WHAT TYPES OF READ-ALOUD PRACTICES DO SECONDARY TEACHERS ENGAGE IN? WHAT ARE THE STUDENTS’ PERCEPTIONS OF THE SECONDARY READ-ALOUD PRACTICE?

Jessica M. Primeau

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate College of Bowling Green State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

May 2007

Committee:

Cindy Hendricks, Advisor

Tim Murnen

Craig Mertler
ABSTRACT

Dr. Cindy Hendricks, Chair

The purpose of this study was to examine the read-aloud practices of secondary language arts teachers as well as the secondary students’ perception of teacher read-alouds in the classroom. The educator’s behaviors and views in connection with the read-aloud practice was examined in addition to the secondary students’ past and current experiences with read-alouds, their general opinions in relation to the practice, as well as the perceived benefits and/or hindrances employed by teacher directed read-alouds. The types and frequency of teacher read-alouds was also studied.

Nine high school sophomores and five sophomore language arts teachers participated in interviews aimed at discovering information regarding teacher read-alouds in the secondary classroom. Students and teachers from a local small and large school took part in the study. The students and educators were asked to answer questions pertaining to their experiences with teacher conducted read-alouds at the secondary level as well as their overall impressions of the instructional method. In addition, students were asked to supply information concerning the benefits and/or obstructions created by teacher read-alouds as well as the types of material read aloud. Students were also prompted to identify the amount of time spent on teacher directed read-alouds as well as the reoccurrence of the method. The data collected was analyzed to determine the types of patterns that existed amongst the secondary teachers’ and students’ responses.

The conclusions drawn from the study revealed that the read-aloud practice is indeed, valued by students and teachers alike. Data also showed that the educators implemented the practice for
purposeful reasons rather than reading aloud for mere pleasure. Similarly, it was discovered that
the educators also use read-alouds as more of a literacy tool rather than a motivational tool.
Lastly, it was communicated by the students that they favored listening to specific materials, such
as poetry and short stories, over other types of read-aloud material.

In the end, recommendations were made, which encouraged enjoyable and motivational
purposes for reading aloud, as well as additional suggestions that will help improve the read-
aloud practice for years to come.
To Corey and Braden... for hanging in there and providing everlasting support throughout this study. You will feel neglected no longer
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to Dr. Cindy Hendricks for her helpful and timely feedback, as well as her invaluable suggestions. This study could not have been completed to the level that it was without her assistance. Dr. Hendricks truly is a remarkably dedicated and inspiring educator.

An additional thank-you goes out to Dr. Mertler and Dr. Murnen for their continuous advice throughout the duration of this study.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rationale</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theoretical Orientation for the Study</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supporting Historical Studies</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Understanding Read-Alouds</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Attitude</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>METHODS AND PROCEDURES</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Procedures</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher Data Analysis</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Data Analysis</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Page</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Data Analysis</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion of the Results</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</td>
<td>57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>59</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Conclusions and the Research</td>
<td>61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDICES</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A</td>
<td>71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B</td>
<td>73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C</td>
<td>77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix D</td>
<td>84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix E</td>
<td>95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

It is widely accepted that reading aloud to students at both the primary and secondary level is beneficial. The 1985 landmark publication, *Becoming A Nation of Readers*, made one of the most influential statements in regards to reading aloud: “The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children” (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985, p. 23). Although generally supported by teachers across the country, it is still unclear as to whether or not teacher read-alouds are viewed positively by students as well. Typically, elementary-aged children view teacher-conducted read-alouds in a positive light, usually looking forward to that block of “story-time” set-aside during the school day (Roberts & Wilson, 2006). However, what often is not discussed is how high school students actually perceive this particular instructional method.

**Statement of the Problem**

Since the student’s attitude towards reading is one of the most vital components of the reading process, it is imperative that the secondary students’ perceptions of teacher read-alouds be examined. For success to take place between students and reading, “positive associations” must first be created (Goldfinch, 2002). The question that remains is that although this “positive association” between read-alouds and the teacher may be apparent, is it actually perceived as “valuable” to the students? Therefore, it is not only the student’s overall attitude that must be examined, but also the types of instructional methods used, time spent, and the chosen literature incorporated into the read-aloud sessions.

Over time, research has indicated that reading aloud to students helps build social relationships between teachers and students as well as students and one another (Barrett, 2000). Additional studies have revealed that secondary students who experience teacher read-alouds
understand “the power of the spoken word and the bond that develops between speaker, oral reading, and audience” (Megyeri, 1993, p. 52). Such practices also help students to “internalize the conventions of language as well as improve comprehension of the text” in addition to a broad range of other educational benefits (Barrett, 2000, p. 35). With such a wide array of literacy-based benefits tied to the modeled reading practice, studies must now focus on the students’ attitude towards this practice and what can be done to maintain “positive associations” or alleviate any negative judgments.

Research Questions

According to Trelease (2001), author of The Read-Aloud Handbook, teacher read-alouds have the potential to positively impact students by stimulating their “interest, their emotional development, their imagination, and their language” (p. 145). As previously stated, with such a wide range of literacy-based benefits tied to the art of reading aloud, there is no question as to why the modeled reading practice is so highly praised amongst educators today. Nevertheless, one perception that is often overlooked, but may prove more valuable than the educator’s perception, is the student’s view of teacher read-alouds. According to Roberts and Wilson (2006), “The ultimate success of instruction is strongly affected by the reader’s attitude” (p. 64). Therefore, the questions to be answered by this investigation were: What types of read-aloud practices do secondary teachers engage in and what are the students’ perceptions of the secondary read-aloud practices?

Rationale

Research has indicated that a student’s attitude towards reading is an integral component of the entire reading process (Roberts & Wilson, 2006). Whether reading to oneself or listening to a teacher-directed read-aloud, the student’s attitude plays a vital role in the knowledge and
literacy skills acquired while engaged in any reading-related activity. With evidence to support the importance of student attitude, it is imperative that studies not only analyze the benefits of literacy-based instructional methods, but also the student’s overall perception towards these practices.

With the focus on the secondary student, studies with results pertaining to the primary level student are not of relative importance. Since younger students have generally revealed a positive attitude towards reading and literacy-related activities, it is now essential to analyze the views held by secondary students in relation to teacher read-alouds.

Studies and educators continue to support the implementation of read-alouds in the secondary classroom. Read-alouds have demonstrated effectiveness when introducing a new topic of study in addition to assisting in the development of vocabulary. On the other end of the spectrum, modeled reading practices have also allowed students to embark on journeys they may never have had the chance to experience. Read-alouds allow students to think creatively while improving their auditory skills and learning the basic conventions of language. Further benefits tied to read-alouds include the ability for teachers to model useful reading strategies in addition to improving comprehension levels (Fisher, Flood, Lapp & Frey, 2004).

Research and common practices have revealed the importance of student attitude in addition to the effectiveness of teacher-directed read-alouds in the classroom. With a wide range of research in support of these topics, the secondary students’ perceptions of read-alouds, the types of read-alouds administered, materials used, and frequency of the practice must now be examined.
Definition of Terms

The following is a list of terms and definitions to help the reader better understand the study, the purpose of the study, and the findings related to the secondary students’ perceptions of teacher read-alouds.

Active Interviewing: An interviewing format where “both parties to the interview are necessarily and ineluctably active” (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997, p. 114).

Attitude: “a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object” (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, p. 6)

Multi-Stage Sampling: The process of “selecting a sample within each chosen cluster, rather than including all units in the cluster” (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2004).

Secondary students: Generally, students enrolled in one of the nine through twelve grades.

Schemata: “Background knowledge” which relates to the “theories we hold about events, objects, and situations” (Wade, 1990, p. 442).

Teacher read-aloud: A teacher read-aloud is an instructional method in which a teacher reads an entire selection or part of a selection out loud to a group of students, often creating a “shared experience” (Collins, 2005, p. 10).

Think aloud: “A metacognitive technique or strategy in which a teacher verbalizes thoughts aloud while reading a selection orally, thus modeling the process of comprehension” (Block & Israel, 2004, p. 154).

Picture books: “The format that he author and illustrator have chosen in which to tell a story and is generally not indicative of reading ability or interest level” (Giorgis, 1999, p. 51).
Limitations

Since the purpose of this study was to examine read-aloud tactics implemented within the classroom as well as the secondary students’ perceptions of teacher-directed read-alouds, attention will not be directed towards student read-alouds. Although the student read-aloud is a fascinating subject worth studying, the focus of this study was on how students actually perceive teacher read-alouds rather than the oral reading conducted amongst themselves. In addition, although the educator does play a major role in how students view the teacher read-alouds in the classroom, the teachers’ opinions and/or insights did not play a major part in this study. The focus was on the students’ perspective, rather than how the teacher viewed read-alouds or choose to implement or stray away from the tactic.

Since the focal point of this investigation was based upon secondary students’ views, there were a number of factors the researcher was not be capable of controlling during administration of the study. Interviews were conducted amongst nine high school sophomores in the Northwest Ohio area, who were selected via the multi-stage sampling process. Approximately four interviewees were selected from one small high school and five from a medium school. Although the researcher did have control over the classrooms from which the interviewees were selected, the researcher did not have control over which exact students were selected. In addition, the researcher had little information about what the interviewees’ past experiences with teacher-read alouds were, which in the end may have altered the outcome.

In choosing the schools, a small and a large school in the Northwest Ohio area was used for the purpose of obtaining valuable information that applied to a diverse range of schools. Information taken from only a small or large school would not be relevant to a wide-range of schools in the Northwest Ohio area. In addition, obtaining information from various schools
would most likely reflect a more accurate view of student perception at the secondary grade level.

Along with the student interviews, five sophomore language arts teachers were also asked to take part in separate interviews. Similar to the student interview process, the researcher had little information about the educators’ current read-aloud practices, which may have affected the study and final implications.

In addition, there were also a number of outside factors that may have potentially influenced responses from the interviewees. The time of day interviews were conducted, as well as the attitude of the interviewees during that particular time may have played a part in the initial findings. Students and teachers may have also answered based on what they perceived the interviewer wanted to know or wanted them to say. Other factors such as the amount of time students and teachers had to respond or wanted to respond may have also skewed the final results.
CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The teacher-directed read aloud, an instructional method used to help students excel in a wide range of literacy-based areas, is a practice that has been highly valued and implemented by educators for years. Not only is this practice used to assist students’ development with various literacy skills, it is oftentimes also used for the purpose of motivating students to independently read and in consequence, enjoy the reading process. For decades, studies have been conducted to increase the value placed on read-alouds in addition to providing teachers with support about how and why to implement the practice. Chapter two will provide a theoretical orientation to the study. In addition, a historical exploration of read-alouds will be included in this chapter. This chapter also provides readers with a basic understanding of read-alouds.

Theoretical Orientation for the Study

The theoretical orientation for this study was derived from numerous research studies in support of the teacher-read aloud practice. From the support of Jim Trelease, advocate for reading aloud and author of The Read-Aloud Handbook (2006), to teachers representative of every grade level, it is clear that the value placed on this particular instructional method is inestimable. For some, the teacher directed read-aloud is viewed as a classroom literacy tool, helping students to improve and excel with a wide variety of reading tasks. For others, the read-aloud method is used as a motivational device, fostering the joy of reading within students across the grade levels. Although there appear to be two basic yet imperative models tied to the purpose of reading aloud, the literacy model and the motivational model, the theoretical orientation for this study stems mainly from the motivational model of teacher directed read-alouds.
Model 1: The Motivational Model

Motivation has always been viewed as an integral component of the learning process. Over the years, several research studies have been conducted to examine the actual role of motivation in literacy learning. The findings revealed that there is indeed, a link between motivation and a reader’s “destiny” as a literacy learner (Guthrie, 1996). According to Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, and Mazzoni (1996), it can be concluded that literacy learning is in fact “influenced by a variety of motivation factors” (p. 518). From these factors, several theories and models have been developed by scholars for the purpose of promoting a better understanding of the motivation and reading processes.

The “Expectancy-Value” Theory of Motivation, as cited by Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, and Mazzoni (1996), was devised by Jacquelynne Eccles. The “Expectancy-Value” Theory describes motivation as being deeply affected by a student’s perception of failure or success with a specific learning task as well as the value he or she places on the task at hand. In connection with reading, students who then believe they are skillful readers will most likely surpass those who do not hold such optimistic views of the reading process. Similarly, students who view reading as “valuable and important” will engage in reading more often, developing a love for reading as well as effortlessly conditioning themselves to become better readers on their own (p. 518).

In some ways similar to the “Expectancy-Value” Theory of Motivation, “The Mathewson model”, developed by Grover Mathewson in 1994, proposes that attitude is one of several factors that influence an individual’s objective to engage in reading (as cited by McKenna, Kear, & Ellsworth, 1995). The feelings and outcome of a reading experience are actually reverted back to the individual, eventually influencing his or her attitude towards the reading process (as cited by
McKenna, et al.). Within this model, Mathewson focuses on four factors that are believed to strongly affect attitude. The four factors include: personal values, goals, self-concepts, and influential messaging (p. 937) which are all possible forms of influence during an actual reading experience.

The “McKenna Model” of affective reading (Kush, Watkins, & Brookhart, 2005), proposes that a reader’s attitude is formed as the result of three factors: “self perceived judgment about reading outcomes, self-perceived judgment about expectations of others,” and “specific learning experiences” (p. 30). One major difference between the McKenna model and the Mathewson model is that the McKenna model proposes that a reader’s attitude is formed over a long period of time, rather than during only a limited number of actual reading experiences. In addition, the model also states that outside sources, such as parents and teachers, may potentially influence attitude.

Since it has been well established that motivation plays such an important role in literacy learning, the read-aloud practice has been recognized as a valuable reading model for associating reading with pleasure in students across the curriculum (Meehan, 2006). Meehan reports that numerous students have “sophisticated and enlightening explanations for the power of the read-aloud” indicating that read-alouds have the power to motivate them to independently read as well as foster a general love for reading (p. 812). By engaging students in teacher directed read-alouds and allowing them to see the pleasure reading can bring to a teacher as well as a classroom, students are unknowingly being conditioned to associate reading with enjoyment. Consequently, when students begin to develop a love for a specific task, such as reading, they become motivated to engage in the task more often, which in turn transforms them into more successful and component readers.
As students become better readers, their self-concept as reader also begins to improve. As cited in Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, and Mazzoni, (1996), the “idealized reader” is one who feels competent when reading, thus engaging in the task more often (p. 519). As students begin to develop confidence with reading, as with most other tasks, they engage in the task more often, thus conditioning themselves to become improved readers. On the other hand, students who possess poor self-concepts as readers will read less, eventually causing them to fall behind and view the reading process as a chore, rather than an educational and pleasurable activity.

Aside from the enjoyment and self-concept factors, students are also motivated by the value they place on a specific task. According to Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, and Mazzoni, (1996), evidence from various studies support the idea that “high motivation to read” is associated with a “high value assignment”, while “low motivation to read” is associated with a “low value assignment” (p. 519). Therefore, it is beneficial that read-alouds are created to appeal to students’ interests so that a higher value is placed upon the practice. In addition, it is also imperative that read-alouds allow for knowledge growth so students are aware of the information gained from engagement in read-aloud practices. If the students’ values are met, the importance of reading process will become apparent.

Model 2: The Literacy Model

The second read-aloud model can be viewed as the literacy model, as named by the researcher. Although not as significant to the theoretical orientation of the study, this model focuses on the literacy skills gained through engagement in the teacher directed read-aloud, thus reflecting the imperativeness of not only creating motivation within a student, but also helping the student to obtain a wide-range of literacy skills.
As with most instructional methods, the purpose of any educational technique is to teach a specific skill so that the skill is internalized in hopes of helping the student to excel in school and succeed later in life. The read-aloud, which involves a teacher orally reading a piece of text to his or her students, has the potential to help students improve as literacy learners in an array of ways. From expanding a student’s vocabulary to improving a student’s comprehension of a specific reading, the literacy skills obtained are immeasurable and imperative to the overall success of the practice (Seedfeldt, 2003). The literacy skills obtained from teacher directed read-alouds will be discussed in greater detail later in chapter 2.

Supporting Historical Studies

Generally, researchers and educators across the curriculum support teacher-directed read-alouds. Because of this support, numerous studies have been conducted for the purpose of adding value to the read-aloud practice.

One particular study that aided in the influence of this thesis was the 1993 study of secondary teachers conducted by Duchein and Mealy. According to Giorgis (1999), the purpose of this study was to examine the read-aloud practices of primarily, secondary level teachers, how often that practice was incorporated into the curriculum during the upper level years of schooling, and how the read-aloud method impacted students. The study indicated that most teachers ceased or severely limited the read-aloud practice by the third grade. However, those teachers who continued to read to their students through the middle and high school years made lasting impressions on their students, thus reflected the imperativeness of the read-aloud practice (Giorgis).

Another study (Fisher, Flood, Lapp, & Frey, 2004) that added further value to the read-aloud method investigated the procedures used in read-aloud practices. This study consisted of
observing 145 expert classroom teachers during read-aloud sessions. In addition to the observations, another 18 teachers were interviewed about their read-aloud practices and experiences. From data received via the observations and interviews, the most essential components of teacher-directed read-alouds were identified. According to the researchers, seven imperative components of teacher read-alouds are necessary for successful implementation. The components consisted of the types of literature chosen by the teacher, the importance of previewing materials beforehand, and the importance of establishing a purpose for the read-aloud session. In addition, the researchers also identified the significance of using fluent language and expression while reading, as well as incorporating thought-provoking questions into the session. According to the researchers, connections should also be made between independent reading and writing (Fisher, Flood, Lapp, & Frey).

An additional investigation, published by Hart and Risely (1996), aimed at discovering how children could get a head start on vocabulary acquisition by their first year of school. The investigators used 42 “normal” families, representative of the welfare, working-class, and professional class, in their study. When the children belonging to these households were seven months of age, the researchers made monthly one-hour visits and continued these visits for two and a half years. While present, the researchers tape-recorded and transcribed the conversations and actions that took place in front of the children. According to the results, every family, regardless of socioeconomic status, did similar things with their children. However, the major differences that were discovered made a significant difference in the vocabulary acquisition of the children. For instance, when the daily number of spoken words for the children belonging to the professional households was accumulated, each of those children will have heard 32 million more words than the children belonging to the households on welfare and 19 million more words
than the children belonging to the working class families. Consequently, those children who had been exposed to frequent meaningful conversations, which often manifest during read-aloud sessions, will have a higher level of vocabulary than those that were not (Hart & Risley).

Although not directly related to the actual read-aloud practice, Krashen’s and Von Sprecken’s study (2002) focused on an imperative component of the reading process: student attitude. Oftentimes, it is thought that as children grow older, their interest in reading declines. However, according to the study by Krashen and Von Sprecken, this is not the case. During their investigation, Krashen and Von Sprecken analyzed a wide-range of reading attitude surveys given to primary, middle, and secondary level students. According the results, interest in reading does not decline as children become older. Although adolescents have more pressures and often lead busier lives than younger children, their interest in reading still remains the same (Von Sprecken & Krashen).

Another study (2005), conducted by Kush, Watkins, and Brookhart involved an examination of second and third graders, their reading achievement, behaviors, and attitudes in the primary grades, and a later investigation of the same children at the seventh grade level. The purpose of the study was to find if reading attitude, behavior, and achievement in the primary grades would actually predict reading achievement at the seventh grade level. Based on the results, the second and third graders’ attitudes towards reading did not affect their performance in the primary grades, but it did prove to have an affect on reading achievement at the seventh grade level. To some extent, the study appeared to prove that although attitude and achievement may not be closely related in the early stages of learning, the two actually become “more closely linked over time, developing into important causal determinants of reading achievement by early
adolescence” (Kush, Watkins, & Brookhart, p. 29). Thus, the results reveal that attitude is an imperative component of reading at all grade levels.

Understanding Read-Alouds

Although the teacher-read aloud method is a rather simple process to understand, the following information will help the reader to become better acquainted with not only the purpose of the read-aloud, but the benefits as well as the formats and materials that guide the read-aloud practice.

Benefits of Teacher Read-Alouds

Langer (1995) stated that literature “sets the scene for us to explore both ourselves and others, to define and redefine who we are, who we might become, and how the world might be” (p. 5). In connection with this empowering statement, are the countless, underlying benefits that teacher directed read-alouds have the potential to manifest.

A teacher read-aloud can be defined as "an instructional method in which a teacher reads an entire selection or part of a selection out loud to a group of students, often creating a ‘shared experience’” (Collins, 2005, p. 10). More often than not, teacher read-alouds take place in the primary classroom, where children look favorably upon the time of day when they are invited to listen and discuss the events of a story. However, in today’s secondary classroom, teacher read-alouds have become more of a presence due to research that has revealed a wide range of literacy-based benefits tied to effective read-aloud practices.

One of the first and foremost benefits of teacher-directed read-alouds is the skills and conventions of language that read-alouds have the ability to teach. Since read-alouds give all students the chance to experience books above their reading levels, they are being conditioned to associate their teacher’s language with the way their language should sound (Dreher, 2000). By
listening to stories and various text read aloud, students learn to understand language
congventions and how the components of a sentence work together (Fisher, Flood, Lapp, & Frey,
2004). During read-alouds, students are also able to experience how “good” readers read with
intonation and fluency which in turn, helps them to create a more vivid picture of the material
read in addition to understanding various language patterns (Seedfeldt, 2003). Once obtained,
students can then transfer these specific skills and conventions to their own literacy practices.

Teacher directed read-alouds have also been shown to improve the comprehension of
text. Oftentimes, students have trouble reading certain material, such as a scientific-based
informational text, on their own. By listening to the content read aloud, students do not have to
struggle with the decoding component of reading. In turn, students are able to focus on the
content of the reading and grasp the intended implication of the text (Barrett, 2000).

In addition to improved comprehension and an increased understanding of language skills
and conventions, read-alouds have also been effective when connected to specific content
learning. Using read-alouds to introduce new topics or add “layers of meaning” to certain ideas
helps to expand student knowledge as well as connect schemata with newly obtained information
(Barrett, 2000, p. 36). To help enhance knowledge of a certain topic, such as The Great
Depression, a read-aloud about someone’s personal struggle during the Depression could help
students grasp a better understanding of the time period and the setbacks encountered by
individuals on a daily basis. In consequence, experiences are created and information is acquired
that students would normally not have the ability to attain (Seefeldt, 2003).

Read-alouds also have the potential to encourage a deeper more enhanced way of
thinking amongst listeners. Oftentimes, “when students listen to literature, they think more about
the literature they hear” compared to when students read literature on their own (Barrett, 2000, p.
When listening to an oral reading, students are able to think about issues, events, and characters in creative and engaging ways. Furthermore, students are often able to “develop a sense of self as they compare themselves to characters and respond to situations” (Seedfeldt, 2003, p. 8).

In addition, read-alouds also encourage the formation of dynamic social relationships between students and teachers as well as the students themselves. While reading aloud, a union often develops between the teacher’s reading and the message he or she is able to direct to the class. In turn, students feel comfortable and encouraged to not only listen but also connect to the reading, as well as others, on a more personal level. Oftentimes, vibrant discussions are created and personal reflections are shared (Fisher, Flood, Lapp, & Frey, 2004).

Improved listening and speaking skills have also been tied to effective teacher read-aloud practices (Fisher, Flood, Lapp, & Frey, 2004). Listening skills are often enhanced during modeled reading sessions when students are given the opportunity to use their auditory skills for an extended period of time for the purpose of obtaining certain information or grasping the intended meaning of a story. Similarly, speaking skills are potentially improved amongst students when teachers are able to model fluent speaking habits during various readings.

Read-alouds also help students expand their vocabularies. According to Trelease, "conversation is the prime garden in which vocabulary grows" (2006, p. 13). It is during read-aloud sessions, when teachers and students are in a sense, engaged in conversation with a book, that students are able to pick up on new vocabulary. Through read-aloud sessions, students are able to hear unfamiliar vocabulary and connect new terminology with the intended meanings. Consequently, connections are often made and the new words become a part of their lexicon.
While engaged in a read-aloud session, students are often tuned in to the teacher’s enthusiasm, dramatization and apparent love for reading. Such modeling from a respected adult has the potential to motivate students to not only independently read, but also helps foster a desire to learn. When students actually see the passion their teacher has while reading, eagerness is often cultivated within the students as well (Fisher, Flood, Lapp, & Frey, 2006).

**Read-Aloud Formats**

A read-aloud does not necessarily always consist of an educator directly reading a piece of literature to his or her students. A teacher read-aloud can actually take a variety of forms (Lesesne, 2006). It can be used to introduce students to a new topic in any content area classroom or can be used to activate student’s schema to prepare for the reading of a new novel (Rycik & Irvin, 2005). To introduce students to a section in geometry class on *Descartes’ Rule of Signs*, the instructor may read excerpts from Rene Descartes’ biography. Similarly, when tapping into student’s schema to prepare them for the upcoming novel, *The Scarlet Letter*, the teacher may read William Bradford’s *Journal of Plymouth Plantation* so students obtain a better understanding of the Puritan lifestyle and can connect the reading to information they had learned about Puritans during pervious years, as well as the information they will obtain in the future (personal example).

A read-aloud may also “be utilized to teach skills and strategies such as context clues, word attack skills, or main idea” (Lesesne, 2006, p. 52). If a teacher notices that some students are having difficulties using context clues to decode unfamiliar words, he or she may walk the students through a think-aloud while orally reading and modeling how to use context clues with an excerpt from the text. Similarly, the teacher may also incorporate a think-aloud into his or her
A read-aloud can also be used for “sheer pleasure and enjoyment” (Lesesne, 2006, p. 53). Taking time out of the day to read a picture book, piece of poetry or exciting newspaper article allows students to relax, free their minds, and absorb the wide range of new information that read-alouds can potentially offer.

Additionally, a read-aloud is sometimes used to model the importance of literacy to younger adults. In the secondary classroom, students have oftentimes already developed a pessimistic view of reading and its importance. By taking the time to read aloud to students, the teacher is relaying the message that reading is essential and that his or her students are worthy of the attention. Furthermore, the enthusiasm put forward during a teacher read-aloud also allows students to see that their teacher enjoys reading and in the near future, perhaps they will take pleasure in reading as much as their teacher does (Seefeldt, 2003).

**Read-Aloud Materials**

According to Trelease, "an essential element in reading aloud is what you choose to read" (2006, p. 177). The text teachers choose to read during modeled reading sessions usually varies from classroom to classroom depending on the age, level, and interest of the students. Other factors contributing to the chosen read aloud materials include the topic connected to the read-aloud session as well as the intended purpose behind the gathering. During the usage of such read-aloud materials, however, it is always encouraged that active learning including “questioning”, the exploration of materials, “problem solving, and decision making” is promoted (Albright, 2002, p. 419).
Over the years, studies have shown that the literacy instruction of schools relies primarily on fictional text. Although some may not see this as an issue, the National Assessment of Educational Progress’s study about the reading preferences and achievement of fourth grade students found that students who were exposed to more than one type of reading material showed higher achievement levels than students who were exposed to only one type of material. Based on these results, it is advised that teachers expose students to an assortment of literature when reading aloud in the classroom (Dreher, 2003).

In *The Read Aloud Handbook*, Trelease (2006) divides his "Treasury of Read-Alouds" into nine distinct categories. Within in each category is an array of literature that teachers across every grade level could potentially choose for read-aloud sessions.

The first type of literature mentioned by Trelease (2006) is the wordless book. The wordless book is a story told through pictures only. This type of read-aloud material can be used at the secondary level to introduce a topic or potentially relay an emotional message to students through the use of illustrations. Although the stories are told through only pictures, teachers still have the potential to stimulate discussion and encourage students to create their own text based on the engaging illustrations (Erickson, 1996).

The second category of literature addressed is the predictable book. The predictable book is a story that uses repeated phrases which allow students to predict what will happen next. Predictable books give students the opportunity to join readings and in consequence, make sense of words they normally would not be able to understand (Trelease, 2006). The predictable book is an exceptional way to help students expand and reinforce vocabulary (Dreher, 2003).

Reference books or information books are considered another type of potential read-aloud material. According to Dreher (2000), informational texts have the power to promote
independent reading because “they help teachers tap students’ interests” (p. 28). When the interests of students are struck, their motivation to read is then increased, fostering the opportunity for literacy growth. In addition, reference or information books can also be used to introduce students to new subject matter or enhance understanding of an unfamiliar topic (Trelease, 2006).

The picture book is a popular form of literature often incorporated into read-aloud sessions as well. Picture books are writing pieces that use both pictures and wording to tell a story. Although text is used to help tell the stories, the pictures are the main focus (Trelease, 2006). Since picture books are “a diverse genre of literature” and often relate to a wide range of topics, they could be implemented in any content area classroom (Albright, 2002, p. 418). Similar to the wordless books, the picture book can be also used to relay an emotional message or introduce students to a new unit of study (Trelease). In addition, picture books also have the potential to engage adolescents in various content materials for the purpose of encouraging a higher order of thinking (Albright, p. 419).

Short novels are basically shorter versions of the typical full-length novel. Usually introduced to students just beginning to read chapter books, short novels can be incorporated into the secondary classroom for read-aloud sessions as well. Short novels provide classroom teachers with the opportunity to track and analyze their students’ reading progress by engaging them in think-aloud processes. By modeling metacognitive strategies, educators are able to demonstrate how to think about the text for the purpose of engaging in more thoughtful reading (Ivey, 2003). In addition, short novels also have the potential to motivate students to engage in further readings related to topics reflected in the book or written by the same author (Trelease, 2006).
Full-length novels are pieces of writing usually a couple hundred pages or more in length. Teachers have the choice to read full-length novels in completion, over an extended number of read-aloud sessions, or just certain chapters or passages (Trelease, 2006). By reading only certain chapters, teachers are often able to heighten their students’ interest which eventually provokes them to skip ahead and read that same book or related readings independently (Ivey, 2003). Full-length novels can also be used to increase student vocabulary or help students grasp the essence of figurative language (Trealse).

Poetry is another writing form often incorporated into read-aloud sessions. Orally reading poetry can help students hear the intended rhythm of certain poems or obtain a better understanding of the poet’s thematic messages (Trealse, 2006). According to Erickson (1996), it is imperative that read-alouds are quick and able to hold the interest of not only the teachers but also the students. Therefore, poetry selections are excellent pieces to implement for quick oral reading purposes.

Anthologies, often rich with a variety of literary forms, could also be integrated into the secondary classrooms’ read-aloud sessions. Anthologies provide educators with the opportunity to choose from a wide-range of text. Depending on what the teacher plans to focus on, almost all literary skills can be touched upon using some piece of literature from an anthology (Trealse, 2006). In addition, material from anthologies often provides for successful oral presentation which enables students to experience the fluency and intonation used during the reading process for the purpose of fostering more “fluent, expressive readers” (Erickson, 1996, p. 213).

The final piece of literature mentioned, which can be used as read-aloud material, is the fairy and folk tale (Trealse, 2006). Often used for reading in the home or primary-schooling environment, fairy and folk tales provide messages that frequently relate to novels or other units
of study within the secondary grade levels. Such read-alouds can be used to introduce students to a new topic or broaden their background knowledge.

Student Attitude

For decades, it has been acknowledged that student attitude plays an essential part in the reading process. In fact, the success of any instructional method in the classroom is more than likely affected by the student’s attitude towards that particular task (Richek, List, & Lerner, 1983). Similarly to the two previously mentioned motivational models, it is then imperative that strong correlations are made between reading and the student so that not only an intrinsic motivator is created, but a positive attitude towards the overall reading process is also fostered.

The primary purpose for creating a positive attitude towards reading is simple: It is necessary for “adequate literacy development” (Wilson & Roberts, 2006, p. 65). Without positive perceptions, the reader will more than likely dread the reading task as well any activity associated with reading. In turn, lifelong pessimistic views towards reading are created which then negatively affect the overall success of the reader’s literacy development.

As described previously, the read-aloud was created for two primary purposes: As a motivational tool and a literacy tool. To successfully implement the literacy end of the model, the motivational aspect must first be met. However, before the motivational aspect is met, a positive attitude must first be fostered. Once positive views of the reading process are created in the classroom, the road to positive literacy development is underway.

Summary

Every component of the literature review, although not directly tied to the read-aloud practice, plays an integral part of the reading process. From the wide-range of benefits tied to the modeled reading practice, to the materials used during the read-aloud sessions, every piece of the
process is imperative to the overall success of the method. Over a period of time, research has indicated the benefits of reading aloud to children at every age level. The next step in the research process is to find what read-aloud tactics are executed and how many of these students actually view the process as valuable so, if needed the necessary alternations can be made to ensure the continuing success of the read-aloud practice.
CHAPTER III. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this study was not only to examine read-aloud tactics implemented by secondary educators but also the secondary students’ perceptions of teacher-directed read-alouds in the classroom. As cited by Collins (2005, p. 10), although there already exists a “large body of word arguing the significance of story in children’s lives”, there has been little research conducted for the purpose of analyzing the secondary student’s views of teacher read-alouds. For years, the teacher directed read-aloud has been a familiar practice in the classroom, capturing the attention of students across the grade levels and teaching a wide-range of literacy skills. It is apparent that this instructional method has been embraced primarily by elementary-aged students, whose opinions oftentimes appear more frequently than secondary students’ opinions. Consequently, it is imperative that the secondary students’ perception of the teacher read-aloud practice be examined, to add additional educational benefits and value to the read-aloud method at the high school level. Since read-alouds are generally supported by a wide range of research, the student’s views as well as the instructional methods implemented, time spent, and literature incorporated into the read-aloud sessions was analyzed. This chapter outlines the methods and procedures that were implemented for this investigation.

Methods

The following is an in-depth overview of the methods that were used during the implementation of this particular study.

Research Design

According to Trochim (2006) and Mertler (2006), the research design best suited for the purpose of this study was the non-experimental design. Since the variables, which are the secondary students’ perspectives and methods implemented by the teachers, could not be
controlled, the conclusions only describe or report the information gathered from the study rather than manipulate possible outcomes (Mertler). In turn, there was not a comparison group or "multiple waves of measurement." Therefore the non-experimental design appeared most appropriate for this particular study (Trochim).

The researcher first implemented an active-interview, composed of a template of questions that addressed the extent to which read-alouds were used in the classroom as well as the types of read-aloud methods used. An active interview consisting of active participation by both the interviewer and interviewee, was used instead of a standard interview because it allowed deeper, more thought-provoking responses by both parties (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997). By “treating interviewing as a social encounter in which knowledge is constructed,” the researcher was able to “capitalize upon” the “respondents constitutive contributions” and in turn, obtain more valuable information (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997, p. 114).

Since a large number of interviews were not conducted, the researcher used the active-interview format in hopes of obtaining more valuable information from a lesser number of participants. The active-interview was given to sophomore language arts teachers currently teaching in either a small school or a large school. From information received via the active-interviews, the researcher then selected at least one educator who used read-aloud methods sparingly and one who used read-aloud tactics extensively, for a total of four educators (two per school). Based on data gathered via the teacher interviews, the researcher was able to find classrooms where read-aloud instruction was both used extensively and used sparingly to obtain a diverse range of student opinions for the purpose of adding future value to the read-aloud method. See Appendix A for teacher active-interview template.
Next, approximately two students from three different classrooms, and another three students from a subsequent classroom, all currently in the classes of the teachers who were selected from the active-interviews, participated in the next stage of active-interviews. More specifically, two students from each of the three classrooms selected via the teacher interviews, and another three students from the last classroom selected via the teacher interviews, for a total of nine students, engaged in the active-interview process. Information reflecting both positive and negative views of the read-aloud practice was obtained and analyzed from these interviews. See Appendix B for student active-interview template.

Since the described design consisted of several “one-shot” interviews rather than pre and post test interviews, it followed the non-experimental design. The research design did not follow the true-experiment or quasi-experimental design because the groups were not selected based on a complete random selection process and because there was not a pre and post test analysis. Through the non-experimental design, valuable information was obtained through the active-interview (post-test only) process (Trochim, 2006).

Subjects

Nine participants, all enrolled at the sophomore grade level, were randomly selected from the chosen teachers’ classrooms. The participants were selected from a chosen small school or large school in the Northwest Ohio area. Northwest Ohio area schools were used since the researcher currently resides in this particular area.

According to the Ohio Department of Education’s Typology of School Districts, the small school chosen could be identified as a “rural/small town, moderate to high median income school.” Schools identified in this specific category “tend to be in small towns located in rural
areas of the state outside of Appalachia” (Ohio Department of Education, 2006). According to the school administration, this particular school embodies 140-170 students per graduating class.

The large school participating in this study, as defined by the Ohio Department of Education, was identified as an “urban/suburban school” with a “very high median income” and “very low poverty.” Schools categorized by this type “surround major urban centers.” In addition, “a very high percentage of the adult population has a college degree, and a similarly high percentage works in professional/administrative occupations” (Ohio Department of Education, 2006). According to the school administration, this particular school embodies 375-400 students per graduating class.

Participants chosen from the sophomore grade level were selected for the study because they were currently enrolled in secondary level classes and would have had more than a year of schooling at the secondary level. The following criteria were imperative to the purpose of the study because it was the secondary student’s view that was analyzed. At the sophomore level, these students would have already have had exposure to or neglect from the read-aloud method, which would have helped to create a stronger framework for the study. Students at the freshman level were not used because of their lack of schooling at the secondary level. Furthermore, students at the junior and senior level were not chosen because students at these particular grade levels may have been pressured into thinking they did not have to take the study seriously or did not have to take part in the process since they were viewed as the “upper classman.”

In addition to the nine sophomore students, five sophomore language arts teachers also participated in the study. Two teachers from the chosen small school and three from the large school were selected to participate in the first stage of active-interviews. The teacher active-interviews were conducted for the purpose of gaining information regarding read-aloud practices
in those specific teachers’ classrooms. Only sophomore language arts teachers were selected because it is the sophomore students’ perceptions that the study is aiming to interpret.

**Instrumentation**

A 15-item student active-interview template was designed for data collection. Since the interview followed the active-interview format, which consisted of active participation by both the interviewer and interviewee, not all questions were asked and additional questions often surfaced (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997). The 15-item template was used for guidance and additional prompting purposes during the interview and contained questions related to the read-aloud practices and experiences well known or unfamiliar to the secondary level students. In addition, an audio-tape recorder was used to record responses from the interviewees.

The interview requested information from students regarding experiences with teacher read-alouds at the secondary level. Questions pertaining to the length of teacher read-aloud sessions, types of materials used and frequency of the sessions were asked. Additional questions pertaining to student opinions about the read-aloud practice were also posed. For instance, students were asked to provide information regarding their likes and dislikes of the practice as well as possible academic values connected to the instructional method. See Appendix B for student active-interview template.

In addition to the student active-interview template, a teacher active-interview template was created for the purpose of gaining relevant information about read-aloud practices in the classroom. This active-interview was shorter in length and only posed questions pertaining to read aloud instruction in the classroom. This short, yet vital active-interview was used for the purpose of selecting classrooms that contained students who both had extensive and rare exposure to the read-aloud practice. See Appendix A for teacher active-interview template.
Procedures

The purpose of this study was to analyze read-aloud methods implemented by secondary educators as well as the secondary students’ perceptions of teacher read-alouds in the classroom. The procedures for this investigation could be divided into four central phases. During phase one, an “informed consent form,” explaining the purpose and procedures of the study, was given to the principals and teachers of the selected buildings. An additional letter was written to parents that asked for consent to allow their child or children to potentially participate in the study (Mertler, 2006, p. 79). After consent had been received from all participants, phase two of the study began. See Appendix C for consent letters.

During phase two, an active-interview was administered to sophomore language arts teachers currently teaching in the selected small or large schools. All schools were located in the Northwest Ohio area. The brief active-interview, which consisted of five possible questions, was administered for the purpose of gaining information about the teachers’ current read-aloud practices. During the interview, all questions were addressed while sometimes, additional questions surfaced for the purpose of obtaining the needed data. At least one teacher who regularly implemented read-aloud routines in the classroom and one that did at a rarity (for a total of four teachers; two per school) were chosen via the gathered active-interview data. However, it was not the teachers who participated in the next phase of the study, but the students in their classrooms. See Appendix A for teacher active-interview template.

During phase three, an interview was administered to nine high school sophomores currently enrolled in one of the two chosen schools. Two students from each previously determined classroom, and another three students from a different classroom (via the teacher active-interviews) were selected to take part in the next stage of active-interviews. The students
were selected using the multi-stage sampling method. A 15-item template was used to guide the researcher and help prompt additional information from the interviewees regarding teacher read-aloud practices that they had or had not experienced or to which they had little or significant exposure. Since both the interviewer and interviewee were active participants during the active-interview process, additional questions often surfaced during administration. Questions regarding the length of teacher read-aloud sessions, types of materials used and frequency of the sessions were asked. Additional questions pertaining to student opinions about the read-aloud practice were also posed. Students were also asked to provide information regarding their likes and dislikes of the practice as well as their perceived academic value of the instructional method. See Appendix B for student active-interview template.

During the fourth and final phase of the study, the data collected during the interviews were analyzed and conclusions were drawn. The audio-tapes and information regarding the participants' names, schools, etc. were kept in a locked cabinet and were destroyed at the conclusion of the study. Pseudonyms were used in place of the participants’ actual names as well as the actual names of the schools.

Data Collection

Data were first collected from responses given by teachers during the first stage of active-interviews. Sophomore language arts teachers in the Northwest Ohio area, who taught at either the chosen small or large school, were selected to take part in the active-interview. From these data, four teachers were chosen, two from each school type. The educators were selected based on their responses to the read-aloud questions during the interview. At least one teacher who routinely implemented the read-aloud practice and one who did at a rarity (for a total of four
teachers; two per school) were selected. It was not the teachers who actually participated in the next data collection process, but the students in their classrooms.

The second data collection occurred during the student active-interview process. Nine students, two or three from each classroom of the teachers who were chosen via the first stage of active-interviews, participated in the next stage of interviews. A 15-item template was used to guide the examiner during the active-interview to obtain the necessary information. Questions were sometimes altered or added to elicit additional information from the participants regarding read-aloud practices. Responses were recorded by the examiner, using an audiocassette tape, and remained confidential.

Data Analysis

Data obtained from the teacher and student active interviews were analyzed by distinguishing apparent patterns amongst the responses. Teacher frequency of read-alouds, methods used, and views of the practice were analyzed by transcribing each interview separately. After the transcription process was complete, each individual question was examined for the purpose of identifying obvious patterns that existed within each response. See Appendix D for teacher interview transcriptions.

In regard to the student interviews, a similar approach was taken. Student experiences with read-alouds, including exposure to the practice, frequency of the experience, materials used, and length of the read-aloud sessions was analyzed. In addition, student opinions regarding the value placed on teacher read-alouds was also examined. The student data were organized using a color-coded format for the purpose of distinguishing various question types. After the questions were grouped accordingly, each question was analyzed separately to identify patterns and draw relevant conclusions. See Appendix E for student interview transcriptions.
Summary

Since the purpose of this study was to examine and analyze the read-aloud tactics used by secondary educators as well as the secondary student’s perception of teacher read-alouds in the classroom, an in-depth literature review was conducted. Next, active interviews were administered to teachers and students. This non-experimental research design allowed the researcher to obtain the necessary information for successful implementation and investigation of the study. From the data, different patterns were analyzed and conclusions were drawn to add continued support to the read-aloud practice.
CHAPTER IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

As previously stated, it has been confirmed that reading aloud to students at all grade levels is beneficial. Teacher directed read-alouds not only improve comprehension and vocabulary acquisition, but also allow students to think critically and develop an understanding of what language should sound like. Although the literacy benefits tied to read-alouds are endless, the question remains as to how students and teachers actually view the practice. To answer the overlying questions: “What types of read-aloud practices do secondary teachers engage in and what are the students’ perspectives of the secondary read-aloud practices?”, a study was conducted amongst sophomore language arts educators and students. The results of the interviews have been recorded and analyzed in the following chapter.

Teacher Data Analysis

For the purpose of this investigation, five sophomore language arts teachers were interviewed using an active-interview format, which consists of active participation by both the interviewer and interviewee (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997). Two of the educators interviewed taught in a small high school, while the other three taught in a large high school. Both high schools were located in Northwest, Ohio area. During administration of the interviews, the educators were asked to describe whether or not they implemented read-alouds in their classrooms, the frequency of the read-aloud if implemented, the types of read-aloud strategies used, their opinion in connection with its value, and their perception of the students’ views on read-alouds. Although additional question were often posed, the inquiries mentioned above were of primary importance to this particular study. The table below categorizes the teachers by school, school size, subject taught, and subject type. Pseudonyms were used in the place of the educators’ actual names. To view the transcribed interviews, see Appendix D.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Pseudoschool</th>
<th>School Size</th>
<th>Subject Taught</th>
<th>Subject Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cathy</td>
<td>Evergreen</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Sophomore Language Arts</td>
<td>College Prep and Honors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick</td>
<td>Evergreen</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Sophomore Language Arts</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwen</td>
<td>Sycamore</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Sophomore Language Arts</td>
<td>College Prep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>Sycamore</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Sophomore Language Arts</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evan</td>
<td>Sycamore</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Sophomore Language Arts</td>
<td>Honors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Frequency of Read-Alouds**

According to the data, all five language arts teachers implemented read-alouds in their classrooms to some degree. Within both high schools mentioned above, there were three divisions of language arts courses. The classes ranged from the lowest level, named the “general” class, to the highest level, named the “honors” class. Between the lowest and highest divisions were the “college prep” class. Cathy, currently teaching sophomores at Evergreen High School, stated that although she does use read-alouds, she primarily uses the instructional method with her “college prep” kids, rather than her honors students. Although her honors students do have some exposure to read-alouds, it is limited compared to her college prep students. Nick, who mentioned that he teaches the “general” English students, sees read-alouds as a necessity and affirmed that he uses the strategy at least two-three times a week.

Similar to Nick, Gwen, currently teaching “college prep” classes at Sycamore High School, stated that she also used read-alouds two-three times a week. Also teaching at Sycamore, Sam, who instructs the “general” level courses, stated that he used read-alouds quite frequently, but could not provide an approximate weekly average. To further expand on his response, he stated that it depended on the unit being taught, so some weeks he may incorporate more or less
read-alouds than other weeks. Lastly, Evan, instructor of the English honors courses at Sycamore High School, stated that he “rarely” used read-alouds, confirming his response by stating that he had only implemented the strategy one or two times this school year.

*Read-Aloud Methods Used*

Since all five educators used read-aloud tactics in their classrooms, a variety of instructional strategies were communicated to the researcher. Beginning with Evergreen High School, Cathy stated that she used read-alouds more frequently at the beginning of the school year for the purpose of demonstrating to her students how they should think and ask questions while reading. She also implemented the method when she came across an “interesting” story that may spark her students’ interest. In addition, Cathy also used read-alouds when her students were engaged in a reading piece with a “rough” vocabulary, for the purpose of helping them understand the language to a better degree. Aside from the vocabulary aspect, she also affirmed that she used this instructional method to “monitor” her students’ comprehension or to help them prepare for the Ohio Graduation Test. She specifically stated that Edgar Allan Poe’s work was some of the literature that was often incorporated into read-aloud sessions.

Also teaching at Evergreen, Nick stated that he incorporated short stories, novels, and much of the literature they read during class into his read-aloud sessions. He often uses the read-aloud strategy to help “get them started,” so his students comprehend the material “better” and obtain a general understanding of the literature. Nick mentioned that, “A lot of times, it’s just me reading the story,” and “posing the questions as we go,” for the purpose of aiding in the comprehension aspect of reading. In addition, Nick also implements read-alouds to assist students with difficult vocabulary. While reading, he is often able to stop and ask, “Do you know what this word means?” to ensure that his students are able to grasp the language. Aside from
vocabulary, Nick also uses read-alouds to help students recognize and identify a variety of literary devices, such as foreshadowing, which was specifically mentioned by the interviewee.

Currently teaching at Sycamore High School, Gwen stated that she often incorporated read-alouds into her classes when reading a play or “difficult literature.” She additionally used read-alouds when she tries to “engage their interest in a book.” When reading for interest, she will often read up to a predetermined point and stop, to make her students “want” to read further. When asked if she read aloud to help students with difficult vocabulary, she said that she used read-alouds for primarily “content” purposes only.

Also teaching at Sycamore, Sam stated that he often used read-alouds to get his students engaged in a new piece of literature. Frequently, if he gave his students time to start or continue reading with a literary work during class, they neglected to do so. Consequently, he found that “reading to them is the best method for getting them into the story.” Sam also affirmed that he enjoyed reading aloud pieces that “interest” the kids, as well literary works that would be hard for them to understand on their own. In regards to additional read-aloud methods employed, Sam stated that he often reads aloud to monitor comprehension and to assist with vocabulary. When doing so, he usually highlights a particular section in a piece of literature that helps to show the meaning of a specific vocabulary word.

Lastly, Evan stated that he used read-alouds if he wants “someone to really understand the pacing and the tone of a particular portion” of a literary work. He never reads anything in its entirety and never for basic comprehension purposes, only certain parts for “complex analytical moments that they need to be understood.” Evan specifically cited the novel, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, and how he can remember reading aloud a section where Huck, the main character, “mediates on a very important moral decision.” The interviewee noted that he thought
“the pacing of that speech was important in order to understand the moral crisis he (Huck) was experiencing.” He also stated that he sometimes reads-aloud certain parts of Shakespearean plays that he believes need to be spoken out loud for the purpose of understanding “what is going on with the particular moment in the play.”

*The Educator’s Opinion*

Given that all five educators employed read-alouds in their classrooms to varying degrees, the researcher then asked the value that was placed upon the read-aloud practice. According to Cathy, read-alouds are beneficial because “some students…they do better when they hear it (literature)” read aloud. Since many students struggle with vocabulary and the comprehension aspect of reading, teacher conducted read-alouds allow the instructor to help them through those difficult parts “more easily.”

Likewise, Nick affirmed that “a lot of times” read-alouds are beneficial, but not necessarily for every student. According to Nick, some students, when reading, already comprehend and grasp the literature quite effortlessly. For those particular students, read-alouds probably are not beneficial. On the other hand, some students “don’t read on their own,” or “for enjoyment.” For those students, read-alouds are a necessity. Nick communicated that oftentimes, when a story is assigned for homework, his students will not read the literature because it is too hard for them to grasp. He affirmed that if the material is too difficult, “they will not attempt different things,” or they “won’t finish reading it.” In those cases, he believes that read-alouds are vital for the purpose of helping the students get the material read and understand it to some degree.
Gwen, instructor at Sycamore High School, simply stated that she does perceive read-alouds as valuable because “some kids understand it better” and “remember it better,” if the material is read-aloud to them versus attempting to read the literature on their own.

Also teaching at Sycamore, Sam communicated that he does view the read-aloud strategy as valuable, “but not for all classes.” He stated that with many “average” level classes, the students are not “self-motivated,” so they need to be read to during class. With these particular students, all they have to do is listen. Sam stated that although they may only be listening, “they are still getting the literature.” “That’s what I’m here for, to make them aware of the literature.”

Last of all, Evan, instructor of the honors courses at Sycamore, stated that read-alouds can be valuable, depending on the use. For the analytical purposes mentioned earlier, such as helping students understand pacing or tone, he believes that “yes,” the method is valuable. For “at-risk students who have difficulty with comprehension,” he also believes that the strategy can also be beneficial. On the contrary, he does not find read-alouds as a valuable instructional method in honors level language arts courses. According to Evan, honors students “should be doing the comprehension on their own.” If he does the comprehension for them, “they are missing extending their analytical knowledge, which is the focus of any honors program.” Therefore, he finds the read-aloud strategy as a “waste of time” because honors students should be able to undertake the reading component on their own.

*The Educator’s View of the High School Student’s Perspective*

According to the data, all five language arts teachers believe that some, but not every high school student perceives read-alouds as a valuable instructional tool. Cathy, instructor of the college prep and honors courses at Evergreen High School, believes that there is mixture of feelings regarding read-alouds amongst high school students. She indicated that in many classes,
“you have the ones that zone out and you have the ones that actually like being read to.” She believes that although some do enjoy the practice, there are always a few or more students who do not perceive the practice as valuable, in turn, “zoning out” during the time actual read-alouds are conducted. Cathy specifically cited “accelerated students” and how many would rather “fly through” the material “at their own pace.” On the other hand, she believes that there are students who actually appreciate read-alouds in the classroom.

Correspondingly, Nick stated that there is not a class where every student thinks and acts the same way. Consequently, he thinks that there will always be some students that favor read-alouds and some that do not perceive the practice as valuable; however, he does believe that the students who view the practice negatively are in the “minority.” According to Nick, many of his students “do say they understand it better if someone reads it and they get to listen, follow along.” He does not know if it is the “laziness” factor or the “comfort” factor, but overall, his students appear to value read-alouds and benefit from the practice in his classroom.

Moving on to Sycamore High School, Gwen stated that she believes most high school students view the read-aloud practice in a positive light. Since many students do not like to read by themselves, they like when a teacher reads aloud to them instead. On the contrary, she does believe that there is “definitely a group of kids that would rather read to themselves, but they are the minority.”

Also at Sycamore, Sam, instructor of the “general” level classes, stated that since many of his students are “passive learners” they enjoy listening to him read-aloud. Although many favor read-alouds, he believes there will always be a group that would rather read the material on their own because they claim to “get it better and keep track of it better.” Then, there is the group that “doesn’t care one way or another.” And, of course there is the group that will not read unless
they are read to by the teacher. Consequently, he believes that there is a mixture of feelings regarding the high school students’ view of read-alouds.

Lastly, Evan affirmed that he believes students’ views stem mainly from how the read-aloud is used by the classroom teacher. He thinks, “A lot of them view excessive use of read-aloud strategies as a little bit of a joke” and more of an “elementary” level practice. On the contrary, he could see students with “learning challenges” enjoy and actually benefit from the practice, rather than seeing it as a “silly approach.” Overall, Evan thinks that read-alouds can be of value if used in the right context and with the right group of students.

Student Data Analysis

To elicit the needed data, five sophomore language arts teachers were interviewed for the purpose of gaining information relevant to their read-aloud behaviors and views. From these data, four educators, two from the small school (Evergreen) and two from the large school (Sycamore), were chosen to have their sophomore language arts classes participate in the second stage of interviews. From Evergreen High School, two honors students from Cathy’s class (instructor of college prep and honors courses), and two students from Nick’s class (instructor of general level courses), were randomly selected to participate. In addition, another five students were randomly selected from Sycamore High School. Three students were selected from Sam’s classroom (instructor of the general level courses), and two were selected from Evan’s classroom (instructor of the honors courses). Because only two sets of students from two different classrooms were going to be chosen from Sycamore High School, Gwen’s students were not selected. This decision was made based on the data she provided and how similar it was to the data elicited from Sam. The table below categorizes the students based on school, school size,
class they are currently taking, and the teacher of that class. Pseudonyms have also been used in place of the students’ actual names.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>School Size</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Olivia</td>
<td>Evergreen</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>General Language Arts</td>
<td>Nick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony</td>
<td>Evergreen</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>General Language Arts</td>
<td>Nick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tara</td>
<td>Evergreen</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Honors Language Arts</td>
<td>Cathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felicia</td>
<td>Evergreen</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Honors Language Arts</td>
<td>Cathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fern</td>
<td>Sycamore</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Honors Language Arts</td>
<td>Evan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara</td>
<td>Sycamore</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Honors Language Arts</td>
<td>Evan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susie</td>
<td>Sycamore</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>General Language Arts</td>
<td>Sam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>Sycamore</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>General Language Arts</td>
<td>Sam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td>Sycamore</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>General Language Arts</td>
<td>Sam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During administration of the interviews, students were asked to describe their teachers’ read-aloud behaviors, such as frequency of the read-aloud sessions, the types of read-aloud strategies used, and their opinion in connection with its value. Although additional question were often posed, the inquiries mentioned above were of primary importance to this particular study. To view the transcribed and color-coded interviews, see Appendix E.

**Frequency of Read-Alouds**

Beginning with Evergreen High School, Olivia, currently taking the general level language arts class from Nick, indicated that her teacher does read aloud during class. Although the frequency depended on the unit of study, she stated that read-alouds were usually conducted
“a couple times a week,” for about 30 minutes at a time. When asked if she would like her teacher to read aloud more often, she stated, “No,” because she tends to get “tired of listening.”

Taking the same general level language arts course as Olivia, Tony indicated that his teacher reads aloud to their class as well. He similarly stated that the teacher usually reads about “half the class,” which rounds to approximately 20-30 minutes. Tony also confirmed that the read-alouds take place on a daily basis. When asked if he would like his teacher to read aloud more often, he stated, “He does it enough.”

Also at Evergreen, Tara, currently taking the honors language arts class from Cathy, indicated that her teacher does not read aloud during class. When asked if she would like her teacher to read aloud, she indicated that she understands things better when reading on her own. She indicated that if her teacher did read aloud, the frequency would depend on what the teacher was actually reading.

Felicia, enrolled in the same honors course, also stated that her teacher did not read aloud during class. When asked if she would like her teacher to read aloud, Felicia replied, “Yes, because I’m not very good at reading and in honors, like, you have to read big words and words that mean others words that I don’t really know.” The same student indicated that if her teacher did read aloud, she would like implementation to take place a few times a week, so she could still “practice reading” on her own.

Moving on to Sycamore High School, Fern, currently enrolled in the honors language arts course instructed Evan, indicated that her teacher does read aloud but “not large portions of things.” When asked how long her teacher reads aloud, she said that it depended on the unit of study at that particular time, but when he does, it is “not that long” because students are usually doing the reading. Fern also confirmed that she may like her teacher to read aloud more often,
but it would depend on the material being read. She would favor poetry and text that he would explain more in depth, but indicated that if it was reading “just out of the textbook,” she would rather do it on her own.

Also taking the same honors course, Sara indicated that Evan does read aloud during class. When asked how often and for how long read-alouds are conducted, Sara stated that the read-alouds are usually “not long,” maybe “a couple minutes” in length. She also indicated that her teacher usually reads aloud every Thursday, which is the day he implements vocabulary quizzes. When asked if she would like her teacher to read aloud more often, she said, “Yes, because it helps me concentrate better.”

Susie, enrolled in Sam’s general level course, stated that her teacher does read aloud, usually at the end of class for 15-20 minutes. When asked how often read-alouds are conducted, she stated that they do “a lot of in class reading, so probably daily.” Susie also indicated that she would like her teacher to read aloud more often, because she can understand the content better. She also stated that read-alouds enable her to think about the material being read at the same time she is listening.

Emily, enrolled in the same general level course as Susie, also confirmed that her teacher reads aloud during class. She indicated that he usually reads “a good portion of class,” specifically saying “the whole class period or half of it.” When asked how often her teacher reads aloud, she indicated that the method is usually implemented two-three times a week, so she would not care for her teacher to read any more than what he already does.

Lastly, Nathan, also taking the general level language arts course, stated that his teacher does read aloud during class, with the method usually occurring “a few times a week.” When asked how long the read-aloud sessions usually are, he indicated that although it depends on the
unit of study, the read-alouds can sometimes last an entire class period. Nathan also indicated that he would like his teacher to read aloud more often, because “when the teacher reads, it helps.”

**The Materials**

After being asked about the frequency of read-aloud implementation, the students were asked to describe the materials used during read-aloud sessions as well as their likes and dislikes in connection with the materials. Beginning with Evergreen High School, Olivia stated that her teacher usually reads aloud “stories out of the book.” When asked if she liked or disliked the text that was read aloud, she stated, “I pretty much dislike everything.”

Taking the same course as Olivia, Tony stated that his teacher usually reads aloud books, specifically citing, *The Grapes of Wrath*. He also indicated that his teacher reads aloud short stories and poems. When asked about his likes and dislikes in connection with the material read aloud, he confirmed that he likes “poems best.” He also stated that he likes short stories, but could do without novels and particularly long stories.

Also at Evergreen, Tara, currently taking the honors language arts course, stated that although her teacher does not read aloud during class, she would like her to read aloud Shakespeare. In regard to the novels and short stories, however, she “can get those better” on her own.

Felicia, taking the same honors course as Tara, stated that although her teacher does not read aloud during class, she would like her to read “poetry and maybe novels that are really long,” because she tends to lose focus during the reading of longer text.

At Sycamore High School, Fern, enrolled in honors language arts, stated that her teacher reads aloud certain lines in poems for the purpose of emphasizing particular points. When asked
if he read aloud sections of novels or short stories, she stated, “hardly ever.” In connection to the material used during read-aloud sessions, Fern was also asked to describe her likes and dislikes about the materials used. She indicated that she does not favor anything if the teacher is reading in a “droning voice;” however, it just depends on what and how the material is being read.

Taking the same honors course, Sara stated that her teacher reads aloud their vocabulary quizzes as well as certain portions of text for reviewing purposes. When asked what her likes and dislikes were in connection with the materials, she stated, “I like when teachers read tests and certain words that I don’t know.”

Enrolled in the general language arts course, Susie indicated that her teacher reads aloud novels and “interesting articles.” Susie also confirmed that she likes it when her teacher reads material that they will be quizzed or tested over later in the year. She could not cite anything that she disliked hearing her teacher read aloud.

Also in the general language arts course, Emily stated that the same teacher reads aloud novels, short stories and articles. She indicated that she likes hearing plays read aloud, specifically citing Romeo and Juliet. When asked if there was a certain text she disliked hearing read aloud, she stated, “long chapter books.”

Lastly, Nathan, enrolled in Sam’s general class, stated that his teacher reads aloud books and short stories. Nathan also confirmed that he likes listening to “anything that we’re gonna have to do homework on,” but dislikes hearing short stories.

The Student’s Perception

After eliciting responses in connection with frequency and read-aloud materials, the students were then asked their opinion on several issues related to the read-alouds they had been exposed to during their language arts class. The students who had exposure to read-alouds were
asked to describe their understanding of the material that was read aloud to them, as well as the value they place on the practice. In addition, the students were also asked to describe any academic benefits or hindrances connected with the read-aloud method.

Beginning with Olivia, she stated that her understanding is enhanced if the teacher reads the text aloud. She also confirmed that read-alouds are not a waste of time because if the teacher reads it, “the story will get read because if he just has us read it, nobody will read it.” When asked how read-alouds help her learn or prevent her from learning, Olivia indicated that read-alouds help her comprehend and learn new vocabulary terms. The only negative aspect of the read-aloud practice was that she sometimes falls asleep.

Tony, enrolled in the same language arts class as Olivia, stated that he “absolutely” understands the text better if the teacher reads it aloud. He also indicated that read-alouds are not a waste of time because he has “reading problems,” so when the teacher reads, he obtains a better understanding. In addition, Tony also stated that read-alouds are beneficial because the class pays attention more than they would if they had to read the text on their own. Therefore, when the teacher reads the class is “focused” and “listening.”

Tara and Felicia, both enrolled in the honors course at the small school, previously confirmed that their teacher does not read aloud during class. Consequently, the students were asked what potential benefits or possible hindrances they could see arising if their teacher did read aloud. Tara could not think of anything negative, but did positively indicate that the time “might go by faster” because the teacher would read quicker than some of the students do. Felicia indicated that she cannot read fast so if the teacher read-aloud, she “probably would not have as much homework” and she could probably comprehend better. When asked to think of any negativity potentially connected to the method, Tara mentioned that if the teacher read aloud,
she might not obtain enough practice decoding unfamiliar words because the teacher would be doing it for her.

Moving on to the students at Sycamore High School, Fern, taking honors language arts from Evan, indicated that she sometimes understands the material better if her teacher reads it aloud, but it just depends on what he is reading. If it is “something pretty easy” than she would rather read it on her own; however, if the text is “more in depth,” than she would rather the teacher read it because he will explain and discuss the material in greater detail. When asked if she views teacher read-alouds as a “waste of time,” she stated, “No,” because the method does help students remember. In addition, Fern also indicated that read-alouds help students obtain a better understanding of the text because when it is read-aloud in class, it is often discussed further. On the contrary, she did state that she could see some read-alouds becoming “really boring,” so students may lose their focus.

Sara, enrolled in the same language arts course as Fern, stated that she understands the text better if her teacher reads it aloud. She does not view read-alouds as a waste of time because her comprehension improves when the text is read to her. Sara did mention that she could see “really smart” kids disliking the practice because they “don’t need help” reading. She also indicated that read-alouds help her notice “specific details” she may have missed if she was reading the text to herself.

Taking the general language arts class from Sam, Susie indicated that she understands the text better if the teacher reads it aloud to her rather than her reading it silently. She does not view read-alouds as a waste of time because the method gives her “a chance to take everything in” because it is difficult for her to “read and think at the same time.” The only negativity she could
see arising from the method was that some students who lose focus easily might not benefit from read-alouds.

Similarly, Emily stated that she understands the material better if the teacher reads aloud because he usually stops at certain points and explains the text further. She does not view read-alouds as a waste of time because “for the people that don’t like to read, it helps them because they can just follow along.” Emily also mentioned that read-alouds help her learn because the reading is done during class, so the teacher is able to guide them.

Last of all, Nathan, taking the same general course, stated that he understands the material better if teacher reads aloud. He does not view the practice as a waste of time because his comprehension improves when the teacher reads to him. Nathan could not cite anything negative.

Combined Data Analysis

After interviews were transcribed and data were reported, the student and teacher responses were analyzed for the purpose of discovering possible patterns that existed amongst the data. From the various patterns, conclusions would later be drawn to answer the following research questions: What types of read-aloud practices do secondary teachers engage in and what are the students’ perspectives of the secondary read-aloud practices?

Frequency Analysis

As previously stated, it appears that all five language arts teachers use the read-aloud practice in their classrooms. Although it appears to be a common practice, the frequency of implementation amongst each educator is quite different. According to Nick, instructor of the general level courses at Evergreen, and Gwen, instructor of the college prep courses at Sycamore, read-alouds are implemented at least two-three times a week. Similarly Sam,
instructor of general level courses at Sycamore, affirmed that he uses the practice quite often, but the actual frequency of use depended on the unit he was teaching. According to the educators, the actual length of the read-alouds depended on the current unit of study.

Based on the student responses, it appears that their answers align with their teachers’ responses. Olivia and Tony, enrolled in Nick’s general class, indicated that their teacher does implement read-alouds frequently, ranging from “a couple times a week” to “daily.” Both students confirmed that the read-alouds usually last about half the class. Olivia and Tony also indicated that they would not want their teacher to read-aloud anymore than what he does. Sam’s students (Susie, Emily, and Nathan), indicated that some weeks their teacher reads two-three times, while other weeks he reads “daily.” His students stated that the read-alouds can last anywhere from 15 minutes to an entire class period, based on the current unit of study. Two of the three students in Sam’s class also indicated that they would like their teacher to read to them more often.

On the other end of the spectrum, Cathy, instructor of the honors and college prep courses at Evergreen, stated that she does use read-alouds but the frequency of use is much higher in her college prep courses. She specifically cited her honors students and how she does not read-aloud “a whole lot” in those classes. Likewise, Evan, instructor of the honors courses at Sycamore, affirmed that he rarely uses read-alouds, maybe “a couple times a year.” Both instructors did not provide an exact length of time for read-aloud instruction.

Based on the data, it appears that some of the students’ replies are similar to their teachers’ responses, although there appear to be some discrepancies. Although Cathy stated that she does, but not frequently use read-alouds with her honors students, Tara and Felicia, both taking her honors course, indicated that their teacher does not read aloud during class. Although
she does not implement the practice (according to the students), only one student indicated that she would like the teacher to read-aloud during class. While Evan indicated that he rarely uses read-alouds, his students (Fern and Sara) specified that he reads small portions of text, lines from various poems, and reads aloud for reviewing purposes. Nonetheless, his students did mention that he usually does not read “large portions” of text and that the read-alouds do not last for long periods of time, which coincides with Evan’s previous response. His students also indicated that they would like him to read aloud more often than what he currently does.

Methodology and Material Analysis

According to the data, the educators appeared to indicate that read-alouds are commonly implemented for vocabulary guidance, comprehension monitoring, and student-engaging purposes. Every educator, with the exception of Evan, stated that they use read-alouds to monitor their students’ comprehension or to spark interest about a certain topic or piece of literature. Likewise, every teacher, with the exception of Evan and Gwen, indicated that they often use read-alouds to help students with unfamiliar vocabulary. Aside from vocabulary instruction, comprehension monitoring, and interest-engaging purposes, Gwen and Sam also affirmed that they use read-alouds for content purposes while Cathy indicated that she sometimes uses the practice during think-aloud demonstrations. Lastly, Evan, who appeared to possess a different reasoning for read-aloud use, stated that he employs the method to help students grasp “complex analytical moments that need to be understood”. Amongst the educators, the most popular read-aloud materials used during implementation of such methods appeared to be plays, short stories, and chapters from novels.

According to the students, the most common read-aloud material appears to be short stories and poetry. Other materials mentioned were articles, vocabulary quizzes, and novels.
From these materials, the students indicated that they favored or would favor listening to poems, plays, short stories, and text they would be quizzed or tested over later in the year. Students appeared to dislike listening to longer text, such as chapter books, literature with difficult language, and anything that the teacher reads in a “droning” voice. Students were not asked to describe methods used by the teachers when reading such text aloud.

*Analysis of the Educator’s Opinion*

Regarding the educator’s opinion, the data appear to indicate that all five educators value the read-aloud practice to some degree. Teaching college prep and honors students at Evergreen High School, Cathy stated that many students perform better when they hear a certain text read aloud, so she does perceive read-alouds as valuable. Similarly, Gwen, instructor of the college prep students at Sycamore High School, indicated that she thinks read-alouds are beneficial because many students understand and remember the literature better.

Also holding similar opinions, Nick and Sam, both general level teachers, indicated that more often than not they do view the practice as valuable, especially for the students that “give up” easily on difficult reading assignments or will not attempt certain assignments at all. On the contrary, they do think there are some students who do not need read-alouds because they are competent readers and are already making the necessary “connections” in their heads.

Possessing a somewhat different view of the read-aloud practice, Evan, instructor of the honors students at Sycamore, believes that read-alouds can be valuable, depending on the use. For “at-risk” students, the practice is “probably” beneficial, but for honors classes, “no,” unless a read-aloud is being used to extend their “analytical knowledge.”
Analysis of the Educator’s View and the High School Student’s Perspective

According to the data, it appears that all of the educators interviewed perceive that their high school students view read-alouds in differing ways. For the most part, the educators believe that the read-aloud practice is viewed positively by students. However, the teachers were quick to acknowledge that not every student views read-alouds in such a positive manner.

According to Cathy and Nick, many students do enjoy read-alouds but there are always going to be some that “zone out,” possibly due to “laziness,” or some that would rather just “fly through” the material on their own. Gwen and Sam, both teaching at Sycamore High School, held similar views affirming that most students do view the practice as beneficial, although there are a “minority” who do not.

Last of all, Evan, instructor of honors students at Sycamore, believes that many of his students may view “excessive use” of read-alouds as “a joke” while some honors students may even view the read-aloud practice as “silly.” On the contrary, he does believe that students with “learning challenges” probably view read-alouds as more of a necessity.

Based on responses elicited from the students, it appears that many of them do value the read-aloud practice. Out of the nine students interviewed, all of them believed that teacher-directed read-alouds were beneficial, although sometimes for differing reasons. The most common benefit communicated by the students appeared to be that they could understand the text better if the teacher read it to them. For many of them, it is hard to “read and think” at the same time, so when the teacher reads aloud they have a chance to “take everything in” and really comprehend what they are hearing. The second most frequently mentioned benefit seemed to be if their teacher read the text for them, their reading assignment would be complete. Although this response could be attributed to a degree of “laziness” on the students’ part, it was a “benefit” in
their eyes. In addition, the students also mentioned that read-alouds help them learn unfamiliar words and for some, help them to stay “focused” during the readings.

Out of the nine students interviewed, six had only positive comments to say about the read-aloud practice. Although the other three students did reveal many positive aspects about the practice, Olivia and Fern also mentioned that read-alouds can be “boring,” so some students do tend to lose focus. Felicia indicated that read-alouds might be viewed negatively in her eyes, if the teacher just read over the new vocabulary words without giving students a chance to figure the new terms out on their own.

Discussion of Results

Reverting back to the original research question: What types of read-aloud practices do secondary teachers engage in and what are the students’ perspectives of the secondary read-aloud practices?, it appears that all necessary data were collected for the purpose of drawing relevant conclusions.

Focusing on the first component of the research question, it seems that although the read-aloud method was employed by each educator to some degree, the college prep and general level instructors tended to use read-alouds more often than the honors instructors. A motive behind this finding was not communicated, but a probable explanation could be that honors students are often viewed as individuals who should be proficient in a particular area of study. Since these pupils are honors language arts students, it may be assumed that they are competent enough to read and understand the literature on their own. On the contrary, it may be assumed that since the college prep and general students are not honors students, they need more assistance with their subject area. In consequence, the educators are more apt to provide additional guidance in the form of read-alouds for these particular individuals.
In regard to the read-aloud practices of secondary educators, it also appeared that the most common purposes for read-aloud implementation are vocabulary guidance, comprehension monitoring, and motivation. Although think-aloud demonstrations, content fulfillment, and critical thinking uses were other purposes mentioned, the first three seemed to be the most popular. Based on this data, it seems that the general and college prep teachers are more likely to implement read-aloud strategies for guidance while the honors level teachers are more apt to implement the strategies for the purpose of extending analytical thinking. Although a concrete reasoning behind this finding was not communicated by the educators, it may be assumed that honors students can already grasp the basic reading process, so they must be challenged at a different level, in this case, to extend their thinking styles. On the other hand, it may be assumed that college prep and general level students need more guidance with basic reading processes, so they are not yet capable of extending their thinking in different ways. In turn, they are not challenged to extend their ideas, only improve their reading capabilities.

In connection with the read-aloud practices of secondary language arts educators, the data also seem to indicate that all five teachers do value the read-aloud practice. When interviewed, it appeared that most of the educators felt the method could help students understand and remember the literature better. On the other hand, the instructors also indicated that not necessarily every student needs read-alouds because some are already component readers or should be, if they are enrolled in an honors classroom.

Lastly, in regard to the educators’ views of their students’ perspectives, it appears that the majority believe their students do view the practice positively, although they were quick to acknowledge that a “minority” of students are probably not so optimistic about the method. One
teacher specified that honors students may even view the practice as “silly,” while students with reading difficulties embrace read-alouds with more favor.

Moving on to the second component of the research question, “What are the students’ perspectives of the secondary read-aloud practices?” it appears most of the students interviewed would like their teachers to read aloud to them more often than they already do. It can be assumed that most students would like this frequency to increase because of the benefits that will be mentioned later in the discussion.

In regard to methodology, the students seemed to indicate that their teachers most frequently read-aloud short stories or poetry, in addition to articles, vocabulary quizzes, and novels. It appeared that the students’ favored listening to poems, short stories, and any text over which they would later be quizzed or tested. The students seemed to favor these materials because the text was not as long or because they were more apt to earn a better grade if the text was reviewed. In turn, the students seemed to have an aversion to longer text or reading material containing difficult language, as well any literature that was read in a monotone manner. It may be assumed that this type of literature was not favored because the students have a more difficult time focusing during longer readings, because text with difficult language is harder to grasp, and because material read with no or little expression is difficult to embrace.

Based on data in connection with student perception, it also appears that all nine students do value read-aloud sessions. Most of the students seemed to indicate that read-alouds were beneficial because they could understand the text better if it was read to them rather than them having to read it on their own. The students also appeared to mention that if their teacher read the text to them, they would have less homework or in some cases, no homework at all. Therefore, it appears that the students embrace the read-aloud method because it not only gives them an
improved understanding of the text, but it often gives students the opportunity to lessen the homework load.

Summary

After all five teacher interviews and nine student interviews were completed, the data were presented and analyzed for the purpose of drawing relevant conclusions in connection with the read-aloud practice. According to the data, it appears that the read-aloud practice is commonly implemented amongst secondary language arts teachers. The data also seemed to say that although the educators have various motives for implementing the strategy, they all seem to value the practice to some degree.

In regard to the student perception, it appears that the majority of high school students do value the read-aloud practice. Although they favor a variety of literature, the students seem to understand the benefits that can arise from engagement in read-aloud sessions.
CHAPTER V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is widely accepted that reading aloud to students at any grade level is beneficial. Although research supports the use of teacher directed read-alouds in kindergarten through twelfth grade classrooms, the student’s attitude towards such instructional methods is one component of education that is often overlooked. It has been suggested that student attitude is an integral component of the reading process (Roberts & Wilson, 2006). Consequently, it was not only the student’s overall attitude that was examined, but also the types of instructional methods used, time spent, and the chosen literature incorporated into the read-aloud sessions. In the following chapter, a synopsis of the problem under investigation, the previous literature, and the methodology will not only be presented, but also a concrete overview of the conclusions drawn from the collected data. To conclude the chapter, a presentation of possible recommendations for future action will be provided.

Summary

The read-aloud method is generally supported by teachers across the curriculum. Although there is an array of support amongst educators, it is still unclear as to how students actually view the read-aloud method. Overtime, research has uncovered a wide range of literacy benefits tied to the act of reading aloud (Trelease, 2006). Although it seems as if this strong establishment of benefits would outweigh any negativity, studies must begin to focus on the students’ opinion within research for the purpose of maintaining positive associations or alleviating any negative judgments. Since, “The ultimate success of instruction is strongly affected by the reader’s attitude” (Roberts & Wilson, 2006, p. 64), the questions that were answered by this investigation are: What types of read-aloud practices do secondary teachers engage in and what are the students’ perspectives of the secondary read-aloud practices?
A review of the literature in connection with the read-aloud method was presented. From this literature, a theoretical orientation was derived from numerous research studies in support of the read-aloud practice. The theoretical orientation for this particular study focused on the motivational model of literacy and the link between motivation and a reader’s “destiny” as a literacy learner (Guthrie, 1996). Theories such as the “Expectancy-Value” Theory (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996), and “The Mathewson Model” (McKenna, Kear, & Ellsworth, 1995), were presented for the purpose of revealing the influence of student motivation and attitude in connection with the reading process.

In addition to the motivational model and a description of historical studies focusing on vital reading components, a literacy model was also included in the review of the literature. This particular model focused on literacy skills that could be improved through engagement in teacher directed read-alouds. Enhanced comprehension, the ability to obtain a better understanding of the basic conventions of English, vocabulary acquisition and an encouragement of critical thinking skills, were all literacy areas mentioned, aside from many others, that could be potentially improved through read-aloud engagement (Seedfeldt, 2003).

Likewise, a detailed overview of varying read-aloud formats as well as read-aloud materials was also presented. Read-aloud forms such as instruction purposes and enjoyment uses were also presented, in addition to many more. Materials included in this section ranged from picture books to full-length novels, as well as text such as anthologies and reference books.

Chapter III focused on the methodology used during implementation of the study. The non-experimental design, which was the research design chosen for this particular study, was described in depth. Following explanation of the research design, the subjects, who included five sophomore language arts teachers and nine sophomore students, were selected to participate in
the study. The participants were chosen from one small school and one large school in the Northwest Ohio area. Their involvement included participation in an active interview, where they were asked to communicate their experience with various aspects of the read-aloud practice. After the collection of information was complete, the data were analyzed and conclusions were drawn.

Conclusions

Based on the analysis of data, answers to the original research questions were discovered. In reference to the first part of the question, which asked “What types of read-aloud practices do secondary teachers engage in?” it can be concluded that secondary language arts teachers only engage in read-alouds for specific purposes. From those purposes, which include vocabulary guidance and comprehension monitoring, amongst others, it was revealed that reading for fun was not a reason that teachers read aloud. Although some of the teachers did mention they may read a piece aloud to grasp their students’ attention, none of the educators specifically stated that they read aloud for pure entertainment purposes. As a result, the data indicates that the read-aloud practice is used primarily for specific academic purposes at the secondary level.

In addition, it can also be concluded that the secondary language arts teachers did not read-aloud for motivational purposes. Based on the two literacy models described in Chapter 2, it was revealed that the educators used read-alouds as a tool for helping their students improve on a wide range of literacy skills. As mentioned by the interviewees, the college prep and general teachers often read-aloud for guidance as well as monitoring purposes. According to the honors instructors, they often read-aloud to encourage critical thinking amongst their students. As a result, it can be concluded that reading aloud for such purposes stem from the literacy model of read-alouds, which focuses on literacy skills that can potentially be gained through engagement.
in the practice. On the other hand, the motivational model, which focuses on a student’s personal values, goals, self concept, and influential messaging in connection with reading experiences, did not seem to be a prominent reason for implementing the practice.

Moving on to the second branch of the research question, “What are the students’ perspectives of the secondary read-aloud practices?”, it can be concluded that the students’ favored listening to poems, short stories, and any text they would be quizzed or tested over later in their classes. Data indicated the students favored these materials because the text during such read-alouds was not as long or because they were more apt to earn a better grade if the text was reviewed. It can also be concluded that poetry was favored because poetry can often be difficult to read and often contains rhyme and rhythm that is meant to be read orally. In consequence, it may have been more pleasurable for the students to engage in such experiences with their teachers conducting the readings, rather than them reading the material on their own. The data also indicated that the students have an aversion to longer text or reading material containing complex vocabulary, as well any literature that was read in a monotone manner, because it may be more difficult to comprehend and keep focus during such readings.

In regard to student perception, it appears that the nine student interviewees do value the read-aloud practice. The most popular reasoning behind this finding was that most students believed they could understand the text better if it was read to them. The students also mentioned that if their teacher read the text to them, they would have less homework or in some cases, no homework to complete later in the day. For these reasons, it can be concluded that the students are aware of the academic benefits tied to the practice as well as the extra time away from their studies that read-alouds have the potential to provide.
The Conclusions and the Research

Using the original studies collected in the literature review of Chapter II, it can be concluded that much of the research supports findings drawn from the collected data. The data has revealed that secondary language arts teachers only implement read-alouds for specific purposes. Although some of those purposes include vocabulary guidance and comprehension monitoring, reading aloud for fun was not one of the uses mentioned. According to the research, it has been suggested that all purposes mentioned by the educators are indeed, tied to an array of potential literacy based benefits. According to Barrett (2000), read-alouds enhance the comprehension of text as well as encourage a deeper, more analytical way of thinking. Seedfeldt (2003), indicated that read-alouds are effective when connected to specific content learning while Trelease (2006), indicated that read-alouds help students expand their vocabularies. On the contrary, the research also indicated that simply “opening a book in front of students and showing them-reading to them-the parts of a book that make it worth reading in the first place” is a powerful way to motivate students, engage students, or even “inject a level of humor into the classroom” (Albright, 2002, p. 418). Although research has suggested that reading-aloud for fun is a powerful purpose, it was not communicated as a major reason to read-aloud by the educators.

Stemming from the previous finding, it was also concluded that the secondary language arts teachers did not read-aloud for motivational purposes. As previously mentioned, there are two literacy models tied to the read-aloud practice, the motivational model and the literacy model. Although both can be seen as equally important, the findings revealed that the educators used read-alouds as a tool for helping students to improve their literacy skills, rather than a motivational tool. While it is imperative to help students improve their literacy skills, research has indicated that motivation is an integral part of the reading process. According to Gambrell,
Palmer, Colding, and Mazzaoni (1996), literacy learning is in fact “influenced by a variety of motivation factors” (p. 518). As a result, it is imperative to follow the research and recognize that motivation is an area that should not go unnoticed.

Aside from conclusions drawn from the teacher data, the student data was also found to link to previous research. As mentioned, the data revealed that the students’ favored listening to poems, short stories, and any text they would be quizzed or tested over later in their classes. Based on the responses, it can be concluded that the students favored these materials because the text was not lengthy or because they were more apt to earn a better grade if the text was reviewed. In turn, the students seemed to have an aversion to longer text or reading material containing difficult language, as well any literature that was read in a monotone manner. Although there is an absence of research in connection with why high school students favor certain reading material over others, it may be assumed that this type of literature was not preferential because the students had a more difficult time focusing during longer readings, because text with difficult language was harder to grasp, and because material read with no or little expression was difficult to embrace. According to the research, it also appears that students who are exposed to an assortment of materials show higher achievement levels than students who are exposed to a limited variety (Dreher, 2003, p.27). As a result, the students may not have favored certain readings because they may have had too much exposure to the same types of materials.

Last of all, it was concluded that secondary students do value the read-aloud practice. According to the data, students favored the read-aloud practice because they could obtain a better understanding of the text if it was read aloud rather than them reading it on their own. The students also mentioned that if their teacher read the text to them, they would have less
homework or in some cases, no homework at all. These specific conclusions support the research developed by numerous scholars, but more specifically, Barrett (2000), who stated that read-alouds helps students comprehend because they are able to focus on the reading and grasp the intended implication of the text. In the end, it appears that students embrace the read-aloud method because it not only gives them an improved understanding of the text, but it often gives students the opportunity to lighten the amount of homework they could potentially have.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions elicited from the educator and student data, the following recommendations have been made for future action.

Although each educator employs the read-aloud method for purposeful reasons, it was revealed that one of those purposes was not reading-aloud for fun. If primary and secondary level children are going to embrace the reading process, a love of reading must first be fostered amongst them. To achieve such a goal, students of all levels must be trained to see that reading is a pleasurable activity. Educators, alone, have the power to model enjoyable reading sessions in the form of teacher-directed read-alouds for the purpose of promoting a love for reading amongst their students (Fisher, Flood, Lapp, & Frey, 2006). As a result, it is recommended that all educators, specifically secondary language arts teachers, implement read-alouds for not only “purposeful” reasons, but also for fun and entertaining reasons.

In relation to the prior recommendation, it is also encouraged that secondary language arts teachers read-aloud for motivational purposes. During the analysis, it was revealed that although the educators did read-aloud to help students improve on a wide range of literacy skills, they did not read-aloud for motivational purposes. According to the research, numerous studies have reported that students “sophisticated and enlightening explanations for the power of the
read-aloud” indicating that read-alouds have the power to motivate them to independently read as well as foster a general love for reading (Meehan, p. 812). Since research has indicated that read-alouds have the potential to motivate students and potentially cultivate a love for reading, it is recommended that read-alouds be used as a motivational tool as well as a literacy tool.

Based on the student data, it was revealed that secondary students do indeed value the read-aloud practice. Since the students communicated that read-alouds help them better comprehend the material being read, it is encouraged that educators continually read-aloud to their students for the purpose of promoting improved comprehension. From this benefit, students will eventually develop the skills needed to become more proficient with the reading process (Barrett, 2000).

Lastly, it was communicated by the student interviewees that educators who read aloud large portions of text or who read with little enthusiasm often cause them to lose focus or have an aversion to read-aloud sessions. Based on this data, it should be recommended that read-alouds are not used in such contexts. According to Roberts and Wilson, if students think that “reading is boring, their negative attitude toward reading will hinder their reading improvement” (2006, p. 65). Consequently, read-alouds should not only be treated as a time to embrace an engaging piece of literature, but also a chance for teachers to help foster a love for reading within their students, for the purpose of creating life-long, competent readers.

Summary

The importance of literacy and its reading component is something that cannot be put into words. A read-aloud, which consists of the teacher reading a portion of a text out loud, for the purpose of creating a “shared experience,” is an instructional method that has the power to develop lasting, proficient readers (Collins, 2005, p. 10). According to data collected for the
purpose of answering the overlying research questions: What types of read-aloud practices do secondary teachers engage in and what are the students’ perspectives of the secondary read-aloud practices?, read-alouds are a heavily favored instructional strategy amongst not only secondary language arts educators but also high school students. Although the reasoning behind implementation, as well as the students’ favorable outlooks differ, one conclusion can be made certain: The read-aloud is an imperative, yet enjoyable instructional strategy for students and educators at the high school level.
REFERENCES


Fishbein, M. & Ajzen, I. (1975). *Belief, attitude, intention and behavior*, Addison-
Wesley.


APPENDIX A.

READ-ALOUD TEACHER TEMPLATE
Helpful Definition: A read-aloud can be defined as an instructional method in which a teacher reads an entire selection or part of a selection out loud to a group of students, often creating a “shared experience” (Collins, 2005, p. 10).

Tentative Questions

1. Do you use read-alouds in your classroom? Explain.

*If no, move to question #4.

2. If so, do you conduct read-alouds on a regular basis?

3. What sort of read-aloud methods do you use?

4. Do you perceive read-alouds as valuable at the secondary level?
5. How do you think high school students view read-alouds?

Additional Comments:
APPENDIX B

ACTIVE-INTERVIEW TEMPLATE
Active-Interview Template

1. Does your teacher read aloud to you? (Explain definition if needed) Yes/No
   (If yes, proceed to questions below. If no, proceed to question *10)

2. If so, what does your teacher read aloud to you?

3. How long does your teacher read aloud to you?

4. How often does your teacher read aloud to you?

5. Would you like your teacher to read aloud to you more often?
6. What do you like hearing your teacher read aloud? What do you dislike?

7. Do you understand what is being read aloud better if your teacher reads aloud rather than you reading silently?

8. Do you view teacher read-alouds as a waste of time? Why or why not?

9. What benefits (academic) arise from teacher read alouds? Hindrances?
10. Since your teacher does not read aloud to you, do you wish he or she would?

11. What would you like read aloud to you?

12. How often would you like your teacher to read aloud to you?

13. How might teacher read-alouds help you learn (benefits)? Keep you from learning (hindrances)?
APPENDIX C

CONSENT LETTERS
January 2007: Teacher Read-Alouds in Secondary Schools: Teacher Practices and Student Perspectives

Dear Student,

I am a Graduate Reading Student at Bowling Green State University. Currently, I am conducting a research study on read-aloud methods used by high school teachers and the high school student’s view of these methods. The purpose of my study is to find out what read-aloud methods are being used and how affective these methods are to students. This study will benefit teachers and students by helping teachers to see how their read-aloud methods work and are viewed, for the purpose of bettering your own education and the education of future students.

The purpose of this letter is to ask you to be in my study. The study is voluntary and if interested, I am asking you to fill out the attached form, sign it, and return the slip to me along with your parent’s slip. Although many of the sophomores will be asked to participate, only three will be randomly selected. The interview will take place one time and will take about 10-15 minutes to complete. Once you have signed the form and returned it, we will discuss times that you are available to meet. Your participation in the study will involve only this one interview. Participating or not participating will not impact your grade or class standing.

Please be assured that all of the information you share will remain private. The interview will be audio-taped by me, the researcher. Tapes will remain in a locked cabinet and will be destroyed and then discarded at the end of this study. The tapes will not be shared with anyone else. In addition, please be aware that results from the study will be presented in a way that hides the identity of the individuals who participated.

Please keep in mind that participation in this study is completely voluntary and that you have the right to withdraw at anytime. If you wish to opt out, please contact Jessica Primeau or Cindy Hendricks at the numbers listed below. Also note that the likely risks to you are no greater than those in daily life. By completing the form, you are agreeing to participate in the study. Please complete the form within one week. If you do not wish to be in the study, simply do not send back the form.

If you have any questions about this study, I may be contacted at imprime@bgsu.edu. You may also contact my chairperson, Dr. Cindy Hendricks, at cindyg@bgsu.edu or (419) 372-7341. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights, please contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) at hsrb@bgsu.edu or (419) 372-7716. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Jessica Primeau
Bowling Green State University Graduate Student
Consent Form

It has been explained to me that by filling out the form and signing below, I am agreeing to participate in this study. If selected, I have been informed that I will be contacted and asked to participate in a one-on-one interview.

*Please keep the letter for your records and return only this consent form.

________________________________________
Your Full Name

________________________________________  _______________________
Signature                Date
January 2007: *Teacher Read-Alouds in Secondary Schools: Teacher Practices and Student Perspectives*

Dear Educator,

I am a Graduate Reading Student at Bowling Green State University. Currently, I am conducting a research study on read-aloud methods used by high school teachers and the high school student’s view of these methods. The purpose of my study is to find out what read-aloud methods are being used and how affective these methods are to students. This study will benefit teachers and students by helping teachers to see how their read-aloud methods work and are viewed. By becoming a part of this study, you will be able to provide helpful information about read-aloud methods in order to better the education of your students as well as the students of others.

The purpose of this letter is to ask you to be in this study. The study is voluntary and if interested, I am asking you to fill out the attached form, sign it, and return the slip to me. All sophomore language arts teachers will be asked to take part in the interview. The interview will take place one time and will take about 10-15 minutes to complete. Once you have signed the form and returned it, we will discuss times that you are available to meet. Your participation in the study will involve only this one interview.

Please be assured that all of the information you share will remain private. The interview will be audio-taped by me, the researcher. Tapes will remain in a locked cabinet and will be destroyed and then discarded at the end of this study. The tapes will not be shared with anyone else. In addition, please be aware that results from the study will be presented in a way that hides the identity of the individuals who participated.

Please keep in mind that participation in this study is completely voluntary and that you have the right to withdraw at anytime. If you wish to opt out, please contact Jessica Primeau or Cindy Hendricks at the numbers listed below. Also note that the likely risks to you are no greater than those in daily life. By completing the form, you are agreeing to participate in the study. Please complete the form within one week. If you do not wish to be in the study, simply do not send back the form.

If you have any questions about this study, I may be contacted at jmprime@bgsu.edu. You may also contact my chairperson, Dr. Cindy Hendricks, at cindyg@bgsu.edu or (419) 372-7341. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights, please contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) at hsrb@bgsu.edu or (419) 372-7716. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Jessica Primeau  
Bowling Green State University Graduate Student
Consent Form

It has been explained to me that by filling out the form and signing below, I am agreeing to participate in this study. If my classroom is selected, I have been informed that three of my students will be contacted and asked to participate in a one-on-one interview.
*Please keep the letter for your records and return only this consent form.

__________________________
Your Full Name

__________________________
Phone Number

__________________________   _______________________
Signature                Date
January 2007: Teacher Read-Alouds in Secondary Schools: Teacher Practices and Student Perspectives

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am a Graduate Reading Student at Bowling Green State University. Currently, I am conducting a research study on read-aloud methods used by high school teachers and the high school student’s view of these methods. The purpose of my study is to find out what read-aloud methods are being used and how affective these methods are to students. This study will benefit teachers and students by helping teachers to see how their read-aloud methods work and are viewed, for the purpose of potentially bettering your child’s education and the education of future students.

The purpose of this letter is to ask consent for your child to be in the study. The study is voluntary and if interested, please fill out the attached form, sign it, and return the slip to your child’s language arts teacher. Three sophomores per school will be randomly selected to take part in the interview. If chosen, your child will be contacted to meet with me one-on-one to discuss his or her views about read-alouds. The interview will take place one time and will take about 10-15 minutes to complete. Once you have signed the form and returned it, your child and his or her teacher will discuss times available for the interview. Your child’s participation in the study will involve only this one interview. Participating or not participating will not impact your child’s grade or class standing.

Be assured that all information your child shares will remain private. The interview will be audio-taped by me, the researcher. Tapes will remain in a locked cabinet and will be destroyed, then discarded at the end of the study. The tapes will not be shared with anyone else. Also be aware that results from the study will be presented in a way that hides the identity of those who participated.

Please keep in mind that participation in this study is completely voluntary and that your child has the right to withdraw at anytime. If you wish that your child opt out, please contact Jessica Primeau or Cindy Hendricks at the numbers listed below. Also note that the likely risks to your child are no greater than those in daily life. By completing the form, you are providing consent for your child to participate. Please complete the form within one week. If you do not wish for your child to be in the study, simply do not send back the form.

If you have any questions about this study, I may be contacted at imprime@bgsu.edu. You may also contact my chairperson, Dr. Cindy Hendricks, at cindyg@bgsu.edu or (419) 372-7341. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights, please contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) at hsr@bgsu.edu or (419) 372-7716. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Jessica Primeau
Bowling Green State University Graduate Student
Teacher Read-Alouds in Secondary Schools: Teacher Practices and Student Perspectives

Consent Form

It has been explained to me that by filling out the form and signing below, I am giving consent for my child to participate in this study. If my child is selected, I have been informed that my child will be contacted and asked to participate in a one-on-one interview.

*Please keep the letter for your records and return only this consent form.

__________________________
Your Full Name

__________________________
Your Child’s Full Name

__________________________     _______________________
Signature                Date
APPENDIX D.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTIONS
INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTIONS

First Teacher Interview: College Prep and Honors Teacher-Small H.S.

1. **Do you use read-alouds in your classroom? Explain.**

   I do with my college prep kids, especially towards the beginning of the year with short stories I’ll read a story and stop, kind of periodically to ask them questions, to make sure they are paying attention, to make sure they understand the process as they read, like asking questions to themselves. A lot of times if I have an interesting story, I’ll read that aloud. In class I have a couple of those I do with my juniors b/c not all of them will read the story if I assign it for homework. If I think it’s a story that they’ll like. Stories that have kinda like a rough vocabulary so its hard for them to understand. I’ll read like usually the Poe stories I’ll read to them and stop quite often and question them. I do it more with my college prep kids than with my honors and I don’t do it a whole lot.

2. **Could you go a little more in depth about the read-aloud methods that you use?** I do it for monitoring comprehension, for vocabulary, to model what they should do when they read because a lot of kids will come in and say “well I don’t understand that story.” Did you read it? “Yeah.” And their eyes will kinda glaze over and they don’t really focus on or ask themselves questions as they read so I model that process to them. And sometimes what I will do to prepare them for the OGT is give them questions to think about in advance so when I read to them I’ll ask them to underline passages that you think will help you answer the question. I do that.
3. **Do you perceive read-alouds as valuable at the secondary level?** I do because some students...they do better when they hear it. It slows them down, it helps their vocabulary if they don’t know how to pronounce. I can get through those parts more easily and help them with that. So, I think it definitely is valuable at the secondary level.

4. **How do you think the high school students view read-alouds?** You have the ones that zone out and you have the ones that actually like being read to. Sometimes they have a reading assignment do for the next day and we have some extra minutes left at the end of class and they are just sitting there not really working. You know you say, “Well here’s time to read the story and they don’t really do it so I ask, “Do you want me to read it to you?” and they’re like “yeah, yeah, story time!” Ummm, so yeah some of them do enjoy it but other times they just zone out.

5. **Do you think the ones that like listening to read-alouds want you to do it so they don’t have to do it? Laziness on their part?**
   Probably both, yeah.

6. **So what about the kids that don’t have any trouble with reading? Do you think they like being read to or would they rather do it on their own?** Umm, well I think the really accelerated students would rather just kinda fly through it at their own pace because when you do read aloud you read more slowly than you would silently. So, I think the really accelerated students may not like it as well because you know they just
want to finish it or if they’re really enjoying the story it’s easier to find out what happens.
But then there are some that really do appreciate it.

**Second Teacher Interview:** General Teacher-Small H.S.

1. **Do you use read-alouds in your classroom? Explain.**

   Yes, I do. A lot of the reading we do as far as short stories, novels, things like that I will read either, you know if it’s a short story I’ll read the whole thing, if its longer I’ll read and have them finish. Umm a lot of the times its nice because I can point out the things that I want them to see in it, try to get them started so they understand and at least get the basis.

2. **If so, do you conduct read-alouds on a regular basis?** I’d say 2-3 times a week.

3. **Could you be a little more specific about your methods?** Umm, a lot of times it’s just me reading the story, you know posing questions as we go. A lot of times I’ll call out students to read a passage, and then I’ll read the next one, then I’ll have another student read a different passage and it kinda breaks it up nice so we can point out things and ask questions in different paragraphs, things like that. With the upcoming novel it’ll be a combination. I’ll read part, they’ll read it silently, they’ll read some of it out loud, so you know, a little bit of everything.

4. **So, is some of what you’re doing for comprehension, vocabulary, etc?** That’s a lot of, you know, when I stop to point stuff out. That’s what it is. You stop to say, “Do you know what this word means?” Because if they just read it themselves, they’ll plop through it. They’ll miss half
of the words. If it’s an easier reading level type thing I don’t mind having them do it because they can get it. Especially if it’s interesting and can hold their focus. If its not, I like to stop and ask “What’s this word” and go over the word. You know go over a concept, you know maybe even foreshadowing because if you see this, what might you think will happen later. Make them think about it as they read because I don’t know how many would do it on their own.

5. Do you think read–alouds are valuable at the secondary level? A lot of times, yes I do. Not, I wouldn’t say, for every single student it is, because I’m sure a lot of them are getting help and some of them are already making those connections in their heads. As for my “regular ed” kids, most of them don’t read on their own, they don’t read for enjoyment, so yes, I’d say its pretty necessary. If you look at, if I assign them a story and say “give me this worksheet for tomorrow”, “do it on your own”… what I get from that versus if we do it together, is its night and day. They’ll not attempt different things. They’ll just say “I didn’t get it.” They’ll give up, they won’t finish reading it. So, yeah, I think its valuable for some kids.

6. How do you think high school kids view read-alouds? I’ve asked them this question because if they don’t like it I’m not going to bore them to death. That’s not the purpose. But you know, most of them rather be read to. There are certain ones that would rather do it themselves too. There’s no class where all of them are the same, where all of them think the same way. But a lot of them rather be read to. And I don’t know if it’s the laziness thing or its more comfortable, they understand it better and a lot of them do say they understand it better if someone reads it and they get to listen, follow along, you know. So it’s probably a combination? There are some smart kids that yeah, still wouldn’t do it if you just left them to do it. There are some other kids
that would like to read, some kids that want to do it themselves. For me, that’s the minority. As far as the kids that would rather do it themselves. There are some that would like to read out loud as a class, together… it’s just when you hit a slower reader they get frustrated with each other, get bored, and they are not getting it. The vocabulary types things. Words are getting mispronounced every paragraph, so, that’s part of it too.

**Anything else?** I just don’t think there is any right method. It just depends so much on the kids and their read level, their interest, and for some kids it works great, for others, like a college-type bound kid, it would be wasting their time and it would be taking something away from them because they should do it and should have to do it. But for other kids, it’s the only way they are going to get through it so, its one of those that I don’t want to necessarily be reading to them for 20 minutes but at the same time it might be the best thing. It has to be an overall purpose thing. If it’s my purpose to teach them vocabulary or these concepts then its better to read to them. If its those are the types of goals that I have, if its not just basic can they read types of things. There are times that I think they can improve better by listening than by struggling through it themselves. I just think it depends so much on the level of the kids…it really does.

**Third Teacher Interview:** College Prep-Medium High School

1. **Do you use read-alouds in your classroom? Explain.**

   I use read-alouds all the time, especially if we’re reading a play. I also use read-alouds if it’s difficult literature, like with my seniors, we just got done reading *Beowulf* and I
practically read the whole thing out loud to them. I also do read-alouds if I’m trying to engage their interest in a book. Like I’ll start reading and I’ll read up to a point that I think would make them want to read on, then I stop.

2. **Is this on a regular basis?**
   
   I’d say more like 2-3 times a week.

3. **What sort of read-aloud methods do you use? Some specifics?**
   
   It’s really just for content. Yeah, we read for content mainly.

4. **Do you perceive these read-alouds as valuable at the secondary level? Why?** Yes.
   
   Because I think some kids understand it better if you read it aloud to them. They remember it better as well.

5. **How do you think the students view read-alouds?** I think they like it when you read aloud to them because a lot of them don’t like reading to themselves so I think it’s a positive experience. There are definitely a group of kids that would rather read to themselves, but they are the minority.
Fourth Teacher Interview: General Teacher- Medium H.S. (Appendix D)

1. **Do you use read-alouds in your classroom? Explain.**

   I do use read-alouds in my classroom. Often, we’ll have a story that we’ll start during class and I find that with many students, if I give them time and say, “read this story to yourself”, they don’t end up reading anyways so I find that reading to them is the best method for getting them into the story, and then they can go home and finish reading it. Umm, along the lines of reading out loud, I often use book on tapes too.

2. **How often do you read-aloud?**

   It depends what kind of unit we are on. If we are reading a novel, it happens more frequently. If we are going a play, like *Oedipus*, we’ll often read the whole thing out loud. With *A Separate Peace*, I did quite a bit of reading aloud. I like to read aloud great stories that interest the kids or when it’s hard to understand by yourself.

3. **Explain a few of the read-aloud methods that you use.**

   Very rarely do I have the students read aloud. At this level, they clamor up and aren’t as cooperative about it. I definitely do it to help with comprehension. Vocab, umm, I may highlight a section or use part of a story to show the meaning of the vocabulary word.

4. **Do you perceive read-aloud as valuable at the secondary level?**

   I do but not for all classes. With an average class like I have, they are not always self-motivated. So with a read-aloud, I can say, “Listen, I’m reading for you so all you have to
do is listen.” That way, even if they are not reading, they still are getting the literature.

That’s what I’m here for; to make them aware of the literature.

5. **How do you think high school students view read-alouds?**

I was worried about it when I came here three years ago…if they would like being read to. When I came here I started reading out loud…especially the plays, and they like that. They volunteer to read for plays more than anything. A lot of them are passive learners to they like listening, they’re like, “OK, we’ll listen.”

6. **Do you ever get any complaints about your read-alouds? For example, someone might want to read on their own?**

Yes, I do get that sometimes. I think there is the group that is like, “I really rather read it on my own because I get it better and can keep track better.” Then there is the other group that doesn’t care one way or another. Then of course, there is the group that won’t do it unless you read it to them. So, yeah, there’s a mix.
1. **Do you use read-alouds in your classroom? Explain.**

   Very rarely. I might read aloud a portion of a selection when we are focusing analytically on that portion. But, uhh, I can only remember doing that a handful of times. I never read aloud entire selections to the class.

2. **So do you use read-alouds on a regular basis, once a week, etc.?** Maybe a couple times a year.

3. **What are some of the methods that you use?** Mainly if I want someone to really understand the pacing and the tone of a particular portion. For instance, maybe I feel that the emotion a person would speak this has a bearing on understanding its meaning. I can remember reading aloud a portion of *Huck Finn* where Huck mediates on a very important moral decision. And I thought that the pacing of that speech was important in order to understand the moral crisis he was experiencing. I can remember reading aloud certain portions of Shakespearean plays where I feel that the structure of his poetry is important for understanding what is going on with the particular moment in the play and that can really be conveyed by speaking it out loud. Those are the only cases that I use it. It's not for basic comprehension, just for complex analytical moments that they need to understood.
4. **Do you perceive read-aloud as valuable at the secondary level?**

Umm, it depends upon its use. For the uses I mentioned, yes. For at risk students who have difficulty with comprehension, probably. I use both teach primarily honors students so I don’t use it for those purposes very often at all. And when I teach regular track students, I teach co-taught class where I have tutoring assistants where usually that person or those people will use both strategies rather than me. I support them in small-group session and audio, like books on tape, so I don’t personally use it very much and I find it valuable for what I do. **So, it’s not very valuable for an honors class?** No, No because with an honors class they should be doing that comprehension on their own and if I do the comprehension for them they are missing extending their analytical knowledge, which is the focus of any honors program. In other words, it wastes times. They can get the comprehension on their own.

5. **How do you think high school students view their teachers reading aloud to them?** I think a lot of them view excessive use of read-aloud strategies as a little bit of a joke. “Why is my teacher reading this entire story out loud to me?” “Why is this teacher playing a CD of the story being read to me?” “I learned how to do that in elementary school!” But, then again my primary experience is with honors students so I can see a lot of high school students who experience learning challenges and are on IEPs as seeing it as essential and not seeing it as a silly approach. But then again, I think those students get that small group session where the rules are different than a regular class session.
APPENDIX E

STUDENT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTIONS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLOR</th>
<th>DATA CATEGORY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>Materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Perception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>Perspective Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Frequency Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>Material Analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student #1: Teacher #2’s Class (General English)

1. Does your teacher read aloud to you?
Yes.

2. If so, what does your teacher read aloud to you?
Like, stories out of the book. Poetry? No, we haven’t done poetry yet.

3. How long does your teacher read aloud to you?
Umm, about a half hour.

4. How often does your teacher read aloud to you?
About a couple times a week. It depends if we’re reading a story or not.

5. Would you like your teacher to read aloud to you more often?
No. Do you think it’s too much? Yeah, I get tired of listening.

6. What do you like hearing your teacher read aloud? What do you dislike?
7. Do you understand what is being read aloud better if your teacher reads aloud rather than you reading silently?

I understand it better when the teacher reads it.

8. Do you view teacher read-alouds as a waste of time? Why or why not?

No. Not really, because the story will get read because if he just has us read it nobody will read it.

9. How might teacher read-alouds help you learn? How might teacher read-alouds keep you from learning?

It helps me comprehend, learn some vocabulary words. Anything negative? Sometimes I fall asleep.

Student Interviews: Small School

DATA

2/1/07

Student #2: Teacher #2’s Class (General English)

1. Does your teacher read aloud to you?

Yes.
2. If so, what does your teacher read aloud to you?

“Umm, I don’t know the names of the books.” But, uhh, oh, “The Grapes of Wrath.” That was a good book. I liked that one. We read a bunch of other ones, but I don’t remember. Ok, what about short stories, poems? Yeah.

3. How long does your teacher read aloud to you?

Umm, he usually reads about the half the class. Uhh, about 20 some minutes, half hour. If we want then we can read to ourselves or he’ll like pick somebody to read or we’ll volunteer or something.

4. How often does your teacher read aloud to you?

Every day.

5. Would you like your teacher to read aloud to you more often?

He does it enough.

6. What do you like hearing your teacher read aloud? What do you dislike?

Umm, I like poems best. They’re cool. Short stories too. I dislike long novels or stories in the book. I hate them things.
7. Do you understand what is being read aloud better if your teacher reads aloud rather than you reading silently?

Yes, absolutely.

8. Do you view teacher read-alouds as a waste of time? Why or why not?

No. Because I think it helps. Like me, I got reading problems and it’ll take me like an hour to read a paragraph. So, when he reads I understand it.

9. How might teacher read-alouds help you learn? How might teacher read-alouds keep you from learning?

We pay attention more. I find myself, when I read I start to drift. Even though I’m reading the words, my mind is in a different place. But when he reads we’re focused and I’m listening.

Anything negative? No.

Student Interviews: Small School

DATA

2/1/07

Student #3: Teacher #1’s Class (Honors English)

1. Does your teacher read aloud to you? (Since No, proceed to 10)
*10. Since your teacher does not read aloud to you, do you wish he or she would?

No. Umm, I comprehend things better when I read them by myself.

11. What would you like read aloud to you? Maybe Shakespeare?

Yeah, I guess I would like her to read that aloud. But the novels, short stories, I can get those better on my own.

12. How often would you like your teacher to read aloud to you?

Depends on what she’s doing.

13. What benefits could you see arising if your teacher read aloud to you? Hindrances?

I might go by faster because some people read at different speeds. Nothing negative really.

**Student Interviews: Small School**

**DATA**

2/1/07

**Student #4:** Teacher #1’s Class (Honors English)

1. Does your teacher read aloud to you? (Since No, proceed to 10)

Ahhh, no.
10. Since your teacher does not read aloud to you, do you wish he or she would?
Yes. Because I’m not very good at reading and in honors like you have to read big words and
words that mean other words that I don’t really know. Ok, so you think it might help you
comprehend better? Yeah. Helps me understand what’s going on.

11. What would you like read aloud to you?
Umm, poetry and maybe like novels that are really long because I tend to lose focus sometimes.

12. How often would you like your teacher to read aloud to you?
Umm, like 2/3 of the time, so I can still practice reading so I get better but also so I don’t get far
behind. So, not everyday but a few times a week would probably be helpful? Yeah.

13. What benefits could you see arising if your teacher read aloud to you? Hindrances?
Like just like comprehending it and uhhh, I can’t read that fast so I probably would not have as
much homework if she read it out loud to me. Negative? Ahhh, if I don’t know how to
pronounce words and she just did it for me than it might be, because she would just do it for me
and I wouldn’t get to practice.

**Student Interviews: Small School**

**ANALYSIS**

2/1/07

**Student #1:** Teacher #2’s Class (General English)
1. Does your teacher read aloud to you?
   Yes.

2. If so, what does your teacher read aloud to you?
   Like, stories out of the book. Poetry? No, we haven’t done poetry yet.

3. How long does your teacher read aloud to you?
   Umm, about a half hour.

4. How often does your teacher read aloud to you?
   About a couple times a week. It depends if we’re reading a story or not.

5. Would you like your teacher to read aloud to you more often?
   No. Do you think it’s too much? Yeah, I get tired of listening.

6. What do you like hearing your teacher read aloud? What do you dislike?

7. Do you understand what is being read aloud better if your teacher reads aloud rather than you reading silently?
   I understand it better when the teacher reads it.
8. Do you view teacher read-alouds as a waste of time? Why or why not?
No. Not really, because the story will get read because if he just has us read it nobody will read it.

9. How might teacher read-alouds help you learn? How might teacher read-alouds keep you from learning?
It helps me comprehend, learn some vocabulary words. Anything negative? Sometimes I fall asleep.

Student Interviews: Small School
ANALYSIS
2/1/07

Student #2: Teacher #2’s Class (General English)

1. Does your teacher read aloud to you?
Yes.

2. If so, what does your teacher read aloud to you?
“Umm, I don’t know the names of the books.” But, uhh, oh, “The Grapes of Wrath.” That was a good book. I liked that one. We read a bunch of other ones, but I don’t remember. Ok, what about short stories, poems? Yeah.

3. How long does your teacher read aloud to you?
Umm, he usually reads about the half the class. Uhh, about 20 some minutes, half hour. If we want then we can read to ourselves or he’ll like pick somebody to read or we’ll volunteer or something.

4. How often does your teacher read aloud to you?

Every day.

5. Would you like your teacher to read aloud to you more often?

He does it enough.

6. What do you like hearing your teacher read aloud? What do you dislike?

Umm, I like poems best. They’re cool. Short stories too. I dislike long novels or stories in the book. I hate them things.

7. Do you understand what is being read aloud better if your teacher reads aloud rather than you reading silently?

Yes, absolutely.

8. Do you view teacher read-alouds as a waste of time? Why or why not?
No. Because I think it helps. Like me, I got reading problems and it’ll take me like an hour to read a paragraph. So, when he reads I understand it.

9. How might teacher read-alouds help you learn? How might teacher read-alouds keep you from learning?

We pay attention more. I find myself, when I read I start to drift. Even though I’m reading the words, my mind is in a different place. But when he reads we’re focused and I’m listening.

Anything negative? No.

**Student Interviews: Small School**

**ANALYSIS**

2/1/07

**Student #3:** Teacher #1’s Class (Honors English)

1. Does your teacher read aloud to you? (Since No, proceed to 10)

No.

*10. Since your teacher does not read aloud to you, do you wish he or she would?

No. Umm, I comprehend things better when I read them by myself.

11. What would you like read aloud to you? Maybe Shakespeare?
Yeah, I guess I would like her to read that aloud. But the novels, short stories, I can get those better on my own.

12. How often would you like your teacher to read aloud to you?
Depends on what she’s doing.

13. What benefits could you see arising if your teacher read aloud to you? Hindrances?
I might go by faster because some people read at different speeds. Nothing negative really.

Student Interviews: Small School

ANALYSIS

2/1/07

Student #4: Teacher #1’s Class (Honors English)

1. Does your teacher read aloud to you? (Since No, proceed to 10)
Ahhh, no.

*10. Since your teacher does not read aloud to you, do you wish he or she would?
Yes. Because I’m not very good at reading and in honors like you have to read big words and words that mean other words that I don’t really know. Ok, so you think it might help you comprehend better? Yeah. Helps me understand what’s going on.
11. What would you like read aloud to you?
Umm, poetry and maybe like novels that are really long because I tend to lose focus sometimes.

12. How often would you like your teacher to read aloud to you?
Umm, like 2/3 of the time, so I can still practice reading so I get better but also so I don’t get far behind. So, not everyday but a few times a week would probably be helpful? Yeah.

13. What benefits could you see arising if your teacher read aloud to you? Hindrances?
Like just like comprehending it and uhhh, I can’t read that fast so I probably would not have as much homework if she read it out loud to me. **Negative?** Ahhh, if I don’t know how to pronounce words and she just did it for me than it might be, because she would just do it for me and I wouldn’t get to practice.