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Student Choice-of-Text in an Upper Secondary Independent Reading Program: A Quasi-Experimental Study

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I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Brian M. DeLoach entitled "Student Choice-of-Text in an Upper Secondary Independent Reading Program: A Quasi-Experimental Study." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Teacher Education.

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We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

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Student Choice-of-Text in an Upper Secondary Independent Reading Program: A Quasi-Experimental Study

A Dissertation Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Brian M. DeLoach
May 2023

DEDICATION

This study and this entire process is dedicated to my esteemed colleague, former Teacher-of-the-Year, and beloved wife. Your absolute commitment to excellence and discipline in all that you do has inspired me every step of the way. Your patience as I was gone twice-a-week or more till after midnight on those long drives to Knoxville from Cleveland to attend class after work, living there during the summers, missing each other, and promising you over the phone that it wouldn't be like this forever—all those times were hard. I will always be thankful for your steadfastness during this strange and difficult season. Now, it is time for us to chase your dreams. Know that I will be there to support you as surely as you supported me for however long it takes.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effects of student choice-of-text and reading comprehension outcomes in a 12-week independent reading program in an upper-secondary school. Students aged 17-18 (N = 52) were divided into two groups with one receiving an assigned text of age-appropriate Lexile estimate and genre; the other group was given free choice-of-text from an appropriate Lexile level from a classroom library. This quasi-experimental study followed a pretest-posttest, one-way ANCOVA model with both groups receiving the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test series before and after the intervention. Both groups made modest gains; however, the ANCOVA results revealed no statistically significant difference between the choice-of-text and No Choice-of-text groups ($p = .262$). Participant interviews of typical and non-typical cases are included. Recommendations for further research include a call for a readjustment of previously reported effect sizes upon which to build future studies in adolescent literacy.

Keywords: Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile (AMRP), Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test (GMRT), Sustained Silent Reading/Daily Independent Reading (SSR/DIR), Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA), Reading Comprehension, Instructional Design Theory, Choice-of-Text, Secondary Education

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Outside health and housing, encouraging a child to read and keeping them reading is arguably the single most important thing that can be done to influence positive outcomes in young people's lives - socially, culturally, educationally, and economically.

<div align="right">

-Ellard, Kelly, & McKerracher, 2012

</div>

When I first arrived at the University of Tennessee in 2017, I already had my research ambitions fixed and ready. However, in his introductory course, Dr. Cihak articulated, "You're at the top of the research funnel. Give it time." The wisdom of this professor proved prophetic because I initially intended to study the prevalence of post-apocalyptic themes in Young Adult Literature (YAL). In time, I realized that although it would have been an interesting pursuit, there was ultimately no authentic commitment to service in such a path. As an educator, one surely believes in the beauty of theory, and it is easy to be captivated by the literary classics like most other ELA teachers, but after over a decade in the classroom, teaching at every level of secondary from elite Dual-Enrollment seniors to wrangling RTI freshmen, the reflective educator is destined to be humbled, time and again, by the often-brutal pragmatism of the teaching profession.

I came to realize that I have been called to serve students, and therefore, any theory must ultimately distill and connect to praxis; the theory must inform the educator's service to students. With this realization and the generous guidance of Ivey and Johnston (2013), Moss and Miller (2013), Kittle (2008), and Hruby et al. (2016), which Dr. Groenke provided to me in those first tenuous months, I came to abandon my original research interests. Instead, I chose to study the pedagogy of Independent Reading which

will hereto forward be referred to as the synthesis term: "Sustained Silent Reading/Daily Independent Reading" (SSR/DIR). Many of the adherents of SSR/DIR espouse the practice as an educational panacea for all modern ELA problems, and their passion for the practice has only deepened since the 2000 National Reading Panel's unfavorable report. Though there are certain nuances in SSR/DIR which will be defined later in this document, Fountas and Pinnell (2022) provide a concise summary of the term:

> Each reader selects a book from a rich, well-organized collection of books in the classroom. Books are not organized by level in your classroom library but, rather, according to categories such as author, illustrator, theme, series, genre, etc. Students are free to choose any text for independent reading based on their personal interests, though you support learning how to make good choices through individual reading conferences and whole group mini lessons. Students share their thinking through discussion and writing, as you come alongside readers to support thinking through brief conferences. (para. 3)

Slowly, as a doctoral student and current secondary practitioner, I began to implement disjointed parts of SSR/DIR into my own classroom since district mandates meant that I could not implement the full vision as outlined by Fountas and Pinnell (2022), Miller and Moss (2013), or Miller (2007). I struggled with the district administration for books, classroom libraries, and, most of all, for *time*—time for selection of texts, time for conferencing, and most importantly, time for students to "drop everything and read."

However, in a stroke of welcome synchronicity, my ELA department of 12 of the finest educators in the southeast took to implementing a version of SSR/DIR into their

daily lesson plans in the 2018 school year, even going so far as to make it an official department policy for students to spend 10-15 minutes reading nearly every day. It became a valued part of the school's ELA curriculum, and the teachers in the department became fixated on SSR/DIR research. As reflective practitioners, we exchanged books and research articles on the topic. We debated SSR/DIR theory over lunch and planning periods. We wrote grants for classroom libraries and hauled in books from our homes to supplement when the grants were not enough, and we fought the administration and its barrage of paid consultants who insisted on textbooks and "canned curriculum."

In engaging in these debates, grants, research, and in digging deeper into the literature surrounding SSR/DIR as part of my formation at UTK, I shared with my colleagues what I was learning in my evening classes and from the independent readings assigned by my advisor and other professors. At the high school, my colleagues and I bickered and myth-busted over the best ways to support our students in their independent reading. For example, though it has become a standard practice, I argued that the teacher modeling reading during the scheduled reading time offered about the same benefit as students looking at a picture of a teacher reading, and the teacher should be coaching and conferencing during this time based on Miller and Moss's (2013) research. My colleagues soundly rejected this practice at first because we as teachers often come to view our classroom practices as part of ourselves, and sometimes challenges to those practices can be taken personally. Eventually, they came around as the educators, including me, all delved into the research to continue refining our practice and developing grants for classroom libraries for the new freshmen and sophomore teachers.

Although our school district used a modified, supported model of SSR/DIR, I questioned if 15 minutes per day was enough; after engaging with the research around SSR/DIR, I came to view the practice as a foundational ELA pedagogy rather than the supplemental one as it has been implemented. Ivey and Johnston (2013) established an ELA classroom where SSR/DIR was not a supplementary feature but the entire focal point of the teacher's pedagogy, and the reported benefits were vast—not only in reading comprehension as measured by state testing, but also in student socialization and general citizenship. Unfortunately, the current administration both locally and in most school districts nation-wide, does not allow for such a classroom as the one Ivey and Johnston (2013) created in their research; the National Reading Panel's statements are still too fresh in the minds of standards writers, and the ELA teachers must piece together the time and resources, as Miller and Moss (2013) have suggested, to let kids read books but only in short 10-15 minute segments.

At times, special circumstances allow for a more complete implementation of the foundational SSR/DIR pedagogy at an individual level; sometimes students need a specialized curriculum—not just an IEP or ILP. Such was the case with one of my senior students, who will be known as "Jalen" to protect his identity. It was Jalen who sealed the lingering doubt I had over my research decision. Jalen was a challenging student from the outset. His discipline report, which stretched back to elementary school, told a story of perpetual conflict and, if the trend held, foreshadowed a difficult future after high school. Jalen mainly tried to sleep in class, and I had to wake him up a dozen times those first few days. Before beginning a disciplinary report or stepping up my own interventions

with a phone call home or the dreaded office referral, I went to the other teachers in the

building who'd had Jalen as a student in years past; this is a regular practice with students

and teachers in this district. The professionals know the student, and they can tell their

colleagues the things not written in the official reports—things that can sometimes make

a difference. There were, admittedly, a few former teachers who said Jalen was a lost

cause: one of the growing percentage who do not make it to graduation every year.

However, one former teacher who'd had Jalen for U.S. History said, "Jalen is the

smartest kid who will ever fail your class, but he'll read everything you give him." After

talking it over with my trusted colleague and spouse, I decided the best thing for Jalen

would be to administer the curriculum I'd been reading about for years at UTK.

I didn't ask for permission to do this; I just did it. With both my wife and I being

former English majors in our undergraduate programs, there was a home stockpile of

nearly a thousand books ready to draw from. We went home and began to pick out

relevant books from the shelves—books we thought might appeal to Jalen. The next day,

in between a class break, I took Jalen to the library, laid all the books out on a table, and

told him to choose. Afterwards, we began a one-on-one SSR/DIR course. Jalen would

check in with me every day. On Fridays, we would meet in the library, drink coffee, and

talk about the book Jalen was reading at the time.

I was still new at managing SSR/DIR effectively, and my version of the practice,

admittedly, still lacked the highly supported structure scheme that will be discussed later,

but the *spirit* of the thing was right. Sometimes Jalen would finish a book in two days;

other times, he would get 30 pages into a novel and decide it wasn't for him. Sometimes I

would have to sell him on a book, but once Jalen committed, he would devour it. After

three months of this, getting to know Jalen, and appreciating him as a reader with his own

perspective and thoughtful insights, Covid swept through our nation and school system,

and our district made the decision to freeze grades under all circumstances. We sent the

students home, and I did not see Jalen again. It is regrettable that neither Jalen nor I had

the opportunity to see the full fruition of all his reading and the weekly book talks, but

although he was only a class of one, and we only had three months, this experience

convinced me that SSR/DIR has the potential to be a foundational rather than a merely

supplemental ELA pedagogy. SSR/DIR was what was left when I reached the bottom of

Dr. Cihak's "Research Funnel," and I believe that within the study of literacy,

investigating SSR/DIR will serve as the focus of my research and pedagogy now and for

many years to come.

The research seems to support the belief in SSR/DIR despite the NRP's (2000)

recommendations. Krashen's (2005) literature review found 51 published studies which

concluded that students participating in SSR/DIR either outperformed or were equal to

students enrolled in any other type of reading program. As a young teacher, I sincerely

believed that by focusing on strictly the classics, refinement of a student's heart, soul,

and, hopefully, reading comprehension would inevitably follow. But now, after ten years

of teaching public high school at every grade and intervention level, I realize how

narrow-minded this very middle-class view was. It is critical to note that I still support

the teaching of the classics and shared texts, but high interest, Young Adult Literature

(YAL) which deals with all the trauma of being a teenager in America is what the

students want to read—if at all. It is these *disturbing books*, as Ivey (2018) articulates, that resonate with teens in their most tumultuous years. I certainly believe that Homer's epics and Shakespeare's tragedies can still stir the essential nobility in the soul, and I pride myself as an educator in mining out the immediately relevant lessons in *The Canterbury Tales* or in *Beowulf*, but it is Laura Halse Anderson's *Winter Girls* (2009) and the grimy window and mirror held up by Robert Cormier's novels that resonates with these students in their formative years. It is in the unflinching view of the intersection of race, class, and tortured masculinity in Bissinger's *Friday Night Lights* (1990) that challenges students most. Coming to SSR/DIR has been an epiphany of making teaching more student-focused and less about the educator's literary preferences and eccentricities including my own.

In embracing the tradition, development, and implementation of SSR/DIR, I hope to join the cadre of researchers and educators who assist in the continual refinement of SSR/DIR through worthwhile contributions to the scholarly literature. There are, however, several assertions in the current state of the art which need citational authority or more rigorous studies to substantiate the positive outcomes of SSR/DIR, choice for example, as it applies to upper secondary students (juniors and seniors in the 16-19 year age range). There is even ambiguous terminology requiring continuous clarification in adolescent literacy (Fagella-Luby, Ware, & Capozzoli, 2009). By continually refining, revising, testing, and, when necessary, defending SSR/DIR to stakeholders, a more substantial and dynamic craft will continue to evolve. It is not that educators are grinding towards an ever more approximated postpositivist state of perfection, but rather educators

living in an evolving world must continually adjust the pedagogy to evolve with the state of teenagers. It is in this spirit of "constant tinkering" and maybe even poking things which aren't broke, that I seek to interrogate and hopefully refine the traditionally accepted and critical component of SSR/DIR: student choice-of-text.

I became fascinated with choice-of-text as a component of SSR/DIR after my comprehensive examinations were finished, and Dr. Botzakis suggested, in passing, the lack of research on choice. It gnawed at me for months. Like other educators, I never questioned the positive aspects of choice and assumed that choice-of-text is a critical and essential component of SSR/DIR because choice must be essentially good, and everyone must benefit from choice. Leading literacy researchers such as Allington (2011) conclude that student autonomy and choice are integral to favorable motivational outcomes as they relate to reading. However, in reflecting on choice as part of SSR/DIR and ELA in general, I began to have questions; though Allington (2011) and Krashen (2004) make a compelling case for choice, Allington's (2011) book focuses solely on primary grades, and Krashen (2004) sets the limits of their meta-analysis at age 14. I began to wonder: "What about older students?"

Because of the lack of focus on older students in the research, I started to focus on high school juniors and seniors who are still being tested, still being placed in ELA courses, and have developed different cognitive/behavioral processes (Ramsey, 2020) than their younger counterparts. I began to wonder if the research had left these older adolescents behind in literacy proficiency research especially among historically disadvantaged populations. The implication from this research gap is that practitioners

are to reasonably assume that what works for a seven-year-old first grade student will also work for a 17-year-old junior. The more important question is: "will the benefits of choice-of-text necessarily translate not just for motivation but for reading comprehension as measured by a normed tool?" That is—all or most of the research deals with younger adolescents and children in primary grades; is the pedagogy produced from this body of work *translatable* to an upper-secondary classroom? I began to question these assumptions. I also began to have questions about the essential inclusion of choice-of-text within SSR/DIR and the ELA curriculum in general and wondered if it is beneficial to society as a whole—especially in a post-algorithmic environment. For example, due to the rise of highly individualized targeted media based on algorithms, everyone's Netflix, TikTok, and YouTube feed looks different, and I began to fear that we are running out of cultural touchstones. In other words, shared experiences and texts may be diminishing, and free choice, especially in the context of algorithms, may be contributing to this alarming trend.

As a multicultural school that embraces its multiculturalism, it is possible that there is a point in affirming and validating the lived experiences of our diverse perspectives and that seeking commonality and creating a shared culture reaches a point of diminishing return in a learning context. "Culture" in this study is defined as "[t]he sum of the available descriptions through which societies make sense of and reflect their common experiences" (Collons et al., 1996, p. 35). Though "cultural touchstones" is a deeply loaded term and begs the question: "who decides which works of literature or media should be cultural touchstones?" citizenship cannot be disconnected from culture

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which also is within the realm and mission of the public school system. This opens valid questions of considering whose culture is privileged in such curriculum decisions. This is an important question and may be the most important question to consider, but unbounded choice will continue to be exploited by corporate interests in the name of equity; I believe a level of limited, shared texts, agreed-upon by community stakeholders, may still have a place in education along with freely chosen books and media.

The other realization came when I discovered Vohs et al. (2008) who challenges the positive assumptions of choice and instead found another point of diminishing return where free choice was more exhausting than beneficial to the subjects of their study. The report was published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* and demonstrated an exhausting factor across a series of choice-based circumstances including selecting student courses, consumer choices, and even working math problems. Within SSR/DIR, specifically, even Donalyn Miller, a passionate advocate of choice-of-text as part of SSR/DIR, in her seminal work, *The Book Whisperer* (2011), requires her students to fulfill certain genre expectations as part of her class's 40-book requirement for the year; in this way, free choice is limited, bounded, or at least framed to encourage a shared experience where, at least, everyone is reading the same genre at some point. This is a central strategy from Miller (2011) as it anticipates the potentially wearisome aspects of too-much-choice and holds a tacit implication that students ought to be stretched by certain mandates to read outside their comfort zone or default genre; this functions as a "stretch text" or "reach text" but the emphasis is on genre and not necessarily Lexile level. Even within choice-of-text, it seems that there are caveats Miller (2011) has

identified. For example, there are two instances where Miller (2011) admits that there were students who outright refused to read anything outside their designated genre. Miller (2011) reports that she relented to their set ways, but these students represent a highly unique case which may need to be accounted for as a limitation in future studies.

In thinking about these factors taking place near a classroom library, I wanted to start this research journey with the most basic question before considering these larger questions of citizenship, philosophy, cultural touchstones, and choice: "Does choice-of-text necessarily make better comprehending readers as measured by a normed tool and within an upper-secondary SSR/DIR setting?" The answer to this question is the target of this limited, quasi-experimental study with full acknowledgment that the analysis to follow will not definitively answer, once-and-for-all if choice is or isn't vital. However, such a study may influence other teachers and researchers to reconsider our default acceptance of the superiority of choice in a teenage population already bombarded with hyper-personalized media choices from corporate entities. If the analysis ultimately leads to statistical significance, with all other factors including effect size considered, then we will have begun to empirically substantiate what practitioners of SSR/ DIR have believed for decades and continue to support student autonomy within SSR/DIR. If the following analysis fails to reject the Null Hypothesis, specifically for older adolescents, SSR/DIR adherents may need to rethink their default reliance upon choice-of-text as an essential part of the pedagogy.

Background

Choice has dominated the educational debate since the 1950s following Brown v. Board of Education and Milton Freidman's (1955) influential essay "The Role of Government in Education." The emphasis on school choice, whether proffered in good faith or bad, has also influenced public education at the classroom level by emphasizing individualized instruction—not just student choice-of-school but student choice-of-text within that school. One can see this through the continual emphasis on the largely unsubstantiated (Pashler, McDaniel, Rohrer, & Bjork, 2008) learning-style teaching where tailor-made curriculum built from student-interest inventories is the basis for learning. Indeed, currently, choice-ideology permeates discussions of pedagogy. Whether for good or bad, if even such a binary description can be applied to a nation-wide institution of nearly 50 million students, choice is coming to manifest at every level of the school system. Likewise, within individual disciplines and even in mathematics pedagogy (Parker, Novak, & Bartell, 2017), choice pervades the discussion and is seen as an overwhelmingly positive component for student learning outcomes.

Choice, too, is a critical component of contemporary *state-of-the-art* SSR/DIR styles. NCTE (2019) states in its official position on independent reading that "[s]tudent choice in text is essential because it motivates, engages, and reaches a wide variety of readers" (p. 2). In its official statement, NCTE further maintains that student choice-of-text is essential in "fostering true engagement in the act of reading" (p. 4). However, as SSR/ DIR becomes more refined, there are certain qualifiers to the emphasis on choice: unlike the free, unrestricted reading time espoused by early SSR/DIR advocates, in the

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newer models, even the essential element of choice is regulated. For example, Miller and Moss (2013) encourage teachers to "teach and scaffold students' appropriate book selection strategies" (p. 14), and Barshay (2020) argues that larger learning gains are associated with independent reading programs where teachers are highly involved in book selection. Though choice is a critical part of the current best practice SSR/DIR, the researchers are careful to insist on *structuring* choice with the use of interest surveys and by modeling self-selection techniques or by containing free choice-of-text to an intentionally selected classroom library thus accounting for Miller's (2011) student who will read nothing but *Warhammer 40k* novels if permitted.

Statement of the Problem

Choice-of-text is considered a critical component of modern SSR/DIR practices in primary and secondary schools (Guthrie et al., 2007, Ivey & Johnston, 2013). The default inclusion of choice-of-text in modern SSR/DIR is an intuitive addition so long as the benefits of choice from our understanding of psychology translate to an SSR/DIR upper-secondary context. The effects of choice alone on reading achievement, however, have not been sufficiently questioned and investigated in the context of reading achievement at the upper-secondary level. Instead, most of the research is limited to students 8-14 years old. This limited body of research on choice-of-text and reading achievement with upper-secondary students, persists despite the latest information on U.S. reading achievement showing a decline in scores since 1992 when NCES began recording this data. Researchers such as Guthrie and Humenick (2004), in a massive meta-analysis of motivating factors on student reading from the 1970s onward, defined "student" as

"learners ages 8-14" (p. 329) as if high school students' reading ability was of no concern despite the reported downward trend. With most of the research focused on third through fifth grade students, it is puzzling that reading research is unconcerned with high school students despite the decline in literacy at the secondary level. This study first seeks to address this disparity and investigate choice-of-text in an SSR/DIR program with 17-18-year-olds who were not formally included in Guthrie and Humenick's (2004) definition of "students" and so were therefore not included in their metanalysis of student choice-of-text efficacy. Even Guthrie and Humenick's (2004) absolute conclusion about younger students is challenged by later researchers such as Sokal (2006) who found, when examining choice in Canadian fourth-grade males, that the treatment group who was given choice in reading materials scored significantly lower in reading achievement than the control group receiving mandated reading materials which challenges Guthrie and Humenick's (2004) conclusions.

Glynn (2017) investigated "book talks" with engagement and motivation listed as the dependent variable. Glynn (2017) reported generally positive outcomes with students reporting more positive feelings when approaching books when given choice-of-text, but this study reported no reading achievement outcomes as measured by a normed tool. In the case of this study, the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test (GMRT), which reports reading achievement in vocabulary and reading comprehension scores will be used to study the dependent variable of reading comprehension. While the issues of engagement and motivation are important within a holistic implementation of SSR/DIR, in Glynn's (2017) study there was no attention paid to reading comprehension, and reading

comprehension is the focus of this dissertation. Teaching citizenship, moral development, philosophic awakening, and how to be a good person are all the responsibilities of the English/Language Arts teacher. It is also the ELA teacher's task to make sure the student can read well, and quantitative assessments do have a part to play in this, especially in how it may inform curricular and policy decisions. This study's investigation of reading achievement outcomes and choice will lead to greater refinement of SSR/DIR to fully situate the nature of choice-of-text in modern independent reading models, especially when dealing with older adolescent students.

In summary of the problem: choice-of-text is included in modern, upper-secondary SSR/DIR programs without significant, quantitative research support. The conclusions drawn to justify such an implementation come from a meta-analysis of 8–14-year-olds, with either undivulged or highly variable means of measuring reading achievement. In other words, the metanalysis provided by Guthrie and Humenick (2004) draws conclusions and a final effect size of student choice-of-text ($d = 1.2$) from studies using unreported or highly varied measuring tools. Their reported effect size places choice-of-text as the seventh most effective educational intervention to date. John Hattie (2017) produced an effect size ranking based on 1,200 meta-analyses. He ranked 252 factors related to student achievement reported in Cohen's D values; if Guthrie and Humenick's (2004) ($d = 1.2$) conclusion is to be accepted, this would place student choice-of-text over almost every single intervention ever attempted in the history of educational research when placed into the context of Hattie's (2017) list, and reading researchers ought to be skeptical of this value as it will lead to miniscule participant

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recruitment benchmarks and possibly a host of type II errors (Shreffler & Huecker, 2022) in future research because, as reading research moves forward, researchers will set their recruitment benchmarks based off of a highly exaggerated effect size.

Due to how Guthrie and Humenick (2004) frame their metanalysis, their extreme effect size may not apply to high school students, and, according to Sokal (2006), researchers are having issues substantiating this educational panacea if the ($d = 1.2$) effect size is to be accepted. In summary, the literature does not include secondary or upper-secondary students despite lagging achievement, the tools used in the metanalyses are varied and/or not normed, and the effect size reporting ventures into the realm of the absurd; this report demands replication. It is the goal of this study to either provide appropriate support in the case of a significant p-value with accompanying effect size or, in the case of an inconclusive or non-outcome, provide research which may allow a rethinking about how researchers and educators approach student choice-of-text within upper-secondary SSR/DIR.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this Quasi-Experimental study is to examine if there is evidence of a relationship between student choice-of-text [IV] and reading achievement [DV] as measured by the GMRT for upper-secondary students. More information on the GMRT is provided in the REVIEW OF LITERATURE chapter of this document as well as the specifics of how reading achievement is defined; in this study, reading achievement will primarily be measured by the GMRT as reading comprehension. The Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile Reading Survey (AMRP) (Pitcher et al., 2007) will also be

administered during this study (see Appendix 3.2). Apart from correlation studies, the

quantitative data on the relationship between choice and reading achievement outcomes

within a modern SSR/DIR program are virtually non-existent at the upper-secondary

level. The studies are very few and far between. Researchers and ELA practitioners

instead apply attuned benefits of choice which may or may not apply in an upper

secondary SSR/DIR context because these conclusions were made in a primary or middle

school context. Further, Humenick and Guthrie's (2004) gigantic effect size ($d = 1.2$)

reported for student-choice-of-text needs some sort of substantiation at the secondary

level with a normed tool; this is a secondary purpose of this study.

Theoretical Framework

      The dissertation journey is not only to simulate the rigors of the publication

process with its cycle of revisions and rejections, it should also serve as a capstone,

culmination, and the synthesis of the University of Tennessee's TPTE-Ph.D. process.

With this sentiment in mind, I submit an overarching theoretical framework (TF) and a

specific, sub-theoretical framework. I cannot, in good faith, submit a TF specific to this

research endeavor without giving homage to the TF that has shaped me the most.

      In Dr. Anthony Pellegrino's course on TFs in 2017, the cohort was introduced to

the *big umbrella* TFs (positivism, postpositivism, constructivism, transformative, and the

pragmatic). Before delving into the literally hundreds of sub-category TFs associated

with each, I, like most of my classmates, found myself gravitating towards the over-

arching TFs during this class. Though I saw the parallels between the study of literary

criticism and research frameworks, applying the same stance to research methods proved

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to be frustrating because, while a constructivist viewpoint with its many sub-lenses is dearly needed for approaching art and literature, it has some shortcomings when applied to the establishment of best practices in education.

Further, the relativism that results in the equal validation of each theory is as good as nihilism when considering educational interventions; some researchers even go as far as to say that studies with differing TFs cannot ever be compared validly or included in the same metanalysis. And so, through this course, I came to embrace a postpositivist framework and the idealistic belief in the ever-closer approximation of truth—an ill-fated pursuit of perfection but a worthwhile one, nonetheless. I do not believe, as many researchers do, that this puts me at odds with emancipatory frameworks; as Dr. Barbara Thayer-Bacon once proposed in class, "To believe in social justice, you have to believe in at least *some* truth."

Within the postpositivist overarching framework, I have chosen to employ Instructional Design Theory to guide this study. Instructional Design Theory is a framework that offers clear guidance on how to better help students learn and develop (Reigeluth, 1999). The theory is rooted in all three of the basic learning theories (behaviorism, constructivism, and cognitivism) when it emerged as a viable framework in the 1970s. It is not to be confused with Learning Theory alone which describes how a learning event occurred; rather, Instructional Design Theory prescribes a way to better help students learn. This TF aligns more closely with my personal values and philosophy of education. Regardless of the outcome of this study, Instructional Design Theory will inform the DISCUSSION chapter.

This study seeks to clarify the conditions for optimal learning and codify these conditions (Choice or No Choice grouping) within a prescribed, optimal version of SSR/DIR to distill an eventual, approximated best practice. As Frey (2018) states:

> [Instructional Design Theory] is goal oriented or instrumental: Its purpose is to offer the best-known methods of instruction to accomplish given goals under given conditions… Instructional Design Theory addresses the process of gathering information for making decisions about what the instruction should be like. This information includes information about the learners, what is to be learned, and constraints for the instruction. This theory involves analysis. (n.p.)

In this study, "given goals" to accomplish means increasing reading comprehension, and the analysis involved is ANCOVA. It is my intention to examine SSR/DIR in order to distill it into the best-known method to increase reading comprehension which is the chief defining term of achievement within this study. With the quantitative nature of this quasi-experimental study, statistical analysis will be required both at the beginning (G*Power) and end of this study (ANCOVA) with appropriate effect size reporting and post-experiment interviews drawn from the AMRP survey which contains interview protocols to further contextualize the data and report the perceptions of unique and typical cases.

Research Questions

R1: Is there a significant difference in reading achievement gains as defined by the GMRT between students who have received choice-of-text and those who have not within an upper-secondary SSR/DIR program?

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Ho: There is no significant difference in GMRT reading scores between students provided choice-of-text and students not provided choice-of-text in this study.

Ha: There is a significant difference in GMRT reading scores between students provided choice-of-text and students not provided choice-of-text in this study.

Nature of the Study

Exact details are given in the METHODOLOGY chapter; what follows is a brief overview. This study follows a pretest, posttest Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) model with the pretest GMRT score baseline entered as a covariate. Based on the review of literature and specifically Humenick and Guthrie's (2004) metanalysis (see Figure 1.1) a large effect size ($f = 0.4$ equivalent in G*Power) was chosen, and a G*Power (ver. 3.1) analysis was conducted. Based on the *a priori* G*Power output, the number of participants was set at (N = 52) (See Figure 1.2). The simply "large" rather than "extra-large" effect size chosen was due to skepticism over the $d = 1.2$ initial claim and, more importantly, that inserting a Cohen's f equivalent of ($f = 0.6$) into the G*Power software yields a total sample size of (N = 24). This sample size (N = 24) is not even enough to make up a full class in the state where the research site district is located and is, therefore, an unrealistic number of participants for a classroom teacher and contradicts the TF.

After UTK and school district IRB approval and the permission forms were signed and collected, the recruited participants (N = 52) were randomly assigned to choice-of-text and No Choice-of-text groups using a random number generator with participants' coded identities. Students from both groups took the GMRT pretest
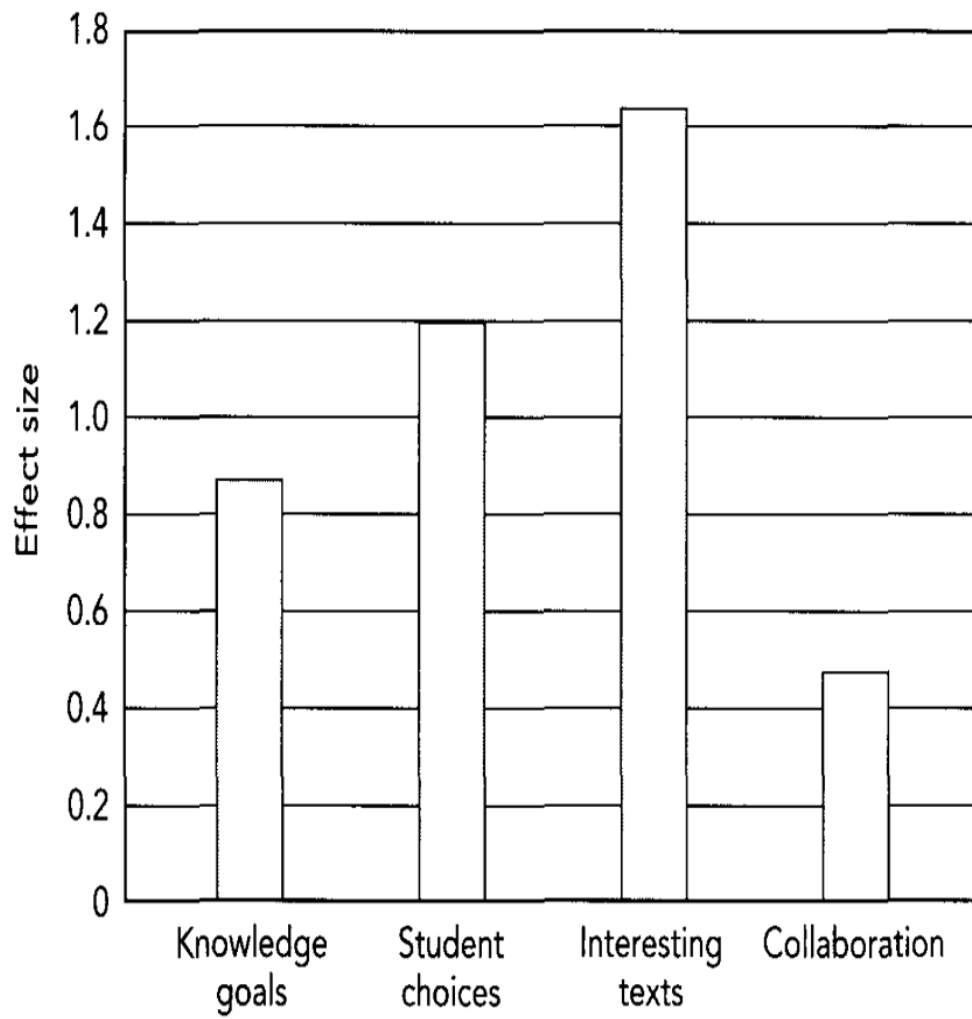
Figure 1.1. Guthrie and Humenick (2004) Effect Size Chart
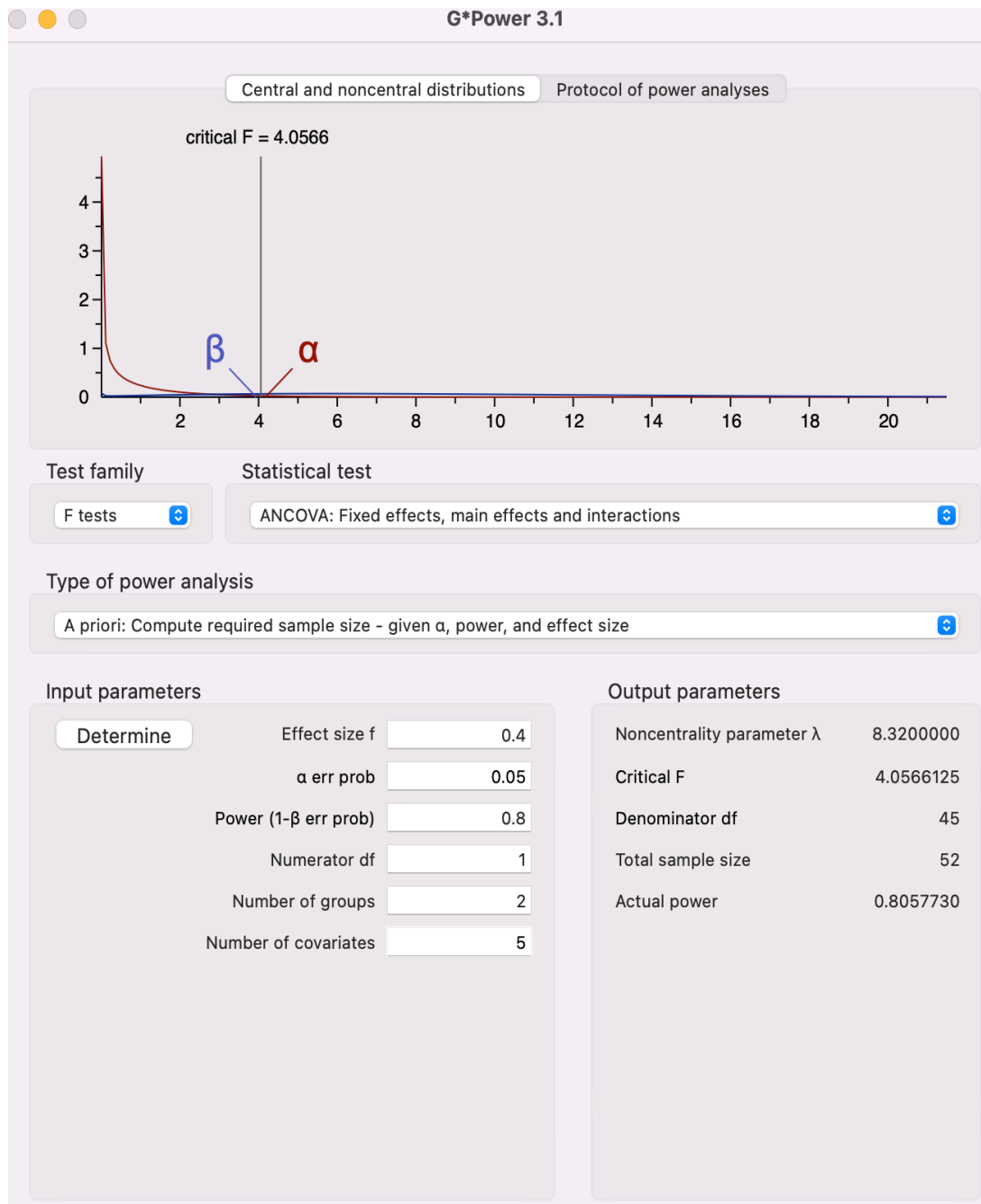
Figure 1.2. G*Power Output

to establish baseline covariate data. Books in the No Choice group were appropriate to interest and Lexile level based on estimated Lexile levels (*Lexile*, 2021) for the grade-level. A 12-week SSR/DIR course following Miller and Moss's (2013) scaffolded curriculum was used excluding the choice component for the No Choice group. This is typical instruction for the research site as SSR/DIR has been the ELA department policy at the school since 2018. Prior to the 12 weeks, there was a student phase-in week when the school focuses on introduction to norms and policies; this week also had students finalizing their schedules and so rosters were somewhat fluid. I partnered with the research assistant to simultaneously begin presenting the research opportunity to potential participants, procuring consent from legal guardians, reviewing the standard course syllabus, reviewing the pacing guide, collecting baseline covariates, and administering the AMRP survey to gain a stronger profile of the students as readers. The research assistant delivered the GMRT pretest to the willing participants and communicated those scores to me for the purpose of normality testing and independent samples t-testing to ensure no severe assumption violations had occurred for the ANCOVA. These scores were communicated in such a way that I could not see what each participant had scored but only what group they belonged to. In this way, I was not able to unconsciously bias the 12-week intervention by knowing what any given participant scored on the GMRT pretest. The research assistant secured these scores until after the posttest had been administered. Once the pretests were collected, the scores analyzed for normality, and the subgroups checked for significant difference via t-testing, I delivered the Miller and Moss (2013) curriculum with fidelity to the Choice group and delivered the same curriculum to

No Choice group excluding choice-of-text. This was a 12-week intervention. At the end of the 12 weeks, the GMRT posttest was administered to student-participants by the research assistant. I was not able to proctor the posttest myself as IRB was concerned with undue influence. After the GMRT posttest, a series of assumptions tests were performed on the scores; when those assumptions were met, an ANCOVA was conducted in SPSS, and a decision was made concerning the Null Hypothesis (Ho). Follow-up interviews were conducted for both typical and non-typical cases according to the data and were used to better inform the RESULTS and DISCUSSION chapters. These interviews were also conducted by the research assistant to mitigate undue influence from the PI.

Summary

This introductory chapter provided a summary of SSR/DIR as it will be defined in this study and how I arrived at this focus for a dissertation study. With choice-of-text serving as a critical component of modern SSR/DIR, I chose to question its significance in terms of reading achievement outcomes as media and education become more personalized through corporate algorithms. In the statement-of-problem section, the extremely high effect size of choice on reading achievement outcomes ($d = 1.2$) reported by Guthrie and Humenick's (2004) metanalysis fails to define "student" past the age of 14 years old and reports the effect size without disclosing the measurement tools used in the various studies in their metanalysis. This study will investigate choice-of-text beyond 14 years old and will report the effect size by relying upon a normed, reliable, and valid measurement tool (GMRT). The theoretical framework of this study is Instructional

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Design Theory as this study seeks to clarify the conditions for optimal learning. The research questions have been stated with accompanying null and alternative hypotheses, and the G*Power output was provided to clarify the number of participants needed (N = 52) based on the effect size reported in the review of literature.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to Moss (2021), "Today's Independent Reading (IR) programs differ significantly from SSR and DEAR. Effective IR programs require active engagement, time, a broad range of leveled texts, talk around texts, and differentiated instruction. The benefits are well worth it: increased student achievement, motivation, and a love of reading" (n.p.). This chapter will summarize the literature discussing the history and manifestation of SSR/DIR as it will be used in this study. This chapter will also outline the argument among SSR/DIR supporters and detractors specifically in the aftermath of the National Reading Panel (2000). The theory around choice, in general, is discussed. After this baseline, choice will be investigated in the context of SSR/DIR. In the next section, the research gap outlined in the INTRODUCTION chapter from the Guthrie and Humenick's (2004) study is expanded upon. The historic development of the GMRT to justify its use in this study will follow.

Historical Context SSR/DIR

As an institutionalized part of ELA education, SSR/DIR has been a constantly improving practice since its inception in the 1960s. Ironically, the current best-practice version of SSR/DIR is no longer silent nor independent (Parr & Maguiness, 2005). The noise is not a new development either; Manning and Manning (1984) began to note that reading scores increased slightly when peer discussion or teacher conferencing was added to traditional SSR/DIR implementation. The latest research in favor of SSR/DIR's current implementation, as exemplified by Johnston and Ivey (2013), Atwood (2015), and possibly the most important for practitioners, Miller and Moss (2013), presents a social

literacy community for teachers to strive for in their classrooms. These researcher-practitioners' understanding of SSR/DIR, USSR, IR, R5, Million Minutes, or DEAR present a version of SSR/DIR that is rooted in the "Social Turn" conclusions (and resulting implications for practice) of literacy research as a sub-branch of situated cognition (Miller & Moss, 2013). It is this most current manifestation of SSR/DIR (the kind presented by Ivey and Johnston (2013) and Atwell (2015) very similar to the R5 model) that I will be referring to. However, in honor of previous research and the various acronyms to refer to this similar reading practice, one should note that "[i]ndependent reading is rarely defined (Knoester, 2008; Serravallo & Goldberg, 2007; Keene & Zimmerman, 1997; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996)" (qtd. in Knoester, 2010, p. 2). Krashen (2004) states, "It is important to note first that various scholars have defined independent reading somewhat differently." Krashen (2004), for example, prefers the term "free voluntary reading." Hughes-Hassell and Rodge (2007) use the term "leisure reading." Anderson, et al. (1988) use the phrase "reading outside of school" and Manzo & Manzo (2000) prefer "recreational reading."

For me to list my own preferred manifestation and accompanying *pet-acronym* is to discount the foundations laid by early researchers; though we've found more optimal ways and have begun to emphasize the social aspect of literacy from the Social Turn, it is unethical to dismiss these early efforts as "wrong" but rather *evolving*. In honor of these early researcher-practitioners, such as Lyman Hunt (1960), SSR/DIR will be the term used in this draft with the understanding that it incorporates the body of work from these early researchers. For this study, I attempted to replicate the version advocated by Miller

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and Moss (2013), as I believe it most faithfully accounts for the Social Turn and honors the previous research on situated cognition, structured choice, the benefits of quality YAL, and independent reading in general. It is not an exaggeration to say that those in favor of the SSR/DIR tend to think of it as *the* solution for ELA education. The Miller and Moss (2013) model will be outlined in detail in the METHODOLOGY chapter.

Teachers having books readily available in their classrooms leads to students reading more independently (Neuman, 1999; Capatano et al., 2009). Reading more independently positively impacts students' overall critical thinking skills, reading ability, vocabulary, and standardized test scores (Reutzel & Juth, 2014). Reutzel, Fawson, and Smith (2008) report that SSR/DIR can improve oral reading accuracy, increase reading rate, improve reading expression, and increase reading comprehension. The firm of Houghton-Mifflin (2016) reports in their literature review that "research shows that independent reading libraries are particularly beneficial to children from low socioeconomic backgrounds" (p. 4). Miller (2010) reports that the daily routine of reading and having books readily available will quickly transform non-readers into readers whose reading confidence will improve, which will manifest in better classroom grades and higher test scores. Culinan (2000) concludes: "students who read independently become better readers, score higher on achievement tests in all subject areas, and have greater content knowledge than those who do not" (p. 2). Krashen (2004) conducted a meta-analysis examining comparisons of curriculum that stressed IR against programs emphasizing prescribed reading and determined that 51 of 54 studies showed

that students in IR programs did as well or better on reading comprehension tests than students in traditional reading programs. Krashen (2004) ultimately concluded:

> The relationship between reported free voluntary reading and literacy development is not large in every study, but it is remarkably consistent. Nearly every study that has examined this relationship has found a positive correlation, and it is present even when different tests, different methods of probing reading habits, and different definitions of free reading are used. (p. 11)

It is critical to remember that Krashen's research, like Guthrie and Humenick's (2004) likewise focuses on younger students in the literature review. Block and Mangieri (2002) reviewed two decades of research on recreational reading and found that:

> students who engaged in recreational literacy activities during school read books outside of school more frequently. Additionally, even with only 15 minutes of in-school reading per day, students significantly increased their reading performance, with average and below-average readers experiencing the greatest gains. (p. 3)

Increased access to books as part of an SSR/DIR within an ELA curriculum is associated with improvements on formative assessments of reading proficiency, and increased student reading comprehension is associated with increased independent reading (Allington & McGill-Franzen et al., 2003 and 2010; Krashen, 2004 and 2011; Neuman & Celano, 2012). Allington (2002) reports that one of the major indicators of effective teaching in ELA was time spent on independent reading of self-selected books. Less effective teaching spent more time on packets, worksheets, and activities.

Calkins, Ehrenworth, and Lehman (2012) make the bold claim that every conceivable standardized test score would show marked improvement with implementation of SSR/DIR. I am conflicted about linking SSR/DIR to standardized test scores; it seems to go against the *spirit of the thing*, and I believe standardized tests are, at best, a necessary evil in primary and secondary education. But due to the theoretical framework and a desire to change the system from within, educator-researchers must be able to get their principals, superintendents, department chairs, and all the others who are beholden to the ACT/SAT machine to support them in implementing this method. Unfortunately, this is not a conversation they can have with these forces without mentioning an increase in standardized test scores. For example, it was only by linking SSR/DIR to improved test scores that the administration allowed the ELA department at the research site of this study to proceed in adopting the SSR/DIR policy, and I am confident this district's circumstances are not unique. If Calkins et al. (2012) are correct, this will not be a major issue, and scores will show marked improvement in this study. Though teacher-researchers may be conflicted on standardized tests, at some point, they must negotiate with those in power who are not so conflicted, and under this TF the teacher-researcher must have a reliable tool of measurement. Within Instructional Design Theory, quantitative analysis is a component; therefore, a testing tool is appropriate. My circumstance is consistent with would-be SSR/DIR proponents at other schools as well.

According to Miller and Moss (2013), despite the incredible gains SSR/DIR is associated with, "many schools have dropped or decreased their attention to IR in favor of literacy instruction that they believe will raise test scores" (p. 12), but as Miller (2013)

goes on to argue, "Ironically, [schools] have eliminated one of the most powerful ways to improve student achievement" (p. 12). Anderson, Wilson, and Fielding (1988) established a link between SSR/DIR and achievement by comparing two groups of fifth graders' test scores (again, no upper-secondary). The group that read independently for an hour per day scored at the 98th percentile on the district's standardized tests. Students who read 4.6 minutes per day, scored at the 50th percentile. Students who participated in no SSR/DIR scored in the second percentile. "Just read" seems to be the way forward; however, in 2000 the Report of the National Reading Panel (NRP) stated: "Literally hundreds of correlational studies find that the best readers read the most and poor readers read the least. Many correlational studies find that the more children read, the better their comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency, However, these findings are correlational in nature and correlation does not imply causation" (p. 3).

"Correlation does not imply causation" is an axiom hammered into students repeatedly in graduate school and in any statistics course; educators have heard the phrase employed for reasons of good faith and also for pure sophistry. When confronted with examples of spurious correlation such as the well-known ice cream sales and murder rates in America (Vigen, 2015), the phrase is of critical importance, but it is too often employed by pedants with a pet cause as justification to ignore a body of research. Concerning the NRP's (2000) literature review, Harlaar et al. (2011) state:

> Although longitudinal correlational studies cannot conclusively establish a causal link between two factors due to the much-cited third variable problem, they can provide information on temporal precedence, which is critical in determining the

direction of influence (Bollen, 1989). Cunningham and Stanovich (1997) reported

that first grade reading ability significantly predicted independent reading in

Grade 11 independent of reading ability at Grade 11. (p. 2124)

The most complete rationale and encapsulation of why we believe in SSR/DIR is given

by Miller (2013) who states:

Children learn to read by reading . . . It's well known that in order to become

thoughtful, strategic, proficient readers, children need to read. A lot. When

children read extensively, they learn about themselves, other people, and the

world; they learn that reading is something they can do that empowers them to

control their lives, connect with each other, and make the world a better place. For

children to develop the habits and identity of thoughtful, strategic, proficient

readers, they need to practice and, to make their practice productive, they need the

tools that we can provide through instruction. This extensive independent reading

practice framed by instruction needs to happen in classrooms every day. (p. 2)

Choice-of-text is an integral part of all current manifestations of SSR/DIR. Miller and

Anderson (2011) found that student choice-of-text in reading was associated with higher

EOC scores than students who were not given choice in reading material in a middle

school sample, but again this assertion, along with Harlaar et al. (2011), falls under the

NRP's category of "correlational" and is therefore dismissible research by the panel's

standards. This dismissal of correlational studies by the NRP's standards is a sub-issue

this quasi-experimental study seeks to address. Even so, the mandated readings were

described by middle schoolers in a study by Guthrie, Klauda, and Morrison (2012) as

"boring," "irrelevant," and "difficult to understand." It also falls within Humenick and Guthrie's narrow definition of "student" (8-14 years old).

The new, supported model of independent reading is indeed a cult of educators, and, despite NRP's (2000) ruling, most of the published research does *seem* to support SSR/DIR advocates' zeal, but SSR/DIR is not without its detractors in addition to the NRP's (2000) critique; Tim Shanahan is a major force in public education and literacy studies; he led the research methodology on the NRP's 2000 report. In addressing one of his critics, Shanahan summarizes the entirety of the SSR/DIR criticisms:

> That good readers read more than poor readers is true but has no bearing on my response to the question. Correlation doesn't prove causation. That good readers read more does not mean that it was reading more that made them good readers. Maybe good readers choose to read more because they can do it well. You are making a good argument for teaching everyone to read well, not for sending kids off to read on their own during the school day . . . You refer to the correlational studies that can't answer the question, while ignoring the experimental ones that have directly tested your theory. Studies in which DEAR time is provided to some kids but not to others have not found much payoff—even when the non-readers were doing no more than random worksheets! You seem to be claiming that since reading on one's own leads to improved achievement—then any and all approaches to encouraging reading must be effective. Following that logic, then telling kids to read on their own, buying books for them, rewarding them with pizzas, or employing electric cattle prods… all must work, too. Remember I

wasn't saying kids shouldn't read, only that requiring "independent reading"

during the school day has not been effective. Only one study bothered to check its

impact on amount of reading, and it found that middle school kids read less as a

result of the practice—since it reduced the amount of reading they did on their

own. (qtd. in Refsnes, 2016)

Harlaar, Deater-Deckard, Thompson, DeThorne, and Petrill (2011) pose a foundational

question of the value of SSR/DIR theorizing:

We cannot infer that independent reading leads to better reading from these

studies because the causal arrow may point in the other direction: Better readers

may simply choose to read more . . . The difficulties of disentangling cause and

effect in cross-sectional data can be circumvented by training studies that seek to

determine whether increasing levels of independent reading result in

improvements in reading achievement, or vice versa. To date, the available

evidence has been mixed. (p. 2124)

Psychology of Choice and Choice as Part of SSR/DIR

From a psychological standpoint, the benefits of choice, cognitively and

otherwise, cannot be overstated according to the literature (Seligman, 1975; Deci &

Ryan, 2000; Fischer & Boer, 2011; Bone et al., 2014). Choice is philosophically,

historically, and even theologically interlinked with western enlightenment ideals of

human freedom and autonomy and the self. Schwartz and Cheek (2016) state that "[i]t is

commonly assumed in affluent, Western, democratic societies that by enhancing

opportunities for choice, we enhance freedom and wellbeing, both by enabling people to

get exactly what they want and by enabling people to express their identities" (p. 106).

Allowing choice is also accepted as the most moral option. Schwartz and Cheek (2017)

provide the following syllogism to explain the self-evidence of the morality of choice:

"The more freedom people have, the more well-being they have. The more choice people

have, the more freedom they have. Therefore, the more choice people have, the more

well-being they have" (p. 106). From an ethical view, Schwartz and Cheek (2017)

acknowledge the logic and superior morality of the previous syllogism; they associate an

increase of choice with an increase in freedom, and any attempt to limit choice

necessarily limits freedom in the "psychologic," of choice—a term they coin for their

paper. Shwartz and Cheek (2017) contend that:

> Evidence has accumulated that a point can be reached at which added options
>
> reduce the likelihood that any will be chosen—that too much choice can paralyze
>
> rather than liberate. Thus where, whereas some choice is good—both to enhance
>
> freedom and to enable people to satisfy preferences when they make decisions—
>
> there can be too much of a good thing. The relationship between the number of
>
> options people face and well-being seems to be non-monotonic—an inverted U.
>
> (p. 107)

Fiske et al. (1998), and Miller (2003) provide a skeptic counter-narrative to the

individualistic framework of choice. Beyond a mere critique of running out of the

possibility of creating new cultural touchstones through corporate algorithm-fueled,

hyper-individualized media, these researchers argue that eastern societies and even

working-class Americans practice an interdependence that defines self in relation to others and may even lead to a stronger sense of self more than unbounded free choice.

Shwartz and Cheek (2017) argue that society must consider the aims of choice within specific contexts rather than adopting a too-western view of choice as an open-ended correlate of freedom and happiness with no point of diminishing return. If practicing choice in the public school system is critical for preparing students for freedom and citizenship, then it is beyond the scope of this study to investigate such a matter; rather, it is solely the purpose of this study to investigate choice within the specific context of reading achievement and be open to the possibility that this point of diminishing return may apply to an educational context as well.

Our modern manifestations of SSR/DIR with the centrality of choice may have more to do with upper-middle class western ideals of independent self-actualization than leading to greater reading achievement outcomes for the children of working-class families—the single study from Sokal (2010) not-withstanding. Again, this may not be ethically wrong, but it may not be the most beneficial model of SSR/DIR for crafting the self among working-class or immigrant children; Shwartz and Cheek (2017) contend: "under a conjoint model of agency, choice is less likely to be directly associated with freedom and well-being, and the lack of individual choice is not as threatening to autonomy or the self" (p. 112).

Guthrie and Humenick (2004) found that choice-of-text was associated with higher reading comprehension and even Allington and Gabriel (2012) state that the "research base on selected reading is robust and conclusive" (p. 10). When investigating

this meta-analysis by Guthrie and Humenick (2004), however, their analysis only focused

on students aged 8-14, even defining "student" as such in their meta-analysis (p. 329).

Later studies on choice and text comprehension from Fraumeni-McBride (2017) also

focus on elementary students and use a non-normed measuring tool. In the review of

literature conducted for this document, it is almost as if high school students no longer

exist and that reading and literacy are of no more concern once a student enters high

school, and the conclusions drawn from studies concerning second-grade children must

be consistent for 17-year-olds. Beyond the age limitations of the research focus, the

dependent variables in Guthrie and Humenick's (2004) study focused primarily on

outcomes on motivation surveys, and reading achievement was an after-thought. Where

choice was investigated with regards to reading achievement outcomes, Guthrie and

Humenick (2004) do not clearly define the means or divulge the tools by which the series

of reviewed researchers reported reading achievement outcomes. It was not specified

either if choice took place within the context of an SSR/DIR program. Sokal (2010) also

challenges the alleged consensus of the efficacy of choice variables in reading programs

in both achievement and motivation. In her review of literature Sokal (2010) states:

> Although some research supports the positive effects of choice on students'
>
> enjoyment (Sweet, Guthrie & Ng, 1998) and efficiency of learning (Reynolds &
>
> Symons, 2001), studies fail to support positive cognitive effects associated with
>
> choice (Parker & Lepper, 1992; Schraw, Flowerday & Reisetter. 1998). Overall,
>
> according to Flowerday and Schraw (2000) and other researchers, having choices
>
> positively affects students' affective responses to texts but has no effect on

cognitive responses. Flowerday, Schraw, & Stevens (2004) contend that the

research designs used to study the effects of choice have been confounded by the

effects of interest. These authors believe that it is a reasonable conclusion that

when readers are given choices in their reading materials, they tend to choose

texts that interest them, findings that some researchers attribute to students'

opportunities for choice could, in reality, be the result of students' interest in the

texts they chose (Flowerday et al., 2004). Accordingly, they predict that providing

children with a number of undesirable choices will do little to motivate them—a

situation that challenges the claims of intrinsic value of choice to children's

reading motivation. (p. 118-119)

This literature review from Sokal (2010) and the response to it, again, focuses almost

exclusively on primary grade students, and the theory of conflating interest with the

intrinsic value of choice could be solved with interest surveys, studying interest trends,

and then matching texts accordingly.

Guthrie (2004) also acknowledges that choice-of-text has different impacts on

students from diverse cultural backgrounds. For example, Guthrie (2004) cites Iyengar

and Lepper (1999) who found that white children benefited from choice-of-text; however,

in terms of motivational outcomes, Asian children were most motivated when they were

matched to a text. "It appears that the effect of choice on motivation is influenced by

children's beliefs and values, which are embedded within their cultural experience"

(Iyengar & Lepper, 1999, p. 342). With schools' rapidly increasing diversity, our default

acceptance of choice may need to be reevaluated in terms of motivation and reading

achievement outcomes among diverse students and even among the 8-14 aged children for which the question of choice is seemingly settled. The inclusion of choice-of-text in SSR/DIR may have more to do with the fundamental individualism of Western society (Cheek & Shwartz, 2017) rather than how choice relates explicitly to greater reading achievement for older adolescents.

Though not specifically related to reading, a closer investigation of the assumed default use of choice in SSR/DIR may not be beneficial to young adults, especially those struggling with reading, if we assume that the benefits of choice apply in general and to SSR/DIR students. For example, Reed et al. (2008) and Patall, Sylvester, and Han (2014) found that teenagers only wanted the ability to choose within contexts where they felt self-confident about their ability to make a successful choice. One can see how this could be an issue when implementing a choice centered SSR/DIR initiative with struggling students who lack confidence in themselves and their reading, especially among working-class, adolescent males. Reed et al. (2008) further found that subjects desired less choice when confronted with more important decisions and only desired more choices when considering casual, short-term decisions such as what type of jelly to put on toast. To achieve the level of engagement and motivation necessary for positive reading outcomes, Fisher and Ivey (2006) argue for "the importance of using interesting reading materials . . . Effective instruction for all adolescents focuses on their personal interests and incorporates diverse reading materials" (p. 183). The intuitive approach is to fulfil this mandate by allowing student choice-of-text, but if reading comprehension and achievement is the goal rather than western self-actualization, this same goal of providing

engaging text can be attained by using normed or even popular interest surveys and their

corresponding YAL flow charts such as the one found on *Epic Reads*[1] which primarily

uses visual cues to match a reader with a book based on their interests. In combining the

appropriate Lexile level to the reader, choice is replaced with the far more intentional

matching via interest survey.

To further complicate the research surrounding the supposedly conclusive

efficacy of choice, Lemov, Driggs, and Woolway (2016), the authors of *Reading*

Reconsidered, argue:

> [t]here isn't any substantial scientific evidence yet to suggest that choice reading
>
> improves reading proficiency—or even fosters a love of reading—according to
>
> some literary experts I talked to . . . student choice reading has been overhyped by
>
> schools and makes a couple of assumptions that don't add up: First, that
>
> adolescents know enough about books to know what they like to read; and
>
> second, that there's greater power in the freedom to 'do your own thing' rather
>
> than in developing a deep understanding of what you're reading. Whether it's
>
> Gabriel García Márquez, Toni Morrison, or Harper Lee, shared [mandated]
>
> reading can also improve equity by giving all students access to high-quality
>
> literature, Lemov says. He also emphasizes that it teaches students to engage in a
>
> balanced and civil discourse, asserting that 'you can only really listen to someone
>
> else's perspective on a story if you're discussing a text that you have also read.
>
> (qtd. in Korbey, 2019, n.p.)

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[1] https://www.epicreads.com/blog/which-ya-book-should-you-read-this-summer/

The point the authors raise is worth considering in the context of the future of our democracy and culture. Educators use analogies every day to explain concepts to their students seeking to ascertain their pre-existing funds of knowledge and connect these funds to new ideas. The issue I have noted over my years of teaching is that with individualized media and algorithms charting students' tastes and curating media to consumers in a highly subjective manner, teachers are running out of shared texts and media to serve as reference points for explaining new ideas or at least getting students to understand old ones in a more meaningful way. This presents a complicated issue with regards to respecting multiculturalism. For example, most millennials' parents watched the *MASH* finale—106 million or 45.3% of people in the U.S. in 1983 (Andrews, 2018). Now, a teacher is fortunate if they have three students in their classroom who have seen the same movie or show from 2022 even among modern choices. School, at some point, ought to aid in creating culture and finding just as many ways in which we are common as celebrating the ways in which we differ. Also from a citizenship standpoint, educators must consider the question: "Are we truly serving students' life-long literacy needs by allowing them to only read what they want to read?"

Previous Research on Choice-of-Text and Effect Size: A Missing Piece

Defining effect size for this study has been difficult due to the conflicting literature related to choice-of-text in SSR/DIR. As the previous section indicates, both sides contend that the matter is settled, with some, such as Guthrie and Humenick (2004), maintaining that choice-of-text matters and that not only does it matter, but it also accounts for the seventh largest educational intervention in the history of educational

research (d = 1.2) if choice-of-text is placed within Hattie's (2017) ranking of educational interventions. Other researchers, meanwhile, such as Lemov et al. (2016) and Sokal (2010), argue that the results of choice-of-text experimental or quasi-experimental studies are few in number, mixed in results, and unconcerned with high school students.

Sokal (2010) investigated the outcomes of choice-of-text versus no choice-of-text in reading achievement and found that, indeed, the students given free choice of reading materials scored significantly higher ($p.$ = .01) than the group who did not have choice of materials. However, this study only dealt with fourth-grade, Canadian males, and, perhaps most critically, Sokal (2010) fails to provide a competing effect size to Guthrie and Humenick's (2004) massive (d = 1.2); in fact, Sokal (2010) does not provide an effect size at all in her study. This raises questions about both the sample selection (N = 62) and the real-world impact of choice. By failing to provide an effect size and focusing solely on p-values, Sokal (2010) has informed us that choice matters in her study (p = .01) but has not told us how much it matters. According to Ellis (2020), this represents a trend that has only recently begun to change among research journals; this dissertation focus on adolescents within an upper secondary SSR/DIR setting and provides an effect size to allow researchers and practitioners to see what potential applied efficacy could be despite the p-value. Ellis (2020) writes:

> The estimation of p-values tends to be vague and speculative. In contrast,
> reporting the effect size facilitates the explicit interpretation of the substantive or
> practical significance of the result… In many disciplines there is an ongoing push
> towards relevance and engagement with stake-holders beyond the research

community. If our research is to make sense to partitioners and non-specialists,

we need to abandon the time-worn habit of drawing large conclusions from small

p-values and engage directly with the evidence itself. We need to shift our focus

from 'did this test achieve statistical significance?' to 'how big is the effect size

and what does it mean?' (p. 15-16)

As a current educator with ten years' experience, I like to assume that I know the

thinking of my students, but I truly know the minds of my fellow educators, and Ellis'

(2020) summation of the state of research as it relates to effect size, *p*-values, and

practitioners is a solid estimate of the teaching community's view of the state of research.

Effect-size reporting has the potential to change our consumption of the research as we

move towards a more perfect praxis where results are not only statistically significant in

terms of *p*-values, but also meaningful in terms of reported effect sizes.

Cross-Context Rational

Another rationale for the study and an oversight in the state of the research which

prevents us from implementing the conclusions drawn from the fourth-grade study and

Guthrie and Humenick's (2004) research with students aged 8-14, is that we cannot

assume what has been effective at the fourth-grade level will be just as effective at the

upper-secondary level. There is a vast body of literature investigating the anatomical

changes (including brain plasticity), related to cognition, motivation, and learning

differences between children and adolescents (Lafon, Chasseigne & Mullet, 2004;

Loschert, Harper, Hermann, & Waite, 2019). For example, Loschert et al. (2019) report:

Adolescents are in a stage of development during which the brain becomes more

specialized and efficient. Learning experiences and environmental influences play

key roles in this process. Learning and development are inextricably intertwined;

these dual processes shape patterns of neural connections during adolescence. As

the brain becomes more interconnected during adolescence, young people are

increasingly able to engage in adult levels of complex cognition, such as abstract

reasoning, future thinking, and social cognition. During adolescence, biological

and environmental changes affect motivation and mindset. Because adolescents

have an increased sensitivity to social evaluation, praising their learning process

and successful strategies, not effort alone, can support development of a positive

mindset and motivate them to learn. (p. 4)

Because of these justifications listed by Loschert et al. (2019), it is inappropriate to

assume that what worked for fourth-graders in the Canadian study by Sokal (2010) and

the 8-14-year-olds in Guthrie and Humenick's (2004) meta-analysis will work for upper

secondary students with their differences in development and motivations. The

assumption that choice-of-text will have a positive benefit across age ranges is

insufficiently substantiated, and more research is needed of at least a quasi-experimental

nature.

In their meta-analysis, Guthrie and Humenick (2004) estimated an average effect

size ($d = 1.2, f = 0.6$) for student choice-of-text and reading achievement—a gigantic

effectiveness level for student outcomes, however, when putting this into dialogue with

the much more recent *Reading Reconsidered* (Lemov et al., 2016), the almost panacea

levels of effectiveness become questionable to dictate the G*Power analysis of this study

and the corresponding number of participants required. This high level becomes even

more dubious when considering the authors' own admission that for certain, diverse

populations, matching students to text was more effective than giving students choice.

With respect to the diversity of the research site's student population and the increasing

diversity in general of this country's population (Frey, 2020), the lack of data for effect

size is secondary, and the lack of a reported, normed tool for measuring reading

achievement in Guthrie and Humenick's (2004) meta-analysis is most critical.

The History and Validity of the GMRT Measurement Tool

Due to Guthrie and Humenick's (2004) inclusion of studies using a variety of

tools for measuring reading achievement, there is a need for a highly normed and

consistent tool. The GMRT fulfills this requirement. The GMRT was developed from the

Gates Primary Reading Tests first implemented by Gates in 1926. These tests were

reviewed and improved in 1956 with input from William H. MacGinitie. Currently, the

GMRT is in its fourth edition, and it is authored by Walter H. MacGinitie, Ruth K.

MacGinitie, Katherine Maria, Lois G. Dreyer and Kay E. Hughes (Lee, 2020).

Jongsma (1980) describes the GMRT as "a survey tests of general reading

achievement" (p. 341). In his review (1989), Cooter states:

> The [GMRT] may be used to measure some aspects of student reading progress
>
> and compare classes, schools, and school systems (Aaron and Gillespie, in press).
>
> Likewise, reading researchers may wish to use it as part of an overall assessment
>
> package when investigating innovative methods. (p. 656)

Investigating innovative methods in reading achievement intervention and SSR/DIR is exactly what I am seeking to do, and for over 40 years, this test has served as one way, among a series of evaluative methods, to assess if these innovative methods are significantly linked to higher reading achievement.

There is great flexibility with the GMRT. A classroom teacher may deliver it to his or her students as easily as any paper test. If a teacher has proctored an EOC before, they may just as easily proctor the GMRT. The directions are clear, and there are two options for processing the scores. An educator or district may choose to send the scores back to the publisher for a detailed report, or, as in my case, one can input the pre/post scores into SPSS to run the ANCOVA, and report significance, effect size, and other key outputs.

I also chose to use this test because of its reliability or the extent to which this tool produces consistent data. Cooter (1989) reports:

> The [GMRT] went through a rigorous national standardization process. Normative scores were developed in 1987-88 with a sampling plan based on geographic region, family income, enrollment size, parents' years of schooling, and other factors… Vocabulary subtests [of alternate reliability] range from .88 to .91, and Comprehension subtests from .87 to .92. Total test reliabilities range from .93 to .95. (p. 657-658)

These figures are derived using the Kuder-Richardson 20 (KR-20) rank where zero is no reliability and one is perfect reliability similar to a Spearman Rho or Pearson Correlation Coefficient formula's output, though a score of .70 is the base desirable outcome rather

than .50. The total reliability of the GMRT's KR-20 = .93-.95 and is almost perfect in terms of reliability—another reason to employ the tool.

Due to the National Reading Panel's (2000) (i.e. Shanahan's) dismissal of the hundreds of correlational studies as providing no evidence of a causal link between SSR/DIR and reading achievement, I have avoided these correlational formulas altogether (apart from correlating the AMRP survey to GMRT scores as a secondary objective) and chose only methods which seek to establish quasi-experimental arguments for causality derived and adapted from the medical model in this quasi experimental study. The prefix and caveat "quasi" is important because even the NRP must admit that the classroom is not a laboratory.

Curry (1989) approves the GMRT as well as stating that "[t]he challenging Vocabulary items beyond level 2 should clearly discriminate good from poor readers" (qtd. in Cooter & Curry, 1989, p. 257); since I focused on testing upper-level, secondary students, Curry's reservations about sub-level 2 items do not apply. In keeping with the varied content I used to replicate Miller and Moss's (2013) SSR/DIR model, the GMRT is most appropriate as Curry (1989) states that the "comprehension items appropriately tap both literal and inferential comprehension and draw from poetry, fiction, and nonfiction texts" (qtd. in Cooter & Curry, 1989, p. 257), but Curry (1989) cautions against over-interpretation of the results in keeping with a holistic evaluation of the individual student.

In terms of validity or if the GMRT is measuring what it claims to measure, Cooter (1989) critiques the early versions of the test, stating that evidence of validity has

not been established. Early in the GMRT's inception, though, Change and Brown (1983) found a high correlation between the GMRT and The Minnesota Reading Assessment in reading rate—the state standardized test used at the time. In more recent research on the GMRT's validity, DiAntonio (2016) provided evidence of validity when the GMRT was administered simultaneously with the highly normed and valid New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge Language Arts Literacy (NJAS) to fourth, fifth, and sixth-grade students in Gloucester City School District over three consecutive years. DiAntonio (2016) found that the results of the experiment showed that prediction of student scores on the NJAS can be established with a high reliability by the scores achieved on the GMRT, and as students progressed through grades, the correlation grew stronger starting at $r = .568$ in fourth, $r = .718$ in fifth and finally $r = .816$ by sixth-grade between the two tests. Although, again, this investigation maintains the literacy trend of only investigating students in the lower grades, even though standardized testing of reading achievement is still mandated through junior year in the state where the research site is located, this is the best tool available at the time of this study and has been adapted for use at the junior/senior levels and beyond.

　　　　To put this in perspective, if a student scores "passing" or "proficient" on the NJAS, that student will score "one grade level above or higher" on the GMRT (DiAntonio, 2016, p. 35). Assuming this upward trend of stronger and stronger correlations between the GMRT and district and states' own, normed tools holding steady, I have a great deal of confidence that the GMRT is measuring what it intends to

measure, and the research from DiAntonio (2016) has addressed Cooter's (1989) reservations.

Peer-review boards from a host of reputable journals are also permitting use of the GMRT as a reliable tool in literacy research. These include *Reading Research Quarterly*, *Reading and Writing*, *The Journal of Educational Psychology*, *Exceptional Children*, *Scientific Studies of Reading*, *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *The Journal of Educational Computing Research*, *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, and *The Journal of Learning Disabilities* just to name a few; all these journals are publishing research that accepts the GMRT as a tool of measurement. By choosing the GMRT for a measuring tool, I can more readily place the results of this study within a wider applicability, context, and conversation with the body of literacy scholarship.

Other reputable scholars such as Jenkins and Jewel (1992) have relied upon the GMRT as a norming tool for their own tests of validity for emerging measurement tools, and though Cooter (1989) is generally critical, he does admit:

> The test makers are also to be commended for the rigorous development of reliability and out-of-level norms, which help make the tests quite useful for various student populations. Likewise, the availability of many special services from the publisher regarding the scoring and interpretation of test results is impressive… [and] the Gates-MacGinitie seems adequate. If adopted as one part of an overall reading evaluation, it may prove to be very useful in a school setting. (p. 658)

The scalable nature of the test is convenient as well. Every level has a specifically designed test. The first two test levels are the Pre-Reading Level with Sub-Tests in Literacy Concepts, Oral-Language Concepts, Letter and Letter/Sound Correspondences, and Listening Comprehension. The other test is Beginning Reading and consists of Sub-Tests in Initial Consonants and Clusters, Final Consonants and Clusters, Vowels, and sight words. These first two exams are available as paper and pencil versions only and take between 75 and 100 minutes to complete (Golchtie, 2021).

Early Independent Reading tests 1 and 2 [*sic*] are employed to measure the level of early independent reading ability. Goltchie (2021) states, "This is the level at which they demonstrate fluent decoding and good comprehension without benefit of any teacher intervention. These levels generally coincide with students in first and second grade" (n.p.). Early Independent levels include a test of decoding, comprehension, and word knowledge. This test takes 55 minutes. Level 2 [*sic*] takes 75 minutes to complete (Goltchie, 2021).

Mature Reading Levels 3-10/12 [*sic*] specifically measure a student's overall reading ability in grades 3 through 10/12 [*sic*]. It is divided into two parts that assess Vocabulary knowledge and Comprehension (Goltchie, 2021). My research involves this level of the GMRT as this study concerns twelfth-grade students, and there is some overlap in characteristics between this level and the Adult Reading (AR) Level test.

Lastly, the AR test is meant for colleges, trade schools, employers, GED, and Adult Education programs; this Level is intended to gauge the overall reading ability of an adult. The Mature Reading Levels 3-10/12 [*sic*] and the AR Level test each take 55

minutes to complete. Though the upper levels of the test can be delivered digitally, I do not trust something so expensive, time-consuming, and precious to the legendary inconsistency of public-school wireless internet, and so, my research assistant delivered this test with paper and pencil.

The popular sites and scholarly sources all agree on the convenience of the GMRT as a readily accessible tool that any classroom teacher can use to evaluate students as part of an individual or school-wide assessment. I am not solely using the GMRT for the ease of delivery, but also for the ease with which I can convince my colleagues to use it. This study seeks to not only generate data for the aggregate sum of research on SSR/DIR to be consumed by academics, but for the school, the district, and my fellow teachers who believe in SSR/DIR. No matter how effective, if the process is tedious, teachers will avoid it, and the GMRT appears to be simple; one sympathizes with the hour-long demographics process of in-school state-mandated ACTs before students may even begin the four-hour long test. It is little wonder why teachers would have an almost pathological aversion to any testing tool no matter how rich the data. On the other hand, the GMRT does not require any of the difficulties and tedium of an ACT/SAT demographics sheet.

Summary

This chapter discussed the history and current manifestation of SSR/DIR, the philosophy and psychology of choice, choice in education, and the complicated history of choice as part of SSR/DIR. Effect size of choice is discussed, and Guthrie and

Humenick's (2004) lack of inclusion of high school students is further examined. The

history, development, reliability, and validity of the GMRT is provided.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted at a southeastern public high school. The school was designated as a Title I school with approximately 50% of students qualifying as economically disadvantaged. As one of the provisos in the approval process, the University of Tennessee's Institutional Review Board requested that I not disclose specific racial demographic data as these could be used to identify the specific school and could constitute a breach of confidentiality and FERPA. Suffice to say that the school was highly diverse and economically disadvantaged, representing the schools most in need of focus in the region. The school practiced modified four-by-four block scheduling for full-credit courses. Where a four-by-four block schedule usually follows four, 90-minute blocks (Brown, 1998), the research site district had four 80-minute periods with a 25-minute "Climb" period which other districts would call "home room." There was more time permitted between class changes as it was a larger campus with some students having to walk nearly a quarter of a mile between the 80-minute classes. It should be noted that the School Superintendents Association estimates that only 30% of the nation's secondary schools practice block scheduling, and this offers a potential limitation for replication of this study (Rettig, 2019).

At the start of the 2022 school semester, grade-level 17-18-year-old students were randomly sorted into classes. According to the high school's Head-of-Guidance, "Our software, PowerSchool™, randomly populates grade-level students into courses. In this way, we can't pick and choose who goes where." From there, for the first week, standard classroom operating procedures were be established. During this time, IRB-approved

permission forms were given to students to procure both student and parental consent for minors to participate in the study (see Appendix 3.1 and Appendix 3.4). This form was created to fulfill the five requirements for informed consent published in the 2018 *Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects* (CFR 46.116) and is modelled after the form available on UTK's IRB page: https://irb.utk.edu/forms/. Students were motivated to participate by the PI reciprocating with gift cards to local cooperating businesses upon return of a signed consent form. Regardless of whether the student or parent wished to participate, the return of the form guaranteed that the student received a gift card. Since SSR/DIR was already part of the formal curriculum at this school, students or parents who did not wish to take part in this study still received the same SSR/DIR treatment as their peers, but they did not receive the GMRT, the AMRP, and their data was not included in the study.

Because the precedence in the literature reports an exceedingly large effect size, I framed the G*Power analysis to detect a large effect size so that at least a full class of students could take part in the study ($f = 0.4$ in G*Power ver. 3.1). This value corresponds to Cohen's D large effect size ($d = 0.8$ at $\alpha = 0.05$). Based on the G*Power analysis, I needed to recruit (N = 52) participants for this study from the randomly assigned students. Students' names and other identifying information were coded and secured. For this study, the participants names were coded by allowing the participants to choose their pseudonyms in the interviews (Wiles & Allen, 2015). The data were stored on a password protected laptop with a lockout feature. At the conclusion of the study, digital copies of the data were purged from the laptop; there are printed copies of the data

stored in a locked safe at my residence until three years after the conclusion of this study at which point the files will be destroyed. Only the dissertation committee, the research assistant, and I will have access to the data, however, due to FERPA, the dissertation committee was only permitted to view the coded names of participants. Students with IEPs and 504 plans specific to English were also included in this study as they are part of the typical classroom.

Before the students arrived, a YAL library of no less than 364 books was moved into the classroom space. The classroom teacher in this study had knowledge of each of these books per best practices of SSR/DIR; it is difficult to have meaningful, engaging conversations if the teacher does not have at least some knowledge of the student's SSR/DIR text. A class library, instead of a centralized school library, is critical to modern SSR/DIR. Neuman (1999), and Kim (2003) both concluded that students read more in classrooms with libraries compared to those without. 364 is the number of books required in this study because Fountas (2018) suggests 300-600 books in the classroom for SSR/DIR, and the International Reading Association (1999) suggests seven books for every student. With the G*Power analysis dictating a participant requirement of (N = 52), this equals 364 books which lies within the IRA's (1999) suggested range.

All books in the library were within the Lexile level of 90% of U.S. 12th grade students (11-CCR.1070L-1385L). After the appropriate number of students were recruited and their permission forms were signed and secured, their names were entered into Group Maker™, a random team generator app to assign to the "Choice" or "No Choice" group." Typically, all students would take a genre interest survey which is

standard practice in modern SSR/DIR, but doing so in this study would add "student interest" as another element which would complicate the analysis per Sokal (2010). However, since use of interest surveys is standard in modern SSR/DIR, yet will not be included in this study, it must be submitted as a limitation.

On the second day of the third week of the semester, The GMRT pretest was administered at the research site by a research assistant trained and certified by CITI; this individual's CITI credentials have been submitted and approved by the IRB, and the Reliance Agreement has been submitted and approved. An Individual Investigator Agreement Form (IIAF) was also required as part of the IRB approval and is included with this document (see Appendix 3.6). The identifying markers of the GMRT pretest scores were secured and kept confidential from me (the PI) until after the 12-week SSR/DIR unit was completed and the GMRT posttest had been administered by the same research assistant. This individual has also been trained and certified by the state in standardized testing protocol and has served as a proctor many times. I trained this individual in methods of proctoring and collecting the GMRT. The current publisher of the GMRT makes these training materials available with the testing kit. The reason for the assistant keeping identifying markers confidential from the PI is so that the I would not be even unconsciously biased to give more effort and one-on-one time to specific students over others. Throughout the 12-week study, I had no idea who scored what on the GMRT pretest. Though the blinding of test scores does not represent a real-classroom situation, it had the potential to skew the study if unconscious bias was not controlled for.

Only the unidentified pretest scores were communicated to me so that initial normality testing could be performed.

An informal survey was administered by the research assistant and recorded in the research journal to ascertain previous reading Lexile level. At the beginning of the 12-week study, students in the No Choice group were assigned an SSR/DIR book appropriate to their Lexile level, and students in the Choice group were allowed to choose their text. The Lexile of the books in the class library was ranked according to the Lexile Framework software from MetaMetrics, Inc. The justification for requiring appropriate Lexile levels comes from Perks (2010) who found that a "moderately strong relationship ($r = .43$) [existed] between the average challenge level of texts students reported reading [via Lexile] and reading growth over the duration of the study" (p. 102). Therefore, students were given the appropriate Lexile range of 11-CCR from 1070L which lies at the bottom of this band to 1385 which represents the upper "stretch" end of 11-CCR. As the books in the class library will exclusively lie within the 11-CCR band, this will not substantially affect the groups as it parallels normal classroom operations with a class library. The method of limited Lexile is also to account for the tendency of students to choose unchallenging texts during SSR/DIR (Krashen, 2004).

Miller (2009), as part of her emphasis on choice, also argues for students (like Jalen) being permitted to put down a book if it is not working for them. To accommodate this aspect of choice, the Choice group was allowed a one-week probationary period with any book they chose for the duration of the 12-week unit. Miller (2009) is aggressive in her prescription of number of books to be read by her students: 40 books in one academic

year; this is based on 30 minutes of SSR/DIR per day as well as mandatory SSR/DIR whenever there are "early finishers" in her classroom. Miller's (2011) book choices, as listed in the appendices of *The Book Whisperer,* are on the short side and below the estimated Lexile of upper secondary students; even so her calculations provide an estimate for setting an average number of books to be read during this unit. Hasbrouck and Tindal (2017) and Brysbaert (2019) estimate the average words per minute (WPM) of high schoolers aged 14-18 to be 200-300; the average novel ranges between 60,000 and 100,000 words based on advice from publishing agencies (Bingham, 2021) and my own experiences in the manuscript world with some agents being more hard-lined than others on page count. With this assumption of an average of 80,000, with some non-fiction in the classroom library under that number and some High Fantasy genre books a little over, there are 1,200 minutes available in a 12-week unit assuming we set our SSR/DIR at approximately 20 minutes per day, with the average length assumed; this allows for ~3.75 novels to be read during that time if students are reading between the 200-300 WPM.

This study will designate 20 minutes per day rather than the recommended 30 from Miller (2009). The reason for choosing this dosage comes from Lewis and Samuels (2005) who state that SSR/DIR teachers typically do approximately 20 minute per day, and, more importantly, especially for poorly performing readers, more time with independent reading may not lead to more or better reading comprehension. For example, Wu and Samuels (2004) in their paper presented at the annual IRA convention reported that they compared groups reading for 15 minute per day to groups reading 40 minutes

per day. While the readers who were already good readers benefitted from the increased time, the struggling readers had even greater gains than the good readers from only 15 minutes of daily independent reading time. The good readers at the research site and in districts across America have already been sorted into DE and AP courses by the time of their junior or senior year. This study concerns grade-level students where the struggling readers reside. The research-backed time-per-day for this group to make gains is 15 minutes, but in terms of designating actual time, there needs to be a transitional interval; this is the rationale for the 20 minutes per day rather than the 15. Further, due to the chaotic nature of public schools including snow days, fire drills, school-wide assemblies, standardized EOC testing, and the usual interruptions that are a standard part of public education (and are noted in the daily research journal), I cut the 3.75 novel benchmark to simply three whole novels. The AMRP survey includes a standardized interview protocol and prompts which were used in the student interviews. UTK's IRB required the research assistant, rather than the PI, to conduct the interviews over concerns of "undue influence." The interviews were analyzed for context, thematic parallels, and observable trends and were included in the DISCUSSION chapter.

Following week 12, students took the GMRT posttest with the research assistant serving as proctor. Additional assumption testing took place once these posttests were scored. The data were entered into SPSS, and an ANCOVA, including the pretest as a baseline covariate, was performed with special emphasis on effect size. Based on the output, a decision was made concerning the null hypothesis (Ho). After the data were

collected and analyzed, typical and non-typical cases were interviewed with the questions

provided in the AMRP survey interview protocol (see Appendix 3.2).

The brand of SSR/DIR in this study was not as simple as allowing 15-20 minutes

of unsupported student reading with the teacher merely modeling reading during that

time. Instead, the daily curriculum came directly from Miller and Moss (2013) whose

book *No More Independent Reading Without Support* represents a synthesis of best

practices and served as the basis of this intervention; Miller and Moss (2013) give a

highly supported model of SSR/DIR that is officially endorsed by NCATE and is state-

of-the-art for this pedagogy. My goal was that everything that occurred in this study was

to be intentional and based on the best practices of SSR/DIR established in Miller and

Moss's (2013) book. As Miller and Moss (2013) write: "DEAR and SSR by themselves

aren't enough. Research shows that independent reading must be accompanied by

intentional instruction and conferencing to improve background knowledge, fluency,

comprehension, motivation, and vocabulary . . . When we set children loose day after day

with no focus or support, it can lead to fake reading and disengagement" (n.p.). Per their

recommendations, the following tenets of SSR/DIR were observed for both the Choice

and No Choice groups as part of the 12-week study except for the parts that required

student choice-of-text for the No Choice group:

1. A variety of genres are stored and displayed within designated levels of reading
   difficulty [11-CCR 900L-1385L].

2. Teacher initiates brief, ~five-minute, individual student reading conferences (two-
   three per-day). During these conferences, students will perform *read-alouds*,

book-talks, and set goals for future reading. Reis et al. (2008) found that individual conferences with students led to higher fluency scores. These informal interviews were recorded in the research journal.

3. Students read aloud to the teacher, answer teacher questions, set personal goals for completing the reading of a book within a time frame, and complete one or more book projects. These included creation of posters, graphic organizers, written reactions, and reader-response notebooks

4. Instruction on reading strategies

5. Large- and small-group discussion around the texts students read. Saunders and Goldenburg (1999) found that "talk [both to teacher and peers] appears to play a fundamental role in text-based comprehension" (p. 761) and Nystrand (2006) found that peer discussion of texts improves scores.

These requirements listed in Moss and Miller's (2013) design require high teacher engagement and support showing the evolving nature of SSR/DIR. As stated by Block et al. (2009), "It is the specific actions that teachers take to support students during silent reading periods that produce significant growth in students' comprehension" (p. 278).

Tentative Semester Schedule and Weekly Sample Schedule

The macro-view of the scheduled curriculum was aligned to the district-approved pacing and is as follows (see Table 3.1). This can be adapted for Spring or Fall semester. A weekly sample, wk. eight, Mar. 22-26, will be as follows:

Monday: Settle students, "Good Things" per district policy Students read for 15-20 minutes. "A Modest Proposal" by Jonathan Swift. Students delineate essay in groups.

Table 3.1. Tentative Semester Schedule

Week 1	In-Service	Week 10	Begin Research
	Syllabus and Policies		Research/assign book presentation
	Ice-Breakers		Research
	Explanation of Study		Research
	Permission Forms distributed		Research
Week 2	College and Career Readiness Unit	Week 11	Research
	College and Career Readiness Unit		Research
	College and Career Readiness Unit		Research
	College and Career Readiness Unit		Research
	Collect all permission forms by this day		Research
Week 3	Give AMRP Survey and group students	Week 12	Research
	GMRT Pretest		Research
	Assign Books/Choose Books; begin SSR		Research
	Beowulf		Book Presentations
	Beowulf		Book Presentations
Week 4	*Beowulf* and Book Talks start (3-per day)	Week 13	Graphic Novel
	Beowulf		Graphic Novel
	Beowulf		Graphic Novel
	Beowulf		Graphic Novel
	Beowulf		Graphic Novel
Week 5	*Canterbury Tales*	Week 14	Graphic Novel
	Canterbury Tales		Graphic Novel
	Canterbury Tales		Graphic Novel
	Canterbury Tales		Graphic Novel
	Canterbury Tales		GMRT Posttest
Week 6	*Macbeth* second round of book talks begin with "read-alouds"	Week 15	Begin student Interviews and school-wide Testing Week (EOC and ACT)
	Macbeth		Testing Week
	Macbeth		Testing Week

Table 3.1 continued

	Macbeth		Testing Week
	Macbeth		Testing Week
Week 7	*Macbeth*	Week 16	Final Projects
	Macbeth		Final Projects
	Macbeth		Final Projects
	Macbeth		Final Projects
	Macbeth		Final Projects
Week 8	*Macbeth*	Week 17	Final Projects
	Macbeth		Final Projects
	Macbeth		EOY Presentations
	Macbeth		EOY Presentations
	Macbeth		EOY Presentations
Week 9	*Gulliver's Travels* Assign Book Reviews	Week 18	Final Exams
	Gulliver's Travels		Final Exams
	Gulliver's Travels		Final Exams
	Gulliver's Travels		Winter Break
	Gulliver's Travels		Winter Break

While this occurs, meet with two-three students. Come back together as a class and share

sustaining points of argument and closure. While this occurs, meet with two-three

students. Come back together as a whole class and share sustaining points of argument

and closure.

Tuesday: Settle students, "Good Things" per district policy Students read for 15-20

minutes. Examples of student and real-world satire are explored through *SNL* clips,

Onion articles, and short story. Students will divide into their editing groups and create

short, poetic satire (limerick, haiku) satire as part of the *Gulliver's Travels (1726)* mini

unit. While this group work is occurring, investigator will individually conference with

two-three readers in the hall about reading goals and check-ins about their book.

Wednesday: Settle students, "Good Things" per district policy Students read for 15-20

minutes. Donne Poetry and begin *Dead Poets Society (1989).* Meet with two-three

students for individual book conferences.

Thursday: Settle students, "Good Things" per district policy Students read for 15-20

minutes. Carpe Diem Poetry Analysis and Questions from textbook. Meet with two-three

students for individual book conferences.

Friday: Good Things" per district policy Students read for 15-20 minutes. Finish *Dead

Poets Society (1989)* and close with discussion on the arts in public high school and

aesthetic life. Meet with two-three students for individual book conferences during film.

Assumptions for ANCOVA

Like all analyses, certain assumptions had to be met before loading the data into

SPSS. The assumptions for One-Way ANCOVA are as listed below as well as

contingency plans in case one or more of these assumptions were violated during this study. The RESULTS chapter will delve into these assumptions with accompanying SPSS outputs.

1. Independent observations. Subjects were not placed into multiple groups simultaneously.

2. Normality: In this case, the number of subjects ($N = 52$) well exceeded the number where checking for distribution was required (appx. $N < 20$), but the RESULTS chapter still includes initial normality testing on the pretest with posttest normality analysis.

3. Homogeneity of Variance (Homoscedasticity): "the variance of the dependent variable must be equal over all subpopulations. This is only needed for sharply unequal sample sizes" (*spss* tutorials); since the sample sizes were equal, this assumption was met. In the case of massive attrition until such a sharp inequality occurs, another analysis will be performed. Quantitative figures were still included for this assumption in the RESULTS chapter.

4. Linearity: assumption that the relationship between the dependent variable and each covariate is a generally straight line (see RESULTS chapter).

5. Homogeneity of regression slopes: the b-coefficient(s) for the covariate(s) must be equal among all subpopulations (See RESULTS chapter).

Limitations

With regards to internal validity, Campbell and Stanley (1963) give eight major threats unique to educational research: History, Maturation, Testing, Instrumentation,

Statistical Regression, Experimental Mortality, Differential Selection, and Selection-Maturation Interaction. The threats unique to this experiment are thus included with this limitations section:

1. Testing: By the time of the GMRT posttest, the 52 participants were acclimated to the form and procedures of the GMRT by taking the pretest. Accordingly, this is submitted as a limitation. Though the pretest and posttest are completely different questions, participants will at least be familiar with the format of the GMRT.

2. Mortality: Since Covid-19, there is always the instance that a resurgence could occur, and the school could shut down ending this project. There is also a possibility of loss of participants as this is an option offered for ethical reasons on the IRB-approved permission forms. However, barring these extreme circumstances, the research site's graduation rate was 90% in 2019 and holds a slightly upward trend, and so I did not believe that there would be significant mortality in this group.

External validity threats for educational research design include reactive or interaction effects of testing, selection biases, reactive effects of experimental arrangements, treatment diffusion, and multiple treatment interference or, more commonly "treatment interference interaction." The external validity threats submitted as limitations here are:

1. The potential for multiple treatment interference; as described by Campbell and Stanley (1963), "Multiple treatment interreference, [is] likely to occur whenever multiple treatments are applied to the same respondents, because the effects of prior treatments are not usually erasable" (p. 6). Students in this study have all

been given choice in reading materials from previous years in classrooms where some version of SSR/DIR was practiced. They have all been exposed to some version of SSR/DIR during their time at the research site as well. I submit this as a limitation to this study.

2. The reactive effect of testing: Campbell and Stanley (1963) state that "a pretest might increase or decrease the respondent's sensitivity or responsiveness to the experimental variable, and this makes the results obtained for a pretested population unrepresentative of the effects of the experimental variable for the unprotested universe from which the experimental respondents were selected" (p. 6). This quasi-experimental model is uniquely plagued by this possibility and is submitted as a limitation.

3. Treatment diffusion: As part of the SSR/DIR focus, students in both groups will interact with each other. Controlling for this threat by conducting the study at different sites or asking students not to discuss the particulars of this study is not possible either because interaction is key in modern SSR/DIR and does not reflect normal classroom procedure.

The last major limitation is that interest surveys were not used in this study. Modern SSR/DIR includes genre interest surveys, but this study did not use them since this introduces a confounding variable which cannot be ethically controlled for.

Summary

This chapter provided a profile of the research site, the estimated demographics, IRB processes, schedule of the school, schedule of the study, method of sorting groups,

IRB considerations, justification for ANCOVA, method of security for participants, and

eventual disposal of data. Use of Lexile and a description of the pretest covariate was

included, and the specifics of how the treatment and GMRT were delivered and analyzed

were provided in this section. The method of SSR/DIR is detailed as well as a weekly

schedule example for the 12-week treatment. Assumptions/limitations for ANCOVA

were listed.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

During the recruitment process, it was noted that students designated as Black or African American or LatinX in district data were more hesitant to consent to take part in the research based on observable trends. For example, only 67% of the available students identified as Black or African American consented to be in the study; of the available LatinX pool of students, 79% consented to participate in the study. This is in sharp contrast to the 93% participation rate of available White students and the 100% participation rate of students designated as Asian. This phenomenon of reluctance of Black or African American populations to volunteer as research participants is in keeping with the research of Scharff et al. (2010) and must be submitted as a limitation to this study. Recommendations for this unique obstacle are included in the DISCUSSION chapter.

Students had four days to complete the personal assent and consent forms. Upon completion and return of these forms, the IRB-approved research assistant administered the GMRT pretest and secured the identities of the participants from me (the PI) to prevent potential bias during the intervention. Following the GMRT pretest, AMRP surveys were completed, collected, and secured. Participants were sorted into groups using a random number generator. An informal survey was conducted to ascertain whether students had been previously reading on-level. These reported book titles were analyzed for reading level using the Lexile™ hub to find out if subjects had been reading on-level before this study. The research assistant communicated the non-identifiable GMRT pretest scores to the PI for ANCOVA assumptions testing, normality testing, and

t-testing to ascertain if there were significant differences between the Choice and No Choice groups as the random number generator had sorted them based on GMRT pretest scores. The t-tests were conducted to ensure the designated analysis would be appropriate.

The ANCOVA Assumptions and How Those Assumptions Were Met

1. Independent observations: subjects were not placed in multiple groups simultaneously, and their scores were kept secured from each other

2. Normality: Though not expressly required for ANCOVA with an (N = 52) sample, whole group normality testing with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests of normality produced ($p = .200$) and ($p = .227$) respectively. These values indicate that the pretest GMRT distribution was not significantly different from a normal distribution. Further, the kurtosis statistic (-.394) and the skewness statistic (-.345) were both well within the ±1 threshold. The Histogram and Q-Q plot outputs were likewise reasonable (see Figures 4.1 and 4.2). Before proceeding with the three-month SSR/DIR intervention, an independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the GMRT pretest scores for the Choice and No Choice groups. There was no significant difference in mean scores for the Choice group ($M = 73.5000$, $SD = 11.2045$) and the No Choice group ($M = 68.2308$, $SD = 11.4693$; $t(50) = 1.676$, $p = .100$, two-tailed). The magnitude of differences in the means (mean difference = 5.2692, 95% CI [-1.0468, 11.5852]) was small (eta squared = .02). Though ANCOVA is considered robust against either a normality violation or a violation of homoscedasticity, it is not robust against both
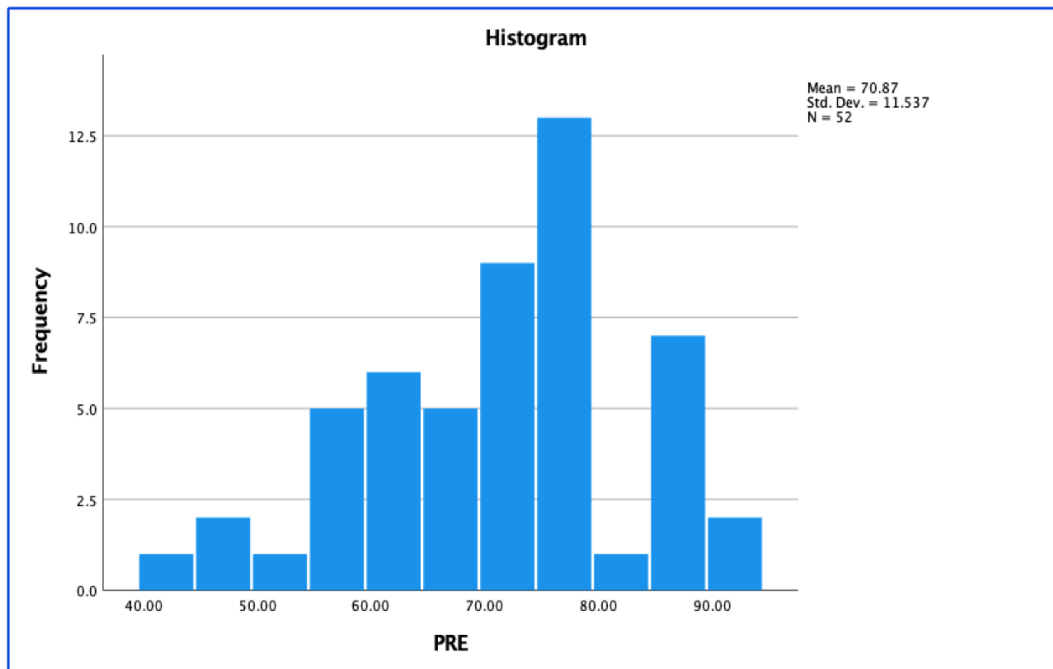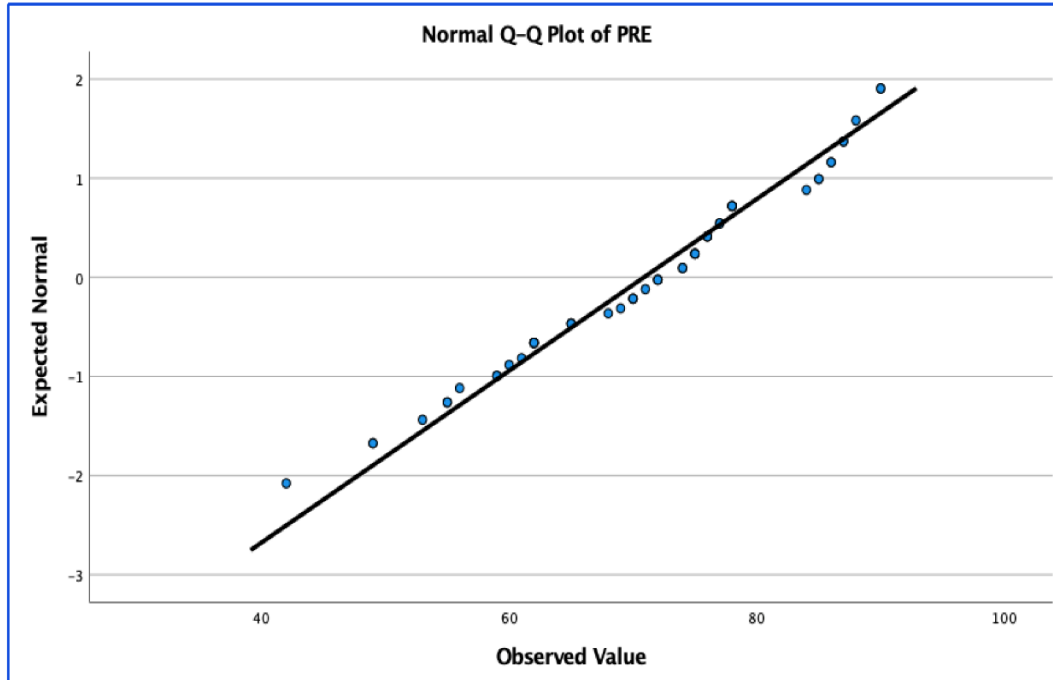
PRE

Figure 4.1. Histogram (Normality Testing)

Figure 4.2. Q-Q Plot (Normality Testing)

simultaneously (Olejnik & Algina, 1984), so the due diligence process was included in this draft to show how both assumptions were accounted for and to plan for any sampling issues leading to ANCOVA being an inappropriate analysis. Though not expressly required for this analysis assumption, I also conducted normality testing for the GMRT posttest and its standardized residuals (see Homoscedasticity for residuals). Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk produced ($p = .200$) and ($p = .367$) respectively. Skewness statistic was (-.316) and kurtosis was (-.537). When separating the groups for normality testing of the pretest subgroups, the Choice group showed acceptable skewness (-.112) though the kurtosis statistic was admittedly high (-.1.091). The value did not exceed twice the value of the standard error (.887); more importantly, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk normality tests produced statistically acceptable results ($p = .200$ and $p = .168$ respectively); the residuals were also normal. For the No Choice group: skewness (-.608), kurtosis (-.245), Kolmogorov-Smirnov ($p = .163$), and Shapiro-Wilk ($p = .177$). Q-Q plots, and histograms were acceptable. Based on these normality outputs and t-tests, I concluded that it was appropriate to proceed with the other assumptions.

3. Homoscedasticity: equivalence of groups was maintained during this study—26 in the Choice group and 26 in the No Choice group. Levene's Test of Equality of Error revealed ($p = .803$) for POST. Standardized residuals for POST for each group were normal: Choice ($p = .588$), No Choice ($p = .379$), and whole group (p

= .644) according to Shapiro-Wilk testing. There were no residuals greater than

+/-3 *SD*, and the scatterplot was visually inspected and found to be within reason.

4. Linearity: see the scatterplot and matrix in Figure 4.3; this assumption was met.

5. The homogeneity of regression slopes assumption for ANCOVA dictates that the

   b-coefficient for the covariate(s) must be equal among all subpopulations. Tests of

   Between-Subjects Effects in SPSS revealed $F(1, 48) = 39.079$, $p = .385$ for the

   "group * PRE" level (see SPSS output in Table 4.1).

ANCOVA Results

We failed to reject the Null Hypothesis (Ho), and we concluded that no

statistically significant difference exists between reading achievement as measured by

GMRT posttest scores between the Choice and No Choice groups: $F(1, 49) = 1.285$, $p =$

.262, partial eta squared = .026 (See "group" level in Table 4.2). Partial eta squared

showed a modest effect size despite the failure to reject the Null Hypothesis. No residual

values exceeded +/- 3 *SD*. The ramifications of this result will be further examined in the

DISCUSSION chapter. Beyond the hypothesis decision based on ANCOVA output, the

most important occurrence to report is that students in the Choice and No Choice groups

both averaged modest gains from pretest to posttest GMRT with the Choice group

averaging a pre-post gain of 3.3462%. Among the Choice group, several participants,

especially among the lower pretest GMRT scorers, achieved +0.5 *SD* gains or higher in

the posttest or a one grade-level leap according to Petty's (2022) explanation of *SD* in

educational interventions. The No Choice group also benefitted, but to a lesser degree,

with an average gain of 1.0384%. Though statistically non-significant based on the
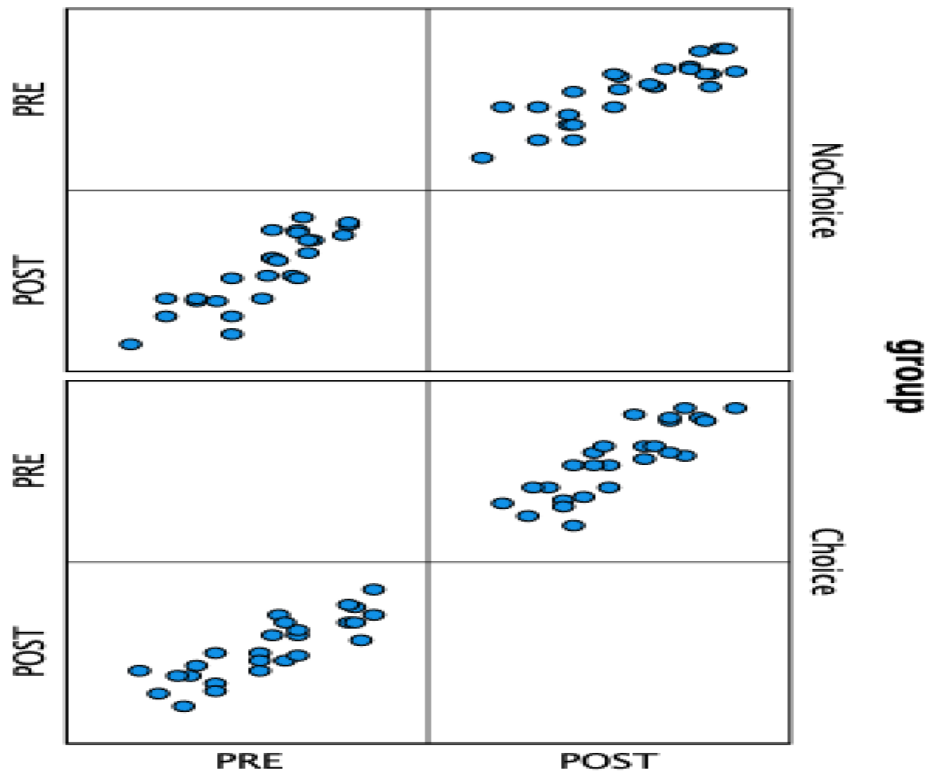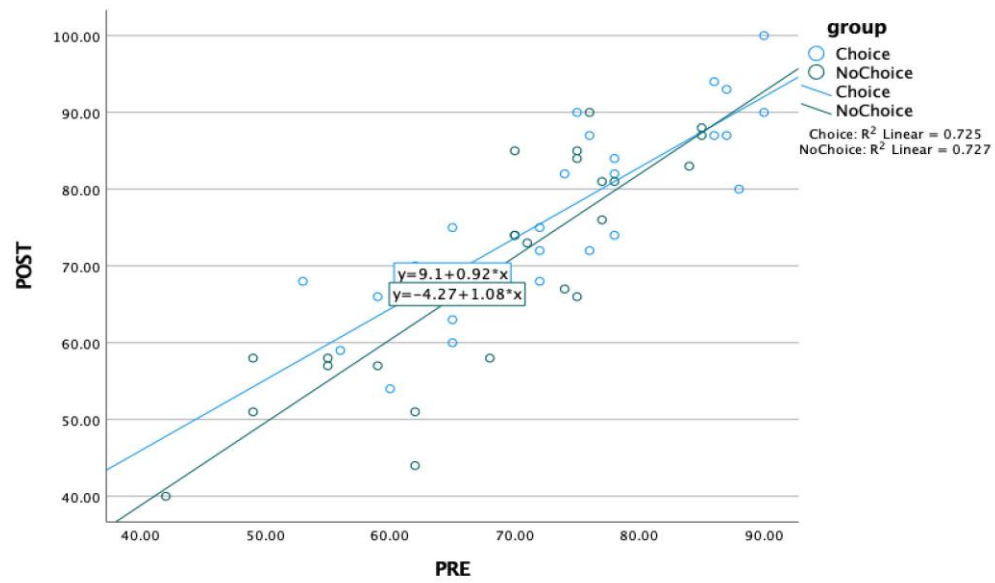
Figure 4.3. Linearity Assumption Testing Output

Table 4.1. Homogeneity of Regression Slopes Assumption Testing Output

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	7233.077	3	2411.026	47.396	<.001
Intercept	7.251	1	7.251	.143	.707
group	55.568	1	55.568	1.092	.301
PRE	6420.732	1	6420.732	126.219	<.001
Group * PRE	39.079	1	39.079	.768	.385
Error	2441.750	48	50.870		
Total	287221.000	52			
Corrected Total	9674.827	51			

R Squared = .748 (Adjusted Square = .732)

Table 4.2. ANCOVA Results Output

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent Parameter	Observed Power
Corrected Model	7193.997	2	3596.999	71.046	<.001	.744	142.092	1.000
Intercept	5.399	1	5.399	.107	.745	.002	.107	.062
PRE	6447.670	1	6447.670	127.351	<.001	.722	127.351	1.000
group	65.072	1	65.072	1.285	.262	.026	1.285	.199
Error	2480.830	49	50.629					
Total	287221.000	52						
Corrected Total	9674.827	51						

R Squared = .744 (Adjusted R Squared = .733), alpha = .05.

parameters of this quasi-experiment, it is important to report that the students' reading comprehension was positively impacted for most students based on the GMRT posttest regardless of group placement.

AMRP Surveys

The Likert style questions from the AMRP survey were quantified on a scale of one to four to give every survey a value per the scoring instructions included with this tool. Parametric testing in the form of a Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) was conducted to ascertain any relationship between the AMRP surveys and the GMRT posttest. Results indicated a medium yet still statistically significant positive correlation between the survey scores and GMRT posttest performance, $r(50) = .310$, $p = .025$. This modest, yet still statistically significant posttest value, should be considered in future studies. For future reference, the pretest GMRT correlation was reported at $r(50) = .246$, $p = .079$.

Student Interviews

In addition to the quantitative analysis, six student interviews were conducted by the assisting researcher following the AMRP Interview protocol included in this document (see Appendix 3.2). I was barred from conducted the interviews myself at the request of UTK's IRB to dissuade the possibility of undue influence. The full transcripts of these six interviews are included in the Appendix section (see Appendix 4.1-4.6). Interview candidates are described as the following: a participant in the Choice group whose GMRT score increased from pretest to posttest (see Appendix 4.1), a participant in the Choice group whose GMRT score decreased from pretest to posttest (see Appendix

4.2), a participant in the Choice group whose GMRT score stayed the same from pretest to posttest (see Appendix 4.3), a participant in the No Choice group whose GMRT score increased from pretest to posttest (see Appendix 4.4), a participant in the No Choice group whose GMRT score decreased from pretest to posttest (see Appendix 4.5), and a participant in the No Choice group whose GMRT score stayed the same from pretest to posttest (see Appendix 4.6). The interview questions follow the interview protocol included with the AMRP survey (see Appendix 3.2).

I attempted an inductive, thematic analysis for the interviews. In this way, I was permitted to allow themes to emerge organically. It is critical to note that these interviews were conducted by the research assistant referenced in the reliance agreement in the appendix (see Appendix 3.6).. This third-party research assistant was necessary to comply with IRB approval because the IRB committee was concerned about undue influence (i.e. the interviewer could not be the same investigator as the PI delivering the intervention). In keeping with the letter and spirit of this requirement, I chose to not include statements that reference my own influence as the PI and teacher-of-record in this analysis. The reason for this redaction is that it could be argued that favorable statements towards the PI in these student interviews, despite the unaffiliated research assistant acting as the interviewer, could skew the answers as the participants knew that I would hear the recording of these interviews later. These statements are still included in the full transcripts in the appendix in case another researcher wishes to analyze them, but they remain outside of the thematic analysis. In addition, identifying information regarding the school district was redacted both from the thematic analysis and the included transcripts.

The themes are examined, analyzed, and put into context in the following section which is organized by the AMRP Interview questions serving as level three headings. Not all questions are included in this analysis because certain questions did not prompt qualitatively significant parallel themes.

What Do You Think You Have to Learn to Be a Better Reader?

Participant "A" reported "Um, to practice like sit down and put a timer on and like to read on a constant speed you know if I can like without messing up, nothing, you know, if I can overcome that you know." Participant "J" responded to the question:

> Um, I definitely, reading, I learn patience because it's something I'm not good at but with reading a book I have to have a lot of patience, you know, about the story line, even just sitting in my chair and reading a book sometimes it's very like, I get antsy, you know, but I've learned how to like calm down and really like read and dig deep into the book.

Participant K responded: "Mmm, probably to make time for it in my day." Participant CM responded: "Like to be better at reading? Um, just read more books, increase my understanding." Participant G responded: "Um, just the curriculum, I guess, to like understand words and um, and like how the story goes along because if I'm reading a book and I'm like getting confused, and I can't keep up with it, it's less interesting." Participant IN responded:

> I think I need to like be a better reader…I think I need to, like, learn the concept of reading. Like you can't just read the book, and then it's done, you have to know, like, the story behind it, you have to know what the author felt while

writing it, so I feel like I…to be a better reader, I need to, like, you know, learn

the concept of why they wrote it.

Of these six responses, three cited "time" or time-related words such as "to sit down" or "patience." These words indicate the current premium on teenagers' time and, if we are to accept the research on SSR/DIR efficacy in its best practice form outlined by Miller and Moss (2013), the time may need to be provided within the school day if it is unlikely to be provided elsewhere. Finding and making time, argues Donalyn Miller (2011), is the greatest obstacle to SSR/DIR implementation; the student-participants seem to support this argument. This parallel echoes Moss (2021) who insists on the importance of time in independent reading in schools.

Do You Share Any of the Following Reading Materials with Members of Your Family: Newspapers, Magazines, Religious Materials, or Games?

When prompted with question D4 from the interview protocol, participant "A" responded, "Mostly my mom…often." Participant "J" responded:

Um, my grandfather is very, very interested in, I mean, honestly, anything in like news, anything politics, so, I mean, I always sit down and talk to him about it because I mean, you know, I'll gladly talk to him about anything, so if it's something he's interested in I'll sit there and listen, so he'll pull out the newspaper, he'll show me different things. I also come from a Christian household, so we have the Bible in our pockets very, very often so…

Participant "K" responded, "Uh, probably my dad… I think around lunch, or around the dinner table, we'll talk about stuff that's going on in the world and what we think about

it… probably Sunday dinner so, once a week." Participant "CM" responded, "Yeah I'll send like, if I see a news article or something, I'll send it to my family…pretty much every day I assume." Participant "G" stated, "All of them" but said this practice of shared reading occurs "rarely." Participant "IN" said, "my mom… pretty often because like we do it like every week or so." The previous responses were surprising; all six participants interviewed stated that shared reading with family members was an occurrence in their homes, and all but one reported that this was a regular practice (every day to weekly).

Tell Me About the Most Interesting Story or Book You Have Read Recently

When prompted with question A1, only half of the participants (A, J, K) referenced the book they were reading or had read for the study. Though six interviews may be too small of a sample to report observable trends with high confidence, it is worth noting that, in a seeming contradiction, two of the three participants in the No Choice group referenced their SSR/DIR reading material, and only one in the Choice group referenced their SSR/DIR reading material. However, regardless of Choice or No Choice group assignment, the participants who referenced their SSR/DIR reading material averaged well over half *SD* ahead of their peers on the AMRP survey based on the Lickert questions (*SD* = 8.857). Though the correlation between GMRT posttest scores and the Lickert scores was modest, there may be indication that the survey can indicate not only motivation to read, in general, but engagement with the novel itself within an SSR/DIR program. However, this is a large observation from a small sample, and more research is needed to substantiate this theory.

Responses pertaining to interest in any of the participants' respective novels within this SSR/DIR study or otherwise were as varied and diverse as the students in the sample. The research assistant followed the interview protocol with the provided probing questions. Participant "A" connected strongly with the novel he mentioned in response to question 1A because of his own immigrant journey. He connected with the story because he saw a part of himself and his community in the protagonist. In his own words, "A" states, "I feel like I've always talked about like how immigration started, how I connect with my people–my Hispanic culture–so I just felt like this is like somehow what I connect with it, and like we go through this every single day."

Participant "J" resisted the narrative that social media is replacing the reading of books (Natanson, 2022) and mentions social media, not as a deterrent, but seemingly an outright inducement to independent reading. For example, in the interview from "J":

RA: Awesome. Um, how did you know or find out about this book?

J: On social media. She's all-over social media

RA: How did you, I think I already asked you this, but I'll ask you again. How did you find out about these books?

J: Just like on social media, honestly, and my friends, we all read them so we all have just switched books here around, you know.

RA: Awesome! Tell me about your favorite author.

J: Definitely her, Colleen Hoover. She's just great, I mean she's the next big thing, she really is like all of her like TikTok and social media she is very talked about.

While it may be too optimistic to hope for co-existence between conventional novel reading and the era of social media, the statements from "J" indicate a glimmer of hope in that social media's assumed destruction of literacy as it is conventionally and narrowly defined may be exaggerated.

Participant "K" had an unanticipated response. As a Choice group reader, this student claimed that, along with the well-crafted plot, the visuals on the book jacket were the most compelling elements for his engagement. In his own words:

RA: Mm huh. That's good. Um, how did you know or find out about this book? You may have already mentioned that, but if you'll say that again.

K: Yes ma'am. I found out or saw the book on the bookshelf and it stuck out to me because on the spine of the book it has big, bright, red letters so I, like, opened it. I was the first one up to go grab a book and, on the front, I saw Leonardo DiCaprio.

RA: (laughs) Mm huh.

K: …and it's like an instantly recognizable face and so that's what made me decide to pick the book because there's a movie, although I haven't watched it, it's based off the book.

Research seems to agree with participant "K." The jacket design matters (Ubbiali, 2020). Even the color of the book matters (Suminas, 2017), and a recognizable celebrity gracing the cover of the novel might even help. Market research from Mind Stir Media Group (2022) indicates that associating a book in some way with a well-known celebrity boosts book demand. The visual potential for engagement ought to be considered by the

SSR/DIR educator/researcher in choosing books to build a classroom library. Ubbiali (2020) notes that different editions of classic books are being produced with updated jackets to reflect modern, visual preferences.

"CM" reported an interest in the classics as a motivator. "G" closely paralleled "A" because his interest was so closely related to his experience in how he connected with the characters albeit in much lower stakes. In "G's" own words:

G: Um, I read about overcoming adversity in a book like a dude got, a guy got injured and he had to overcome that to get ready for the season, which hit home to me because I got hurt last year during our season and I've been working my way to come back so it really helped me out.

RA: Yeah, you could really identify. Gotcha. Um, how did you know or find out about reading material on this?

G: Uh, about…?

RA: What you were just talking about.

G: Oh, uh, just reading the book and it kind of just hit home when I first like started reading it and like the quotes they were saying so it just helped me get through what I was going through.

RA: I gotcha. That makes sense. Um, why was reading this important to you?

G: Uh, because, kind of like I just said, it just helped me get through a tough time, I guess.

RA: Mm huh.

G: And it helped me realize that other people are going through the same stuff I

was going through.

The book "G" is referring to is *Friday Night Lights (1990),* a devastating work of non-fiction. As an athlete with dreams of a Division I future "G" lived some portion of the tragedy in this book because he too had suffered a season-ending injury like the character from the book.

"IN" responded that it was her social network of girlfriends who influenced her own reading interest as well as her professed identity as a girl which, again, supports the notion that readers are drawn to stories and subject matter they personally connect with. In "IN's" own words:

> IN: Oh, on the article. Um, my friend recommended me it because she wanted to know my opinion because she had a different opinion and so we had like this argument and I was like you can't just, you know, give your opinion like that. You don't know what the other person might say, and she was like yeah, that's right but she was really confident about her and I was like I'm not going to back off because I know I'm right. Like whatever this is about we don't know, we're not in that situation.
>
> RA: Uh huh.
>
> IN: So, I found out through a friend.
>
> RA: I gotcha. Ok. Why was reading this important to you?
>
> IN: The article?
>
> RA: Yes.
>
> IN: Because it was, I don't know, I'm a girl (quiet laugh).

RA: (laughs).

IN: So, it was kind of like feminine came in the way, but it was that story, I think
it was about a girl and a guy and it was like about their in-personal things, and he
was like blaming her for things and she took it and then it was like, you know, a
girl can relate about another girl.

RA: Good. Who gets you really interested and excited about reading?

IN: Oh, my best friend. She loves reading and so she tells me the book she read
and so makes me into reading, too. So, yeah.

Along with "J," "IN" also made a case for the internet's place in the future of reading:

RA: Ok. How do you find out about these books? Or how, how do you find about,
how do you find out about books that you may be interested in?

IN: Um, I mean nowadays it's just like online.

RA: Uh huh.

IN: So, I just like, go online and like search if I'm in the mood of reading I just
search and there's online books that I can read on my phone so I do that.

Summary

This chapter reported the anomalies I experienced while recruiting, how the
assumptions for ANCOVA were met with accompanying figures, tables, residuals
testing, and the actual results of the ANCOVA. A decision was made concerning the Null
Hypotheses (Ho) based on the reported p-value. The correlational values between the
AMRP survey on GMRT posttest and posttest scores were reported with a Pearson

Correlation Coefficient. Types of interview cases were reported, thematically analyzed, and the full transcripts of the interviews were included with Appendix 4.1-4.6.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

The Earl of Beaconsfield and former British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli once wrote: "There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics." This epigraph captures the sentiment I feel as I reluctantly reports these results because the emphasis on *p*-values does not encapsulate what happened in this classroom over these three months nor what would have occurred statistically with an even slightly lower effect size to dictate the number of participants in G*Power. Most importantly, the *p*-value doesn't capture the 15 students who achieved gains of +0.5 *SD* or greater. Fagella-Luby, Ware, and Capozzoli (2009) state that "the field of adolescent literacy is replete with ambiguous terminology requiring clarification" (p. 455); if the results of this quasi-experiment are to be accepted, then reading researchers ought to add quantitative metrics to the list of ambiguities in need of clarification. Future researchers cannot have a G*Power analysis which dictates the number of participants based off the effect size reported by Guthrie and Humenick's (2004) metanalysis, especially for upper secondary reading research. By modeling methodology of experiments off of their extravagant effect size ($d = 1.2$), which could not even be replicated with a merely "large" effect size dictating the number of participants in initial power testing, reading researchers may not be able to detect what, in actuality is certainly not the "silver bullet" promised by their metanalysis but may actually still be a worthwhile and effective intervention to increase reading comprehension.

The most substantial conclusion from this study—its contribution to the field—is that this study could not replicate significant results based on such a large effect size. For

future research, SSR/DIR researchers should express caution and a healthy skepticism in accepting exaggerated effect sizes when constructing the methodology of their experiments, and should, instead, adopt a moderately balanced effect size to dictate their G*Power analyses. While not as exciting, and mired in a philosophy of incrementalism, this more sober approach is best. Again, please see Hattie's (2017) ranking of educational interventions where "choice-of-text" would rank as the seventh highest educational intervention in the history of the study of educational interventions and related effect sizes. This quasi-experiment failed to replicate this assertion from Guthrie and Humenick (2004), and one can only wonder how many other studies could be failing to produce statistically significant results because the researchers are running studies using entirely insufficient sample sizes by looking for an effect size that is far too large based on their literature reviews. I recommend replication, or any foray into examining choice, with a more conservative effect size in the G*Power analysis such as the moderate ($d = 0.5$ or $f = 0.25$ for ver. 3.1 G*Power input) as even half SD is equivalent to an entire grade leap (Petty, 2022). In education, as with economics, it seems that researchers are looking for a windfall rather than responsible growth. One can only theorize as to how much false data has been produced based on the accepted effect size in the literature leading to absurdly miniscule samples and a host of type II errors. With the research on SSR/DIR and choice admittedly light, researchers should trend towards the middle in building their methodology for future studies rather than accepting the extremes of Guthrie and Humenick's (2004) meta-analysis that, when placed into context, states that choice yields an effect size of over two grade-levels.

Bringing the Theoretical Framework to Fruition

Instructional Design Theory framework is designed to offer clear guidance on how to better help students learn and develop (Reigeluth, 1999). This framework further addresses the process of gathering information for making decisions about what instruction should be like. To fulfill this framework, the outline and results of this study were packaged in a video and presented to the deputy superintendent and curriculum czar of the district in which this study took place. The deputy superintendent requested this data presentation from me at the conclusion of the study. This same video was presented to the ELA department head of the research site to inform next year's SSR/DIR practice and contribute to our collective research and conversations about reading as we seek to refine our pedagogy. This was done to provide a more complete picture of our practice and understanding of SSR/DIR, and I am confident that there will be future, non-university affiliated studies concerning SSR/DIR in this district. Based on this study, district administrators will have to decide if the modest eta squared effect size is worth pursuing. The only substantial difference in data between the presentation to the district official and to the UTK dissertation committee was that the district official received additional analysis on ACT data of individual students as it relates to this study. Unfortunately, I am not permitted to release that additional data to UTK as this portion consisted of analysis not approved by IRB and may constitute a FERPA violation. I hope that the stakeholders mentioned above will see that, regardless of group, students in the SSR/DIR study made gains in reading comprehension.

Recommendations for Future Studies

Concerning high-school students, it would be beneficial in future studies to create and norm a tool to see how hard participants *tried* on the tests. It may be that our data about reading comprehension is flawed for upper-secondary; perhaps literacy rates aren't declining after 12 as NAEP reports. It may be that students are merely sick of being tested, especially when the tests upon which we measure their performance are not linked to any motivating factor when the adolescent has moved from the "wanting to please" psychological stage into a more disaffected stage where internal motivation becomes precarious. We cannot employ the same methods of evaluating reading comprehension lest we continue to collect this loaded data. For example, when the student-participant "G" interviewed as the "No Choice group: Decrease in Score from Pre to Post" case in Appendix 4.5 reported his previous SSR novel before this study, the title was of the highest text complexity of any of his peers regardless of treatment group. In book talks about his previous reading, he showed understanding of what he had read too. However, this participant showed a massive loss of nearly a full standard deviation from GMRT pretest to posttest.

Interpreting this phenomenon is difficult; it is possible that despite enrolling in this study, this participant saw the posttest as "just another standardized test," and since this student had already been accepted into his first-choice university, he no longer saw the value in giving his full effort. For him, it was a low-stakes test, and low stakes testing comes with its own well-documented motivational issues (Wise & DeMars, 2005; Finn, 2015). If this theory is an accurate description, future researchers should consider this

element in constructing their studies. At some point, at the higher level of secondary education, this may explain why SSR/DIR research is so concentrated in the elementary and early adolescent levels; those research tools employed in those studies may actually be measuring reading comprehension with student effort serving as a minor issue while at the upper-secondary levels, student effort may need to be measured as a major covariate in future research. Reading comprehension may not be in in crisis or even in an alarming downward trend as previous research suggests (Barshay, 2021). What researchers may be seeing is not a sudden drop in literacy but rather a sudden drop in engagement and motivation on the measuring tools (including surveys) which have been designed to measure reading comprehension of much younger students. It's not that they can't read; there is a disparity in the measurement based on "G's" interview and previous reading level which illustrates this disparity. It may be that they are only exhausted from being tested instead of manifesting *declining literacy*. In short, I recommend that future researchers add a test-effort survey tool or outright increase the incentives if such a survey tool is unavailable; this will be a worthy covariate to include.

In addition, the survey tool used in this study must be updated for the 2020s student. For example, this study used the 2007 version of the Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile survey tool; in future research, the PI should consider using the newest version of this tool. As Malloy, Marinak, Gambrell, and Mazzoni state, "[T]he original MRP was developed in 1996, a revision that would reflect the cultural and linguistic changes that occurred in the ensuing decade was needed. For example, digital reading sources were not considered in the original version but now are explored in the revised

conversational interview" (p. 274). The 2007 version of this tool was used, but the more recent model included from Malloy et al. (2013) will be a better measure of motivation for the modern student.

Recent research from Gneezy, List, Livingston, Qin, Sadoff, and Xu (2019) highlights the possible disparity between tested comprehension and actual comprehension. When incentives were introduced to a group of students on a basic standardized test (*PISA*), American students showed higher performance than the non-incentivized control group ($p < 0.01$). The incentives in this study were limited by my own finances. Future researchers may need to adjust the timing and level of incentive to achieve closer-to-accurate results. This suggestion of testing for motivation does not include the AMRP survey which gives a quantitative value, via Lickert Scale; rather, a future study should consider a motivation tool as it relates to the comprehension testing tool itself.

Further research should test for or, at least account for, the likelihood that literacy rates may not actually be declining but we are simply assuming that the older adolescent mind operates the same as the elementary mind and testing accordingly despite research insisting upon the changes in motivation essential in teenagers. Future research should ascertain testing attempt-level with a post-survey of some kind as a covariate—a "How hard did you try on this test?" survey. This could reduce the statistical noise and perhaps mitigate the possibility of false data en masse. There is a tempting trap for quantitative researchers to merely increase the participant sample of a study to achieve statistical significance, but this comes with a unique problem: Armstrong (2019) states, "if a result

is statistically significant it is assumed to be clinically relevant. This assumption becomes less reliable as sample size increases as diminishing effect sizes become statistically significant" (p. 129). So, for me, there is a fine line to walk in designing studies, especially with many reviewers still solely emphasizing *p*-values (Ellis, 2020). It is important to note that in this study, the literature review effect size of (d = 1.2) or "extremely large" was already reduced to merely "large" during the G*Power to establish the appropriate number of participants, and still a significant result was not observed. I recommend that future researchers seeking to replicate this study or any study involving choice-of-text and reading comprehension set their effect size at (f = 0.25) in G*Power (ver. 3.1) and perform the study with 128 participants instead of (N = 56) (See Figure 5.1); by doing so, a balance is maintained between a manageable number of participants and a moderate effect size detection power test.

While not a recommendation *per se*, future researchers should be aware of current legislation concerning classroom libraries. While it did not directly affect this study in a meaningful way, legislation during the experiment dictated that novels in classroom libraries were to be scanned and deemed appropriate or inappropriate by the district's media specialists. This policy did not go into effect during the school year in which the research took place, but future researchers seeking potential replication should be mindful of these new policies concerning classroom libraries. As books are challenged across the country, reading researchers will need to be shrewd in their book selections for class libraries and be prepared to defend these selections as they are scrutinized by community stakeholders of varying agendas.
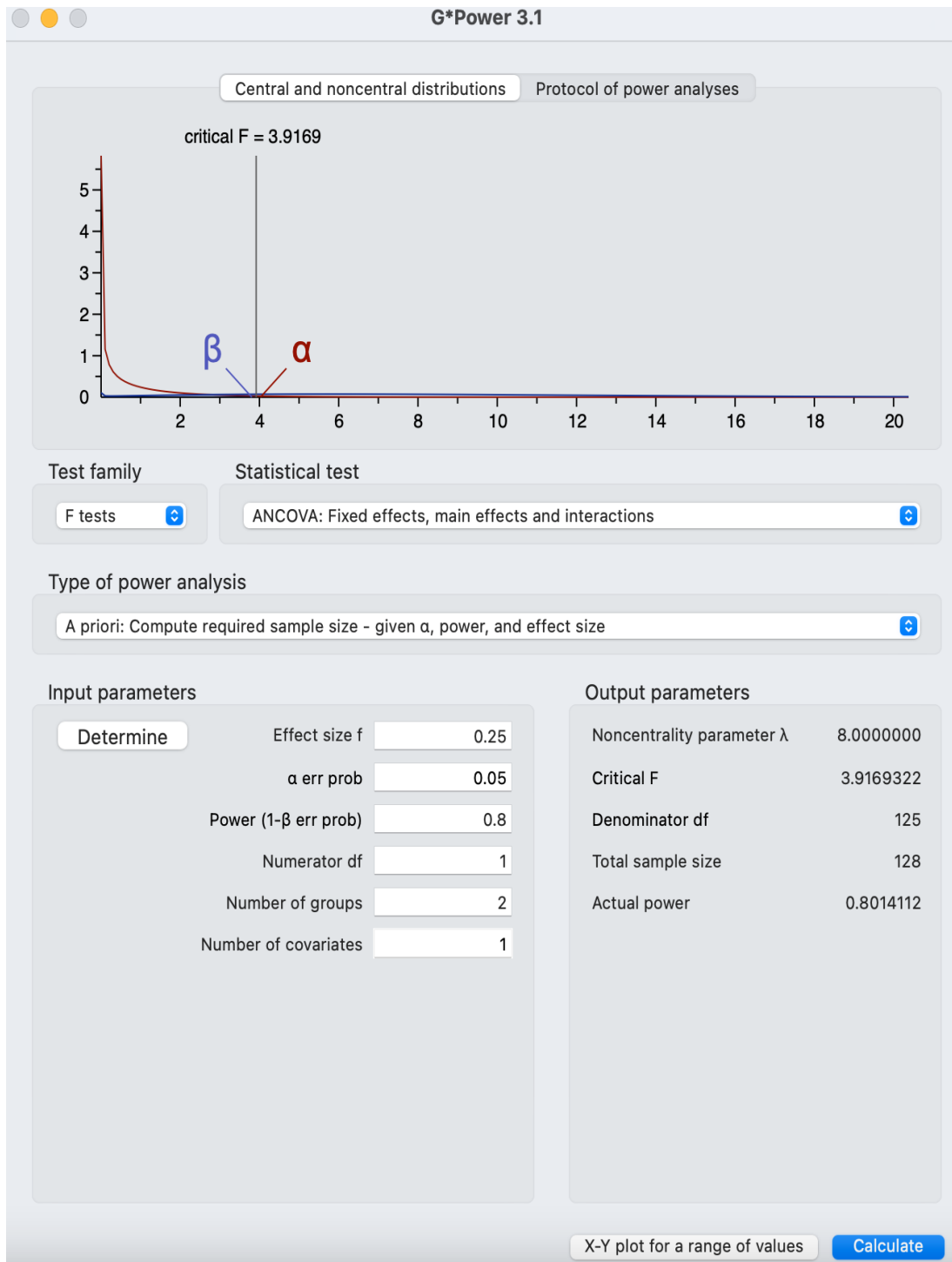
Figure 5.1. Suggested G*Power Output for Future Studies

In addition to fire alarms, tornado drills, and the *Carnival* excess of homecoming week, there were other confounding issues with this intervention. Not all students in this study met the three-whole-novels benchmark. Future studies should either emphasize time spent reading or control for this via a covariate. There are fast readers and slow readers, and future researchers ought to plan for these WPM disparities or include an additional tool to account for respective WPM of participants. There are many open-source tools to quickly and conveniently calculate student WPM, and adding such a measurement to a study would enrich the data.

The final recommendation for future replication concerns recruitment. As stated in the RESULTS chapter, the disparity in voluntary participation among Black/African American students is a consistent phenomenon according to Scharff et al. (2010). In this study, only 67% of the available students identified as Black or African American consented to participate compared to 79% of LatinX students, 93% participation rate of White students and 100% participation of the available students identifying as Asian. Research from the medical field provides suggestions on how to overcome this data-skewing phenomenon. Barret, Ingraham, Hawkins, and Moorman (2017) have created a chart for researchers to consider for overcoming the Black/African American recruitment disparity (see Table 5.1). While I performed the majority of these strategies, I did not perform all relevant strategies in the table (an irrelevant strategy would be "biospecimen collection). These strategies revolve around a relational framework, and it is understood that Black/African American students and their families would be skeptical of institutions and their representatives who have historically mistreated members of this community in

Table 5.1. Recruitment Strategy Chart

Barriers to recruitment	Strategies for improving minority participation
Fear, distrust, confidentiality, and privacy	Be transparent about the research process
Historical atrocities	Acknowledge past problems
Stigma associated with participating in research	Describe current safeguards to protect research participants
Peer and family concerns for the patient	Empower participants by letting them know that the decision to participate is theirs alone
Institutional sharing of personal data	Build rapport by conducting face-to-face interviews instead of phone interviews
Competing priorities and needs	Recognize the whole person. Respect other priorities in their life.
Socioeconomic stressors	Be flexible in scheduling and location of interviews
Family responsibilities	Create a resource book/directory to provide assistance with concerns raised during study participation
Protocol and system barriers	Allow protocol modifications (eg, shorter interviews or complete in more than one sitting)
Rigid or demanding research protocols	Offer alternatives for biospecimen collection
Clinic engagement as a barrier to recruitment	Develop and deepen relationships between clinic staff and research teams

research contexts and otherwise. It may be prudent for the teacher/recruiter to delay the recruitment process until a relationship of trust has been established with all students and especially Black/African American students instead of starting the semester with a recruitment process when the teacher is nothing but a stranger and agent of the institution with a spotted track record in the student's mind. While this comes with its own unique set of limitations such as potential undue influence, it is most certainly outweighed by the potential to redress the 26% participation gap between Black/African American participants and their White peers. Pursuing the correction of this disparity is not merely an issue of methodology but also a matter of grave equity; future researchers in this realm should keep this issue in mind.

Summary

This study revealed several conclusions. The first of these conclusions is the quantitative decision that the ANCOVA failed to reject the Null Hypothesis. When put into context, this leads to two conclusions: that either there is indeed no statistical significance between choice-of-text and No Choice-of-text on reading achievement outcomes in this study or Humenick and Guthrie's (2004, 2007, 2012) effect size assertion has been inflated and may be leading to a host of type II error pitfalls as researchers recruit too few participants based on their literature reviews during which they will inevitably come across the ($d = 1.2$) effect size. It is recommended that researchers set a moderate effect size for future recruitment in their *a priori* power analyses. Student interviews revealed factors of engagement and evolving literacy trends related to digital literacy as well as the need for a larger interview pool to justify observed

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trends in the thematic analysis. Most importantly, it is recommended that future researchers use the revised AMRP from Malloy et al. (2013). Using this revised tool will account for the emphasis on digital reading literacy and may lead to more accurate correlation statistics. The Theoretical Framework of Instructional Design Theory was manifested by sharing results with district stakeholders, conducting further analysis, and making recommendations for future research.

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APPENDIX

3.1 Parent/Guardian Permission Form

Permission for Research Participation of a Minor

Research Study Title: Student Choice of Text and Impacts on Reading Achievement

Researcher(s): Brian DeLoach University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Dr. Susan Groenke, Faculty Advisor, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

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Why is my child being asked to be in this research study?

We are asking your child to be in this research study because they are a member of the age-group this researcher has designated for study, and they have been participating in independent reading since Freshmen year at CHS.

What is this research study about?

The purpose of the research study is to see what impact, if any, student choice-of-text has on reading achievement outcomes.

Who is conducting this research study?

We are giving you the information below so you can decide if this relationship will affect your decision to be in this study: The researcher conducting this study will be the participant's instructor. To control for this potential conflict of interest, permission forms will be collected via third party, and the instructor will not have access to the identity of participants. In this way, All students will be protected against even unconscious bias in this study and will receive an equitable educational experience regardless of their participation in this research.

How long will my child be in the research study?

If you give permission for your child to be in the study, and your child agrees, their participation will last for approximately 12 weeks. There will be a one-hour pretest at the beginning of the 12 weeks and a one-hour posttest at the end of the twelve weeks.

What will happen if I say "Yes, I want my child to be in this research study"?

If you give permission for your child to be in this study, we will ask your child to take a pretest reading comprehension assessment at the beginning of this treatment and a posttest at the conclusion of the 12 weeks. Students who volunteer and whose parents consent will be randomly divided into either assigned reading groups or free-choice groups. All the reading will be at an appropriate Lexile level. The assigned reading group, however, will be matched to high quality and engaging books based on interest surveys in the hopes that all students will be thoroughly engaged during daily independent reading. All this will be performed in addition to their regularly assigned English IV curriculum and will take place during the regularly scheduled independent reading time per department

3.1 Parent/Guardian Permission Form (Continued)

policy. At the conclusion of the post test, unique and typical cases will be interviewed. In this case, another set of permission forms will be distributed to parents of minors.

What happens if I say "No, I do not want my child to be in this research study"?

Your child's being in this study is up to you. You can say no now or leave the study later. Either way, your decision won't affect your child's grades, their relationship with their instructors, or standing within Cleveland High School.

What happens if I say "Yes" but change my mind later?

Even if you decide to allow your child to be in the study now, you can change your mind and stop at any time. If you decide to stop before the study is completed, please report this to the Principal Investigator, Brian DeLoach at **bdeloach@clevelandschools.org** or call (423) 478-1113 and dial extension 8562. If at any time, you report that you would like for your child to be withdrawn from the study, any data collected up to that point will be purged from the study. In the case of publication of any of the data from this study, your child's identity will be secured

Are there any possible risks to my child?

It is possible that someone could find out your child was in this study or see their study information, but we believe this risk is small because of the procedures we use to protect your information. These procedures are described later in this form.

Are there any benefits to being in this research study?

Beyond the compensation due to the participant, there is a possibility that your child may benefit from being in the study, but there is no guarantee that will happen. Possible benefits include an increase in reading comprehension ability. Even if your child doesn't benefit from being in the study, their participation may help us to learn more about how children best learn to read and read better. We hope the knowledge gained from this study will benefit others in the future.

Who can see or use the information collected for this research study?

Identifying information will be kept on a secured laptop that is passcode protected. Consent documents will be kept by the third party in charge of collecting documents in a secured lockbox that the PI will not have access to until after grades are officially posted. The research journal will be digitally logged on the same password-secured laptop. The laptop will be digitally backed-up via passcode protected Google Docs. At the time that the data is presented to the PI's dissertation committee, identifying information will be appropriately coded to protect student privacy. In the case of recorded interviews, which will be accompanied by a separate consent form, the student's privacy will be protected by the PI transcribing the interview and destroying the original audio once complete.

3.1 Parent/Guardian Permission Form (Continued)

If information from this study is published or presented at scientific meetings, your child's name and other personal information will not be used.

We will make every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team from knowing that your child gave us information or what information came from your child. Although it is unlikely, there are times when others may need to see the information we collect about your child. These include:

- People at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville who oversee research to make sure it is conducted properly.
- Government agencies (such as the Office for Human Research Protections in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), and others responsible for watching over the safety, effectiveness, and conduct of the research.
- If a law or court requires us to share the information, we would have to follow that law or final court ruling.
- The Office of Information Technology and the members of the PI's dissertation committee may assist in the analysis of the data.

What will happen to my child's information after this study is over?

We will keep your child's information to use for future research. Your child's name and other information that can directly identify them will be deleted from their research data collected as part of the study.

Will my child be paid for being in this research study?

Your child will be compensated with a ten-dollar gift card to a local cooperating business for returning the form signed to the third party in charge of collecting forms. Regardless of whether the consenting form is returned, your child will be able to participate in the drawing. In addition to the ten-dollar gift card for participants, all students enrolled in the course will be entered into a drawing for a 100-dollar gift card to be awarded at the conclusion of this study. odds of winning are contingent upon the number of students enrolled in the course: approximately 1/52.

*** *Please note: Tennessee gaming law requires that any individual be allowed to participate in the drawing even if that individual does not participate in the research. Accordingly, the consent document must include a statement that anyone age 18 and over may enter the drawing even if they do not participate in the research and provide instructions on how to do so.*

What else do I need to know?

If we learn about any new information that may change your mind about your child's being in the study, we will tell you. If that happens, you may be asked to sign a new permission form.

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3.1 Parent/Guardian Permission Form (Continued)

Who can answer my questions about this research study?

If you have questions or concerns about this study, or have experienced a research related problem, contact the researcher, Brian DeLoach at **bdeloach@clevelandschools.org**, (423)-478-1113 ext. 8562 or the faculty advisor overseeing Mr. DeLoach's research, Dr. Susan Groenke at **sgroenke@utk.edu**.

For questions or concerns about your rights or to speak with someone other than the research team about the study, please contact:

Institutional Review Board
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville
1534 White Avenue
Blount Hall, Room 408
Knoxville, TN 37996-1529
Phone: 865-974-7697
Email: utkirb@utk.edu

STATEMENT OF PERMISSION

I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the chance to ask questions and my questions have been answered. If I have more questions, I have been told who to contact. By signing this document, I am giving permission for my child to be in this study. I will receive a copy of this document after I sign it.

Child's Name (printed) _____

Parent's Name (printed) _____

Parent's Signature _____ Date _____

Researcher Signature (to be completed at time of informed consent)

I have explained the study to the participant and answered all of his/her questions. I believe that he/she understands the information described in this consent form and freely consents to be in the study.

Brian DeLoach_____   _____ TBA_____
Name of Research Team Member   Signature of Research Team Member   Date

3.2 Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile Survey (AMRP)

Figure 1
Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile reading survey
_____

Name: _____   Date: _____

Sample 1: I am in _____.
❑ Sixth grade
❑ Seventh grade
❑ Eighth grade
❑ Ninth grade
❑ Tenth grade
❑ Eleventh grade
❑ Twelfth grade

Sample 2: I am a _____.
❑ Female
❑ Male

Sample 3: My race/ethnicity is _____.
❑ African-American
❑ Asian/Asian American
❑ Caucasian
❑ Hispanic
❑ Native American
❑ Multi-racial/Multi-ethnic
❑ Other: Please specify _____

1. My friends think I am _____.
❑ a very good reader
❑ a good reader
❑ an OK reader
❑ a poor reader

2. Reading a book is something I like to do.
❑ Never
❑ Not very often
❑ Sometimes
❑ Often

3. I read _____.
❑ not as well as my friends
❑ about the same as my friends
❑ a little better than my friends
❑ a lot better than my friends

4. My best friends think reading is _____.
❑ really fun
❑ fun
❑ OK to do
❑ no fun at all

5. When I come to a word I don't know, I can
_____.
❑ almost always figure it out
❑ sometimes figure it out
❑ almost never figure it out
❑ never figure it out

6. I tell my friends about good books I read.
❑ I never do this
❑ I almost never do this
❑ I do this some of the time
❑ I do this a lot

7. When I am reading by myself, I understand
_____.
❑ almost everything I read
❑ some of what I read
❑ almost none of what I read
❑ none of what I read

8. People who read a lot are _____.
❑ very interesting
❑ interesting
❑ not very interesting
❑ boring

9. I am _____.
❑ a poor reader
❑ an OK reader
❑ a good reader
❑ a very good reader

(continued)

3.2 AMRP (Continued)

Name: _____   Date: _____

10. I think libraries are _____.
 ❏ a great place to spend time
 ❏ an interesting place to spend time
 ❏ an OK place to spend time
 ❏ a boring place to spend time

11. I worry about what other kids think about
 my reading _____.
 ❏ every day
 ❏ almost every day
 ❏ once in a while
 ❏ never

12. Knowing how to read well is _____.
 ❏ not very important
 ❏ sort of important
 ❏ important
 ❏ very important

13. When my teacher asks me a question about
 what I have read, I _____.
 ❏ can never think of an answer
 ❏ have trouble thinking of an answer
 ❏ sometimes think of an answer
 ❏ always think of an answer

14. I think reading is _____.
 ❏ a boring way to spend time
 ❏ an OK way to spend time
 ❏ an interesting way to spend time
 ❏ a great way to spend time

15. Reading is _____.
 ❏ very easy for me
 ❏ kind of easy for me
 ❏ kind of hard for me
 ❏ very hard for me

16. As an adult, I will spend _____.
 ❏ none of my time reading
 ❏ very little time reading
 ❏ some of my time reading
 ❏ a lot of my time reading

17. When I am in a group talking about what we are
 reading, I _____.
 ❏ almost never talk about my ideas
 ❏ sometimes talk about my ideas
 ❏ almost always talk about my ideas
 ❏ always talk about my ideas

18. I would like for my teachers to read out loud in
 my classes _____.
 ❏ every day
 ❏ almost every day
 ❏ once in a while
 ❏ never

19. When I read out loud I am a _____.
 ❏ poor reader
 ❏ OK reader
 ❏ good reader
 ❏ very good reader

20. When someone gives me a book for a present, I
 feel _____.
 ❏ very happy
 ❏ sort of happy
 ❏ sort of unhappy
 ❏ unhappy

3.2 AMRP (Continued)

Figure 2
Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile
conversational interview
_____

Name _____

A. Emphasis: Narrative text
  Suggested prompt (designed to engage student in a natural conversation): I have been reading a good book. I was talking with...about it last night. I enjoy talking about what I am reading with my friends and family. Today, I would like to hear about what you have been reading and if you share it.

  1. Tell me about the most interesting story or book you have read recently. Take a few minutes to think about it (wait time). Now, tell me about the book.

     Probe: What else can you tell me? Is there anything else?

  2. How did you know or find out about this book?

     (Some possible responses: assigned, chosen, in school, out of school)

  3. Why was this story interesting to you?

B. Emphasis: Informational text
  Suggested prompt (designed to engage student in a natural conversation): Often we read to find out or learn about something that interests us. For example, a student I recently worked with enjoyed reading about his favorite sports teams on the Internet. I am gong to ask you some questions about what you like to read to learn about.

  1. Think about something important that you learned recently, not from your teacher and not from television, but from something you have read. What did you read about? (Wait time.) Tell me about what you learned.

     Probe: What else could you tell me? Is there anything else?

  2. How did you know or find out about reading material on this?

     (Some possible responses: assigned, chosen, in school, out of school)

  (continued)

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3.2 AMRP (Continued)

Figure 2 (continued)
Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile
conversational interview

3. Why was reading this important to you?

C. Emphasis: General reading

   1. Did you read anything at home yesterday? What?

   2. Do you have anything at school (in your desk, locker, or book bag) today that you are reading?

     Tell me about them.

   3. Tell me about your favorite author.

   4. What do you think you have to learn to be a better reader?

   5. Do you know about any books right now that you'd like to read?

     Tell me about them.

   6. How did you find out about these books?

   7. What are some things that get you really excited about reading?

     Tell me about....

(continued)

3.2 AMRP (Continued)

8. Who gets you really interested and excited about reading?

   Tell me more about what they do.

9. Do you have a computer in your home?

   If they answer yes, ask the following questions:

   How much time do you spend on the computer a day?

   What do you usually do?

   What do you like to read when you are on the Internet?

   If they answer no, ask the following questions:

   If you did have a computer in your home, what would you like to do with it?

   Is there anything on the Internet that you would like to be able to read?

D. Emphasis: School reading in comparison to home reading

   1. In what class do you most like to read?

      Why?

   2. In what class do you feel the reading is the most difficult?

      Why?

(continued)

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3.2 AMRP (Continued)

<div style="border:1px solid">

<p align="center">Figure 2 (continued)
Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile
conversational interview</p>

3. Have any of your teachers done something with reading that you really enjoyed?

   Could you explain some of what was done?

4. Do you share and discuss books, magazines, or other reading materials with your friends outside of school?

   What?

   How often?

   Where?

5. Do you write letters or email to friends or family?

   How often?

6. Do you share any of the following reading materials with members of your family: newspapers, magazines, religious materials, games?

   With whom?

   How often?

7. Do you belong to any clubs or organizations for which you read and write?

   Could you explain what kind of reading it is?

</div>

3.3 Post Experiment Interview Consent Form

Parental Permission for Children Participation in Research

Title: Student Choice-of-Text in an Upper Secondary Independent

Reading Program: A Quasi-Experimental Study

Introduction

The purpose of this form is to provide you (as the parent of a prospective research study participant) information that may affect your decision as to whether to let your child participate in this research study. The person performing the research will describe the study to you and answer all your questions. Read the information below and ask any questions you might have before deciding whether or not to give your permission for your child to take part. If you decide to let your child be involved in this study, this form will be used to record your permission.

Purpose of the Study

If you agree, your child will be asked to participate in a research study about Choice of Text in an Independent Reading program. The purpose of this interview is to provide additional information and context to the study that was described at the beginning of this semester. An additional copy of that permission form is included with this document for your convenience.

What is my child going to be asked to do?

If you allow your child to participate in this study, they will be asked to answer the interview questions included with the Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile Survey. A copy of this survey is included for your convenience, and the interview questions begin on page 3 of that survey. This interview will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

Your child will be audio recorded. To provide accurate transcription of the interview for research purposes. Because your child's information is confidential and to be used solely for research purposes, there are no foreseeable risks to participating in this study.

What are the possible benefits of this study?

Apart from the incentives that all students will receive at the beginning of this study, your child will receive no direct benefit from participating in this interview; however, the interview data may help educators to refine our understanding of how best to teach reading comprehension to students.

Does my child have to participate?

No, your child's participation in this interview is voluntary. Your child may decline to participate or to withdraw from participation at any time. Withdrawal or refusing to participate will not affect their relationship with The University of Tennessee at Knoxville in anyway. You can agree to allow your child to be in the interview now and change your mind later without any penalty.

3.3 Post Experiment Interview Consent Form (Continued)

What if my child does not want to participate?

In addition to your permission, your child must agree to participate in the interview. If you child does not want to participate, they will not be included and there will be no penalty. If your child initially agrees to be in the interview, they can change their mind later without any penalty.

Will there be any compensation?

Neither you nor your child will receive any type of payment for participating in this interview.

How will your child's privacy and confidentiality be protected if s/he participates in this research study?

Your child's privacy and the confidentiality of their data will be protected by the anonymity guaranteed per the previous consent form. If it becomes necessary for the Institutional Review Board to review the study records, information that can be linked to your child will be protected to the extent permitted by law. Your child's research records will not be released without your consent unless required by law or a court order. The data resulting from your child's participation may be made available to other researchers in the future for research purposes not detailed within this consent form. In these cases, the data will contain no identifying information that could associate it with your child, or with your child's participation in any study. If you choose to allow your child to participate in this interview, your child will be audio recorded. Any audio recordings will be stored securely and only the lead investigator will have access to the recording. Recordings will be kept until they are successfully transcribed and then erased.

Whom to contact with questions about the interview process?

Prior, during or after your participation you can contact the researcher **Brian DeLoach** at **423-478-1113 ext. 8652** or send an email to **bdeloach@clevelandschools.org** for any questions or if you feel that your child has been harmed. This study has been reviewed and approved by The University of Tennessee Institutional Review Board and the study number is **[STUDY NUMBER].**

Whom to contact with questions concerning your rights as a research participant?

For questions about your rights or any dissatisfaction with any part of this study, you can contact, anonymously if you wish, the Institutional Review Board by phone at (865) 974-7697 or email at utkirb@utk.edu. You can also contact the dissertation committee chair, Dr. Susan Groenke at sgroenke@utk.edu.

Signature

You are making a decision about allowing your child to participate in this interview. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to allow them to participate in the interview. If you later decide that you wish to withdraw your permission for your child to participate in the interview, you may discontinue their participation at any time. You will be given a copy of this document.

NOTE: Include the following if recording is optional:

_____ My child MAY be audio recorded.

_____ My child MAY NOT be audio recorded.

3.3 Post Experiment Interview Consent Form (Continued)

_____
Printed Name of Child

_____   _____
Signature of Parent(s) or Legal Guardian   Date

_____   _____
Signature of Investigator   Date

3.4 Individual Consent Form for Participants

|

ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Student Choice-of-Text in an Upper Secondary Independent Reading Program:

A Quasi-Experimental Study

1. My name is Brian DeLoach.

2. I am asking you to take part in a research study because I am trying to learn more about how students can learn to read at a higher level.

3. If you agree to be in this study, you will participate in an independent reading program much like the one you have been in for the past three years. The only difference will be that you will be assigned to either a group of students are able to choose their own text from a grade-appropriate reading level or you will be placed into a group of students who are assigned an appropriate text. You will have a pretest before this study to estimate your current reading level and a posttest afterwards to see how much you've grown.

4. The risks in this study are minimal; no one except me and Mrs. Rodriguez will have access to your identifiable information, and only I will have access to the posttest information.

5. There are three major benefits to taking part in this study. Independent reading is associated with higher reading comprehension and ACT scores; this is verifiable in both quasi-experimental and correlational studies, and it is likely that you will perform better on the ACT reading section after taking part in this study. You will also receive a giftcard at the outset of this study simply for returning the signed parental permission form regardless of whether you wish to participate or not. Should you choose to participate, your name will be entered into a drawing amongst the partipants to receive a cash prize at the conclusion of this study.

6. Please talk this over with your parents before you decide whether or not to participate. We will also ask your parents to give their permission for you to take part in this study. But even if your parents say "yes" you can still decide not to do this.

7. If you don't want to be in this study, you don't have to participate. Remember, being in this study is up to you and no one will be upset if you don't want to participate or even if you change your mind later and want to stop.

8. You can ask any questions that you have about the study. If you have a question later that you didn't think of now, you can call me at 423-478-1113 ext. 8562, email me at shv427@vols.utk.edu or ask me next time.

9. Signing your name at the bottom means that you agree to be in this study. You and your parents will be given a copy of this form after you have signed it.

_____   _____
Name of Subject   Date

3.5 UTK IRB Approval Letter

THE UNIVERSITY OF
TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

August 09, 2022
Susan Lee Groenke,
UTK - Coll of Education, Hlth, & Human - Theory & Practice In Teacher Education
Re: UTK IRB-22-06957-XP
Study Title: Student Choice-of-Text in an Upper Secondary Independent Reading Program: A Quasi-Experimental Study

Dear Susan Lee Groenke:

The UTK Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed your application for the above referenced project. It determined that your application is eligible for expedited review under 45 CFR 46.110(b)(1), Categories 6 and 7. The IRB has reviewed these materials and determined that they do comply with proper consideration for the rights and welfare of human subjects and the regulatory requirements for the protection of human subjects.

Therefore, this letter constitutes full approval by the IRB of your application (version 1.2) as submitted, including the following documents that have been dated and stamped IRB approved:

- Revised Main Assent form for parents/guardians v 1.0
- Child Interview Assent form 8.8.22 v 1.0
- Child/Participant Assent Form v 1.0
- Interview Consent Form v 1.0
- IIA Form Fully Executed v 1.0- acknowledged
- IRB motivation to read profile survey and interview proto 4.28.22 v 1.0

You are approved to enroll a maximum of 52 participants. Approval of this study will be valid from August 09, 2022 to 08/08/2023.

Any revisions in the approved application, consent forms, instruments, recruitment materials, etc., must also be submitted to and approved by the IRB prior to implementation. In addition, you are responsible for reporting any unanticipated serious adverse events or other problems involving risks to subjects or others in the manner required by the local IRB policy.

Finally, re-approval of your project is required by the IRB in accord with the conditions specified above. You may not continue the research study beyond the time or other limits specified unless you obtain prior written approval of the IRB.

Sincerely,

Lora Beebe, Ph.D., PMHNP-BC, FAAN
Chair

Institutional Review Board | Office of Research & Engagement
1534 White Avenue   Knoxville, TN 37996-1529
865-974-7697   865-974-7400 fax   irb.utk.edu

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Flagship Campus of the University of Tennessee System ur

3.6 Official Individual Investigator Agreement Form

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE KNOXVILLE
OFFICE OF RESEARCH INTEGRITY

Individual Investigator Agreement

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UT) maintains a Federalwide Assurance (FWA) of compliance, a written agreement, with the Office for Human Research Protections in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that outlines processes by which UT protects research participants. UT has entered freely and intentionally into this FWA because it represents a commitment to providing responsible oversight of research involving human participants conducted or sponsored by UT. UT agrees to extend its FWA to cover the below-named investigator for the purposes of the research described below on the condition that all the following provisions are met.

Individual Investigator (Investigator) Name:	Susan Rodriguez
Study Activities Conducted by Investigator:	Data Security, Test Proctor, Interviewer
UT Principal Investigator (PI) Name:	Susan Groenke, PhD (PI) Brian DeLoach, M.Ed. (Co-PI)
IRB Study Title:	Student Choice-of-Text in an Upper Secondary Independent Reading Program: A Quasi-Experimental Study
IRB Number:	UTK IRB-22-06957-XP Ref #: 1085206
Sponsor or Funding Agency:	N/A
Award Number:	N/A

The Investigator, PI and UT agree to the following general provisions:

1. The above-named Investigator has reviewed *the Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research*, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) regulations for the protection of human subjects at 45 CFR 46, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations for the protection of human subjects at 21 CFR 50 (if applicable), the HIPAA Privacy Rule at 45 CFR 164 (if applicable), the Assurance referenced above, and the relevant UT policies and procedures for the protection of human subjects.

2. The Investigator understands and hereby accepts the responsibility to comply with the standards and requirements stipulated in the above documents and to protect the rights and welfare of human subjects involved in research conducted under this Agreement.

3. The Investigator will comply with all other applicable federal, international, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies that may provide additional protection for human subjects participating in research conducted under this Agreement.

4. The Investigator will abide by all determinations of the UT Institutional Review Board (IRB) designated under the above FWA and will accept the final authority and decisions of the UT IRB, including but not limited to directives to suspend or terminate participation in designated research activities.

5. The Investigator will complete any educational training required by UT and the UT IRB prior to initiating research covered under this Agreement.

IRB NUMBER: UTK IRB-22-06957-XP
IRB APPROVAL DATE: 08/09/2022

3.6 Official Individual Investigator Agreement Form (Continued)

6. The Investigator will report promptly to the PI, who will then report to the UT IRB, any proposed changes in the research conducted under this Agreement. The Investigator will not initiate changes in the research without prior UT IRB review and approval, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to subjects.

7. The Investigator will report immediately to the PI, who will immediately report to the UT IRB, any unanticipated problems in research covered under this Agreement that involve risks to subjects or others.

8. When responsible for recruiting and/or enrolling subjects, the Investigator will seek, document, and maintain records of informed consent and, if applicable, HIPAA Authorization from the subject or the subject's legally authorized representative as required under HHS regulations, FDA regulations, (or other international or national equivalent), the HIPAA Privacy Rule, and stipulated by the UT IRB (if applicable).

9. The Investigator acknowledges and agrees to cooperate with the PI in UT IRB's responsibility for initial and continuing review, record keeping, reporting, and certification. The Investigator will provide all information requested by the PI and UT IRB in a timely fashion.

10. In conducting research involving FDA-regulated products, the Investigator will comply with all applicable FDA regulations (including 21 CFR 50 & 56) and fulfill all Investigator responsibilities (or investigator-sponsor responsibilities, where appropriate), including those described at 21 CFR 312 and 812 (if applicable).

11. The Investigator will not engage in recruitment activities, enroll subjects or perform any study-specific procedures in research covered under this Agreement prior to its review and approval by the UT IRB.

12. Emergency medical care may be delivered without UT IRB review and approval to the extent permitted under applicable Federal regulations and State law. If such care is provided, the Investigator will promptly report the matter to the PI, who will make any further reports according to UT IRB requirements.

13. This Agreement does not preclude the Investigator from taking part in research not covered under the Agreement.

14. The Investigator acknowledges that he/she is primarily responsible for safeguarding the rights and welfare of each research subject, and that the subject's rights and welfare must take precedence over the goals and requirements of the research.

15. This document must be kept on file by the Investigator, PI, UT, and be provided to OHRP or other regulatory agencies upon request.

16. The terms of this Agreement shall begin upon full execution by the undersigned parties and shall continue in effect until either

    a. expiration or termination of UT IRB approval of the research study covered under this Agreement; or

    b. the Investigator becomes affiliated with an institution that holds its own FWA, or

    c. the Investigator is no longer a member of the research team engaged in the conduct of the research study covered under this Agreement.

3.6 Official Individual Investigator Agreement Form (Continued)

Individual Investigator:

Signature: *Susan Rodriguez*
Susan Rodriguez (Jul 21, 2022 11:59 EDT)
Date: Jul 21, 2022
Name: Susan Rodriguez
Degrees: Ed.S.

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Date: 8/5/2022
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IRB APPROVAL DATE: 08/09/2022

4.1 Full Transcript of Case: "Choice group: score increased from Pre to Post"

RA: Ok. Um, I have been reading a good book and I was talking about it with my
husband last night. I enjoy talking what I'm reading about with my
friends and family. Today, I would like to hear about what you have been reading
and if you'd share it. Uh, tell me about the most interesting story or
book you have read recently.

A: Um, can I say one that, it's not recent, but it's one that I enjoyed? It's called
"Crossing the Wire", by Will Hobbs. It's an amazing book. It talks about a kid who
uh, looks into the future of helping his family in Mexico and then he crosses the
border out here into the United States and then he looks for a better future but in the
time that he's traveling to come over here he goes into some um, problems he
Runs…

RA: Mm huh.

A: …as an immigrant. And so hopping on trains, all the crazy stuff, running away from
the immigration status of the border that they have there so it's a pretty good book.

RA: Awesome. Ok. Um, how did you know or find out about this book?

A: So, it was actually in my ESL room in sixth grade. It was a teacher, it was up in
Knoxville that we read it. I don't know, I just fell in love with that book.

RA: That's awesome. Uh, and why was this story interesting to you?

A: I feel like I've always talked about like how immigration started, how I connect with
my people, my Hispanic culture so I just felt like this is like somehow what I
connect with it and like we go through this every single day.

RA: Mm huh. I gotcha. You could identify with it.

A: Yeah.

RA: I gotcha. Ok. Often, we read to find out or learn about something that interests us.
For example, a student I recently worked with enjoyed reading about his favorite
sports team on the internet. I'm going to ask you some questions about what you
like to read to learn about. Think about something important that you learned
recently, not from your teacher and not from television, but from something you
have read. What did you read about?

A: Recently, um, was it asking about that book or can it be something else?

4.1 Full Transcript of Case: "Choice group: score increased from Pre to Post" (continued)

RA: Uh, yeah, something you like to learn about.

A: Ok, so it was this book, um, "A Long Way Gone", I was doing a project for it and it was um, it was about a kid who was stuck in the war pursuing his dreams of becoming an artist. So I feel like what I learned from that is enjoy the moment that you have now because you don't know what you're facing tomorrow.

RA: That's right. That's good. What else could you tell me? Is there anything else about it?

A: About that book?

RA: Mm huh.

A: I mean, it's really crazy how a kid at his age has to go through something like that and face like a war that he's not prepared for and seeing people die every day and not know anything about your family for like about…that's pretty sad.

RA: Yeah. That is. How did you know or find out about reading material on this? How did you find out about that book?

A: How did I find out about that book, well, Mr. DeLoach told us, "Go pick a book", and at first, I was going to pick an Einstein book, but I was like not my interest and then I saw that book and I was like you know what, I'll just go ahead and give it a try.

RA: That's good. Why was reading this important to you?

A: At first, I was like confused about what was going on in that story, but I started like understanding the character and connecting with him. I feel like it is important to realize like how I said, treasure what you have right now because you never know what's going to happen tomorrow.

RA: Ok. Did you read anything at home yesterday?

A: I did not.

RA: Ok. Tell me about your favorite author.

A: My favorite author is Will Hobbs.

4.1 Full Transcript of Case: "Choice group: score increased from Pre to Post" (continued)

RA: Tell me about him.

A: Uh, so, I just like how he, in his books, likes to go into details of every little stuff that goes on in the story with the main characters, side characters, all the cool stuff.

RA: I gotcha. Um, tell, oh sorry. What do you think you have to learn to be a better reader?

A: Um, to practice like sit down and put a timer on and like to read on a constant speed you know if I can like without messing up, nothing, you know, if I can overcome that you know.

RA: To get better. That's good. Uh, do you know about any books right now that you'd like to read?

A: Yes.

RA: Tell me about it.

A: "The Millionaire Next Door".

RA: Yes! Tell me about that.

A: So, personal finance. So, apparently, it's a really good book. Coach Turner told us about it.

RA: Mm huh.

A: I want to learn more about it.

RA: My husband has read that book.

A: Yeah.

RA: Uh, how did you find out about these books?

A: These books, well, I got, about that personal finance?

RA: Yeah.

A: We talk about a lot of stuff in there. And also, I have second period Library so I just

4.1 Full Transcript of Case: "Choice group: score increased from Pre to Post" (continued)

take my time and like go through the books in there.

RA: That's good. What are some things that get you really excited about reading?

A: If I see that I can connect with the title I don't you know like "Crossing the Wire" that's like something I think like I really connected with that so…

RA: That's good. Um, who gets you really interested and excited about reading?

A: Who?

RA: Mm huh.

A: I feel like myself. I don't' really have anyone to like, I don't know, but like myself, I want to sit down and just relax and read a book.

RA: I gotcha. That's good. Uh, do you have a computer in your home?

A: I do.

RA: Ok. And how much time do you spend on the computer a day?

A: A day? I feel like an hour or two.

RA: Outside of school?

A: Outside of school.

RA: I gotcha. What do you usually do when you're on the computer?

A: I usually do edits. For like um, like I create the business cards for companies so like I made a one for this person I was going to be a clown and they were creating business so people would hire them and so I created the designs and everything.

RA: Awesome! That's good to know. Um, what do you like to read when you are on the internet?

A: On the internet?

RA: Mm huh.

4.1 Full Transcript of Case: "Choice group: score increased from Pre to Post" (continued)

A: I like to read articles. It's going to be sound crazy but about like, how should I say it, like narcs, like what has happened in the past and what they did and like how they got away with the stuff like that.

RA: Yeah. That's interesting, yeah. Um, in what class do you most like to read?

A: In English.

RA: Ok, why?

A: Uh, English sets the vibe of like, of reading, mood, you know, and like theme, it's more relaxed sit down and read.

RA: That's good. In what class do you feel the reading is the most difficult?

A: I'll say gym.

RA: Gym? Why?

A: Because it's really hard to concentrate. You're going to sit there and read and you have everything going on and it's so loud in there like you wouldn't be able to concentrate.

RA: Yeah, that makes sense. Have any of your teachers done something with reading that you really enjoyed?

A: I did.

RA: Ok. Tell me about it.

A: So like I said for that "Long Way Gone", we had to create a project about it and it was um, so a presentation had to be three minutes long and I decided to go all in about it and I created like this Netflix theme. I gotta show it to you.

RA: Yeah. I'd be interested to see that. That's awesome. Um, do you share and discuss books, magazines or other reading materials with your friends outside of school?

A: I do not.

RA: Uh, do you write letters or emails to friends or family?

4.1 Full Transcript of Case: "Choice group: score increased from Pre to Post" (continued)

A: I don't but I do, it's like how girls have like their little diary?

RA: Yes.

A: I have mine, but like I usually write stuff about life.

RA: Mm huh.

A: I just write all that down and put it away.

RA: I gotcha. You write letters to yourself?

A: Yeah.

RA: That's good. Uh, do you share any of the following reading materials with members of your family: Newspapers, magazines, religious materials or games?

A: With my family?

RA: Mm huh.

A: Yes, I do.

RA: Ok, with who?

A: Mostly my mom.

RA: Ok. And how often do you think you do that?

A: Often, like if I find like something interesting, I'll like I'm going to go ahead and tell her. I would say like a lot.

RA: Uh, do you belong to any clubs or organizations for which you read and write?

A: I do not.

RA: That's it.

4.2 Full Transcript of Case: "Choice group: Decrease in Score from Pre to Post"

RA: Ok. I have been reading a good book lately and I was talking about it with my husband last night. I enjoy, er I enjoy talking what I'm reading about with my friends and family. Today, I would like to hear about what you have been reading and if you'd share it with others. Uh, tell me about the most interesting story or book you have read recently.

J: Um, recently, I've really been into this author. Her name is Colleen Hoover and she's like the new big author between like a bunch of like girls and like I guess women all around, but um I read one that was super interesting. It was about an author who was faking like her own, she was in a coma, but she was faking it in order to like take her son away from her husband. There were just a bunch of like twists and turns. It was really interesting.

RA: Awesome. Um, how did you know or find out about this book?

J: On social media. She's all-over social media.

RA: Uh, and why was this story uh, interesting to you?

J: Um, it was just, I love mystery stuff and this was very, very like mystery, but it wasn't like scary at all.

RA: Uh huh.

J: And it had a bunch of like, I guess like twists and turns and like unexpected things happened so I really that about it.

RA: Awesome! Ok. Think about something important that you learned recently, not from your teacher and not from television, but from something you've read. What did you read about?

J: Um, I learned about probably the importance of like telling the truth, and how you never know who's listening and you never know who's reading and you never know who's around you so don't, don't lie. Always tell the truth.

RA: That's good. Um, how did you know or find out about this, about that reading material?

J: Um, one of the characters wrote something that she claimed to be a lie, but it basically, was admitting to awful things she has done and, you know, throughout the book everybody thought it was true. It turns out at the end of the book, she writes a

4.2 Full Transcript of Case: "Choice group: Decrease in Score from Pre to Post" (continued)

different things that states how it wasn't true, but we don't know what to believe. If it wasn't true, don't write it down. Those awful things were, you know, and it's supposed to be a story about her life so she wrote down all of these things that she claimed to have happened in her life, but yet all of them claim to be a lie, but who knows if they were actually a lie?

RA: I gotcha. Why was reading this important to you?

J: Um, reading this was important to me because, like I said, I, well I never really read outside of school. I never did read up until I found this author and she's like the first author I think I've ever read multiple series in or multiple books, um, by a certain person so just reading this, reading all of her books, honestly, I'm proud of myself when I finish one because that's not me to like finish a book.

RA: Yeah. That's awesome! Um, did you read anything at home yesterday?

J: Um, no, but I did put a brand new one in my backpack so I plan to read it today.

RA: (Laughs) That's my next question! Do you have anything at school in your desk, locker or bookbag today that you are reading?

J: I do, I do.

RA: Awesome! Tell me about your favorite author.

J: Definitely her, Colleen Hoover. She's just great, I mean she's the next big thing, she really is like all of her like Tic Tok and social media she is very talked about.

RA: That's good. That's awesome! Uh, what do you think you have to learn uh, to be a better reader?

J: Um, I definitely, reading, I learn patience because it's something I'm not good at but with reading a book I have to have a lot of patience, you know, about the story line, even just sitting in my chair and reading a book sometimes it's very like, I get antsy, you know, but I've learned how to like calm down and really like read and dig deep into the book.

RA: That's awesome! That's so cool. Uh, do you know about any books right now that you'd like to read?

J: Um, anything by Colleen Hoover honestly. I'm starting another one of hers and after

4.2 Full Transcript of Case: "Choice group: Decrease in Score from Pre to Post" (continued)

this one, I'm sure I'll read one called "November 9th". I mean, there are just, there's so many still out there that I haven't read that I can't wait to read.

RA: Today's November 9th. (laughs)

J: I know!

RA: How did you, I think I already asked you this, but I'll ask you again. How did you find out about these books?

J: Just like on social media, honestly, and my friends, we all read them so we all have just switched books here around, you know.

RA: Yeah. That's good. What are some things that get you really excited about reading?

J: Um, the story line and like seeing the new characters and how they develop and what's going to happen. That's probably the most exciting part for me is like what's going to happen here, who's going to, you know, like what's going to happen, that's honestly my favorite part.

RA: The suspense.

J: The suspense! Yes, that's the word I was looking for.

RA: Um, who gets you really interested and excited about reading?

J: Um, my brother, he's always been a reader. I mean, my mom would have to buy him series after series after series so he loved to read and he always told me, you know, make sure reading, like it's very important to exercise your brain all the time even in summer, you know, so I've really actually taken that to heart, especially this year.

RA: That's awesome! That's good. Do you have a computer in your home?

J: I do.

RA: Ok. How much time do you spend on the computer a day?

J: Um, at school, I mean, we do all of our work on the computer so I'm on the computer six out of the seven hours of the day.

RA: Wow.

4.2 Full Transcript of Case: "Choice group: Decrease in Score from Pre to Post" (continued)

J: But at home, I don't get on my computer unless there's mandatory homework.

RA: I gotcha. Uh, when you're on your computer, what do you do usually?

J: Just schoolwork.

RA: Ok. Uh, what do you like to read when you are on the internet?

J: Um, I really, I like news articles and true crime articles, anything like really interesting, like true crime, interesting that's happening in our world I like to read about it.

RA: That's good. Um, in what class do you most like to read and why?

J: Probably, I mean, we read in our Comp I class and that's really interesting because Mr. DeLoach always makes anything that we're reading in the class like together super interesting and like he ties it into like the modern day, ties it into like, you know, just makes it so much easier to understand. So, I really like reading in his class.

RA: That's awesome. In what class do you feel the reading is the most difficult and why?

J: Um, well right now I only have my Comp I class. The readings aren't difficult. I don't think that they're, they're difficult like wording and stuff like that, but when I have a teacher like Mr. DeLoach who makes it super easy to understand so it's not hard to understand. If we didn't have somebody to be, you know, kind of tearing it apart for us and like relating it to us now, then I think it would be really difficult to read but I haven't really had anything that was too difficult because of that.

RA: Awesome. He really breaks it down for you. That's good. Have any of your teachers done something with reading that you really enjoyed?

J: Um, let me think. Oh, last year, we did um, in my English III class, we read The Crucible and that was very, very interesting, very interesting so um…

RA: What did you do in there that made it so interesting or that you liked about it?

J: We, wait, I don't know if it was The Crucible, it was the um, The Salem Witch Trials.

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4.2 Full Transcript of Case: "Choice group: Decrease in Score from Pre to Post" (continued)

RA: Mmm.

J: Not "The Crucible", I was thinking of something else. "The Salem Witch Trials", and we played a bunch of games and like in that book they're accusing different people of being witches and stuff like that so we played a bunch of games that was like you can trust me, but actually they were the witch. So, we played that a few times. It was kind of interesting to see like who was telling the truth, who was lying so I like when games are tied into it to like, yeah.

RA: Yeah. Um, do you share and discuss books, magazines or other reading materials with your friends outside of school?

J: Yes. We are always switching books, especially by Colleen Hoover all the time, all the time.

RA: How often would you say you do that?

J: Um, probably, in the summer it was like every three weeks we were switching books but now that we're all like busy and don't have a lot of time to read um, every month or so.

RA: Good, good. Uh, where do you typically do that? Do you get together?

J: Yeah, I mean, we're with each other all the time so you know, we'll just switch out books when we see each other.

RA: Gotcha. Uh, do you write letters or emails to friends or family?

J: Um, I do.

RA: Ok. How often?

J: Um, I'm always in contact with my family. We're really close and I always try to you know, text them or talk to them any time I can.

RA: Gotcha. Uh, do you share any of the following reading materials with members of your family: Newspapers, magazines, religious materials or games?

J: Yeah.

4.2 Full Transcript of Case: "Choice group: Decrease in Score from Pre to Post" (continued)

RA: With who and how often?

J: Um, my grandfather is very, very interested in, I mean, honestly, anything in like news, anything politics, so, I mean, I always sit down and talk to him about it because I mean, you know, I'll gladly talk to him about anything, so if it's something he's interested in I'll sit there and listen, so he'll pull out the newspaper, he'll show me different things. I also come from a Christian household so we have the Bible in our pockets very, very often so…

RA: That's good.

J: Yeah.

RA: Um, do you belong to any clubs or organizations for which you read and write?

J: I do not.

RA: Ok. And that's it. You can stop it.

4.3 Full Transcript of Case: "Choice group: score was unchanged from Pre to Post"

RA: Ok. Tell me about the most interesting story or book you have read recently. Take a few minutes to think about it.

K: Probably the most interesting story I've read as of late was my independent reading book, "Shutter Island", because I really enjoyed it. It's kind of like a thriller, it helps you stay very engaged not knowing what going to happen or when it's going to happen or who the main character can trust and who he can't and, in the end, you find out that he can't even trust himself because he thought he was investigating this mental hospital when, in fact, he's the main um, patient. They're doing a study \ on him.

RA: Um, is there anything else?

K: Like another book, maybe?

RA: Uh, it can be or it can be more about that one.

K: Ok, another book that I've started reading is, uh, "The Book Thief".

RA: Mm huh.

K: Mr. DeLoach, my teacher, he, uh, he gave it to me and I don't like it as much as I liked my "Shutter Island" book just because, like, it's sad…

RA: Mm huh (laughs).

K: …and I don't, I don't rock with the sad books. I didn't know it would be sad whenever I picked it off the bookshelf and he, uh, lent it to me, but it's sad.

RA: Mm huh. That's good. Um, how did you know or find out about this book? You may have already mentioned that, but if you'll say that again.

K: Yes ma'am. I found out or saw the book on the bookshelf and it stuck out to me because on the spine of the book it has big, bright, red letters so I, like, opened it. I was the first one up to go grab a book and, on the front, I saw Leonardo DiCaprio.

RA: (laughs) Mm huh.

K: …and it's like an instantly recognizable face and so that's what made me decide to pick the book because there's a movie, although I haven't watched it, it's based off the book.

4.3 Full Transcript of Case: "Choice group: score was unchanged from Pre to Post" (continued)

RA: Ok. Why was this story interesting to you?

K: Uh, like I said, this story as a, very much so keeps you engaged because like it is a thriller and like this whole time like you don't know what's happening to your main characters. You're kinda left in the dark just like the characters are from like what's going on really behind the scenes. And you see these two detectives try to make their way through like, I don't know, like clues and mysteries. So…

RA: Often we read to learn about something that interests us. For example, a student I Recently worked with enjoyed reading about his favorite sports team/teams on the internet. I'm going to ask you some questions about what you like to read to learn about. Ok? The first one is, uh, think about something important that you've learned recently, not from your teacher and not from television, but from something you have read. What did you read about?

K: Let me think…I was probably reading about some history or, uh, something like that because that's what interests me and I think that's the only thing outside of school that I really like to focus on and study up and know more about.

RA: Gotcha. Uh, what else could you tell me? Is there anything else?

K: Uh, no ma'am, I don't think so.

RA: Ok. How did you know or find out about reading material on this?

K: What did I find out, ma'am?

RA: How did you know or how did you find out about that?

K: Uh, is this in relation to the last question you asked?

RA: Yes, mm huh.

K: Alright, gotcha. I just, it popped up on my, like, recommended stuff.

RA: Mm huh. Perfect. Um, have any of your teachers done something with reading that you really enjoyed?

K: Yeah, like we have at Cleveland, we all have independent reading time. All the English teachers do it in the beginning of class and I think it's a great way to start the class. It becomes my favorite part of the morning just to sit down and read my book.

4.3 Full Transcript of Case: "Choice group: score was unchanged from Pre to Post" (continued)

 It makes me excited to come back to school tomorrow.

RA: That's awesome. Uh, do you share and discuss books, magazines or other reading materials with your friends outside of school?

K: Uh, I mean in class I'll ask my friend what she's reading because after independent reading time is done she'll pick out another book and she'll read it so we kinda recommend things to each other to read.

RA: Ok. How often do you think, um, that happens?

K: Mmm, maybe once a month.

RA: Ok. Uh, do you write letters or email to friends or family?

K: Yes ma'am, I do write Christmas cards.

RA: Ok, so uh, would you say once a year or how often would you say?

K: Uh, Christmas cards, mmm, I think it's probably like fifteen of them…probably fifteen.

RA: Ok. Uh, do you share any of the following reading materials with members of your Family: Newspapers, magazines, religious materials or games?

K: I mean, not usually ma'am, unless it's a kind of uh, you know, conversation starter. You know…

RA: Mm huh.

K: …how family does, asking about what's in the news and what's going on in the world.

RA: Ok, and you said family. Do you want to specify with whom?

K: Uh, probably my dad.

RA: Ok.

K: I think around lunch, or around the dinner table we'll talk about stuff that's going on in the world and what we think about it.

4.3 Full Transcript of Case: "Choice group: score was unchanged from Pre to Post" (continued)

RA: Ok. How often do you think that happens?

K: Uh, probably Sunday dinner so, once a week.

RA: Ok. Do you belong to any clubs or organizations for which you read and write?

K: Uh, no ma'am.

RA: Ok. Why was reading this important to you? I guess "this" would be what we were just talking about.

K: Uh, the important modern-day things?

RA: Mm huh.

K: Oh, just staying up with what's going on in the world because like we see the war in Ukraine, I mean like, stuff affects us and you need to know what goes on around the world, around the globe, it has an impact on our lives, gas prices.

RA: Very true. Uh, who gets you interested and excited about reading?

K: Who gets me really interested and excited?

RA: Mm huh.

K: Probably my awesome English teacher, Mr. DeLoach.

RA: (laughs) Ok, tell me more about what he does to get you excited.

K: He does, uh, he encourages us. Sometimes he'll reward us with like, some affirmations or something like that. He got me excited because he like gifted me a book to read.

RA: Oh, that's nice. Uh, do you have a computer in your home?

K: Yes ma'am.

RA: Ok. How much time do you spend on the computer a day?

K: Uh, probably ten minutes.

4.3 Full Transcript of Case: "Choice group: score was unchanged from Pre to Post" (continued)

RA: Ok. What do you usually do?

K: Uh, go through and help my little siblings get set up on their schoolwork or uh, Accelerated Reading.

RA: Ok. What do you like to read when you are on the internet?

K: (Sighs) Like I said, probably stuff about history or modern day information or uh, current events.

RA: Ok. Uh, in what class do you most like to read and why?

K: Uh, probably in my US History class or in my Government now. I don't have US History anymore, but that's where I like to read because the material is very interesting to me.

RA: Ok. In what class do you feel the reading is the most important and why?

K: Mmm, probably in English because it has to do with all of our assignments.

RA: (Laughs) Uh, why was reading this important to you?

K: Uh, reading this was important to me because uh, I just, it was very entertaining.

RA: Ok.

K: And I enjoyed the book a lot.

RA: Ok, gotcha. Uh, did you read anything at home yesterday?

K: I did not.

RA: Ok. Do you have anything at school in your desk, locker or bookbag today that you are reading?

K: Yes ma'am.

RA: Ok. Tell me about it.

4.3 Full Transcript of Case: "Choice group: score was unchanged from Pre to Post" (continued)

K: Uh, right now, I'm still working on "The Book Thief" because like I said, Mr. DeLoach gifted it to me. I haven't finished it because we have been doing our independent reading and that's usually the time I'll have to read throughout the day, so yeah, that's what I'm reading right now.

RA: Awesome! Uh, tell me about your favorite author.

K: Uh, I don't, I can't name him by name, but whenever I was growing up there was this book series I read called "The Ordinary Boys" series and it's about some boy and he's the only ordinary one in a town full of superheroes and that, yeah.

RA: Awesome! What do you think you have to learn to be a better reader?

K: Mmm, probably to make time for it in my day.

RA: That's good.

K: Just so I'll get it done.

RA: Mm huh. Do you know about any books right now that you would like to read?

K: (Sighs) Mmm, I'd probably like to start the "Harry Potter" series. That's one I've never read, although they're good.

RA: Yeah, for sure. Um, how did you find out about these books?

K: Uh, the movies based off of the books.

RA: Ok. What are some things that get you really excited about reading?

K: Uh, you know, just like the climax, you know, it leaving you on like a cliffhanger and being excited to go back and read some more the next day.

RA: Ok. Um, I'm going to repeat some of these questions. I think I went out of order so um, you already answered it, um, but I'll ask it again. Who gets you really interested in reading and excited about reading?

K: Uh, probably my English teacher, Mr. DeLoach.

RA: Uh, do you have a computer in your home?

4.3 Full Transcript of Case: "Choice group: score was unchanged from Pre to Post" (continued)

K: Yes ma'am.

RA: Ok. Uh, how much time do you spend on the computer a day?

K: At most, ten minutes.

RA: And what do you usually do?

K: I set up Accelerated Reading for my little siblings.

RA: Ok. Um, what do you like to read when you're on the internet?

K: Uh, probably the news, you know, what's going on, current information, stuff like
　　that.

RA: Ok. Um, alright, I think that's it.

K: Alright. Thank you, ma'am.

RA: Thank you.

4.4 Full Transcript of Case: "No Choice group: Increase in Score from Pre to Post"

RA: Ok. Tell me about the most interesting story or book you have read recently. You can take a few minutes to think about it.

CM: Um, probably one I just read, *Slaughterhouse Five*.

RA: "The Slaughterhouse Five"? Um, what else can you tell me about the book? Is there anything else about it?

CM: It was very strange. The writing was weird, which made it harder to read. I really just didn't know what was going on, so it made it interesting.

RA: Mm huh. How did you know or find out about this book?

CM: Mr. DeLoach put me on it.

RA: Why was this story interesting to you?

CM: I've never read another story like it. The writing is very interesting.

RA: Um, think about something important that you have learned recently, not from your teacher, not from television, but from something you've read. What did you read about? Tell me about what you learned.

CM: Um, I forget who told me this, but it was about just… it's unrelated

RA: Yeah. Um, how do you know or find out about reading materials on this?

CM: On the thing I just heard? I don't know.

RA: You don't know?

CM: I forgot who told me.

RA: Why was reading this important to you?

CM: Um, it really helped with what I was going through because I needed to stay connected to my friends and just, I needed it when they said it.

RA: Hm huh. Um, did you read anything at home yesterday?

CM: No.

4.4 Full Transcript of Case: "No Choice group: Increase in Score from Pre to Post" (continued)

RA: Do you have anything at school like in your desk or locker or bookbag today that you are reading about?

CM: No.

RA: Um, tell me about your favorite author.

CM: Um, probably C.S. Lewis because I used to read "Narnia" as a kid. I don't know, I just like him and his philosophy.

RA: What do you think you have to learn to be a better reader?

CM: Like to be better at reading? Um, just read more books, increase my understanding.

RA: Do you know about any books right now that you'd like to read?

CM: Mmm, not really.

RA: How did um, what are some things that get you really excited about reading?

CM: If I know it's like a good book, like if it's considered a classic.

RA: Mm huh.

RA: Who gets you really interested and excited about reading?

CM: Mr. DeLoach, probably.

RA: What all do they do?

CM: Um, he can just hype me up about a book or like tell why it's such a good book.

RA: Mm huh. Do you have a computer at your home?

CM: Yeah.

RA: How much time do you spend on the computer a day?

4.4 Full Transcript of Case: "No Choice group: Increase in Score from Pre to Post" (continued)

CM: At my home, not really any unless it's homework, I guess.

RA: So, you usually do your homework?

CM: Yeah.

RA: What do you like to read when you are on the internet?

CM: Um, I read the like news articles sometimes or just about what's going on in the world.

RA: Mm huh. In what class do you like to read the most?

CM: English, probably.

RA: Why?

CM: Because it's kind of built for reading and Mr. DeLoach is there and he knows a lot about books and stuff.

RA: Mm huh. In what class do you feel reading is most difficult?

CM: Math.

RA: Math?

CM: It's not really reading, but just the way the questions are worded and such.

RA: Mm huh. Have any of your teachers done something with reading that you really enjoyed?

CM: Um, I mean, Mr. DeLoach, I like writing about things I've read and doing projects basically.

RA: Do you share and discuss books, magazines or other reading materials with your friends outside of school?

CM: Yes.

RA: What?

4.4 Full Transcript of Case: "No Choice group: Increase in Score from Pre to Post" (continued)

CM: At one of our red flag footballs, I tried to talk my friends into reading it was really good.

RA: How often do you talk to them about this?

CM: A lot.

RA: Where do you guys talk about this?

CM: Just whenever we hang out.

RA: Do you write letters or emails to friends or family?

CM: Not really. I just text them.

RA: You just text them. How often?

CM: Pretty much every day.

RA: Do you share any of the following reading materials with members of your family: Newspapers, magazines, religious materials, games?

CM: Yeah, I'll send like, if I see a news article or something, I'll send it to my family.

RA: Mm huh.

CM: If it's interesting.

RA: How often?

CM: Pretty much every day, I assume.

RA: Do you belong to any clubs or organizations for which you read and write?

CM: No.

4.5 Full Transcript of Case: "No Choice group: Decrease in Score from Pre to Post"

RA: Ok. Um, I've been reading a good book lately and I was talking about it with my husband last night. I enjoy talking what I'm reading about with my friends and family. Today, I would like to hear about what you have been reading and if you'd share it. So, tell me about the most interesting story or book you have read recently.

G: Uh, the most interesting book I've read, I think, was last year in English class, I read a documentary about like the history of SEC football, which I'm really interested in so…

RA: Yeah!

G: I liked that book a lot.

RA: That's awesome.

G: And the most recent book I've read was *Friday Night Lights*.

RA: Mm huh.

G: And uh, in Mr. DeLoach's class right now, I just got through with that and it was really good, too.

RA: Ok. Good! Um, how did you know or find out about this book?

G: Uh, the first one I just had at my house and I was always interested in like reading it so I finally just took it to class because we had to.

RA: Yeah.

G: And that worked out well, and the second book, I was assigned, but it still ended up working out.

RA: Good. Uh, and why was this story interesting to you?

G: Um, it was interesting because I've always been interested in sports and it's just something that I like and enjoy to read about so…

RA: Good. Think about something important that you learned recently, not from your teacher and not from television, but from something you have read. What did you read about?

4.5 Full Transcript of Case: "No Choice group: Decrease in Score from Pre to Post" (continued)

G: Um, I read about overcoming adversity in a book like a dude got, a guy got injured and he had to overcome that to get ready for the season, which hit home to me because I got hurt last year during our season and I've been working my way to come back so it really helped me out.

RA: Yeah, you could really identify. Gotcha. Um, how did you know or find out about reading material on this?

G: Uh, about…?

RA: What you were just talking about.

G: Oh, uh, just reading the book and it kind of just hit home when I first like started reading it and like the quotes they were saying so it just helped me get through what I was going through.

RA: I gotcha. That makes sense. Um, why was reading this important to you?

G: Uh, because, kind of like I just said, it just helped me get through a tough time, I guess.

RA: Mm huh.

G: And it helped me realize that other people are going through the same stuff I was going through.

RA: Yeah. That's good. Um, did you read anything at home yesterday?

G: Yesterday, I don't think so.

RA: Ok. Um, do you have anything at school in your desk, your locker or your backpack today that you are reading?

G: Currently, no, because we just finished the book and so, technically, no.

RA: Alright. Tell me about your favorite author.

G: Favorite author?

RA: Mm huh.

4.5 Full Transcript of Case: "No Choice group: Decrease in Score from Pre to Post" (continued)

G: That's a good question. Uh, I don't know if I really have a favorite author, but I have a favorite like book series, I guess.

RA: Yeah.

G: I don't know. Um, I liked reading the "Harry Potter" books when I was a kid like middle school so I kind of like those.

RA: Yeah. Definitely. That's a lot of people's favorite. Uh, what do you think you have to learn to be a better reader?

G: Um, just the curriculum, I guess, to like understand words and um, and like how the story goes along because if I'm reading a book and I'm like getting confused and I can't keep up with it, it's less interesting.

RA: Sure.

G: So, if I understand like what it's saying, I think it's more beneficial, like I can actually read the book and enjoy it.

RA: Yeah. Definitely. Um, do you know about any books right now you'd like to read?

G: Mmm, don't think so.

RA: Ok. Um, what are some things that get you really excited about reading?

G: Um, I get excited about just reading like in general like a website per say just like an article. Like if something's interesting to me I'll…I love reading that type stuff, but like a book, I would say, something that catches my eye I'm interested in, I'm like, oh yeah, I want to read that.

RA: Yeah. That makes sense. Um, who gets you really interested and excited about reading?

G: I think, I think my mom gets me excited about reading because she's an English teacher so it's like…

RA: Awesome!

4.5 Full Transcript of Case: "No Choice group: Decrease in Score from Pre to Post" (continued)

G: So, if she like tells me to read something or if I don't, even if I don't want to read it and I start reading it and I'm interested, then I enjoy it.

RA: Good. Alright, that's good. Uh, do you have a computer in your home?

G: Yes.

RA: Ok. And how much time do you spend on a computer a day?

G: At school or just at home?

RA: You, you can comment on both.

G: Uh, ok, well at school I'm on it like almost 24/7, just because every class we use them and when I get home, if I'm doing homework or even just my personal use. I'm on it a good bit so I'd say…mmm…

RA: Most of the time at school?

G: Most of the time…

RA: Most of the time at school, but how many hours after school?

G: Mmm, probably like an hour and a half, not too much because I like getting off of it a good bit.

RA: Yeah. Taking a break.

G: Yeah, just, a good amount of time though.

RA: Ok. What do you usually do when you're on your computer?

G: Uh, looking up stuff like, like actually for example, yesterday I was Christmas shopping on the computer for a good bit.

RA: That's good.

G: And enter, um, researching something and if I'm, if I need to ask questions, it's easier to look up something. Stuff like that.

4.5 Full Transcript of Case: "No Choice group: Decrease in Score from Pre to Post"
(continued)

RA: Awesome. Uh, what do you like to read when you are on the internet?

G: Uh, I like to read stuff about what I'm mainly interested in so I'm a big Tennessee fan so I read a bunch of stuff like that.

RA: Yeah.

G: Like whoever they're playing this week or just reading stuff, opinions on sports and stuff. I love reading articles like that.

RA: That's awesome. Um, in what class do you most like to read?

G: I would, I would say English just because you read the most in there and most of the stuff's interesting and some of it's not, but you just read a lot and it's a lot easier to read in English I would say.

RA: I gotcha. In what class do you feel the reading is the most difficult?

G: It would definitely have to be a Science class for reading like a big paragraph or something and trying to figure it out. It's just a lot harder to read than would be just a normal paragraph of something.

RA: I gotcha. Um, have any of your teachers done something with reading that you really enjoyed?

G: Uh, I think, I think in Spanish class, actually, I think, it was beneficial to read like and it was fun because I had Mr. Smith.

RA: Yeah.

G: And we would read like little things like a couple sentences here and there, but it would be fun because we could read it with the class and understand what we're reading.

RA: Good. Can you tell me a little bit more about how you did that, what did you read in groups? Did you read as a whole class?

G: Uh, both. We would read like, he would take volunteers, we'd read a couple sentences and sometimes it would be funny because people struggled like pronouncing it. It just put everybody in a good mood, and we enjoyed doing that.

4.5 Full Transcript of Case: "No Choice group: Decrease in Score from Pre to Post" (continued)

RA: That's good. That's good. Do you share and discuss books, magazines or other reading materials with your friends outside of school?

G: I would say magazines, maybe, or like a website, but not really books.

RA: Ok. Um, how often would, do you think you do that?

G: I'd say rarely.

RA: Ok. And uh, when you do that, like where does that happen? Are you at home? Are you, Is it in passing?

G: Uh…

RA: Is it at school?

G: Lunch table, maybe. Sometimes out of school, very rarely out of school.

RA: Ok. Ok. Do you share any of the following reading materials with members of your family: Newspapers, magazines, religious materials or games? (Announcement interruption). Sorry about that. I'll ask you again. Um, do you share and discuss books, magazines or other reading materials with your friends outside of school? Oh, no, we did that one, right?

G: Yes.

RA: Sorry. Do you share any of the following reading materials with members of your family: Newspapers, magazines, religious materials or games?

G: Uh, I would say all of them.

RA: Mm huh.

G: We share. Sometimes we talk about the newspaper, rarely magazines, uh, I don't know.

RA: Ok. And you said with your family typically?

G: Yeah.

4.5 Full Transcript of Case: "No Choice group: Decrease in Score from Pre to Post" (continued)

RA: How often do you think ya'll do that?

G: Occasionally. I would say rarely, but it's just like here and there. Yeah.

RA: Gotcha. Do you belong to any clubs or organizations for which you read and write?

G: No.

RA: Ok. Alright. That's it.

4.6 Full Transcript of Case: "No Choice group: score unchanged from Pre to Post"

RA: Ok, alright, um, so I've been reading a good book. Um, I was talking about it, uh, talking with my husband about it last night. I enjoy talking about what I'm reading with my friends and family. Uh, today I'd like to hear about what you have been reading and if you'd share it. So the first thing I'm going to ask you is tell me about the most interesting story or book you have read recently. Take a few minutes to think about it and then tell me about the book.

IN: Ok. Ok so, recently in English class I have read this book, *The Devil in the White City* and it's really interesting. So far, I have read it because, um, it's about like a serial killer.

RA: Uh huh.

IN: And it's about, it happened in Chicago so it's like a historical event and it happened like eighteen or nineteen hundreds and it was about mainly…like I like it because it was suspense, it was thriller, it was like you want to know who killed all of them at this big event in front of everybody and not scared and his reason was he just killed them because he felt the need of it, because he wasn't reaching success by um ar, ar, architect?

RA: Uh huh.

IN: So, he wanted to do that to make himself famous in this world and he felt like everybody did bad deeds. Not all bad deeds are bad, some are for good reason. That's what his quote was in the book.

RA: Oh, wow! Ok. Um, is there anything else you want to tell me about it?

IN: Not so much, but in the starting, I was a little confused on who the main person is. The main person was Burman, but he was a good person. He was not the villain, then throughout when I read it I found out who it was and it was kind of shocking because you would not know because he's not the main character, he's not shown a lot, he's just a side and it was like…because usually when you see movies or read books it's like you always find the hero and then the villain and you know the story. In this one, the villain was like a side character. It was kind of like, hmmm, who did it? I was confused, I thought it might be the hero because of the way he was talking, and the people gave opinion about him. I did notes in my book.

RA: (Laughs). I love it! That's awesome!

IN: Yeah.

RA: Ok. How did you know or find out about this book?

4.6 Full Transcript of Case: "No Choice group: score was unchanged" (continued)

IN: Uh, well, Mr. DeLoach, he gave me it because um, I recommended him this book. He asked us what book we had read in the past in English class so um, I couldn't remember the name but I found out and I told him the name.

RA: I gotcha.

IN: And I think it's Last Famous Words, I think that's what it's called. It's a serial killer, too, not as suspenseful, but it's a really good book.

RA: I gotcha. Awesome! Um, why was the story interesting to you?

IN: Because I felt like a lot of people, like, have a different perspective about this book. Some might think, oh…some might understand his point of view on why he killed and understand what was his need and all. And some might be like no, he's wrong and all because, in that era, it was like good things, you're still trying to build these big new things to be like historical events and nobody thought he would do that, so like to know his point of view and why he did that, it's kind of interesting.

RA: That's good. Ok. Often we read to find out or learn about something that interests us. For example, a student I recently worked with enjoyed reading about his favorite sports teams on the internet. I'm going to ask you some questions about what you like to read to learn about, ok? So think about something important that you learned recently not from your teacher and not from television but from something you have read. What did you read about?

IN: Um, ok, so I read this article. It was about um, it was a real thing, it was about these real popular people and it was like not everything you see is right. Sometimes you have to know what will happen, you can't just judge by what you see or what you hear from other people.

RA: Sure.

IN: Because everyone has their own story. You have to know from the person about what happened so I just learned not to like just come up with conclusion, like actually find out, go in depth.

RA: Yeah. Is there anything else that you can tell me about it?

IN: Hmmm (quiet laugh).

RA: Ok. Uh, how did you know or find out about reading, uh, sorry, how did you know

4.6 Full Transcript of Case: "No Choice group: score was unchanged" (continued)

or find out about reading material on this?

IN: Um, I don't know. I…

RA: How did you like come upon that?

IN: On the book?

RA: On that article?

IN: Oh, on the article. Um, my friend recommended me it because she wanted to know my opinion because she had a different opinion and so we had like this argument and I was like you can't just, you know, give your opinion like that. You don't know what the other person might say, and she was like yeah, that's right but she was really confident about her and I was like I'm not going to back off because I know I'm right. Like whatever this is about we don't know, we're not in that situation.

RA: Uh huh.

IN: So, I found out through a friend.

RA: I gotcha. Ok. Why was reading this important to you?

IN: The article?

RA: Yes.

IN: Because it was, I don't know, I'm a girl (quiet laugh).

RA: (laughs).

IN: So, it was kind of like feminine came in the way, but it was that story, I think it was about a girl and a guy and it was like about their in-personal things, and he was like blaming her for things and she took it and then it was like, you know, a girl can relate about another girl.

RA: Sure.

IN: So, I felt like I need to know what happened about that.

4.6 Full Transcript of Case: "No Choice group: score was unchanged" (continued)

RA: Yeah.

IN: So, I can give my view to other people because I don't want to be like oh, no, I don't know, that's wrong.

RA: Yeah.

IN: Because I want to know about it.

RA: Gotcha. That's good. Alright, did you read anything at home yesterday? If so, what?

IN: No.

RA: Ok. Do you have anything at school, um, in your desk, locker or bookbag today that you are reading?

IN: Not right now.

RA: Ok. Tell me about your favorite author.

IN: (laughs) Um, I don't read much so I don't have a favorite author.

RA: Ok.

IN: I just go upon on the book and the story.

RA: Ok. I gotcha. Alright, um, what do you think you have to learn to be a better reader?

IN: I think I need to like be a better rea…I think I need to like learn the concept of reading. Like you can't just read the book and then it's done, you have to know like the story behind it, you have to know what the author felt while writing it so I feel like I…to be a better reader I need to like you know learn the concept of why they wrote it.

RA: Ok. Uh, do you know about any books right now that you would like to read?

IN: No.

RA: Ok. How do you find out about these books? Or how, how do you find about, how do you find out about books that you may be interested in?

4.6 Full Transcript of Case: "No Choice group: score was unchanged" (continued)

IN: Um, I mean nowadays it's just like online.

RA: Uh huh.

IN: So, I just like go online and like search if I'm in the mood of reading I just search and there's online books that I can read on my phone so I do that.

RA: Ok.

IN: Uh huh.

RA: Um, what are some things that you get really excited about reading?

IN: Um, about reality.

RA: Ok.

IN: Ok.

RA: Good. Who gets you really interested and excited about reading?

IN: Oh, my best friend. She loves reading and so she tells me the book she read and so makes me into reading, too. So, yeah.

RA: Ok. Um, do you have a computer in your home?

IN: Yeah.

RA: How much time do you spend on the computer a day?

IN: Um, not much. I only spend, I guess, an hour or two.

RA: Ok. What do you usually do?

IN: I do my, um, research that I can't do on my school laptop.

RA: Ok.

IN: Because then they would know.

RA: Ok. (laughs). Do you want to elaborate on that?

4.6 Full Transcript of Case: "No Choice group: score was unchanged" (continued)

IN: Um, like…

RA: You don't have to.

IN: Yeah, that's ok.

RA: That's fine. What do you like to read when you are on the internet?

IN: Um, I mainly read articles and about like new things coming out so I can like get to find out about new things.

RA: Uh huh.

IN: To do online, I guess.

RA: Ok. Um, alright. In what class do you most like to read? And why?

IN: I like to read where, I like to read in a class where it's quiet and warm and like nobody's talking, no distraction. It's like the perfect mood around to like read.

RA: Uh huh. Is there a particular class, like subject, like a History class or an English class?

IN: I like to read in English class.

RA: You do?

IN: Yeah.

RA: Why?

IN: Because English class is like, you know, it's quiet because the environment over there is like reading. It's like you read and then you talk about your book and so you get like different opinions like you know if I'm talking to a teacher about it, he'll tell me what he thought while he was reading the book so I can get a different perspective. History, there's not much to like read. We all have work to do in other classes so we don't get time to read.

RA: I gotcha. Ok. In what class do you feel the reading is the most difficult?

4.6 Full Transcript of Case: "No Choice group: score was unchanged" (continued)

IN: I think, I think English class.

RA: Ok. Why?

IN: Because it's like sometimes you're reading a book and you don't have an opinion, but like you know he wants, the teacher wants you to elaborate what you're reading through but that's at some point in the book you're confused, you don't know what the book is talking about so like it's hard sometimes to elaborate.

RA: Ok. Um, have any of your teachers done something with reading that you really enjoyed?

IN: In Criminal Justice we did something while reading where we had to like, you know, find the criminals and you had to like learn about them and we had to write our own story about the criminal and so I find interesting learning about it because you find out what type of people are there in this world and you should be aware of.

RA: That's awesome! Um, do you share and discuss books, magazines or other reading materials with your friends outside of school?

IN: Yeah.

RA: Ok.

IN: I do.

RA: Ok. What? How often? Where?

IN: Um, it's like if I find something interesting I would like to know what they're thinking about and then they could tell me. And then we just tell like that, talking.

RA: Yeah. Discussion about it?

IN: Yeah, discussion.

RA: How often would you say that you do that?

IN: Pretty often, like maybe whenever we talk about it it's like what do you think about this? Oh, yeah! It's like that.

4.6 Full Transcript of Case: "No Choice group: score was unchanged" (continued)

RA: Awesome! Ok. And where does this usually happen?

IN: Um, outside school, either on the phone or like sometimes at lunch it happens.

RA: Ok. Uh, do you write letters or emails to friends or family?

IN: Yes, I do.

RA: Ok. How often would you say you do that?

IN: Um, on special occasions.

RA: Ok. If you had to quantify that, how many times a month or year would you say?

IN: Um, I think one each month because we have this like Indian thing for like every month we have a festival so like we just contact each other throughout these days.

RA: Ok. That's awesome! Um, do you share any of the following reading materials with members of your family: Do you share newspapers, magazines, religious materials, games?

IN: Yeah. With my mom.

RA: Ok. Uh, and how often do you say, would you say you do that?

IN: Um, pretty often because like we do it like every week or so.

RA: Ok.

IN: Uh huh.

RA: That's good. Do you belong to any clubs or organizations for which you read and write?

IN: No.

RA: Ok. And that's it.

VITA

Brian DeLoach has been a PhD student at the University of Tennessee since 2017. During that time, he has been published in *Education Review* and *The Journal of Recreation, Education, and Outdoor Leadership.* He has been a contributing author to Jane Morris's *Teacher Misery* series as well as several other popular press publications focusing on education, philanthropy, and recreation. He has taught ELA at a public high school for ten years.