

The most significant change brought about by NCLB was the national accountability model: standards, schools, districts, and states had to meet national performance expectations (Fusarelli & Ayscue, 2019). Under NCLB states were subjected to yearly assessments of student performance as well as implementation of state standards for and assessments of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Additionally, state and local educational agencies identified schools for improvement and corrective actions. NCLB required schools to report to parents and the public on school performance and teacher quality and to enforce increased qualifications of teachers and paraprofessionals.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) voted on and passed in 2015 under the Obama administration was the second reauthorization of ESEA and retained many elements of NCLB. However, it revised the policy enough to begin allowing states flexibility transitioning from the national accountability model to state designed accountability models. Beginning in 2015, each state devised and submitted its own comprehensive plan to address improving the quality of instruction and closing achievement gaps (ESSA).

The Age of Testing

In the wake of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), states, school districts, individual schools, and classroom environments have undergone significant changes. These acts of federal education legislation required schools to test students annually, meet accountability standards, and identify schools which need improvement (Fusarelli & Ayscue, 2019). Because the organization and regulation of “free

and equal education” for all United States citizens is relegated to state governments, these pieces of federal legislation concerning education equity must be enforced at the state level.

Under NCLB, states had to provide evidence of AYP to the federal government in order to continue receiving federal funding. States were required to prove more students tested at or above grade level proficiency than the year before (Brown & Clift, 2010). The goal of NCLB was for **all** students to test at or above grade level proficiency by the year 2014 (Rosenberg, 2004). The simplest way to provide the federal government with evidence of AYP was to design and administer standardized tests. NCLB was the first piece of education policy to mandate annual nationwide standardized testing in reading and math in grades 3 through 8 (ProCon.org, 2022). Standardized testing has existed “[since] the days of Joseph Rice and the school testing programs of the early 1900s, the Head Start program evaluations of the 1960s, [but] ESEA [Elementary and Secondary Education Act] reauthorizations culminating in NCLB ” significantly increased prescriptive testing requirements in the U.S. (Haertel & Herman, 2005).

Although ESSA is considered a “relaxed” version of NCLB, the policy still requires yearly standardized testing, Although ESSA allows all test preparation, administration, and results analysis to be done at the state level, all students must be tested in math and reading annually to collect proficiency data which is a large portion of what the state reports to the federal government in order to receive funding.

With test scores being the number one criteria for receiving federal funding, district officials and administrators across the country have begun to invest in products and packages designed by curriculum companies and assessment experts which promise to significantly increase students’ test scores. One such company is Curriculum Associates who created iReady. They state that one of the goals of their curriculum is to “help every learner access grade-level work and ultimately succeed at grade level” (Curriculum Associates, 2022). Translated into the language of ESEA, NCLB, and ESSA, iReady is intended to prepare students to score at or above grade-level proficiency on their state test each year. With this as what appears to be the states’, districts’, and the curriculum’s goal, educators have begun making it their goal as well. After being told that the end goal of their teaching efforts is high test scores and being given the curriculum they are expected to use to achieve these high test scores, teachers have felt a sense of lost autonomy and a nagging sense that the government and their administrators are trying to “teacher-proof” schools so that no matter the quality or professionalism of teachers, the students test scores will only improve (States News Service, 2012).

Educator Autonomy

In a study published by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), survey results taken from 37,000 teachers revealed that 18% of teachers consider themselves to have a low level of autonomy in their classroom regarding specific areas of teaching and planning such as textbook selection, which concepts and topics to be taught, teaching techniques, assessment and grading, and disciplinary actions (NEA). More promisingly, 65% of teachers considered themselves to have a moderate level of autonomy in these areas. However, this data was taken in 2003. The same survey was given in 2013 with 26% of teachers reporting low levels of autonomy and 61% reporting moderate levels of autonomy. Teachers reporting high levels of autonomy dropped from 17% in 2003 to 12% in 2013.

If this survey data is any indication of how teachers will rate their autonomy next year, in 2023, the percentage of teachers with low levels of autonomy will increase from 26% to 34% at least, if the rate of increase mirrors that of the increase from 2003 to 2013 (Sparks & Malkus, 2015). Additionally, teachers have been under intense pressure during the pandemic because they are being asked to continue teaching children on grade level while also remediating the skills that they missed while learning virtually.

One contributing factor to this decrease in autonomy since 2003 has been the need to prepare students for the format and content tested on yearly standardized tests. Veteran teachers have had to sacrifice engaging and enriching classwork and projects for more standardized “research based” instruction. Additionally, “first year teachers believed their instructional methodologies were limited due to the growing pressures of high-stakes testing” (Lamb, 2007). In a study conducted by Amber Winkler in which she surveyed both novice and veteran teachers, she found that veteran teachers resent the implication that they are incapable of teaching without a rigid framework and evidence to prove their instructional methods work [whereas] newer teachers appreciated having standardized test data to confirm their success of lackthereof as a teacher (Winkler, 2002).

Although loss of classroom autonomy negatively impacted many classroom environments, the goals which standardized testing and data-driven instruction were meant to accomplish received largely positive reviews from educators across the United States. According to a survey taken by the American Association of Educators, both veteran and novice teachers “truly believe that ‘accountability’ is the key ingredient for any successful reform effort” (Beckner, 2003).

A Need for Support

Since the passing of NCLB, teachers have been speaking out about a need for more creative freedom in the classroom. A common refrain among teachers following the signing of NCLB is best captured by this quote from a rural educator in Maine when he/she said, “The idea of teaching looks less attractive with NCLB” due to an overwhelming uncertainty of how to accomplish all NCLB required (Powell, et al., 2009). With reallocation of instructional and non-instructional time, changes in school’s curriculum, changes in professional development strategies, and a shift in acceptable modes of instruction, teachers quickly transitioned from creative professionals to overpaid test proctors and underpaid magicians considering how much they were asked to balance under this new legislation. If a teacher was not directly instructing his/her class, he/she might be entering data for the schools accountability model or contacting parents of every student who is failing because failing students negatively impact the school’s overall rating, monitoring students’ social and emotional well-being, and planning engaging activities that are backed by the “scientifically-based research” that NCLB demanded of teaching strategies during its tenure as the United States leading piece of education legislation (Linston, 2007).

ESSA did not significantly reduce or change this demand. When ESSA passed in 2015, classroom-related decision making shifted from the states to the districts but still not down to the teachers. Although teachers have much more direct contact with their principals and potentially district officials than they do with state education legislators, teachers still feel that they do not have agency over what they teach in the classroom, but in some cases they do have a voice in what materials, software, and test preparation programs the school purchases (Priestley, Biesta, & Robinson, 2015). For example in the Achieving Success School District, “teachers at School C were asked to describe current instructional practices

linked to curriculum, instruction, and assessment and a potential solution to improve student achievement” after reading and math proficiency decreased from 2015 to 2016 (Fonte, 2018). The results from this survey led the district to seek options for intervention and curriculum support including an online instruction and assessment system.

Intended Use of Computer Adaptive Curriculum and Assessment (CACA)

Dr. Ashley Fonte was the principal investigator of a study which followed the implementation of a “blended learning model” in school C serving the 4th and 5th graders in the Achieving Success School District as a means to support teachers in the areas in which they requested support. This instructional model is based on the “station-rotation model” of blended-learning researched and defined by Staker and Horn (2012). Fonte, alongside the administration and faculty of School C, implemented the station-rotation model in which students would “rotate [...] among classroom-based learning modalities. The rotation includes at least one station for online learning. Other stations might include activities such as small-group or full-class instruction, group projects, individual tutoring, and pencil-paper assignments,” (Staker & Horn, 2012). In iReady’s marketing campaigns, the company states that iReady online instruction and Ready workbook lessons can and should be used by students independently, in small groups, or with the class as a whole. Fonte hypothesized that using iReady in a blended learning environment would increase student achievement and engagement. Research suggests that the key components to student achievement are the following: “1) explicit instruction; 2) independent work; 3) individualized, one-on-one, or small group instruction; and 4) computer assisted instruction” (Greenwood et al., 2002; Marston et al., 1995; Swanson, 2001). In addition to student achievement, Fonte hoped that, because the content would be individualized to the students, the students would be more engaged (Fonte, 2018, pg.16).

Dr. Smith stated that the district hoped to see the most gains from iReady in the bottom 25% of students (Fonte, 2018). However, the administration opted to have all students participate in the iReady program because teachers had requested curriculum support. iReady was intended to provide curriculum support and give teachers an efficient method of collecting data regarding student proficiency. This data was intended to assist teachers in differentiating instruction as well as provide the district with data to send to the state government in order to receive a district rating.

Implementation of CACA: Progress and Misuse

The Achieving Success School District is not the only district which made the choice to support their students and staff by purchasing a technology-based curriculum and assessment system. In a study conducted by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in 2014, researchers surveyed over 3,100 U.S. public school teachers who were demographically representative of the majority of teachers in the U. S. The results of this research study revealed enlightening insights about how teachers want to use instructional technology in their classrooms and consequently the ways the technology to which they have access is failing them and their students. Although this study was not exclusively about CACA or blended learning models, these are two examples of technology and technology implementation strategies that were used or available for use by the teachers surveyed in this study. iReady, the specific CACA used in the Achieving Success school district, is a “two-subject instructional and assessment” tool (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2014).

The Gates study only addresses the impact and effectiveness of the ELA instruction and assessment element of the iReady interface.

The study referenced above concluded that there are 964 digital instructional products available on the educational software market as of 2014. Of those 964 products, 146 of these products were ELA-only products (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2014). While iReady is not an ELA-only product, it does have a learning pathway for students which is ELA instruction specific, meaning it is not cross-curricular or content-agnostic. With this distinction in mind, the Gates study states that “districts are spending much more on [iReady and/or softwares similar to it] than is suggested by the extent to which teachers direct their students to use these products frequently or rate them as effective.” Of the 3,100 teachers surveyed in this study, 7% of those teachers used an ELA or two subject (including ELA) digital instructional product. Of that 7%, between 50-62% of those teachers “perceived the product available to them as effective”, and between 25-32% reported using the products “frequently”(Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2014). These statistics are hardly a rave review for the products on the market as of 2014 and suggest that teacher voices were not the driving force behind spending on instructional products and that those outside the classroom have a disproportionately higher impact on spending than those directly entrusted with student instruction.

Districts and administrators insist they are working to support teachers and fulfill their requests for technology-based assistance, but the software programs districts are funding may not meet teachers' desired criteria nor are many teachers surveyed or asked for their opinion before the purchasing decision is made (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2014). This suggests that the software is not intended to support instruction but rather to replace it all together. Again, the concept of a “teacher-proof” classroom becomes some districts’ and states’ goal instead of investing in and supporting professionals who are a valuable resource in and of themselves.

As this study was conducted in 2014, spending on curriculum and assessment-related products has increased even more since then. This is likely due to President Obama’s ConnectED initiative which had the goal of connecting 99% of American students to broadband or high speed internet by the year 2018. This initiative increased the functionality of having many computers in schools for teachers and students to use as educational tools. With this push toward technology based education, spending on education technology has more than doubled since 2013. Federal, state, and district spending on technology for schools totaled an estimated \$13 billion dollars in 2013 and skyrocketed to well over \$26 billion dollars in 2021. Many districts and individual schools have raised or are raising money outside of federal funding in order to have a laptop computer for every student in their building. According to a survey conducted by the U.S. department of education, during the 2019-2020 school year before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, 45% of schools reported having a computer for every student, or being “one-to-one,” and 37% other than those schools reported being one-to-one in specific grades, classrooms, or subject areas (Gray & Lewis, 2021).

With so many students having constant access to computers and so much money going into acquiring these computers for students, districts are insisting on their consistent use in all subject areas and all grades in which students are one-to-one. This widespread access to functional computer hardware has led to the increased demand for software that meets the needs of teachers and provides districts with the data they need for their state’s

accountability model. In particular, a program called iReady, designed by the curriculum company Curriculum Associates, boasts of reaching 10 million students as of the beginning of 2022 (Curriculum Associates, 2022). Research conducted and published by Curriculum Associates suggests that iReady assessments are a statistically significant indicator of how students will perform on state assessments aligned to Common Core State Standards and that iReady online instruction paired with Ready workbook instruction will increase test scores of students who consistently use the program (Curriculum Associates, 2022). Due to Mississippi students receiving test scores well below the national average since the onset of mass standardized testing in 2001, Mississippi school districts have widely invested in iReady in an effort to improve student performance (The Nation's Report Card, 2001).

Methodology

During this study, I used ethnographic research, a survey, and multiple interviews to gain an understanding of the culture surrounding and the impact of iReady on the students and teachers in the Achieving Success School District, specifically in School D. Through the collection of fieldnotes, survey data, and interview recordings and transcripts, I became intimately familiar with the ways iReady is implemented, the attitudes of students and teachers toward iReady, and the expectations promoted by the administration of School D concerning iReady.

The majority of my data is ethnographic as I spent five days a week for 14 weeks in a classroom which utilized iReady. I watched the way iReady influenced my clinical instructor's decisions regarding what to teach, when to teach each standard, and how to remediate skills. I used a physical notebook to write down observations I made because I was not guaranteed access to a laptop everyday. Additionally, I observed the way teachers within School D other than my clinical instructor spoke about iReady informally and recorded quotes in my notebook. I did not report these findings directly in this paper because I did not have consent from the teachers who said them, but I did use the sentiments to inform the conclusions I state at the end of my research.

I used surveys and interviews to confirm the conclusions I drew from my ethnographic research. I used my clinical instructors' planning period to visit Teacher A, B, and F to conduct interviews over the course of one semester. As well, I sent the survey to all of the ELA teachers in School D. The teachers who had not responded after a week, I followed up with in person to ask if they would be willing to take my survey.

The limitations of these methods include, but are not limited to, opportunity for researcher bias because of my status as a student teacher at School D. As well, School D offered a limited number of available participants and a lack of diversity in the participant

pool. Those who did participate provided short answers with little elaboration. Finally, I struggled to find research which investigated the experiences of teachers who have been forced to use prescribed curriculum.

School Contextual Information

School D is located in rural North Mississippi and is part of the Achieving Success School District. The Achieving Success School District (ASSD) serves approximately 4,500 students per school year. The ASSD has one elementary school, one intermediate school, one middle school, one junior high school, one high school, and 1 alternative school. The ASSD received a “B” on their school report card by the Mississippi Department of Education for the 2018-2019 school year. According to 2019 estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, Town X which the ASSD serves has a population of 34,190. School D serves 309 sixth graders, 287 seventh graders, and 266 eighth graders. 543 students are Black, 261 students are White, 35 students are two or more races, 17 students are Hispanic, and 6 are Asian. 406 students are enrolled as female, and 456 students are enrolled as male. 41% of the students enrolled scored proficient or above in math. 42% scored proficient or above in reading. The median household income of Town X is \$48,000. Town X has its own hospital and is very industrious. The ASSD has little parent involvement due to most parents both working full- time jobs. Some parents support the school by participating in school fundraisers, volunteering at the schools, and supporting community drives such as food drives.

In regard to instruction and curriculum, School D uses a different hierarchical structure starting with district officials trickling all the way down to the students. A district level content coordinator works among and within the schools to make sure instruction techniques and content are consistent vertically between grades and schools and horizontally among classrooms in the same grade. The instruction techniques and content can be added to by teachers when time allows but cannot be subtracted from even if the teacher does not see the recommended strategies and materials benefiting his/her students.

In 7th and 8th grade, School D uses ability grouping to decide students’ class placements. My clinical instructor (Teacher C) teaches the lowest performing class. The “bottom 25” students, as the teachers in School D refer to them, have to have two periods of ELA everyday in 7th and 8th grade. As it was explained to me by Teacher C, the intention of “double-blocking” the students is to give the teacher enough time to both teach grade level content as well as remediate the students’ unfinished learning from prior grades.

Although the class is designated for the students who perform in the “bottom 25%” of their grade, her students range significantly in ability level. Some are included in this class due to diagnosed learning disorders or developmental delays. Others are academically proficient but will not complete and turn in work because of discipline issues. Still others are academically advanced but put forth no effort on standardized tests and therefore test in the bottom 25% even though they do not belong in that grouping. This combination of students creates an environment in which classroom management is challenging, chronic absenteeism is the norm, and motivation is low due to feelings of frustration or defeat. For students in the bottom 25%, School D requires students to spend at least 45 minutes on iReady and pass at least one lesson, either assigned by the teacher or on their individualized instruction pathway. From this point forward these lessons will be referred to as “teacher assigned lessons” and “Green Path lessons.”

Classrooms serving students not in the bottom 25% are also required to utilize iReady instruction. However, the administration does not require students who scored in the advanced category on their 7th grade ELA exam to accumulate 45 minutes every week. They must continue passing lessons and scoring proficient or advanced on their “Standards Mastery” tests. School D recommends that students who scored in the proficient category on their 7th grade ELA exam complete 45 minutes as well as pass a lesson each week. However, the curriculum coordinator only closely monitors the bottom 25% of students to ensure they complete all 45 of their minutes every week.

In the 7th and 8th grades, teachers allow students one whole class period on Monday to pass a lesson and get at least 45 minutes of “time-on-task.” Teachers receive a printed report in their mailbox each Friday from the curriculum coordinator with any student who has not passed a lesson and any “bottom 25” student who has not completed 45 minutes and a passed lesson highlighted in yellow. This system motivates teachers to “get iReady out of the way” at the beginning of the week so that they do not risk running out of time in the week for students to complete their iReady requirement. In Teacher B’s words, she tells her students to “get your minutes, get your pass lesson... my least favorite days of the week” (APPENDIX B).

Participant Contextual Information

Participants in this study are all white women between the ages of 23 and 50. All participants are ELA teachers in grades 6-8. They range in experience from first year teachers to 24 years in the classroom. At least two participants were born and raised in Town X. At least two are Mississippi natives from towns other than Town X. The majority of teachers surveyed have worked in the Achieving Success School District for less than five years.

Ethnographic Data Sources: Contextual Information

Although School D uses the iReady curriculum in both ELA and Math classrooms, I only interviewed and surveyed ELA teachers because that was the area in which I conducted my ethnographic research. The majority of my ethnographic data comes from one 8th grade classroom in School D in which I completed my practicum experience for my degree in Secondary English Education. Other sources of my ethnographic data were the other two 8th grade ELA classrooms, one serving students who scored proficient on their 7th grade ELA exam and the other serving students who scored advanced on their 7th grade ELA exam. Any students who needed to be removed from the bottom 25% classroom were moved into Teacher D’s classroom which serves proficient students. One was placed in Teacher E’s classroom.

As well, I observed one 6th grade and one 7th grade classroom. School D does not ability group students in ELA during 6th grade. Instead, *all* students are double-blocked in an effort to prevent any students from needing to be double-blocked in 7th and 8th grade. In 6th grade, these double-blocks are one after the other which means students are participating in continuous ELA instruction for almost two full hours. In 7th and 8th grades, the students who are double-blocked come once in the morning, leave, and come back in the afternoon.

The remainder of my ethnographic data will be integrated into my analysis of my interview and survey data.

Data Analysis

Interview Responses

Teacher F

I chose to interview the same 6th grade teacher in whose classroom I observed because I was able to witness her complete a whole lesson in the Ready Workbook. Her less than complementary interview responses surprised me due to her seamless and effective use of the Ready Curriculum in her classroom. She, like the other teachers I interviewed and the teachers who completed the survey, acknowledged that iReady and Ready Curriculum is instrumental in bringing basic students up to proficiency but serves little purpose for students who are already proficient, and they are frustratingly easy for students who are advanced (APPENDIX E).

In order to improve student buy-in with the Ready workbook, Teacher F confessed that she and the students “bond over how much [they] don’t like iReady” (APPENDIX H). This bond allows Teacher F to motivate the students to work with her to efficiently and accurately complete the workbook and online lessons so that they do not have to remediate those skills. iReady provides supplemental teacher assigned lessons and printable lessons (new as of this year) in the “Teacher Toolbox” (2022). These new lessons give more layers of scaffolding to the Ready curriculum. The program already allowed for enrichment by allowing students to progress past their grade-level’s lessons. Additionally, with the teacher toolbox, teachers can assign online lessons that do not already appear on the students Green Path or print additional workbook lessons for remediation. These lessons are intended to be teacher lead in small groups to check for comprehension after the teacher has retaught the standard. However, in both Teacher C and Teacher F’s classrooms, the teachers assigned the additional online lessons as a second chance to pass a lesson for their required weekly passed lesson or so that students will complete their time on iReady. I did not observe this happening in Teacher F’s classroom, but she reported this to be her practice during our interview (APPENDIX H). However, I did observe this happening in Teacher C’s classroom. I did not observe Teacher F using the printed lessons, but Teacher C did use the printed lessons for small group remediation at least once while I was in her classroom.

Teacher B

I chose to interview Teacher B out of the three 7th grade ELA teachers because she teaches all of the 7th grade inclusion students, but she does not teach the bottom 25%. This differs from both the 6th and 8th grade in that the 6th grade does not ability group, and in the 8th grade, Teacher C’s classroom serves the bottom 25% as well as the majority of the 8th grade inclusion students. Teacher B is a first year teacher. She has an inclusion teacher with her in the classroom the majority of the time.

Of the three interviews I conducted, Teacher B expressed the most frustration with iReady. She teaches single block classes with inclusion students. She is required to use the iReady software and the Ready curriculum which takes up the majority of her class time. Presumably, Teacher F does not experience this frustration to the same degree because she has two blocks with her students. As well, Teacher A teaches only proficient and advanced

students and therefore is not required to take as much or any class time to allow students to complete 45 minutes of iReady. This prevents her from experiencing the same frustration as Teacher B.

Other than the amount of class time the curriculum occupies, Teacher B expressed frustration with the way the curriculum seems to be “training” the students to expect short texts which leads them to be overwhelmed or refuse to work when presented with longer texts or books with chapters (APPENDIX G). I observed this problem occurring in Teacher C’s classroom as well. Students refuse to read when passages seem daunting and will guess the answers to the comprehension questions rather than reading the text to discern the answers. This issue creates inaccurate data which is one of the district’s motivating factors for using iReady in the first place, according to Teacher B (APPENDIX G).

Teacher A

I chose to interview an 8th grade teacher other than my clinical instructor in order to compare her perceptions of iReady to what I observed in Teacher C’s and Teacher D’s classrooms. Obviously, I spent more time observing in Teacher C’s classroom than any other, but I did spend one week observing in Teacher D’s classroom when Teacher C was absent. I observed Teacher A for one class period at a time on several different days. Teacher A teaches mostly advanced students along with a few proficient students and one bottom 25% student. As her students do not have to complete 45 minutes of iReady as long as they complete a lesson each week, Teacher A does not set aside one class period a week to ensure the students get their iReady time completed. Any student who does not pass a lesson during the class time she does set aside for iReady must pass a lesson on their own time. Many of Teacher A’s students complete the whole iReady curriculum either before they reach her class (during 6th or 7th grade) or complete it while they are in her class. As well, Teacher A does not spend as much time using the Ready Workbook because her students move through the lessons at a faster pace than Teacher C’s and Teacher D’s students. This version of iReady and Ready implementation allows for more teacher-led instruction, more time for student-driven learning, and a more diverse range of teaching and learning methods to be utilized in the classroom.

Although Teacher A does have class time to use instructional methods and activities other than the Ready curriculum, she still feels that the curriculum is restrictive in its terminology. Teacher A says,

“We’re so constrained into using their terminology, because if I use different terminology, it confuses the students. An example is like when we’re talking about claims and counterclaims and rebuttals. [iReady] use[s] different terminology sometimes. So I have to be really sure that I’m using that same vocabulary that they’re using.”

This restriction suggests that the Ready Curriculum may be encouraging memorization of terms and definitions rather than promoting a conceptual understanding of the terms and ideas of which the MCCR standards require mastery. Memorization of academic vocabulary would be valuable if the students were able to apply the definitions to their writing or future reading. However, in each teacher’s classroom I observed, the students had difficulty recognizing the terms when used outside of the context of iReady. For example, when I asked my students for the definition of an allusion, they could quickly answer, “A reference to something famous.” A few days later, a student came to school with green braids in her

hair and another student said, “What up, Medusa?” I enthusiastically asked. “What kind of figurative language did he just use?” The students looked at me with blank expressions until one of them finally said, “A metaphor?” in a hesitant voice. I was disappointed because many of the students in the group to which I posed this question had scored proficient or above on their iReady Standards Mastery Test over RL 8.4 which assesses understanding of figurative language, specifically analogies and allusions.

Further evidence of this disconnect between iReady and reality comes later in Teacher A’s interview. When asked if she believes iReady improves her students reading and/or writing capabilities, Teacher A answered,

“All [the students] would do is breeze through [the online lessons] once. Fail the quiz and not care, but then they can take it again. And then they passed the second time because they'd know the answers. So they had figured by the time they got up to sixth grade, they had the system figured out, they would get answers from other people. You know, they have figured it out. So the goal... they never saw the benefit of ‘hey, this is going to help me learn to become a better reader or writer.’

It's simply how to beat the system to get done what I need to do.”

These same problems existed in Teacher C’s classroom. Students completed their time and passed lessons on a certain standard but scored in the “basic” range on their Standards Mastery Test over the same skills. This pattern is likely because students used the internet, their peers, or an opportunity to retake the same quiz to get a score on the lesson quiz that did not reflect their understanding. The Standards Mastery scores, while a more accurate reflection of the students comprehension, often reflect little other than the extent to which students are willing to tolerate iReady that day. As all three interview participants stated, the students do not like iReady (APPENDIX F, G, H).

Psychology, educational theory, and common sense suggest that students are less motivated to participate in and apply effort to tasks if they do not

- a) perceive the task to be related to their future aspirations,
- b) perceive immediate or impending rewards or consequences,
- c) or inherently enjoy the task they are being asked to do or content they are being asked to learn (Anderman, E.M, 2021;2022).

Teachers in School D are confident that their students do not enjoy iReady, neither the teachers nor the school incentivize iReady other than with passing and failing grades, and the students consistently ask the all-to-common question, “When am I going to use this in real life?” The students at School D are neither intrinsically nor extrinsically motivated, and they do not understand the context into which iReady fits. The program is placed in front of teachers with the promise that it will boost student test scores. Then teachers place it in front of students with the promise that it will teach them what they need to know for their 9-weeks and state tests. In most cases, a score on an intangible future exam is not enough to motivate the student to exert the effort required to learn a skill rather than simply complete a task or earn a passing grade.

Survey Data

Six out of nine ELA teachers at School D responded to my survey regarding their opinions and perceptions about iReady (APPENDIX B). The teachers who took the survey range in experience from 1 to 24 years. Of the six teachers, half of them have been using iReady their whole careers (one, five, and six years). The other three have used it for a third or less of their careers. The survey was anonymous and included 10 questions which did not

reveal any information that could identify them as a specific teacher at School D other than how many years of experience the survey participants have in a 6th-12th grade classroom.

The survey results both agree and disagree with the interviews I conducted (APPENDIX E). The responses that most strongly differ from the interview and ethnographic data I collected was that 80% of participants responded that they support iReady being used in the classroom to some degree. The other 20% expressed that they neither support nor dislike iReady being used at School D. This data contradicts all three interviewees explicit statements of dislike for the program (APPENDICES F, G, H). After considering reasons for this discrepancy, I have concluded the question may have been poorly phrased. The question asked the participant to, "Choose the response which most closely reflects [their] overall attitude toward iReady: strongly dislike, somewhat dislike, neither support nor dislike, somewhat support, or strongly support" (APPENDIX C). All three interviewees acknowledged the effectiveness of using iReady with the bottom 25 %. The survey participants, like the interviewees, may have been answering based on their support of using iReady in appropriate context. However, I intended for them to respond based on the way they feel about implementing it in their own classrooms as the administration expects it to be used.

On the other hand, another set of survey responses directly matched my interview and survey data. Responses to the question, "From your point of view, what do the students like most about iReady?" were mostly varied expressions of "nothing." One teacher responded, "Lessons on their level that they understand." Another teacher elaborated after she stated that her students like nothing and said, "I do believe they would say that they like not listening to the teacher from time to time and that the book itself is pretty simple to use. The book builds from introduction to independent practice." This response suggests that students enjoy independent work as an option, to some extent. I noticed this desire to do independent work manifested itself in my clinical instructor's class when we attempted to challenge the students.

Although the students complained when Teacher C or I would announce the students were going to use the Ready workbook or complete one of the MAP practice tests provided in the workbook, they would flat out refuse to work if we designed an activity or assigned group work that deviated from Ready or iReady. These observations combined with the students' apparent enjoyment of independent work on iReady at times leads me to believe many of them are not being challenged by the curriculum for one reason or another.

In her interview, one reason Teacher A gives for students not being challenged by the curriculum is

"[the students] tank the diagnostic on purpose, so that they have kindergarten lessons. [...] Some of it is that they want easy stuff, but I don't think that's necessarily the guiding motivation. I think that they figure out that [the online lessons are] hard. Even if it's third grade level, if that's where they are... it's gonna be hard, it's gonna be difficult. And so they feel like they don't have any teacher support to go along with the computer instruction. And I think that's the downfall."

According to Teacher A, the students have realized that when the lessons are set to their true level of comprehension, then the online curriculum is challenging. By 8th grade, the students have learned to perform lower than their actual ability on the diagnostic test at the beginning of each school year so that they can be confident that they will pass their lessons on their first attempt. A survey participant confirms the assumption the students outside of

Teacher A's classroom do this. The participant writes, "In lower grades it helps to put students on lessons they need. Not so much older, because they rush through the diagnostic."

Theoretically, this issue can be resolved by the teacher moving the student to their appropriate grade level. However, this solution is easier in theory than in practice because the students must pass three lessons in a row on the grade level on which they are before the teacher can move them up. In Teacher C's classroom, I observed this method work well for the few students who were already motivated to learn. They would ask Teacher C to move them up to the next level if they felt their lessons were too easy, and she would communicate with them about what they had to accomplish in order to be moved up. Unsurprisingly, these students were not the students who "tanked" their diagnostic test to begin with. Students who are on levels that are too easy for them by their own design do not bring attention to the issue and simply do the bare minimum required to get a completion grade for iReady minutes each week. These students pass their lessons with 100% accuracy but have learned nothing because the content is far below their true comprehension level.

The teachers who participated in the survey and those who I interviewed all perceive that the students dislike iReady or at the very least are bored and/or frustrated with it.

Discussion

This research influenced my philosophy of education in ways I did not expect and informed the kind of educator I hope to be. The lessons I will take with me into my first year of teaching are too many to recount here. However, three stand out as noteworthy to the focus of this research. The first implication of this research is that systematic data collection is beneficial when collected and applied with fidelity. The second implication is that understanding student motivation and methods for engaging students is crucial to collecting accurate data. The third implication is that student-centered decision making is the key to student and teacher success in today's data driven school system.

Data collection is beneficial when collected and applied with fidelity.

According to my ethnographic data, the discontent teachers in School D are experiencing with iReady has more to do with the way they are implementing it in their classrooms than it does with issues in the program itself. Many ELA teachers in School D use Monday as an iReady work day to ensure their students complete 45 "active" minutes and pass at least one lesson per week (APPENDIX J). This strategy accomplishes the goal stated by the administration of each student spending 45 minutes on iReady each week and showing proficiency of each standard by passing an iReady lesson which covers that standard. This model of data collection is used with fidelity and analyzed weekly by the curriculum coordinator. However, according to the teachers, the method of collection is not conducive to learning. If it is not a tool for learning, then iReady is nothing more than a weekly or twice weekly assessment system. This level of overtesting yields inaccurate data because students are only inputting, or "giving," to the program and "gaining" nothing in return in the form of content or applicable knowledge.

In Teacher C's classroom, students sit silently for a full 55 minute class period in order to complete their Green Path or teacher assigned lessons. Because of the behavior issues in Teacher C's classroom, this method is effective for completion of the work. The issue remains, though, that the data is not accurate because the students are not performing to the best of their abilities. With inaccurate data comes ineffective intervention and enrichment. Additionally, the teachers I interviewed and surveyed made no mention of the data collection function of iReady being useful to lesson planning, assigning class work groups, or making decisions within the blended learning model in which Dr. Smith intended iReady to be used in the ASSD. While I did not specifically ask the teachers I interviewed and surveyed about data collection in an attempt to understand if the teachers were involved in the data discussions within the school, I did ask the teachers I interviewed why they thought that the ASSD had chosen the iReady software and Ready curriculum over the other products like them that are currently on the market. Teachers F and understood the decision to use iReady to be an attempt to raise test scores but did not communicate an understanding that this increase would come through collecting and applying data. Teacher B communicated that she understood the motivation for using iReady to be data driven, but did not elaborate on whether or not she applied the data collected from iReady in her classroom.

Although School D faithfully collects data, the administration and staff seem to be in the early stages of learning to use the data to increase proficiency and ensure the majority of their students grow each year. Despite any negative sentiments from teachers and students, iReady will likely remain in use in the ASSD for years to come because the district has invested so many resources into implementing it. One solution to improving teacher and student reception of iReady would be to hire or train an administrator who is as avid a supporter and enforcer of data driven learning as Dr. Smith is for School C. Research shows that new programs, curriculum, or initiatives with strong support from administrators that is maintained past the initial year of implementation are more successful due to higher teacher support (Johnson, S. R. et al. 2016;2017;).

Understanding student motivation and methods for engaging students is crucial to collecting accurate data.

The second implication of my research addresses the importance of student motivation in accurate data collection. In my experience of student teaching, I observed that successful students were motivated by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors to some extent. The teachers I observed in School D primarily employed grades as an extrinsic motivator. However, most of Teacher C's students who I student taught were only motivated by keeping a passing grade. This motivation was not enough to collect accurate data on the students. Additionally, our students know that they are in the "slow class" (their words, not mine). Their intrinsic motivation has tapered off over the years due to many genuine attempts to perform well that were met with failing grades, little encouragement from home, and two times longer in English class everyday than their peers.

A professor once explained motivation to my class by using the illustration of a donkey working in the field. A farmer can either dangle a carrot in front of the donkey in the field so that it will walk forward in an attempt to catch the carrot, or the farmer can take a stick and whip the donkey until it moves at the desired pace. The farmer can either promise a reward or impose a punishment. With a donkey, either of these strategies might work and might work over and over again as the donkey might forget the lack of reward or continued abuse.

Children and adolescents are less likely to forget, but this principle still applies. They need clear consequences that are enforced fairly and consistently if performance expectations are not met. More than that, though, students need adults to cast a vision for them of why a person might want to know the knowledge that they are being asked to learn. They need a carrot in the form of a future payoff that is promised to them if they meet certain expectations. Some will argue that their payoff is a high school diploma, and they would be correct. However, children and adolescents cannot and should not be expected to remain motivated in the face of such delayed gratification. Students need milestones, recognition, and incentives throughout their K-12 careers that are delayed by a developmentally appropriate time frame.

Adolescents do not have a fully developed frontal cortex which is the portion of the brain that aids in decision making. Instead of punishing them for what they have not naturally developed yet, teachers should be incentivizing students in ways that we know will motivate them to work to the best of their abilities. If a student who struggles with motivation constantly begs to play a computer game when he finishes his work, a teacher could challenge the student to finish the work with a score that is X% higher than the score he got on his last assignment in order to be allowed to play a game. If the student does not score

the agreed upon percentage, he must correct his work until he achieves the score. In this system, the student gets a reward for completing, achieving, and self-correcting.

I believe this approach to incentivizing iReady could be effective in School D. According to my survey and interview data, teachers perceive that the students do not want to work on iReady, but according to my observations, the teachers need the students to work independently in order to have time to work with small groups and individual students. If students understood that their performance is directly related to a reward in the near future being withheld, the students of School D might complete their iReady assignments with more accuracy. The reward could be as simple as only requiring a student to pass a lesson but not spend 45 minutes on iReady the week after they score advanced on a lesson on their first try. This reward should be applied consistently and to all students regardless of behavior so that they begin to associate doing work correctly and successfully the first time with the natural reinforcement of doing less work in the future. Redoing work or correcting work would not be punished or viewed negatively. However, iReady is an individualized, adaptive instructional system so when the students are performing to the best of their abilities they should be rewarded more often than not. If students choose to be insubordinate and not do their best work on iReady, they are not punished for using more than one attempt on a lesson or score less than advanced. They simply do not get the reward.

Student-centered decision making is the key to student and teacher success.

The final implication is simple but worth addressing. Student-centered decision making is at the heart of schools which are successfully using data to drive instruction. Of course, the premise for implementing iReady in the Achieving Success School District was to improve student achievement. Presumably, teachers and students in the ASSD also want to increase student achievement. In the words of Sir Ken Robinson, of course we want to increase student achievement. “Why would we want to lower it?” The question then becomes how do each of these stakeholders define student achievement. Federal, state, and local education agencies define student achievement as the level at which they score on standardized tests. However, teachers might define student achievement in the way that the National Board defines student *learning* (i.e. the student’s growth in subject-matter knowledge, understanding, and skills over time) (Linn, R., 2011) . Yet another definition of student achievement comes from the students and their families which will differ based on cultural and familial values.

With these stakeholders all defining student achievement differently, administrators and teachers have to work hard to balance all these values and expectations while keeping student’s best interests at the center of every decision made within a school. Based on responses from teachers I interviewed and surveyed within School D, the administration is allowing the values of government education agencies to outweigh the values of the students and their community. Teachers in School D reported that their students strongly dislike everything about the iReady software and Ready curriculum and that the program is not effective for students who are on grade level or above. This suggests that the students are not at the center of decision making concerning how iReady software and Ready curriculum are being used in School D. Instead of brainstorming and implementing creative solutions to the negative culture surrounding iReady in School D, the administration reminds teachers that the program is a necessary evil for collecting data for the state, and the teachers then pass the same message along to their students. These attitudes lead to the program

producing minimal results because of ineffective implementation when it has the potential to be helpful and promote student achievement as defined by all stakeholders .

APPENDIX A

Email to School D Principal

[School D Principal],

I want to start by saying I have enjoyed working with [Teacher C] and at [School D] so much this semester. I am looking forward to next semester when I get to be in the classroom full time.

As I am a senior in the Honors College at Ole Miss, I am currently in the process of researching in order to complete a capstone project. After spending time in a classroom which utilizes the iReady curriculum, I have focused my research on computer-adaptive assessment and instruction systems like iReady and the impact they have when implemented in 6th-8th grade classrooms.

With your and [Teacher C] 's permission, I'd like to conduct research with the teachers in your school next semester during [my clinical instructors]'s planning period. I am interested in the teachers' reception of the curriculum and the degree to which implementation has been productive and beneficial in each classroom. I hope to survey as many teachers as would be willing to participate and observe at least two different ELA classrooms in each grade on two separate occasions. The methods of research would be non-intrusive and would not distract from learning.

I will not interview or survey any students as my focus is on the teachers.

If you would be willing to discuss my research and the possibility of my conducting it in [School D] next semester, please let me know so we can set up a meeting to go over more details.

Thank you for considering my proposal!

Best,
Mary Simpson Stone

APPENDIX B
Email to 6th-8th grade teachers at School D

Teacher,

My name is Mary Simpson Stone. I am a senior at Ole Miss and I am [Teacher C]'s student teacher in the 8th grade here at [School D]. I am conducting research as part of my senior capstone project, and I would really appreciate your help collecting it. Below I have attached a link to an ANONYMOUS survey with questions regarding your opinions and perceptions of the way the iReady curriculum and assessment system has impacted you and your students. This survey should take anywhere from 15-20 minutes to complete and will be invaluable to the senior thesis I am currently writing. If you have any comments, questions, or concerns regarding this survey, please email them to me and I will respond promptly.

LINK TO SURVEY:

https://qfreeaccountssjc1.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_d7mgkvzQB5bDdbw

Best,
Mary Simpson Stone
Room 208

APPENDIX C

iReady Teacher Survey Questions

1. How long have you been teaching in a 7-12 grade classroom?
2. How long have you personally been using iReady in your classroom?
3. What kind of professional development or training did you receive concerning iReady?
4. Choose the response which most closely reflects your overall attitude toward iReady:
 - a. Strongly dislike
 - b. Somewhat dislike
 - c. Neither support nor dislike
 - d. Somewhat support
 - e. Strongly support
5. During a typical week, how often do you utilize iReady (the online interface) for the whole class period?
6. During a typical week, how often do you utilize the iReady workbook for the whole class period?
7. What do you like best about iReady from a teacher's point of view?
8. If anything, what would you improve about iReady if given the opportunity?
9. From your point of view, what do the students like most about iReady?
10. From your point of view, what would the students change about iReady if given the opportunity?

APPENDIX D

Interview Questions

1. What has been your experience with the iReady program ?
2. Tell me about what you've tried with iReady that has worked? What hasn't worked?
3. Has it changed your teaching? If so, in what ways?
4. Has it changed your relationship with your students? If so, in what ways?
5. Has it helped your students to become better readers and writers? In what ways?
6. What training or professional development have you had in writing instruction outside of iReady training?
7. What do you see as the motivation behind or the benefit to using iReady?
8. Why do you think your district specifically chose iReady for ELA instruction?
9. If your district provided iReady as an option but did not require its use, would you continue using it? If so, why or why not?

APPENDIX E
iReady Teacher Response Survey

Q1 - How long have you been teaching in a 6th-12th grade classroom?

1. 1 year
2. 24 years
3. 1st Year
4. 1 (5 in 6th grade)
5. This is my 15th year in education and my 12th year in a 7-12 grade classroom.
6. 19 years

Q2 - How long have you personally been using iReady in your classroom?

1. 5 years
2. 5 years
3. 1st Year
4. 6
5. I have used it for instruction for 4 years.
6. 5 years

Q3 - What kind of professional development or training did you receive concerning iReady?

1. Initial training with the program and yearly training after that
2. i-Ready associates have come to our school on multiple occasions over the last 5 years.
3. I received about 2-3 days worth of training on iReady.
4. Attended inservice regarding how to use iReady
5. IReady provides training every year with the purchase of the program. I believe it is about a 4 hour training, two times a year. They have provided resource materials and hands on instruction on how to use in the classroom for whole group and individualized instruction. They also do a pd on reports provided by the IReady program.
6. Several PD sessions throughout the past 5 years.

Q4 - Choose the response which most closely reflects your overall attitude toward iReady:

#	Answer	%	Count
1	strongly dislike	0.00%	0
2	somewhat dislike	0.00%	0
3	Neither support nor dislike	20.00%	1
4	Somewhat support	40.00%	2
5	strongly support	40.00%	2

Q5 - During a typical week, how often do you utilize iReady (the online interface)? (Please include how many days per week and for how long the students work when given in-class time to work on iReady.)

1. 1 for all students but it may take multiple days for students to pass a lesson
2. 2 or 3 times a week; Students usually get between 45 to 60 minutes a week.
3. My students spend around 15-20 minutes a day on iReady. They have to complete 45 minutes and 2 passed lessons. Some weeks they may have to complete an extra teacher assigned lesson. They will either work this lesson independently or we will work it as a class.
4. 25-30
5. Each week, the students spend around an hour working on their online individualized instructional paths.
6. One day of green path lesson and assigning teacher assigned lesson per lesson

Q6 - During a typical week, how often do you utilize the iReady workbook? (Please include how many days per week and for how long the students work when given in-class time to work on iReady.)

1. 1 day
2. I use the workbook usually 3 days a week. Students have about 20 minutes per day.
3. We use the iReady workbook 3 days a week. We work lessons 1-3 together, 4 together, and then lesson 5 is independent.
4. 1/2 days for a total of 45 minutes
5. During a typical week, my students and I are using the workbook as a resource for an average of two days or 2-50 minute class periods.
6. every week approximately 2 days

Q7 - What do you like best about iReady from a teacher's point of view?

1. in lower grades it helps to put students on lessons they need. Not so much older, because they rush through the diagnostic.
2. It contains differentiated lessons based on the students instructional levels. This is very helpful for the bottom 25% students.
3. I like that the students get to spend independent time working on lessons that are on their grade level. It allows them to work on a standard and a reading passage that they understand best. I like that we are able to change their grade levels based on how well we know the student.
4. Some of the teacher toolbox lessons are good for students who may be struggling
5. The students are provided individual instruction based on their level and the testing is modeled after state tests, but only one standard at a time. This provides adequate data to proceed or intervene.
6. Ability to move lessons for students

Q8 - If anything, what would you improve about iReady if given the opportunity?

1. I think it should be a younger program, like k-6. Older students should not be required, especially in a 50 minute class period. We are already stretched for time and this takes more away.
2. Math has a homework book. I would like their to be one for Reading.
3. Nothing that I can think of.
4. I would change the characters. The students are bored with them.
5. The characters on the online version need to be updated and the passages need to be revamped. Most of our students tire with the characters because they have been watching IReady since their very early years in education. IReady is also notorious for using some of the same subject area passages over multiple years. For example, the Wright Brothers, the Time Traveler, and many other topics are repeated so much that the students become bored with the material.
6. I would let students design the lessons so that they would be more engaged.

Q9 - From your point of view, what do the students like most about iReady?

1. Finishing it
2. Lessons on their level that they understand.
3. I don't know of anything, for the most part my students do not like it, but they do not see how it is helping them.
4. They do not like anything
5. I don't know that they like anything about it. However, if forced I do believe they would say that they like not listening to the teacher from time to time and that the book itself is pretty simple to use. The book builds from introduction to independent practice.
6. Absolutely nothing... except maybe the games.

Q10 - From your point of view, what would the students change about iReady if given the opportunity?

1. They do not like iReady at all, so they would love to not have it.
2. They say the characters talk too much.
3. More interesting lessons! Lessons that they would actually enjoy reading about and completing.
4. Not to do it. They find the lessons long and tedious.
5. The online version is too "kiddy" for the older students. They feel that the characters are "baby".
6. The constraints of having to meet the time and lesson requirement, but that is just because they are not all motivated to work. I think they would like for it to be more like a video game.

APPENDIX F
Teacher A Interview

Investigator 0:01

All right, the first question is what has been your experience with the iReady program overall?

Teacher 0:09

I think that the main thing is that students hate it. And I think that diminishes how effective it can be.

Investigator 0:23

Okay, that makes sense. The second question is, tell me about what you've tried with implementing iReady that has worked.

Teacher 0:34

This year is my first time to be semi successful with it. Never could get it to work in sixth grade. Well, but I would do the teacher assigned lessons with my students. And I gave them the opportunity to not have to do it. And that, that really spurred on everybody especially because eighth grade is the last year of iReady so you can finish it this year. You know, it's very much something you can finish. And once a couple of the students saw people that had either tested out or completed lessons and they were done, and then they were finished, then it spurred them on to be finished as well. The motivation to not have to do it also. I used it as a grade which we could you know, that's completely legit. They had the teacher assigned lesson each week that they had to do for homework, their homework grade. Also, because of the students I teach, I did not have to really watch that 45 minute time. Yeah. And so I was able to focus more on complete the lesson instead of complete 45 minutes. So that that was definitely helpful.

Investigator 2:02

Okay, why didn't it work in sixth grade?

Teacher 2:07

I think it was twofold. First of all, I had a different group of students. So that was under more of the guidelines of having to have the two pass lessons and 45 minutes and everything. And they just that is not something they were motivated to do.

Investigator 2:30

Like it was too much for them to do per week?

Teacher 2:33

I think it really was because in the past now, I'm not sure about this year because I haven't had to really pay attention to that. But in the past we also had to have a high percentage pass. So if say for instance, my student I had told him he had to pass two passed lessons on his pathway. I didn't you know, assign some but it was pathway or teacher sand and 45 minutes. Well, first of all, if you do two lessons that's going to take a lot more than 45 minutes, and so they would get real bummed about that. And then if they were trying which I had them that try, but they had to have like a 67% pass rate. So if you failed one of the lessons, it puts you at a 50%. So now we have to do the third lesson, which still does not get you up to 67%. You have to do four. So that was

really difficult, especially for a student that was trying. Yeah, and if they tried hard and they failed a lesson. They just weren't done. They weren't going to try anymore that week, because they saw no way to accomplish what they needed to accomplish. That makes sense. So what we did in sixth grade with that is for the teacher assigned lessons or grade level lessons, we actually completely did together. So I would log into the iReady lesson from the student version, project it on the board, and then we would go through the whole thing the instruction together, answer the questions, and we would even take the quiz together.

Investigator 4:31

So the next question is how, if at all, has iReady changed your teaching style?

Teacher 4:42

I think it's changed because we're so constrained into using their terminology, because if I use different terminology, it confuses the students. And an example is like when we're talking about claims and counterclaims and rebuttals. They use different terminology sometimes. So I have to be really sure that I'm using that same vocabulary that they're using.

Investigator 5:17

Okay, has it changed your relationship with your students?

Teacher 5:25

It's been really great since we're finished. Um, you know, it really didn't. I didn't... I never placed that much of an emphasis on it in sixth grade either. I just didn't. We did what we needed to do with it. And that's kind of all we did. So I don't think that really changed my relationship with students.

Investigator 5:53

Has it helped your students to become better readers and or writers?

Teacher 6:00

No. No, all they do, and not so much this year, because like, you know, I've got a different group of students but even in sixth grade, all they would do is breeze through it once. Fail the quiz and not care, but then they can take it again. And then that passed the second time because they'd know the answers. So they had figured by the time they got up to sixth grade, they had the system figured out, they would get answers from other people. You know, they have figured it out. So the goal... they never saw the benefit of "hey, this is going to help me learn to become a better reader or writer." It's simply how to beat the system to get done what I need to do.

Investigator 6:52

Along those lines, regarding the workbook, do you think that is better or worse or the same as the online interface?

Teacher 7:02

I think it's, I think it's better. I don't really, I don't necessarily like using it all the time. But now in sixth grade, I did a lot more with it. Because it definitely had that scaffolding. So it really, it really is helpful when students have missed. They can really just do that almost on their own and

everything and it does have some good stories. It does have some good stories and some good text to use. I do not think it's aligned with the state test or our standards, exactly like we the state is. So I do think you have some trouble there. But

Investigator 7:45

In the sense that it puts emphasis on skills that the state doesn't?

Teacher 7:51

It does and just some of the way the questions are asked, are not necessarily the same. So then we have to spend time looking at actual state test questions to

Investigator 8:04

Yeah, kind of like overdoing the multiple choice kind of right. Yeah, that makes sense. Okay, what training or professional development have you had regarding iReady?

Teacher 8:19

Well, every year they have a meeting. That's the staff development here for updates and everything.

Investigator 8:28

So your first year using it, did you have more training?

Teacher 8:31

Yes, they started out iReady my first year of teaching in October. So we were in the middle of a novel and we had to stop to do that. It was sad but it was, it was never something that... but we did have training. They we had I think I think we just did kind of like we did now I think it was like an hour, hour and a half. You know, maybe two hours, maybe two hours because I think they had to cover my room for part of you know, like for a part of the class. So.

Investigator 9:21

What do you see as the motivation behind or the benefit of using iReady?

Teacher 9:28

I think that if you focused on simply your students that are below grade level, you would have a better outcome. I don't think it's beneficial for students that are grade level or above grade level. I just I don't think that it provides that but I can see that if used in a certain way that it would benefit helping students catch up. Yeah, to where they need to be. I can see that benefit. I just am not quite sure that the way they intend for it to be implemented. is the best practice to get that done.

Investigator 10:15

Can you elaborate on that a little bit?

Teacher 10:17

Well, it's set up to be an independent activity. So students should theoretically come into your classroom or what you know computer lab whatever, be able to listen to the instruction,

participate through the instruction, then take a quiz and that should show a level of mastery to move up. And my thought and the way I see it when I've looked at students that have been doing that it's not I think it needs to be geared not not like individual instruction as far as the teacher just constantly but it has there needs to be a level of teacher support. To whatever lesson they're doing. Because what they do is they tank the diagnostic on purpose, so that they have kindergarten lessons. Which they can do but some of it is that they want easy stuff, but I don't think that's necessarily the guiding motivation. I think that they figure out that it's hard. Even if it's third grade level, if that's where they are. Yeah, it's hard. You know, if that's where you are it's gonna be hard, it's gonna be difficult. And so they feel like they don't have any teacher support to go along with the computer instruction. And I think that's the I think that's the kind of downfall

Investigator 11:58

Did the district or the principals give you all a reason for implementing iReady when they brought it in?

Teacher 12:14

It was one of our not our administrators in this building but a district administrators thesis work. Yeah, that was why that's why we did it.

Investigator 12:28

Gotcha. They didn't provide something like "this will help test scores"?

Teacher 12:35

Oh, I mean, they did. Yeah.

Investigator 12:39

If your district provided iReady as an option, but did not require its use, would you continue using it?

Teacher 12:52

I would not continue. Well, I don't I don't know. Let me rephrase... my initial reaction is to just say no, I would not continue to use it. However, I do think it has its place. I just think it needs to be implemented differently. I can definitely see that it's helped students who need the instruction to catch up on grade level. And it's it's, you know, even then for grade level, the way I've used it this year, I I can't really say if it's helped or not as far as their comprehension, their grades, their ability to be proficient in their standards, but it certainly hasn't hurt. But I think having some flexibility and freedom with it this year has certainly helped and everything but I strongly believe the idea that it's completely an independent thing, especially for children who are not on grade level. I think it just frustrates the students. I don't think it's helpful. So I would not I would not continue to use it in the same way that iReady intends for it to be used.

APPENDIX G
Teacher B Interview

Investigator 0:00

Okay, so the first question is, in general, what has your experience been with the iReady program?

Teacher B 0:10

I think it's really beneficial for lower kids that are struggling on their own time if they need extra help or if they need tutoring. I think it's beneficial to those that are struggling with a certain standard, I think it is a complete waste of time for any other kid. I think it's a waste of time for the on grade level kids and the higher kids and with it being implemented 45 minutes mandatory. I think it's ridiculous and it's tough on teachers. It is tough on the kids. If they miss that one day of iReady and they don't have internet at home. I don't think... I just don't think it's realistic. I don't think it's necessary. I think it's a waste of time, but as it is helpful as a tutoring tool for those that are struggling.

Investigator 0:53

That makes sense. Okay, tell me what you've tried with iReady in terms of like implementing it in your classroom. That has worked and then tell me about what hasn't worked.

Teacher B 1:04

Okay. So at the beginning of the year, we were doing assigned lessons together. So I would do the first part with them, they would do the second part by themselves, the quiz part by themselves. And I just really didn't feel like anyone was learning anything because they were just waiting for me to give the answer in my quieter classes. It was like crickets. And then I would just explain the answer, and I felt like it was kind of a waste of time. So now, I just because I kept getting in trouble with not getting my kids minutes because there were weeks that I just would skip it altogether. Because I'm going to teach but I want to teach and so once I start getting in trouble, I said, Okay, I'm just gonna do one day of iReady. I assigned the lesson to them. They can do it or do their pathway and it's worked to get the minutes but I don't know if their kids are learning anything from it. I have a couple that are finished with it all together. So definitely a complete waste of time for them too. And then I just feel like doing the lessons together as a class doesn't really work because they just sit there and I've tried to use the whiteboards and do the answer. And I just think they're bored to death because we turn the lights off too. So I think there was I don't think it didn't work. So now I just give them a day. Get your minutes, get your pass lesson... my least favorite days of the week.

Investigator 2:32

Okay. Good to know. So can they test out of each grade level on the program?

Teacher B

Well, you can test out of the whole program.

Investigator

Oh, so Do you have kids that are done?

Teacher B 2:43

Yes, they finished all eighth grade. Yeah, and I asked the powers that be “What should I do with these students?” And there was no answer. And she will read a book but I just I don't know... I'm like, “do I give her a grade still? They're like, “yeah, just give her a 100 or you can still make her do it.” I just kind of tell her to do 15 minutes and then read a book.

Investigator 2:50

Okay, this question is hard for you because it's your first year but has iReady changed the way you want to teach? If so, in what ways?

Teacher B 3:41

Maybe given me better ideas on wording of questions. But not really. I don't like the short passages, multiple choice. Because, like, what's that really going to help you out? These kids now are trained to read short passages and refuse to read any kind of chapter book when they should be reading chapter books and freak out. Yes, they are literally afraid of them. If something is more than a page. Yeah, they will not read it and I think it's because they've been spoiled by iReady and how short the passages are.

Unknown Speaker 4:17

Okay, has it changed your relationship with your students?

Teacher B 4:27

I think those that asked for help. It's allowed me to sit at their desk and help them with their already because on iReady days, I walk around and help them. And so those that actually care to pass their quizzes, and those that have asked questions or want help, I would say it's probably closer to those students allowed me to see exactly where they're struggling. Yeah, but then it doesn't change anything for the kids aren't going to even ask for help. Just clicking through Yeah, they just click and go right. Or they get their lesson and then they just let the minutes run.

Investigator 5:02

Has it helped your students to become better readers or writers and in what ways?

Teacher B 5:15

Definitely not writers. My kids cannot write. They are not taught to write at any point. That's another story. But um, maybe better readers because it does read it out loud to you if you need it. And I do have some students that can barely read so it helps them be able to hear it. See the words are read a lot out to them on the front of the class. Or read to them a lot. And so having the program where it'll read it to them, yeah, that's helpful.

Investigator 5:47

What do you think could be changed about it to help make them better writers?

Teacher B 5:59

So many things need to be changed for these kids to write. Um, my specific students, they just struggled so bad with writing because they have not been properly taught how to write and if there was a writing portion of iReady and they had to type in their own answers and had to make a complete sentence. That would be a good idea. They had to write. If they said, Tell me about this person's perspective versus this person's perspective. Something of that nature that would help them too. Yeah, I don't think just reading those passages and clicking through the answers helps them in any way.

Investigator 6:42

What training or professional development have you or did you receive before you started using iReady?

Teacher B 6:52

None. They said, Here's your password. And that's what we'd love to hear. Go ahead and get on it. I mean, it literally took me months to figure out what's going on with the iReady program. Yeah, we were supposed to have training and it never happened. It didn't happen. We were told just ask questions as we need.

Investigator 7:12

Okay, so what do you see as the motivation behind or the benefit of using iReady?

Teacher B 7:25

I think it's a way for them to track that kids are doing something in the classroom. And I think it's a way for them to have data on standards instead of actually seeing what their teachers are teaching in the classroom and caring about lesson plans and what's actually going on in the classroom. They can just say, Okay, well it says they got iReady minutes. Yeah, or they met a standard. And then that's just good enough for them. I think it's all data driven.

Investigator 7:55

Yeah. Okay. Why do you think that your district chose iReady specifically, for ELA instruction?

Teacher B 8:06

That's a good question. Yeah. I honestly have no idea.

[From 8:12 to 10:01 another Teacher entered the room to speak with Teacher B. This part of the recording is not part of the interview.]

Investigator 10:01

Okay, the last question is, if your district provided iReady as an option, but did not require its use would you continue using it? If so, why or why?

Teacher B 10:14

Um, I would say on occasion, I feel like I might even use it more that it's not if it's not shoved down my throat. Yeah. Then maybe let's do a lesson together for remediation or let me assign a lesson as a quiz and see how the kids do. Yeah, like once or twice a month. I would not be doing

it weekly. Definitely not. Because I think it takes away from other ideas that I have, that are not just iReady. In the iReady book, they want me to teach those lessons that literally bore everybody to tears. And I've so many better ideas to get them engaged but I need to do the book because it goes with the program. So I haven't been able to really teach anything the way that I've wanted to teach it. Yeah. So yes, but no.

APPENDIX H
Teacher F Interview

Investigator: Okay, to get started what has been your experience with the iReady program ?

Teacher F: Overall, I would say iReady is great in theory, but it's really hard when you are doing it in classroom, especially with the workbook and the program, because the kids are bored with both the passages selected in the workbooks and with how it's set up on the website.

Investigator: Okay, tell me what you've tried with implementing iReady in the classroom that has worked, and then what hasn't worked.

Teacher F: So for the workbook pages, the best way that I've gotten engagement is to let them work on some of it in groups and to make like games out of it. So I do many different things, where, like, sometimes I'll let them work in groups, whichever group gets all the answers, right, they get a reward. Or we'll do the four corners thing where if you pick this answer, go there, pick somebody random, let them explain it. I really like that as well. And sometimes I even like give them whiteboards and have them write their answers and then somebody has to explain it like that too. So just trying to be as creative as possible. And then iReady, the website is set up to really work independently, and I hate it.

The remainder of the transcript is paraphrased from the original interview because the recording software stopped recording at this point. Teacher F read and approved the validity of these paraphrased answers

Investigator: Has it changed your teaching? If so, in what ways?

Teacher F: I don't think it has changed my teaching style because I still use the same techniques and tools I would use if we didn't use iReady, but it has restricted my creativity. If I were designing my lesson plans, I would be more creative with the activities and texts, but with iReady we don't have time to do as much of that. Like I said, I try to be as creative as possible, but you can only do so much with multiple choice questions and short passages.

Investigator: Has it changed your relationship with your students? If so, in what ways?

Teacher F: I would say it really hasn't other than the fact that we bond over how much we don't like iReady. Like obviously I try to be as positive as possible about it at the beginning of every year but the kids have been using iReady since, I think, 3rd grade or maybe younger at this point so they know it's not fun. Even if I'm super positive, they get burnt out by October or November and honestly I do, too.

Investigator: Has it helped your students to become better readers and writers? In what ways?

Teacher F: Maybe readers but not writers. Since the online program will read the passages to them, it's definitely building vocabulary but not as much comprehension. There is no writing element to the online program. The workbook does have writing questions and prompts but writing instruction is definitely not the point of iReady.

Investigator: What training or professional development have you had for the iReady?

Teacher F: We have training before school starts each year. iReady sends people to train us on any updates and teach the new teachers how to use the program.

Investigator: What do you see as the motivation behind or the benefit to using iReady?

Teacher F: I think the motivation behind using it is to remediate students who are not on grade level and make sure every standard is covered every year. iReady also helps teachers and the administration have data on every student which is helpful to an extent even though not all of it is accurate.

Investigator: Why do you think your district specifically chose iReady for ELA instruction?

Teacher F: Honestly, I think it is an attempt to raise test scores because, you know, our school's scores have historically been pretty low. It's worked because our scores have increased a lot but the kids and a lot of teachers don't like it so it definitely has pros and cons.

Investigator: If your district provided iReady as an option but did not require its use, would you continue using it? If so, why or why not?

Teacher F: I would probably still use it for remediation and bottom 25 students but I wouldn't use the work book every week like I do now or keep doing 45 minutes and 2 passed lessons for every 6th grader because I think that's too much for them. If they fail one lesson and pass the next, they still have to do a third lesson because they have to have two passed lessons each week. After three lessons the kids have been on iReady for three hours which is too much "instructional time" on the computer in my opinion.

APPENDIX I
Consent to Participate in Research

Study Title: iReady Teacher Interview

Investigator

Mary Simpson Stone
Undergraduate - Secondary English Education
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Faculty Advisor

Ellen A. Shelton, Ed.D.
Division of Outreach
J12 Jackson Avenue Center
The University of Mississippi
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Key Information for You to Consider

- **Voluntary Consent.** You are being asked to volunteer for a research study. It is up to you whether you choose to participate or not. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled if you choose not to participate or discontinue participation.
- **Purpose.** The purpose of this study is to discover how teachers are using the scripted curriculum and computer adaptive instruction and assessment system called iReady.
- **Procedures and Activities.** You will be asked to consider a series of questions focusing on your classroom practice during a face-to-face interview.
- **Risks.** Some of the foreseeable risks or discomforts of your participation include honest and open reflection into your classroom practice that may lead to some uncomfortable discussions.
- **Benefits.** Some of the benefits that may be expected include potential discoveries that may assist another teacher in examining his or her classroom and utilizing iReady more effectively.
- **Alternatives.** Participation is voluntary and the only alternative is to not participate in the research component of the program.

_____ By checking this box I certify that I am 18 years of age or older.

What you will do for this study

As a participant you will be asked to have open and honest discussions about your classroom. The format will be as follows:

- Complete one 10 question survey about your experience with the iReady curriculum.
- Be observed teaching twice using the iReady curriculum.
- One interview during a planning period on the day of your choice.

The purpose of this study is to discover how teachers are using the scripted curriculum and computer adaptive instruction and assessment system called iReady.

Audio Recording

During our interview sessions, we will record the sessions so that we can take note more accurately for research purposes. We will let you know when we begin recording the session.

Time required for this study

Your participation in the interview will take approximately one planning period of discussion or 40 minutes of your time.

Possible risks from your participation

Possible risks, if any, might be some discomfort in discussion classroom instruction as well as interactions with the iReady program. These risks are minimal, and all identifying information will be removed from your interview.

Benefits from your participation

You should not expect benefits from participating in this study. However, you might experience satisfaction from contributing to educational knowledge. The questions in the program are designed to help you think about who you are teaching and how. The intent is for all teachers to grow as practitioners.

Confidentiality

- a. Research team members will have access to your reflections. We will protect confidentiality by coding and then physically separating information that*

identifies you from your responses (which is even safer than how medical records are stored today) before any publication or presentation.

- b. Members of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) – the committee responsible for reviewing the ethics of, approving, and monitoring all research with humans – have authority to access all records. However, the IRB will request identifiers only when necessary. We will not release identifiable results of the study to anyone else without your written consent unless required by law.*

Confidentiality and Use of Audio Recordings

- Recordings of interviews will allow the researchers to reflect on the nuances of language and discussions. By recording the sessions, the researcher can also be a facilitator and discussion leader. Only members on the research team will have access to the transcripts. Recordings will be stored on Mary Simpson Stone’s University of Mississippi Box account which is password protected and data encrypted.

Right to Withdraw

You do not have to volunteer for this study, and there is no penalty if you refuse. If you start the study and decide that you do not want to finish, you only need to let Mary Simpson Stone or Dr. Shelton know. Whether or not you participate or withdraw will not affect your current or future relationship with any individuals named in this document or The University of Mississippi, and it will not cause you to lose any benefits to which you are entitled.

IRB Approval

This study has been reviewed by The University of Mississippi’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the IRB at (662) 915-7482 or irb@olemiss.edu.

Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information. When all your questions have been answered, then decide if you want to be in the study or not.

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information. I have had an opportunity to ask questions, and I have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Furthermore, I also affirm that the researcher explained the study to me and told me about the study’s risks as well as my right to refuse to participate and to withdraw.

Date

Signature of Participant

Printed name of Participant

APPENDIX J
INFORMATION SHEET

Title: iReady Teacher Survey

Investigator

Mary Simpson Stone

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Faculty Advisor

Ellen A. Shelton, Ed.D.

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Description: The purpose of this qualitative study is to discover how teachers are using the scripted curriculum and computer adaptive instruction and assessment system called iReady. I will document and analyze the extent to which the curriculum and computer program encourage effective teaching practices and the extent to which the program is negatively impacting teacher efficacy and engagement.

Procedure: In order to participate you need to complete this online survey. Your participation in this online survey is completely anonymous. No information you share electronically can be traced to you or the computer you used. Your participation in the survey indicates you read this consent information and agreed to participate in this anonymous survey.

Cost and Payments/Time

This anonymous survey will take 15-20 minutes of your time.

Risks and Benefits

As we do not ask for identifying information, there are few risks to taking this survey. You will be assisting the researchers in understanding how and why teachers respond to student writing in the high school classroom as well as the impact on students as they enter college writing courses.

Confidentiality

No identifiable information will be recorded. Your participation in this research is completely anonymous. No information you share can be traced electronically to you, the computer you used, nor can you be traced by any information you provide.

Right to Withdraw

You do not have to take part in this study and you may stop participation at any time. You may skip any questions you prefer not to answer.

IRB Approval

must be included as written

This study has been reviewed by The University of Mississippi's Institutional Review Board (IRB). If you have any questions, concerns, or reports regarding your rights as a participant of research, please contact the IRB at (662) 915-7482 or irb@olemiss.edu.

Statement of Consent

I have read and understand the above information. By completing the survey/interview I consent to participate in the study and that I am over 18 years of age.

If you consent, please click the blue arrow button below to proceed with the survey:

APPENDIX K
Lesson Plan Feb. 7-11

Teacher Name	Current Standard(s) Based on current pacing	Date
[Teacher C], [Teacher F], Stone	RI 8.8 W 8.1 L 8.2a	February 7th-11th
Daily Agenda		
For each day, include your daily plan of activities with estimated time for each activity.		
<p>Monday</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bell work - Argument RI 8.8 (5 Minutes) 2. iReady Teacher Assign Lesson RI 8.9 (30 minutes) 3. Closing - Practice Digital Journal <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remediate - Point of View RL 8.6 2. Boyd: The Wife's Story CommonLit (Guided and Assessment questions) 3. Stone: The Wife's Tale Narrative Writing Assignment 4. Vocab Jam - ELS words <hr/> <p>Tuesday</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ELS Test <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. iReady workbook RL 8.9 2. iReady minutes <hr/> <p>Wednesday</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bellwork 2. Independent Practice iReady Workbook RI 8.9 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remediate Standards from ELS Test <hr/> <p>Thursday</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remediate Standards from ELS Test <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Practice SM Test 2. Digital Journal - Entry 3 <hr/> <p>Friday</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SM Test <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. STAR test 2. Make-up work 3. Scrabble 		
Assessment		
For new standard	For remediated standard	
Informal: iReady teacher assign lesson Formal: Standards Mastery Test		

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