

PORTRAITS OF DEVELOPMENTAL READING STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY  
EXPLORATION

A dissertation submitted to the  
Kent State University College  
of Education, Health, and Human Services  
in partial fulfillment for the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Linda N. Remark

August 2017

© Copyright, 2017 by Linda N. Remark  
All Rights Reserved

A dissertation written by

Linda N. Remark

B.S., The University of Akron, 2004

M.A., The Ohio State University, 2008

Ph.D., Kent State University, 2017

Approved by

\_\_\_\_\_, Co-director, Doctoral Dissertation Committee  
Denise N. Morgan

\_\_\_\_\_, Co-director, Doctoral Dissertation Committee  
Kristine E. Pytash

\_\_\_\_\_, Member, Doctoral Dissertation Committee  
Tracy Lara Hilton

Accepted by

\_\_\_\_\_, Director, School of Teaching, Learning and  
Curriculum Studies  
Alexa L. Sandmann

\_\_\_\_\_, Dean, College of Education, Health and  
Human Services  
James C. Hannon

REMARK, LINDA, N., Ph.D., August 2017

TEACHING, LEARNING,  
AND CURRICULUM STUDIES

PORTRAITS OF DEVELOPMENTAL READING STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY  
EXPLORATION (287 pp.)

Co-Directors of Dissertation: Denise N. Morgan, Ph.D.  
Kristine E. Pytash, Ph.D.

The purpose of this study was to explore developmental reading students' abilities and attitudes in reading, as well as the role literacy played in their lives. As higher education is funded based on student performance, it is in all college stakeholders' interest to help all students, including developmental learners, succeed. Learning from developmental reading students has been proven to be advantageous in understanding their experiences and assisting with their academic success.

Using a descriptive multiple case-study design, data were collected from 16 developmental reading students through two questionnaires, two reading assessments, literacy tracking, and two semi-structured interviews. Five participants' data were further explored through a case and cross-case analysis. The study found developmental reading students were open to improving their reading abilities and viewed the developmental course as a medium through which to do this. They also appreciated and valued reading, though not always in ways academia would require. Finally, developmental readers were not always able to accurately identify their reading needs and did not view literacy as a social or cultural experience.

The results of this study have important curricular implications for developmental students, educators, and their institutions. Instructors should provide meaningful

opportunities for reflection on reading abilities and attitudes. Additionally, institutions should incorporate placement measures which place *and* diagnose specific literacy needs. Finally, classroom experiences need to incorporate and expand on the different types of literacy students are using outside of the classroom as well as support literacy use with others.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

In Residency II, Dr. Morgan emphasized how this doctoral process is a journey, unique to each person on its path. This certainly has been a journey; one in which many people have traveled with me. To those people, I would like to thank and recognize.

First, to Dr. Morgan and Dr. Pytash, you both have been such a great source of support and encouragement throughout my years at KSU. As I struggled with my theoretical framework, making my writing tighter, or nailing the line of inquiry or research questions, you were there every step of the way. I cannot thank you both enough for the patience, guidance, and sheer knowledge you have shared with me. Thank you.

Dr. Lara, you helped to clean up my methodology and make my research processes clearer. I am very appreciative that you agreed to serve on my committee and help shape my work. I have benefited from your expertise and input! I also believe every professor at Kent with whom I had the privilege of learning from in this doctoral program helped shape my journey, and for that I am grateful.

I am not sure I would have been able to get through the last few years without my critical friends. While many peers have been a source of encouragement and provided feedback, MD and Nicole, you have been invaluable. MD, working with you and sharing our papers with one another helped me both as a writer and a critical reader. Your dedication to your field and education is impressive and motivating. Nicole, seriously, I am so glad we wound up in Residency I together. Through that class and the others in which we found ourselves sitting in together, your friendship has been such a gift. Late

night texts and early morning moaning, we commiserated with and supported one another. Thank you for your friendship and helping me stay encouraged. You are so close to the end as well my friend!

I am also grateful to be surrounded by a wonderful department at work. When I started this program, there were eight of us working full time. The fact that six of you had already earned a doctorate or were working toward one, was awe-inspiring. You each have been so helpful and supportive. Whether it was words of guidance, tips, reading a chapter, or allowing me to recruit from your classrooms, you all have been the perfect support group. Dr. Kate, I am so very thankful you took time to read every chapter and help me with my data. Our department was so lucky to have you as a fount of wisdom and assistance!

To my participants, you stuck with me through questionnaires, assessments, and interviews. Each one of you had a positive attitude with me and my gratefulness to you sharing your thoughts, time, and efforts is unwavering. Obviously, without you, this dissertation could not have been written. Thank you to every single one of you.

Mom, I hope I have made you proud. Thank you for your support and involvement. You have always been such a positive influence and source of love in my life, thank you for always supporting my academic goals. Seeing you work so hard while mastering motherhood, both now and when I was young, was a huge comfort I took knowing that I could do the same. To my dad, grandma, brothers, family and my friends, thank you also for being supportive of my education. Simply asking how my dissertation

was going, or asking about my research, were ways you showed you cared and were invested. Thank you.

Brayden, Parker, and Makenzie, my loves. When I started this program Brayden, you were one year old! Since then we have added to our family and this only helped to motivate me more. I promised myself I would not compromise time or memories with my children which meant a lot of late nights and early mornings so I would only work while you slept. I know in the last few months of the dissertation you all saw me working more and I hope you can remember that I had a goal and I worked hard to achieve it. My hope for you all is to do the same. If you want something, you keep at it, make time for it, and I will be here for you every step of the way. Your education is so important and I hope I pass that along to you. But, finally my babies, mommy has her Ph.D. and I can now enjoy more late night snuggles and much more time spent on – whatever we want!

Todd. No amount of thank yous would cover my gratitude for you. Whether it was agreeing to extra-long nights with the kids while I was in class, taking them out of the house to play so I could write or just being there to listen to me stress and doubt myself, you supported my goal of attaining this degree. You have certainly confirmed what an amazing man, father, and supporter you are. Thank you.

To myself – you did it!



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	iv
LIST OF FIGURES .....	xi
LIST OF TABLES .....	xii
CHAPTER	Page
I. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Defining the Study .....	1
Developmental Readers and College Developmental Reading .....	2
Reading Characteristics Investigated .....	3
Reading Abilities .....	4
Reading Attitudes .....	5
Literacy Practice and Role of Literacy .....	5
Reading Identity .....	6
Sociocultural Significance in Literacy: A Theoretical Lens .....	7
Statement and Significance of the Problem .....	8
Purpose of the Study .....	10
Research Questions .....	10
Conclusion .....	10
Definition of Terms .....	11
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE .....	12
Sociocultural Perspective on Literacy .....	12
Literacy Defined and Redefined .....	12
The Role of Others in the Sociocultural Framework .....	13
Contexts that Influence Literacy .....	14
Classroom Implications .....	14
Community College Education .....	15
The Purpose of Community Colleges .....	16
Characteristics of Community College Students .....	18
Developmental Education at the College Level .....	22
Need for Developmental Education .....	22
Developmental Reading .....	24
Reading Characteristics Investigated .....	26
Reading Abilities .....	27
Reading Attitude .....	32
Importance of and Assessments Utilized to Assess Reading Attitude .....	36
Call for Attitude Research .....	37
Literacy Practices and Role of Literacy .....	38

Developing a Reading Identity .....	44
Summary .....	45
III. METHODS AND PROCEDURES .....	46
Significance.....	46
Purpose and Questions.....	46
Theoretical Framework .....	47
Language Learning from the Sociocultural Perspective .....	48
Research Design: Qualitative Case Study .....	48
Type of Case Study .....	49
Context of the Study .....	51
Setting .....	51
Participants, Consent, and Access .....	53
The Research as a Reader .....	55
Teacher Researcher.....	57
Data Collection .....	58
Piloting of Instruments .....	62
Dissertation Data Collection .....	64
Data Analysis .....	76
Preparing and Organizing Data .....	76
Types of Data Analysis.....	78
Case and Cross-Case Synthesis .....	84
Establishing Trustworthiness .....	86
Credibility .....	86
Dependability .....	90
Transferability.....	94
Ethical Considerations and Limitations .....	94
Summary .....	97
IV. FINDINGS.....	99
Strengths, Struggles, and Attitudes of Developmental Reading Students .....	100
Strengths .....	100
Strengths Summary.....	108
Struggles .....	109
Struggles Summary.....	115
Attitudes.....	116
Summary .....	117
Literacy's Role in Developmental Reading Students' Lives .....	118
Literacy Log Results .....	118
Literacy Log Summary .....	120
Selection of Case Study Participants .....	123

Billy.....	124
Reading Strengths and Struggles .....	126
Attitude Toward Reading.....	136
Role of Literacy .....	138
Madison.....	142
Reading Strengths and Struggles .....	143
Attitude Toward Reading.....	152
Role of Literacy .....	154
Bree .....	157
Reading Strengths and Struggles .....	158
Attitude Toward Reading.....	166
Role of Literacy .....	168
Janelle .....	171
Reading Strengths and Struggles .....	172
Attitude Toward Reading.....	182
Role of Literacy .....	184
Jamie .....	186
Reading Strengths and Struggles .....	187
Attitude Toward Reading.....	195
Role of Literacy .....	196
Summary .....	199
Cross-Case Analysis .....	200
Role of Reading .....	201
Reading as a Developing Ability and Reading Attitude .....	205
Early Experiences with Reading.....	209
Understanding Literacy.....	211
Influence of Others on Personal Literacy .....	214
Conclusion .....	215
 V. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS .....	 216
Overview of the Research Study.....	217
Discussion of Findings.....	219
Accuracy of Self-Perceptions Regarding Reading Ability .....	220
Value and Role of Reading, Understanding Literacy .....	223
Reading as a Developing Ability and Reading Attitude.....	226
Early Experiences with Reading.....	227
Influence of Others on Personal Literacy .....	228
Implications .....	229
Accuracy of Self-Perceptions Regarding Reading Ability .....	230
Value and Role of Reading, Understanding Literacy .....	231
Reading as a Developing Ability and Reading Attitude.....	233
Early Experiences with Reading.....	234
Influence of Others on Personal Literacy .....	235
Limitations .....	236

Future Research .....	237
Conclusion .....	238
APPENDICES .....	240
APPENDIX A. PERSONAL (FACE TO FACE) RECRUITMENT SCRIPT ....	241
APPENDIX B. LITERACY LOG .....	243
APPENDIX C. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS GUIDE .....	249
APPENDIX D. READING ABILITY LIKERT-TYPE SCALE SURVEY.....	252
APPENDIX E. ADULT SURVEY OF READING ATTITUDES.....	255
APPENDIX F. RESEARCHER LITERACY LOG EXCERPT EXAMPLE .....	259
APPENDIX G. EXAMPLE OF MEMOING DURING THE ANALYSIS PROCEDURES WITH A CASE STUDY PARTICIPANT'S DATA .....	261
REFERENCES .....	263

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Code to Category .....	82
2. Chain of Evidence .....	93
3. RALSS Overall Results .....	104
4. ASRA Overall Results .....	116

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Reading Attitude Researched .....	33
2. Literacy Practices Researched .....	39
3. Placement Criteria .....	53
4. Data Collection Timeline .....	60
5. ASRA Statements .....	72
6. Research Questions and Data Collected .....	76
7. Data Analysis Procedures .....	78
8. Excerpt from Codebook .....	82
9. Peer Debriefing Results .....	88
10. Case Study Database Excerpt .....	92
11. Practices for Establishing Trustworthiness .....	95
12. Summary of Study Phases .....	98
13. Strengths According to RALSS .....	102
14. IRI Overall Grade Level Results.....	105
15. IRI Strengths .....	107
16. PPVT Grade Level Results .....	108
17. Struggles According to RALLS .....	111
18. IRI Struggles .....	112
19. PPVT Item Analysis Results .....	115
20. Literacy Log's Most Frequent Literacy Events .....	121

21. Literacy Log Realizations .....	122
22. Overall Results of Assessments .....	124
23. Billy’s Self-Identified Reading Strengths and Struggles .....	127
24. Billy’s IRI Oral Performance .....	129
25. Billy’s IRI Silent Performance .....	130
26. Billy’s IRI Listening Performance .....	130
27. Billy’s Overall Performance Across Modalities and Grade Levels .....	134
28. Billy’s PPVT Performance .....	135
29. Madison’s Self-Identified Reading Strengths and Struggles .....	145
30. Madison’s IRI Oral Performance .....	146
31. Madison’s IRI Silent Performance .....	147
32. Madison’s IRI Listening Performance .....	147
33. Madison’s Overall Performance Across Modalities and Grade Levels .....	148
34. Madison’s PPVT Performance .....	150
35. Bree’s Self-Identified Reading Strengths and Struggles .....	159
36. Bree’s IRI Oral Performance .....	161
37. Bree’s IRI Silent Performance .....	162
38. Bree’s IRI Listening Performance .....	162
39. Bree’s Overall Performance Across Modalities and Grade Levels .....	163

40.	Bree's PPVT Performance .....	163
41.	Janelle's Self-Identified Reading Strengths and Struggles .....	174
42.	Janelle's IRI Oral Performance .....	176
43.	Janelle's IRI Silent Performance .....	176
44.	Janelle's IRI Listening Performance .....	177
45.	Janelle's Overall Performance Across Modalities and Grade Levels .....	177
46.	Janelle's PPVT Performance .....	178
47.	Jamie's Self-Identified Reading Strengths and Struggles .....	189
48.	Jamie's IRI Oral Performance .....	190
49.	Jamie's IRI Silent Performance .....	191
50.	Jamie's IRI Listening Performance .....	191
51.	Jamie's Overall Performance Across Modalities and Grade Levels .....	192
52.	Jamie's PPVT Performance .....	194
53.	Participants' Definition of Reading .....	213



# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Defining the Study**

- \* “To me reading is necessary, reading is necessary; I mean there’s no other way to put it” – Billy
- \* “I would say I’m a developing reader.” – Bree
- \* “I feel like reading plays a huge role in your daily life.” – Janelle
- \* “I mean, I’m sure I could use improvement [in reading].” - Jessica
- \* “It [developmental reading class] actually helps, so maybe I did need it.” - Madison

The statements from Billy, Bree, Janelle, Jessica, and Madison are diverse - yet all demonstrate the significance of developmental reading courses. Moreover, these statements demonstrate the necessity of students who struggle in reading to successfully complete the courses. These students represent the many who are entering college without addressing or improving their reading struggles such as comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, and issues with motivation and/or a negative attitude toward reading (Armstrong, Stahl, & Kanter, 2015; Caverly, Nicholson, & Radcliffe, 2004; Givens, 2010; Paulson, 2014; Perin, 2013). Additionally, past reading experiences and readers’ social and cultural experiences regarding literacy impact their overall reading identity (Alvermann, 2001; Compton-Lilly, 2009; Ferdman, 1990; McCarthy, 2001; Williams, 2004). Because of this, understanding and researching reading barriers along with acknowledging sociocultural components of literacy is important in helping those who struggle with reading to overcome their challenges.

## **Developmental Readers and College Developmental Reading**

In order to address reading barriers and know how to assist readers in overcoming their challenges, it is necessary to understand who developmental readers are and the purpose of developmental reading. Developmental reading students have been described in the literature as sharing common characteristics regarding their outlook, use, and attitude toward reading. For instance, many developmental students come into the developmental programs with anxiety, lack of motivation, or a display of poor attitude (Faigley, Daly, & Witte, 1981; Fox, 1980). Moreover, there are students in developmental reading classes who “generally do not consider themselves readers and do not enjoy reading in most contexts” (Paulson, 2006, p. 56). Consequently, if students do not view themselves as readers, they will be less likely to participate or take an active role in their reading education (Armstrong & Newman, 2011). The way in which students view themselves as readers or non-readers could be linked to their self-efficacy in reading, derived from their past achievements in reading (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). Furthermore, developmental reading students often do not understand the role and importance of reading in their daily life (Lei, Bartlett, Gorney, & Herschbach, 2010; Morris & Price, 2008). As students enroll in developmental reading courses, these are characteristics to consider both when educating and researching this population.

Developmental reading is coursework designed to develop and apply comprehension, vocabulary, and critical thinking and analysis skills for students who need assistance reaching readiness levels for college courses. Perin (2013) further described developmental readers as those who have had less than successful high school

experiences, wait until late in their high school career or even after graduation to decide about attending college, and in some cases, may be English Language Learners (ELL). Developmental readers can also often be students who have been out of a formal academic classroom for five or more years before entering higher education, or returning after a previous unsuccessful experience. These students will often struggle with comprehension, decoding, and vocabulary skills as well. These skill deficiencies present obstacles in the overall reading process and in reading instruction.

Due to the overall common characteristics of developmental readers, programs designed for these students should provide “a foundation for life-long reading” (Paulson, 2006, p. 52) as well as instill in developmental reading students “the belief that reading has intrinsic value” (Paulson, 2006, p. 52). Programs for developmental readers should also aim to prepare students for college level coursework, focus on retention, and successful completion of developmental coursework. Taking all of this into consideration, while acknowledging the influence others have on literacy use and past literacy history, developmental educators and developmental reading programs are charged with ensuring reading challenges can be overcome and skills can be transferred to other subjects and areas in a reader’s life. One way to assist in this is to explore and investigate specific reading characteristics.

### **Reading Characteristics Investigated**

Reading characteristics are the qualities readers possess, that can help to describe who a reader is. In this study, reading abilities, reading attitudes, and literacy practices were the reading characteristics considered, as part of an exploration into developmental

reading students' reading identities. These characteristics were investigated to capture reading identities within the sociocultural framework. The following sections provide a brief introduction to each of these areas under study.

### **Reading Abilities**

Reading abilities are the evaluations of students' strengths and struggles in specific areas of reading, which are also components of an overall reading identity. Reading identities are often positioned for readers when they are labeled as a particular type of reader, such as poor, average, or advanced (Alvermann, 2001; Gee, 1996). Reading labels are positioned for readers by educators at any level, peers, or friends and family. Oftentimes the label is internalized and that is how a reader will describe him/herself concerning his/her reading, regardless of actual reading ability. Past struggles as well as current struggles and accomplishments also contribute to how people identify themselves as a reader (Compton-Lilly, 2009). Ultimately, in order for an individual to consider his/her strengths and struggles with reading, reflection is central.

Having students reflect on their own abilities is crucial; there may be a discrepancy between a reader's perceived abilities (both by themselves and by others) and their actual reading ability. Through reflection, labels can be challenged and reading abilities, a student's strengths and struggles, can be evaluated. Reflection is an essential part of the learning process (Dewey, 1933). Asking developmental students to reflect, consider, and evaluate their strengths and struggles allows them to identify their needs, recognize their talents, and grow in their academic pursuits.

## **Reading Attitudes**

Reading attitude is a state of mind that makes reading more or less probable (Smith, 1990b). Understanding a student's reading attitude is important for many reasons. First, reading attitude increases or decreases the frequency of reading; a positive reading attitude results in greater enthusiasm for reading, leading to increased practice and reading usage. Second, college students' attitudes toward reading is essential for reading compliance and authentic learning from a text (Isakson, Isakson, Plummer, & Chapman, 2016). Next, a student's desire and readiness to learn will be impacted by reading attitude. For instance, motivated readers spend more time reading; additional reading practice leads to overall better reading (Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988; Kim, 2003; Rodrigo, Greenberg, & Segal, 2014; Smith, 1990b). Finally, also to consider is that past reading experiences play a role in the attitudes students have when they reach college (Applegate et al., 2014). For these and other reasons, students in developmental reading need to evaluate their reading attitudes to see if such attitudes are barriers to reading success.

## **Literacy Practice and Role of Literacy**

Literacy practice refers to both the materials read and/or written as well as the frequency in which these practices are engaged (Rodrigo, Greenberg, & Segal, 2014). One of the ways in which literacy practices are observed are through literacy events. Literacy events are individual reading or writing occurrences and when looked at together with the context of these occurrences, provides a picture of one's literacy practice. This is an area which warrants reading educators' attention as reading proficiency and

reading practice are strongly associated (Rodrigo, Greenberg, & Segal, 2014; Smith, 1996). Studying how and why students use literacy allows researchers to better understand the reasons behind literacy use, how often literacy is being used throughout a student's day, and the value a student places on literacy. These practices are also strongly linked to the sociocultural background and experiences in which readers are situated. Literacy practices help to shape a student's reading identity and provide valuable insight into literacy use, specifically helping to view, in this study's case, developmental readers from a perspective that can help explain reading issues, challenges, or successes.

### **Reading Identity**

Reading identities are positioned by what a reader is reading, when they engage in this reading, the context in which the reading is taking place, and the purpose for which the reading is engaged (Compton-Lilly, 2009). This positioning occurs interactively, "in which what one person says positions another" (Davies & Harre, 1990, p.48). It is through statements made by peers, teachers, and any others in a readers' life that readers begin to become aware of different possible reading identities and internalize themselves and others as readers (Hall 2016; Wortham, 2010). The evaluation of oneself being a "good" or "poor" reader is entrenched in cultural, social, and historical roots (Compton-Lilly, 2010; Hall, 2016) and have already been established by the time readers reach middle school (Hall, 2016). This is important as a reader's reading identity (both positive and negative) has the potential to limit his/her reading interactions (Hall, 2016). Therefore, understanding how readers identify with their reading can help shape

instruction to assist in repositioning and reshaping these identities to support overall reading success.

### **Sociocultural Significance in Literacy: A Theoretical Lens**

Literacy is a form of language connected to social, cultural, and political contexts (Gee, 1996). The current study was viewed through the belief that literacy use is based on past experiences as well as influenced by social and cultural backgrounds. In other words, the language in which children are socialized to become competent is saturated with cultural markers (Purcell-Gates, Melzi, Najafi, & Faulstich Orellana, 2011). Furthermore, shared family practices around print materials reflect assumptions and beliefs about the purposes of literacy and appropriate social interactions around it (Purcell-Gates, Melzi, Najafi, & Faulstich Orellana, 2011). Whatever children learn about print, before formal education, is shaped by literacy traditions in their community and daily lives; they take this with them into their early education (Purcell-Gates, Melzi, Najafi, & Faulstich Orellana, 2011). This is significant in the shaping of students' literacy identities throughout their educational experiences. Literacy identities formally begin shaping in kindergarten and are carried with readers throughout their educational experiences (Hall, 2016). How students view themselves as readers and writers will impact the way in which they evaluate their abilities (Compton-Lilly, 2009), their attitudes toward reading (Applegate, et al, 2014), and how and why literacy is used (Compton-Lilly, 2009). Any of these affective qualities have the potential to influence reading achievement and ultimately success as a developmental reader (Saxon, Levine-Brown, & Boylan, 2008).

### **Statement and Significance of the Problem**

Because of an emphasis throughout the literature on mostly negative qualities developmental readers possess, an implication might be that developmental readers may not value or understand the importance of reading (Hsu & Wang, 2010; Paulson, 2006). It has also been reported that developmental readers tend to struggle with low motivation and confidence levels in addition to feeling unprepared for the college level reading required in their courses (Givens, 2010). Furthermore, researchers stated some developmental readers even feel reading is a frightening or a threatening experience (Hodges & Agee, 2000; Spann & McCrimmon, 1994). These studies point to facts that developmental readers are not motivated and harbor negative reading attitudes.

Yet despite these struggles, research concludes that many developmental readers feel resentful at being forced to take a developmental course that does not count for credit toward their degree or transfer (Caverly, Nicholson & Radcliffe, 2004). This may be accounted for by the fact that, while designed to enhance reading skills, developmental reading courses are typically not directly connected to a specific field of study. Most developmental reading programs are sequenced, requiring students to take multiple courses to develop reading skills which in many cases will delay transfer or graduation timelines.

The characteristics described above about developmental readers in previous studies have employed quantitative methods in gathering student beliefs, attitudes, and views toward reading (Chambers Cantrell, et al., 2013; Caverly, Nicholson & Radcliffe, 2004; Givens, 2010; Prat-Sala & Redford, 2010). In those studies, instruments that were



relied upon were questionnaires, course examinations, and pre- and post-tests to investigate developmental reading students' abilities, attitudes, and views on literacy. A recent case study took an in-depth look at one developmental reading student and her experience with text (Randel, 2014). However, beyond this case study, qualitative research is limited with this population and topic.

Case studies involving developmental readers in general are scarce, particularly regarding their reading abilities, attitudes, and how literacy plays a role in their lives. Limited research has been conducted in which developmental reading students themselves are asked to describe their experiences and views on reading. Incidentally, those who struggle with reading have historically been silenced in the research conducted about them (Connor, 2013; Randel, 2014). As a result, the developmental reader's voice is missing in the current research. Including the reader's voice can help to inform the college, and field in general, on who contemporary developmental readers are and ultimately how they can best be served to assist in reaching reading success.

Through listening to those who struggle with reading, educators can learn about the experience of living with reading struggles from those who are best positioned to tell us (Randel, 2014). The students are the beneficiaries of schooling; listening to their voice validates them as partners in the educational process (Turley, 1994). This is essential as "instructors do not necessarily judge students' needs and challenges best" (Elisha-Primo, Sandler, & Goldfrad, 2015, p. 2) and listening to student voices plays an important role in "enabling students to authenticate and thus maximize their classroom experience" (Elisha-Primo, Sandler, & Goldfrad, 2015, p.3).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to explore developmental reading students' abilities and attitudes in reading, as well as the role literacy played in their lives. This was done through a descriptive, multiple case-study. The goal of the study was to develop student reading identities through a detailed description of developmental readers' reading abilities, attitudes, and daily literacy practice as evidenced through the participants' own perspectives and demonstrations of reading.

### **Research Questions**

Through interviews, questionnaires, and reading assessments, I studied developmental reading students' evaluation of their reading abilities, attitudes, and literacy practices. The present study was guided by two research questions:

1. What are the strengths, struggles, and attitudes of developmental reading students regarding academic reading?
2. What role does literacy play in the lives of developmental reading students?

Through this exploration, developmental readers' reading identities are described.

### **Conclusion**

In this dissertation, the sociocultural framework is presented in chapter 2. Along with this framework, a review of the literature pertaining to this study is presented. Chapter 3 includes a description of the qualitative case study used to address the research questions, along with the data collection and analysis procedures. In chapter 4, the analysis looks at results pertaining to the two research questions based on all participants in general, and then five case studies providing a portrait of contemporary developmental

readers. Chapter 5 provides implications of this study as well as recommendations for developmental reading programs.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Developmental** - A process of development, growth and progress. This term denotes the potential for a student and an unfinished process of learning which can be promoted with assistance (Illich, Hagan, and McCallister, 2004).

**Literacy** – An activity which includes the use of reading and/or writing. Literacy is a form of language connected to social, cultural, and political contexts (Gee, 1996).

**Literacy Practice** - Both the materials read and/or written as well as the frequency in which these practices are engaged (Rodrigo, Greenberg, & Segal, 2014). For this study, materials only read or written were investigated.

**Reading attitude** – A state of mind, accompanied by emotions, that makes reading more or less probable (Smith, 1990b). Reading attitudes are partially shaped through the belief system of a student's culture (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

**Reading abilities** - Evaluation of students' strengths and struggles in specific areas of reading.

**Reading identity** - The who, what, when, where and why of a particular reader's reading practice, taking into consideration the impact others have on the formation of this identity within a particular social and cultural environment (Compton-Lilly, 2009). Ultimately, how a reader would describe themselves within the contexts they practice reading.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

In this review of the literature, I discuss literacy as socially and culturally situated; otherwise referred to as the sociocultural perspective. An overview of community college education and developmental reading at this level is provided. I describe previous research findings as related to reader abilities, reading attitudes, literacy practices, and developing a reading identity. A summary is then provided connecting community college developmental reading and the reading characteristics described.

#### **Sociocultural Perspective on Literacy**

This section will first provide early definitions of literacy and how these definitions have broadened when viewed through the sociocultural perspective. Then, this section will present examples of how others influence literacy. Finally, the many contexts in which literacy is influenced and the implications of this will be reviewed.

#### **Literacy Defined and Redefined**

While there exists a “traditional” definition of literacy, how literacy can be understood has broadened with the consideration of the sociocultural perspective. The 1957 definition of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defined literate people to be those who could read and write (UNESCO, 2008). Literacy has also been defined by the *National Literacy Act of 1991* as an individual’s ability to read, write, and speak in English in order to proficiently compute and solve problems (Padak & Bardine, 2004). As demonstrated, the traditional definition of literacy has revolved around the ability to read and write. The sociocultural

perspective builds on these literacy understandings to include literacy and language as “fully attached to ‘other stuff’: to social relations, cultural models, power and politics, perspectives on experience, values and attitudes, as well as things and places in the world” (Gee, 1996, p. *vii*).

Literacy is not limited to just the acts of reading and writing. The reader and writer impact the construction of meaning due to their unique experiences and positions in the world. Gee (2015) further explains the sociocultural perspective as the understanding that individuals learn and gain knowledge in physical, social, cultural, and technological environments through interactions with others. As described, the definition of literacy has moved from the belief in literacy as simply reading and writing to one that includes reading and writing with consideration of the individual’s literacy identity in a social and cultural context. Along with the definition of literacy broadening to include multiple additional components, considering the role others (peers, teachers, family) play in how literacy is utilized is significant to the sociocultural framework.

### **The Role of Others in the Sociocultural Framework**

The role of others is essential when viewing literacy from the sociocultural perspective. How developmental readers interact with and view literacy, as well as how they evaluate themselves regarding their literacy proficiencies is often based on feedback from others. The sociocultural perspective’s view on literacy practices is that they are a result of being situated in a particular sociocultural group; these include ways of talking, interacting, valuing, and believing, which go beyond reading words on a page or searching for simple meanings (Gee, 2015). People acquire the literacy knowledge and

practices needed to participate in a community of practice as they talk to one another (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). In this way, the social, cultural, and historically defined literacy experiences students bring with them into a classroom setting interact with literacy uses and applications they acquire from others. Past literacy experiences developmental readers bring with them to a college classroom impacts the way they currently view and practice literacy as well.

### **Contexts that Influence Literacy**

From the sociocultural perspective, scholars view literacy development as more than the act of reading and writing (Gee, 2001; Vogt & Shearer, 2003). Literacy also includes how a child in a home, school and/or community does or does not acquire specific social practices, language, and facility with printed words (Gee, 2001). Learning is heavily influenced by social contexts in political, sociological, psychological, and physical spheres (Vogt & Shearer, 2003) and can be understood through exploring the cultural, social, and historical contexts in which a reader was raised (Davidson, 2010). Culture is also linked to the purposes for which language and literacy are valued and used in daily life (Fingeret, 1991).

### **Classroom Implications**

Understanding that literacy is influenced through interactions with others as well as the multiple contexts in which a reader engages with literacy, there are implications in the classroom. Literacy only has meaning in the social, institutional, political, and cultural contexts in which it is used (Gee, 2015). Students' use of literacy will take on particular meanings within the classroom, while students may use literacy for different

purposes outside of the classroom. Because individuals come to the classroom with different uses for literacy, students create new meanings through interaction with others. Students will also apply different uses of their literacy behaviors beyond what might be anticipated in and out of the classroom setting based on sociocultural backgrounds. This can dictate how they use literacy and view the role it plays in their lives.

Literacy acquisition, reading attitude, and how literacy is practiced do not occur in a vacuum. Beliefs, values, attitudes, and literacy practices are pressed upon readers as children by the social and cultural groups in which they are raised. These characteristics are then carried by the readers up to and through adulthood. If the social and cultural environment was one in which literacy was not valued nor developed, that can have negative ramifications for a reader throughout their education (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Kush, Watkins, & Brookhart, 2005; Sanacore, 2002; Smith, 2001). When pursuing higher education, this may present a barrier to achieving academic success. Researchers investigating developmental reading must recognize the social and cultural components of literacy and how they shape a reader's reading identity when trying to understand readers' evaluations of reading abilities, attitudes, and literacy practices.

### **Community College Education**

This section will describe why community colleges formed as well as the characteristics of a typical community college student. A brief evolution of community colleges and a contrast between two and four-year students will also be discussed. Being aware of the history of these institutions and its' students provides context for understanding the current study's participants.

### **The Purpose of Community Colleges**

Community colleges (originally called branch campuses) were established for various reasons. First, in the early to mid-1800s, the majority of students enrolling in universities were white, male, and middle class and the universities were often located out of reach for many others due to geographic barriers. Therefore, in response to the growing demand for education for all, the Morrill Act of 1862 was established which set aside money and land for additional institutions of higher education to allow easier access for those who desired education beyond secondary school (Lorenzo, 1994). Second, in the mid-1800s, universities such as The University of Georgia, The University of Michigan, and The University of Minnesota were overcrowded with students. Pressure was on these universities to not only educate students in their content areas, but help to solve society's problems such as drug abuse, alcoholism, highway deaths, and teenage pregnancies (Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2014). Due to the large enrollment, this was a difficult charge for the universities. Third, leaders in these institutions believed that they needed relief from this pressure as well as their lower division preparatory work in order to truly become centers for research and professional development. This began the movement toward establishing what was known as branch campuses as extensions to the partnering four-year university that could prepare students in their first two years before coming to a four-year university (Cohen, Brawer & Kisker, 2014).

**Growth of junior colleges.** Joliet Junior College was the first independently operating two-year college without being tied to a four-year university (Coley, 2000), breaking away from the term and idea of a "branch campus." This was in response to the



demand for more education for the technology advancements in manufacturing and the workforce in general at the turn of the century. Resulting from this demand, junior colleges started advertising vocational training, transfer preparation, associate degrees, and lower cost to attract students who needed an education who did not have the ability to pay the high price at a university (Lorenzo, 1994). The GI Bill of 1944 and the Higher Education Act of 1965 gave financial assistance to those who could not previously afford higher education. Many of the students who benefited from these actions gravitated to junior colleges (Cohen, Brawer & Kisker, 2014). Thus, the desire for more junior colleges began to grow.

**Community colleges.** As more students enrolled in junior colleges, the term shifted to reflect the students who were enrolling in these institutions. In the 1970s the term “community college” became more acceptable and used as it reflected the fact that these institutions served the community and met the community’s needs (Cain, 1999). The 1970s and 1980s also saw a higher number of high school graduates who were looking for higher education at a lower cost and a closer location to home; for many, community colleges were the answer.

Now, community colleges operate in every state and enroll approximately 12 million students a semester nationwide, including both for credit and noncredit students (American Association of Community Colleges, 2016). The purpose of today’s community college still reflects that of the junior colleges in the early 1900s. These institutions aim to provide vocational training, transfer preparation, associate degrees, career enhancement certificates, attract a diverse student body, offer lower cost so all can

have access to higher education, and provide developmental education for those who struggle. As Cohen, Brawer and Kisker (2014) stated, the goal of community colleges is to give the opportunity for all students to rise to their greatest potential. Like the students who attended junior colleges shared similar traits, students today who attend community colleges often share common characteristics.

### **Characteristics of Community College Students**

Often when one thinks of a college student, a traditional four-year university student comes to mind, yet community college students differ in many ways. Knowing community college students differ from their four-year counterparts is essential in understanding and being able to meet the needs of community college students. The first difference, community college students and four-year university students vary based on age and exposure to higher education. Community college students are on average older than four-year college students, with a national average age of 29 (Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2014). This means that for many community college students, they have been out of the formal educational setting for approximately 10 years. This contributes to a higher reporting of anxiety, being unprepared, and experiencing the feeling of uncertainty of college expectations and requirements (Perin, 2013). To add to this, 45% of community college students are first generation college students (Cohen, Brawer & Kisker, 2014). Along with potentially being older – or as Cain (1999) described “non-traditional,” these first-generation students are just learning what college is all about and lack the college “know how” that many four-year students already possess because of previous modeling in their families.

Second, community colleges accept a broader and more diverse student population. As with four-year universities, community colleges enroll more women than men, though this trend is higher in community colleges (American Association of Community Colleges, 2016; Lorenzo, 1994; Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2014). Students of minority backgrounds are frequently found in community colleges, which also reflects the demographics of the community in which they are found. Perin (2013) added that along with ethnic, racial, and religious minorities, students in the linguistic minority often head to community colleges to not only learn content for their field, but also to sharpen their English skills. Fourteen percent of international students in the country are in community colleges for similar reasons. Another minority population within society are students who have served time in prison. These students can often find a space for their educational goals in a community college (Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2014). Students in community colleges may also have diagnosed or undiagnosed learning disabilities and are students whom four year universities will not accept (Perin, 2013). Community colleges are prepared to handle these types of students and because of these characteristics, community colleges offer more developmental classes than four-year institutions (Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2014).

Third, community college students are more likely to have higher demands on their time and responsibilities. Community college students are more likely than four-year students to be working full or part time while attending classes (Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2014; Clotfelter, Ladd, Muschkin, & Vigdor, 2013; Lorenzo, 1994; Simmons, 1994). In fact, today only 40% of community college students can afford to attend full

time due to their working responsibilities (Cohen, Brawer & Kisker, 2014). This means more community college students attend class at night, on weekends, and online.

Furthermore, community college students are more likely to be raising a family which presents issues with childcare and sometimes transportation (Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2014; Clotfelter, Ladd, Muschkin, & Vigdor, 2013).

Fourth, community college students are more focused on the job market and earning credentials to move into a career quickly and efficiently. Cain (1999) argued that community college students are pragmatic in nature. They are in college to gain skills for the job force and do not value courses they have to take that are not in line with their career field. These students may also never see graduation as the goal (though this is the standard through which success is highly measured). Instead, they attend to meet other short term needs and then may choose to stop out, or drop out, before completing their programs (Cain, 1999; Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2014). Community colleges are better equipped to give these students the education they are looking for in order to move them into jobs more efficiently (Cohen, Brawer & Kisker, 2014).

Fifth, community college students arrive with less academic advantages than four-year university students. Cohen, Brawer and Kisker (2014) described community college students as less motivated and in need of more direction as compared to four-year students. Sociologically, they are trying to rise up and out of their social class as more community college students are from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2014; Simmons, 1994). It is for these issues – lower socioeconomic class, working part or full time, raising a family, financially independent, the tendency to not

rely on others for support (emotional, financial, academic)— that Coley (2000) stated community college students are more at risk for failure. Perin (2013) added that community college students often have poor K-12 instruction, lower than average ACT scores, struggle with motivation and confidence, do not have clear goals, and hold lower career ambitions. All of these factors lead to lower success rates.

Also in terms of fewer academic advantages, Tinto (2008) believed community college students are less likely to be connected to their campus and less likely to persist through completion. One reason for this is only 26% of community colleges nationwide offer on campus housing (American Association of Community Colleges, 2016). This leads to less engagement and connection to the community college campus which leads the student to feel a sense of isolation (Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2014; Engstrom & Tinto, 2008). The social isolation can then lead to academic isolation (Tinto, 1987). For reasons of lack of engagement, balancing other responsibilities, potentially lower ability levels and ambitions, The Chronicle of Higher Education (2013) reported that the persistence rate of community college students is 53% while four-year students is 78%. One additional attribute that may explain the dismal community college persistence rate is the open-door policy of most community colleges. Due to the ease of entry and exit, students are assured that they can start and come back easily, which leads to erratic attendance and low semester to semester return rates (Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2014).

Not all characteristics described are unique to just community college students, though these students fit these characteristics in higher percentages as compared to four-year college students. As previously mentioned, community colleges provide a larger

percent of developmental education courses due to the unique population and needs of the students. The next section will provide an overview of the need for developmental education, then specifically developmental reading.

### **Developmental Education at the College Level**

This section will introduce why developmental education in general is necessary. This will include the definition and purpose of developmental education. This will then lead to definitions and goals of developmental reading specifically. Included will be a discussion on how research has described developmental readers and the goals of developmental reading programs.

#### **Need for Developmental Education**

Nearly half of all students enrolled in community colleges are in need of developmental education in at least one academic area (Gallard, Albritton, & Morgan, 2010; Rutschow & Schneider, 2011). According to the American Association of Community Colleges (2016), the number of general community college students across the country enrolled in Fall 2014 was 7.3 million (includes part and full time, credit seeking only). Therefore, approximately 3.6 million American college students require developmental education.

In order to effectively teach developmental students, instructors must understand the purpose of developmental education. The official definition according to the National Association of Developmental Education is that developmental education is “a comprehensive process that focuses on the intellectual, social, and emotional growth and development of all students” (2016 Fact Sheet: National Association of Developmental

Education). The National Association of Developmental Education (NADE) was formed in 1976 and is often the authority to look to regarding developmental education.

According to NADE, developmental education strives to help the underprepared student prepare, the prepared student advance and the advanced student excel.

To support NADE's definition, according to Gallard, Albritton, and Morgan (2010) developmental education focuses on not just the intellectual, but also addresses the social and emotional growth and development of students. McGrath and Spear (1987) similarly defined developmental programs "to be understood as encouraging and facilitating the full mental, moral, and emotional growth of students, whose lives might be enriched by their coming to know, appreciate, and ultimately express their full selves as members of society" (p. 16). This indicates that educators are not in the classroom simply to teach the content area; rather, other considerations need to be taken into account. Students come into the classroom with background knowledge, emotions such as anxiety, and both positive and negative academic experiences which will impact their success. Understanding who the student is, how they learn, their views of their learning and experiences as well as what goals they would like to achieve are just as important as conveying the content knowledge (Boylan, 2003; NADE, 2016). Illich, Hagan and McCallister (2004) suggested that developmental education incorporates a comprehensive approach to aiding all students improve their learning skills. The ability to learn is present, though an improvement is needed. One type of developmental education course offered in many community colleges is some form of a developmental reading course.

## **Developmental Reading**

As previously stated, nearly half of community college students require developmental education in at least one area. Of those students, approximately 20% require developmental reading (College Reading and Learning Association, 2013). However, numbers are more difficult to estimate in developmental reading due to variances in how developmental reading is offered across community colleges. For instance, placement tests used as well as the variation of the test score cutoffs, and if developmental reading is offered as a standalone course or if it is integrated with developmental writing impact numbers of developmental readers across the community college population.

**Developmental readers.** Regardless of percentage of developmental readers found in community colleges, developmental readers have been researched and described in the literature as sharing some common traits. Many developmental students come into the developmental programs with anxiety, lacking motivation or displaying a poor attitude (Faigley, Daly & Witte, 1981; Fox, 1980). Givens (2010) described students in developmental courses as those who may struggle with confidence and motivation levels. There are students in developmental reading classes who “generally do not consider themselves readers and do not enjoy reading in most contexts” (Paulson, 2006, p. 56). If students do not view themselves as readers, they will be less likely to participate or take an active role in their reading education (Armstrong & Newman, 2011). In addition, Givens (2010) asserted that some students become even more discouraged when placed in a developmental studies classroom in which it is often viewed as a waste of time since



it does not transfer to other institutions or does not count as credits toward their degree.

Caverly, Nicholson and Radcliffe (2004) stated further that in some cases, developmental students can be resentful or feel stigmatized.

Additionally, often developmental reading students do not understand the role and importance of reading (Lei, Bartlett, Gorney & Herschbach, 2010; Morris & Price, 2008).

If students cannot view the reading and learning taking place in their developmental reading course as applicable, this represents an additional barrier to their achievement.

Paulson (2006) also emphasized that developmental reading programs should be, “providing a foundation for life-long reading” (p. 52) as well as “instilling in developmental reading students the belief that reading has intrinsic value” (p.52).

Allowing developmental readers multiple opportunities to hold reading in a higher esteem will more likely make it more meaningful and important to work hard toward their academic and professional goals, all of which will require some level of reading (Paulson, 2006).

**Developmental reading programs.** Developmental reading programs have many goals to meet considering the students they serve. One such goal might be to transform student attitudes toward reading, in order to positively affect their overall achievement. Another goal is to motivate students to become active in their reading and to begin to view themselves as critical readers. Finally, developmental reading students face greater academic challenges because their reading skills deficiencies can make it more difficult to transition into their core content areas of study. This is also demonstrated in the work of Bettinger and Long (2009) who stated that these

developmental programs “help underprepared students gain the skills necessary to excel in college and may serve as a tool to integrate students into the school population” (p. 737). Therefore, a goal of these programs is to enhance developmental reader’s reading skills.

***Developmental programs and the affective component.*** While often developmental programs are focused on the cognitive development, the affective development is as critical. Addressing the affective component is instrumental in also impacting the cognitive processes (Gillespie, 1993; Saxon & Morante, 2014). Because developmental programs are comprised of adults with varied life experiences bringing a multitude of challenges, instructors must be attuned to the needs beyond the cognitive. Emotional growth and development should be as much of a focus as the academic and social (Boylan, 2003; NADE, 2016). Ultimately, the overarching goal, then, of developmental reading programs is to ensure that reading challenges can be overcome, both in the cognitive and affective realms, so students can then transfer their reading skills to their subject areas (Hsu & Wang, 2010). Now that an understanding of the need for and characteristics of community college developmental readers has been offered, the remainder of this review will provide an overview of the community college students’ reading characteristics, which are the focus of the present study.

### **Reading Characteristics Investigated**

Through the course of the research, I explored developmental readers’ strengths, struggles (together known as reading abilities), attitudes, and the role literacy plays in their lives (literacy practices). Through exploring these different reading characteristics,

a portrait of developmental readers' reading identity can be crafted. Listening to the voices of developmental readers in these areas can aid in understanding how persistent reading difficulties impact students and therefore shape future instruction in developmental reading. The section that follows reviews the literature associated with reading abilities, attitudes, literacy practices, and reading identities.

### **Reading Abilities**

Self-perceived reading strengths and struggles contribute to how students judge their abilities in reading. These perceptions greatly impact literacy achievement (Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Guay, Marsh, & Bolvin, 2003; Purcell-Gates, Degener, Jacobson, & Soler, 2002; Shore, Sabatini, Lentini, & Holtzman, 2013). It is important for readers to understand their strengths and struggles in reading for several reasons. First, recognizing areas of weakness allows readers to be purposeful when setting reading goals. Student selected goals can lead to overall higher achievement (Forster & Souvignier, 2014). Second, knowing student reading strengths and struggles can help students to understand their reading behavior, allowing for strengths to be capitalized on during instruction and struggles to start to be overcome (Kwon & Linderholm, 2015). Finally, being aware of both strengths and struggles can either motivate or inhibit (Henk, Marinak, & Melnick, 2012). Information on strengths and struggles can be gained from standard assessment data as well as from the students' own self-reporting.

**Strengths and struggles from standardized assessments.** Data gained from standardized reading assessments such as the Compass Reading Placement Test, do report if assessed reading standards have been met. These standards are based on a

reader's ability to construct meaning from text and assesses reading comprehension. However, these data do not answer the question of what abilities struggling readers possess nor exactly what their struggles are (Buly & Valencia, 2002; Dennis, 2009). Reading involves several components which include reading fluency, vocabulary, word identification, phonemic awareness, and comprehension (Buly & Valencia, 2002; Chall, 1967). While standardized reading assessments measure and report student passage and failure rates with the above-mentioned components, they often mask where students struggle or excel with percentages and percentiles (Buly & Valencia, 2002). Dennis (2009) valued the general data a standardized reading assessment can provide, however, he suggested that specific areas of strengths and struggles would be helpful; especially when knowing strengths can help to build toward more meaningful instruction. This is when collecting information beyond standardized assessment data is imperative.

**Strengths and struggles reported from students themselves.** In addition to using assessment data to identify strengths and struggles in reading, hearing from the students themselves is essential. Randel (2014) argued that listening to students provides a different type of data that can be more useful to literacy practitioners than aggregated assessment data alone. Randel (2014) stated struggling readers' voices have been largely absent in the research, despite being the population under study. When they are studied, it is mostly through standardized assessment means. Few studies have given voice to current college students (Bowen, et al., 2011). McLeod (2011) advocated for the student voice and their right to have their academic experiences expressed. Involvement of the

student voice is advantageous (Brooman, Darwent, & Pimor, 2015). When the student voice is heard, it is sometimes overshadowed by the researcher's voice.

Efforts in advocating for students are limited when researchers speak for students, rather than letting students speak for themselves (Mansfield, 2014). As Cook-Sather (2006) proclaimed, "Learning to listen to students means learning not to speak for them" (p. 6). Too often those who are marginalized, like developmental education students, are the subject of policies versus the actors in shaping policy. This is also true in the research. Developmental education students are the subjects, but rarely the actors in the research. Similarly stated while researching student educational experience, Erikson and Shultz (1992) found that exploring student experience is essential as little empirical and conceptual work has directly considered student experience and its impact on achievement, and this remains true today. When studies do explore student experiences or perspectives about their education, it is usually viewed from the perspective of the educators' interests; rarely is the perspective of the student explored (Erikson & Shultz, 1992).

Having students themselves identify and evaluate their own strengths and struggles is one way in which to gain this information. Becoming more self-aware, or practicing self-evaluation, may lead to higher self-confidence and overall higher efficacy (Stone, 1994). This is important to note as perceived ability of a reader is strongly related to reading practice and achievement (Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Guay, Marsh, & Bolvin, 2003; Purcell-Gates, Degener, Jacobson, & Soler, 2002; Shore, Sabatini, Lentini, & Holtzman, 2013).

**Self-evaluation from a sociocultural context.** Additionally, students will often compare their own abilities with others as a means for self-assessment in order to gain information on where they stand (Cheng & Lam, 2007). Students' self-evaluations of abilities are impacted by the achievement levels of classmates (Henk, Marinak, & Melnick, 2012). For instance, if a developmental reading student feels as though he/she does not belong in a developmental reading course based on how he/she perceives his/her classmates, he/she will more than likely rate his/her strengths as numerous and his/her struggles as limited. Developmental readers' evaluations are of their own individual abilities, though they do not take place in a vacuum. Evaluations, and overall literacy identities, are shaped by particular contexts and relationships (Triplett, 2004). When students evaluate their strengths and struggles in reading, it is often done through comparing their own abilities to others in similar contexts, in relation to how reading was valued in their social and cultural upbringing, and their overall attitude toward reading.

Students' reporting of their reading strengths and struggles will be influenced based on the social and cultural environments in which they were raised and/or currently find themselves in; Alvermann (2001) argued culture constructs ability and disability. This indicates that students may be relying on others' valuation of their abilities rather than their own. This can lead to lack of ownership in reading development and potentially impede reading progress. Most literacy learning starts outside of school (in the home or community), continues alongside schooling and into adulthood (Barton, 2001). Therefore, the social and cultural environments may have large impacts on the

strengths and struggles students experience as they enter into college level reading and in the reading classroom itself.

Perceptions of one's abilities are formed through one's experiences with and interpretation of one's environment and are influenced by reinforcements, evaluations by significant others, and one's attributions for one's own behavior (Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton, 1976; Shavelson & Bolus, 1982). The social environment plays a large role in how students perceive their own abilities, especially considering personal background and the role others play in their educational context (Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton, 1976; Shavelson & Bolus, 1982).

**Impact of self-perceptions.** Self-perceptions can either inhibit or motivate learning (Henk & Melnick, 1995; Schunk, 1984; Zimmerman & Ringle, 1981). According to Guay, Marsh and Bolvin (2003), a student's self-perception of his/her ability, worth, and competence can influence his/her school performance. This can then influence self-perceptions; it is a reciprocal relationship. Furthermore, according to Mac Iver, Stipek and Daniels (1991), students with more positive self-beliefs will put forth more effort in their academic endeavors and when encountering failure will still put forth great effort to succeed. In reading, self-perceptions can also have an impact upon an individual's overall orientation toward the literacy process itself (Henk & Melnick, 1995). There is a direct link between reader self-perception and their subsequent reading behavior, habits, attitudes, and overall reading achievement (Henk & Melnick, 1995).

Bandura (1993) asserted that no personal agency is more pervasive than people's beliefs about their own capabilities. These beliefs influence how people behave, think,

motivate themselves, and feel. Self-efficacy beliefs impact cognitive processes in that those who have a high self-efficacy visualize success, while those who doubt their self-efficacy visualize failure (Bandura, 1993). Under this premise, in an academic environment, students' self-efficacy beliefs may impact their perceptions regarding their experiences, targeted areas of strengths and struggles, and ultimately the effort and motivation they put forth (Henk, Marinak, & Melnick, 2012).

**Summary.** Overall, how students self-evaluate their strengths and struggles is connected to their reading attitude, is in relation to others, and based on their social and cultural beliefs they bring with them. Part of a reader's reading identity encompasses how he/she evaluates and thereby feels about his/her abilities in reading. This shapes who he/she is as a reader. It allows him/her to identify and view himself/herself as a strong or weak reader by evaluating his/her own behaviors during the reading process.

### **Reading Attitude**

Reading attitude can be defined as a state of mind, accompanied by emotions, that makes reading more or less probable (Smith, 1990b). Reading attitude exists on a continuum of positive to negative feelings toward reading with a corresponding tendency to seek or avoid reading (McKenna, Kear & Ellsworth, 1995). Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) observed that attitude develops from the expectations and consequences from one's culture and culture is the greatest influence on beliefs and attitudes. Much research has been conducted on reading attitude with various populations. See Table 1 for a sampling of studies in which reading attitude has been previously researched.



Table 1

*Reading Attitude Researched*

<b>Elementary and middle school students</b>	<b>Adults</b>	<b>Across subject areas</b>	<b>English as a second/foreign language</b>
* Engin, Wallbrown, and Brown (1976)	* Smith (1990b)	* Bassham, Murphy and Murphy (1964)	* Ghaith and Bouzeineddine (2003)
* Lewis and Teale (1980)	* Smith (1990c)	* Gardner (1975)	* Kim (2003)
* McKenna and Kear (1990)	* Smith (1992)	* Gauld and Hukins (1980)	
* Ley, Schaer, and Dismukes (1994)	* Gillespie (1993)	* Schibeci (1983)	
* McKenna, Kear and Ellsworth (1995)	* McCabe and Miller (2003)	* Blosser (1984)	
* Kush and Watkins (1996)	* Applegate, Applegate et al., (2014)	* Quinn and Jadav (1987)	
* Baker and Wigfield (1999)		* LaForgia (1988)	
* Hogston and Peregoy (1999)			
* Smith (2001)			
* Sainsbury and Schagen (2004)			
* Kush, Watkins, and Brookhart (2005)			
* McKenna, Conradi, Lawrence, Jang and Meyer (2012)			
* Conradi, Jang, Bryant, Craft and McKenna (2013)			

**Importance of researching reading attitude.** Regardless of this breadth of research, investigations into the reading attitude of adults, specifically those in college

reading settings, still remains scarce, -despite its importance. It is important to note, adults' attitudes toward reading are likely a result from early reading experiences (Smith, 2001). Additionally, students' reading attitudes worsen as they move through school (Conradi, Jang, Bryant, Craft & McKenna, 2013; Ley, Schaer, & Dismukes, 1994). Knowing this information deems it a necessary area of recognition and research for adult readers as well. Understanding how, when, and why reading attitudes develop is crucial in helping address the developmental reader holistically.

Reading attitude is linked to reading achievement, can determine reading practices, has an impact on motivation to read, and is the affective component of reading that makes the biggest difference on overall reading success (Kush & Watkins, 2001). Because of this, college level educators should understand the importance of understanding reading attitude's role in the reading process (Kush & Watkins, 2001), assessing reading attitudes (Alexander & Cobb, 1992), as well as helping to overcome any negative attitudes while working on fostering more positive ones. Part of the goal of developmental programs are to address these affective components, such as attitude (NADE, 2016).

**Advantages of positive reading attitudes.** There are various benefits from a positive reading attitude. First, adults with more positive reading attitudes perform at higher levels on standardized reading tests, read more often, and read a wider variety of materials (Smith, 1990b). Second, possessing a positive reading attitude is helpful when growing reading abilities (Smith, 1990b). Research indicates that attitude may impact the level of achievement a reader might obtain (Kim, 2003; McKenna, Kear & Ellsworth,

1995); there exists a relationship between reading attitude and reading achievement (Conradi, Jang, Bryant, Craft, & McKenna, 2013). Third, students with higher achieving reading skills often have positive reading attitudes while those with poor reading skills often have to overcome negative reading attitudes (Kush, Watkins, & Brookhart, 2005). An additional benefit to a positive reading attitude is that reading attitude likely also influences an individual's reading behavior (Smith, 1990b) and therefore is linked to the motivational aspect of the reading process. Ideal readers are those who are enthusiastic about reading, are motivated to spend significantly more time reading than average readers and therefore, with this additional practice, become better at reading (Applegate, Applegate, et al., 2014; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997).

***Importance of developing positive reading attitudes in children.*** Smith's (1990b) findings reinforce the value of developing positive reading attitudes in both adults and children. Positive attitudes toward reading are needed for choosing to read, sustaining effort in that reading, and for deeper learning. Positive attitudes toward reading in childhood produces adults who continue to read and engage in reading (Kush, Watkins & Brookhart, 2005). Readers with negative attitudes avoid reading, which may negatively impact comprehension (Ghaith & Bouzeineddine, 2003). When negative attitudes toward reading persist, unsuccessful reading experiences are likely to continue (Hogsten & Peregoy, 1999). Early development of a positive attitude toward reading is associated with sustained reading throughout life in various contexts (Kush & Watkins, 2001). Developmental reading classrooms in the college setting must address this component of the affective domain and work to foster positive reading attitudes

(Gillespie, 1993). Developmental reading classrooms need to be focused not only on the comprehension, vocabulary, and content area reading, but also on promoting and encouraging positive reading attitudes (Gillespie, 1993). Part of this will necessitate teachers assessing and addressing affective factors such as reading attitude (Gillespie, 1993).

### **Importance of and Assessments Utilized to Assess Reading Attitude**

Despite often being a difficult area to assess, reading attitude has been assessed in the past. Engin, Wallbrown and Brown (1976) created and validated *A Survey of Reading Attitudes* with 853 students. Smith (1990b) adapted the *Adult Survey of Reading Attitudes* (ASRA) based on Wallbrown, Brown and Engin's work (1977). Smith (1990a; 1991) found the ASRA useful in determining reading attitudes and identifying reading attitude differences among adults with varying reading abilities. This assessment is utilized to determine the different aspects of reading attitude including reading activity and enjoyment, anxiety and difficulty, social reinforcement, modalities, and attitudes about tutoring. Smith (1990a; 1991) found the instrument had reasonable construct validity in assessing reading attitudes.

Assessing reading attitudes is important in the overall instructional outcome and evaluation of adult reading programs (both developmental and non-developmental) for multiple reasons. Educators should be able to assess student reading attitude, and then in turn use that information to help cultivate more positive attitudes (Conradi, Jang, Bryant, Craft, & McKenna, 2013; Cothorn & Collins, 1992). Because attitude may influence

reading failures or success, it is necessary to investigate this affective component in college reading (Gillespie, 1993).

Affective characteristics, one example being reading attitude, are very important pieces of student success (Gillespie, 1993; NADE, 2016; Saxon & Morante, 2014; Saxon, Levine-Brown, & Boylan, 2008). In fact, the most prominent affective factor that impacts reading achievement and success is attitude toward reading (Kush & Watkins, 2001; Quinn & Jadav, 1987). Though researchers, particularly Smith (1990b, 1990c, 1992) studied adult reading attitudes, professional literature focused on adult developmental readers in a college setting (as opposed to Adult Basic Education), is scarce. With previous research of all age levels reporting that reading attitude is important as it relates to reading achievement, probability of reading, and literacy practice, investigating reading attitude with developmental readers with low retention rates (Givens, 2010), in a college setting is becoming increasingly important.

### **Call for Attitude Research**

More than thirty years ago, more research was called for in examining reading attitudes of adult readers in all educational settings (Smith, 1991), and little has changed. Smith (1990b) argued there were very few studies examining the reading attitudes of adults, though adult reading habits have been frequently reported. Previous studies have typically focused on college student leisure reading; none focus purely on academic reading for college students (Isakson, Isakson, Plummer & Chapman, 2016). Progress toward developing this understanding and the need of this type of research has been slow, despite the necessity of understanding reading attitude (McKenna, Kear & Ellsworth,

1995). Qualitative research is needed at the community college level relative to reading attitude (Alexander & Cobb, 1992) as few studies on reading attitude go beyond elementary school (Alexander & Fox, 2011; McKenna, Conradi, Lawrence, Jang & Meyer, 2012). Reading attitude plays a substantial role in motivation to learn, endurance in reading, deep learning and overall reading achievement and is worthy of educators' attention.

### **Literacy Practices and Role of Literacy**

Connected to reading attitude is a student's literacy practice. According to Rodrigo, Greenburg and Segal (2014), literacy practices refers to how often and how well students read, and what students like to read. The use of literacy in the home and the community is varied and many (Barton, 2001). Literacy practices refer to activities twofold: both the types of materials read and the frequency in which they are engaged. How often students engage in literacy practices is directly linked to achievement, attitude, and motivation (Rodrigo, Greenburg, & Segal, 2014).

Literacy practices have been investigated with and across several populations as demonstrated in Table 2. Despite there being a span of four decades' worth of research, research focusing on literacy practice in developmental education and writing as a literacy practice are largely missing. The National Endowment for the Arts reported that half of college age students regularly engage in the reading of literature (Applegate, Applegate, et al., 2014). Even so, few studies have provided data on how much reading school children do (Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988). Studies with elementary children show time spent reading is linked to achievement, which would suggest this as

an area of interest to reading educators and researchers. Overall, this indicates this is an area in which a gap exists in the literature on developmental readers.

Table 2

*Literacy Practices Researched*

<b>Children</b>	<b>Adults</b>	<b>Adult Literacy Programs</b>	<b>Writing focused</b>	<b>Developmental Education</b>
* Long and Henderson (1973)	* Sharon (1973-74)	* Sheorey and Mokhtari (1994)	* Parr (1992)	* Sheorey and Mokhtari (1994)
* Greaney (1980)	* Guthrie (1984)	* Purcell-Gates, Degener,	* Purcell-Gates, Degener,	
* Anderson, Wilson and Fielding (1988)	* Kirsch and Guthrie (1984)	Jacobson and Soler (2002)	Jacobson and Soler (2002)	
* Taylor, Frye and Maruyama (1990)	* Smith (1990c)	* Mellard, Patterson and Prewett (2007)	* Karlsson (2009)	
* Foertsch (1992)	* Guthrie and Greaney (1991)	* Rodrigo, Greenburg and Segal (2014)	* Cohen, White and Cohen (2011)	
* Ivey and Broaddus (2001)	* Farris (1992)			
* Nippold, Duthie and Larsen (2005)	* Kirsch, Jungleblut, Jenkins and Kolstad (1993)			
* Clark and Rumbold (2006)	* Smith (1995)			
* Becnel and Moeller (2015)	* Smith (1996)			
	* Smith and Stahl (1999)			
	* Smith (2000)			
	* Scales and Rhee (2001)			
	* White, Chen and Forsyth (2010)			

**Importance of researching literacy practices.** The investigation into developmental reading students' practices with literacy is advantageous for the field for multiple reasons. First and foremost, literacy practices, the reading and writing of text, are linked to reading achievement (Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988; Mellard, Patterson, & Prewett, 2007; Smith, 1996). Achievement has been specifically linked to reading a variety of print (Smith, 1996) and amount of time spent reading outside of school (Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988). Furthermore, Gallick (1999) found that recreational reading has been found to improve comprehension, writing style, vocabulary, spelling and grammar. Clark and Rumbold (2006) also found children who read very little do not have the benefits of reading (comprehension, grammar, writing ability, vocabulary breadth and positive reading attitude, greater self confidence in reading), are not motivated to read, and academic achievement decreases significantly. In addition, Nippold, Duthie, and Larsen (2005) stated the amount of time spent reading predicts word knowledge.

**Categories of literacy.** Gallego and Hollingsworth (2000) described three types of literacy – school, community, and personal. However, school literacy is often more valued over the other two types (Gallego & Hollingsworth, 2000). If bridges are not built between the various literacy practices in and out of school - if there is a devaluation of learners' cultural and personal experiences, their preferences, strengths and areas of need – disengaged readers are often the result. Because school literacy is often more highly valued, adults do not recognize the diverse literacy practices they actually engage in if they are not academically centered (Gallego & Hollingsworth, 2000). Low-literate adults



need to see how outside reading and writing can be used and valued in the classroom.

One way of doing this is researching and validating the literacy practices in which these students are engaged.

**Literacy practices in the sociocultural framework.** Literacy practices include the reading and writing of specific texts for socially situated purposes and intents (Purcell-Gates, Degener, Jacobson & Soler, 2002). Perry (2009) further defined literacy practices as focusing on what people do with written language, and are shaped by cultural, economic, political, historical, and ideological factors. Therefore, literacy and literacy practices should not be viewed as simply a collection of skills; rather a form of cultural practice (Resnick, 2000). Adults specifically read what is related to their lifestyle and culture (Scales & Rhee, 2001). Literacy practices depend upon these various factors.

Luke (2003) argued that because literacy practices are shaped by context and change over time, it is necessary to examine what counts as literacy in different contexts, the literacy resources available in those contexts, and how literacy practices are adopted, rejected, adapted, and/or transformed. Context plays a role in shaping literacy use in different communities and individuals in those communities have multiple purposes and uses for literacy in day to day life (Perry, 2009). Students evaluating their literacy practices will do so in multiple contexts, will use literacy for many reasons, and will have various justifications as to why literacy was utilized. Understanding the contexts, reasons, and uses helps to position and understand a reading identity.

**Writing practices researched.** The current study investigated both reading and writing practices developmental students used in their daily lives through tracking of such practices as they occurred. Though several researchers have looked at literacy practices, those studies have focused on reading. A study of writing practices as the main focus, or even shared focus, is scarce in the literature. Cohen, White, and Cohen (2011) defined everyday writing as any writing carried out in the daily lives of an individual. These researchers studied the frequency of which different types of texts were produced by adults. The researchers recorded reading and writing as it was engaged in, versus recollection at a later date, believing this method to be a superior way to collect data. While Cohen, White, and Cohen (2001) addressed literacy practices as they related specifically to writing, this is still an area in the professional literature lacking insights for college developmental readers' use of writing.

**Methods used to study literacy practices.** Many studies have been conducted addressing adult reading activities and practices (Smith & Stahl, 1999). However, particular methods of collecting literacy practices are more highly valued and suggested. Smith and Stahl's (1999) research was unique as it used a Reading Activity Method (RAM) that required participants to record reading activity as it occurred rather than recalling it later. Cohen, White and Cohen (2011) recognized the value of utilizing this method of recording reading and writing as it occurred, and incorporated it into their more recent research.

Smith (2000) found readers' affective responses to reading are rarely obtained in survey studies. Studying individuals' reading practices is important to better understand

how people will participate in reading. Most previous studies of reading practice relied on self-reports through surveys after the fact (e.g. “what did you read yesterday?”). Smith’s (2000) study relied on RAM with synchronous reporting. Real-time recording was found to be more reliable in obtaining information about literacy practices (Cohen, White, & Cohen, 2011; Smith, 2000). Information obtained on the amount of time adults (those both college and non-college students) spent on literacy has been documented, as well as for what purposes the literacy was used for (Farris, 1992; Guthrie, 1984; Kirsch, Jungleblut, Jenkins, & Kolstad, 1993; Sharon, 1973-74; Sheorey & Mokhtari, 1994; Smith, 1996; White, Chen, & Forsyth, 2010). However, this information is quantitative in nature and does not provide the student’s voice on the value or role the literacy played in their life.

Literacy practices are tied to reading attitude, motivation, achievement, and overall reading success. They have been studied in multiple ways with various populations. However, few studies have used developmental readers in a community college setting, particularly with the use of reporting through a RAM method, with follow up discussions. Furthermore, reading habits of college students have not received as much attention in the literature as younger students (Gallick, 1999). Understanding literacy practices of readers allows for a more thorough portrait of a reader’s identity. One significant study that explored developmental reader’s use of literacy was Sheorey and Mokhtari in 1994. Beyond this study, literacy research which focuses on adults in a college setting is rare. Researching reading abilities, reading attitudes, and literacy practices all contribute to instructors’ understanding of student reading identities, and

may promote the integration of support activities that significantly advance student achievement.

### **Developing a Reading Identity**

Considering a reader's abilities, attitudes, and literacy practices allows for a reader's reading identity to become positioned. Identities, however, are socially constructed and therefore subject to the influences of people, contexts, and institutions (Compton-Lilly, 2009; Ferdman, 1990). The labels that others apply influence one's identity as a reader (Alvermann, 2001). According to Compton-Lilly (2009), "Personal and shared histories as readers, past successes, shared understandings about the uses and purposes of texts, current struggles and accomplishments as well as official criteria for reading competence contribute to the ways people identify themselves as readers" (p. 35). Reading identity is complex and related to various social practices. A reader may identify him/herself as a good reader in his/her social group of peers, though a poor reader in his/her college courses. Reading identities are context dependent and are fluid in their understanding and positioning.

How parents, peers, teacher and students perceive a reader also plays a role in the construction of identity (Alvermann, 2001; Compton-Lilly, 2009; McCarthy, 2001). For instance, students who are identified as poor readers can expect to receive reading instruction which focuses on the skills they are lacking, rather than meaningful interaction with text (Hall, 2016; Johannessen, 2004). This perpetuates the poor reader identity and further positions a reader as identifying with the "poor reader" label. Even those who have been positioned as good readers can have their interaction with text

limited (Hall, 2016). For example, if a reader only views reading as quickly saying words, he/she is not meaningfully experiencing that text. The positioning of reading identities can shape how readers view their own reading, how they interact with the text, and how reading instruction is delivered to the different types of readers.

Reading identities are developed through considering multiple aspects of the reading process and areas connected to reading. Reading identities include the readers' evaluations of their strengths, struggles, their reading attitudes, and how literacy plays a role in their lives. This information allows a developmental reading educator to begin to understand the needs of developmental readers and advance the effectiveness of the reading support services provided for reading instruction.

### **Summary**

Research is abundant addressing the purpose and formation of community colleges, developmental education, and developmental reading. However, gaps exist in the areas of developmental reader's reading abilities, reading attitudes, and literacy practices, all three of which contribute to students' overall reading achievement, or lack thereof. These components also help to position a reading identity. These reading characteristics have been investigated with various populations, primarily through purely quantitative means. Despite the voluminous professional literature related to literacy, student reading characteristics in higher education have received minimal attention, especially from a qualitative perspective. This gap, then, will be explicitly addressed in the proposed study.

### **CHAPTER III**

#### **METHODS AND PROCEDURES**

In elementary settings, students “learn to read” and later “read to learn;” though learning to read and reading to learn should go together throughout a K-12 experience. Because of this, the assumption is often that students arrive at college with the ability to read to learn. However, ACT (2006) found the number of students who are on track for college readiness shrinks from eighth to twelfth grade. Additionally, literacy demands are more challenging in college-level texts and the reading strategies used by students in high school may no longer be appropriate (Williamson, 2008). This has an impact on students’ success in college.

#### **Significance**

Nationally, only 22.3% of community college students complete their developmental coursework within two academic years (Complete College America, 2013). Furthermore, only one in ten students who require developmental education graduate from a two-year community college (Complete College America, 2014). Based on this information, and the previous chapter’s demonstration of the necessity and importance of developmental reading programs, more support for college developmental readers is necessary. In order to support these students, more qualitative research yielding the needs of this population, from the readers themselves, is needed.

#### **Purpose and Questions**

While studies and initiatives, such as Complete College America, have investigated completion and passage rates as well as other statistical information,

limited research has explored this population from a qualitative standpoint. Viewing students as partners in both the educational and research process allows for a deeper understanding of and collaboration in developmental education. The purpose of this study was to explore developmental reading students' abilities and attitudes in reading, as well as the role literacy played in their lives. The goal of the study was to develop student reading identities through a detailed description of developmental readers' reading abilities, attitudes, and daily literacy practice as evidenced through the participants' own perspectives and demonstrations of reading. The present study was guided by two research questions:

1. What are the strengths, struggles, and attitudes of developmental reading students regarding academic reading?
2. What role does literacy play in the lives of developmental reading students?

### **Theoretical Framework**

Literacy in the current study was understood through a sociocultural perspective as the theoretical framework. The sociocultural perspective can be defined as the understanding that individuals learn and gain knowledge in physical, social, cultural, and technological environments through the interaction with others (Gee, 2015). When students interact with literacy, the sociocultural background and the environment in which literacy is practiced shapes how students may evaluate their reading abilities, as well as acknowledges the role literacy plays in their lives.

### **Language Learning from the Sociocultural Perspective**

Literacy is interwoven with wider practices that involve talk, interaction, values, and beliefs, beyond formal instruction. Furthermore, literacy is situated in different social practices; literacy and reading are social activities (Davidson, 2010; Gee, 1997; Gee, 2015; Purcell-Gates, Degener, Jacobson, & Soler 2002; Street, 1984). The literacy situated in social practices is also situated in cultural contexts, in both formal and informal environments. The implication of this is that students can bring with them these experiences and contexts into the classroom when creating meaning from text with one another. Meaning, literacy is always rooted in socially mentored and shared experiences (Alvermann & Guthrie, 1993; Gee, 2015; Henk & Melnick, 1995). In turn, these frames of reference (cultural and social contexts) may be used as a source of comparison when evaluating attitudes and abilities regarding literacy. It is with these understandings the study was viewed regarding how students may evaluate, value, and discuss their reading abilities, attitudes, and the role of literacy in their lives.

### **Research Design: Qualitative Case Study**

Previous research and statistics have painted a troubling picture of developmental readers. It has been reported developmental readers have negative reading attitudes, are resentful toward developmental reading, do not value literacy, and have negative past reading experiences. However, the research did not explain *why* this is the case, nor is the research inclusive of developmental readers' voices.



A case study design allowed for both a quantitative and qualitative exploration into developmental readers' experiences.

Yin (1989) described case studies as contributing “uniquely to our knowledge of individual, organizational, social, and political phenomena” (p. 14). Through the exploration of developmental reading students, more can be known about these individuals which has potential to impact how the research site addresses developmental reading students and their curriculum needs. This could further lead to applications in other colleges' developmental reading programs or potentially other areas of developmental education in general.

Case studies are used when there is a need to conduct an in-depth study of a complex interaction between a phenomenon and its real-world context while drawing upon multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 1992, 2014). The purpose of this study was to explore developmental reading students' attitudes and abilities in reading, as well as the role literacy played in their lives. The complex interaction was between the developmental reading students' reading abilities (strengths and struggles with), reading attitudes, and how they viewed literacy's role in their daily routine.

### **Type of Case Study**

Due to my intent on understanding who developmental readers were in various aspects, a holistic multiple case study design was utilized. Though developmental reading students may share some common characteristics, developmental readers come into developmental education with diverse abilities,

attitudes, and literacy practices. Exploring the experience of one single developmental reader would not allow for the breadth of experiences and stories held by this population. On the other hand, when studying large samples of developmental readers, individual stories can get lost in the statistics. Therefore, investigating developmental reading experience from a moderate number of developmental readers, or from multiple cases, allowed for a fuller portrait of developmental readers than a single story could, with more anecdotal depth allowed than with a large sampled study.

Utilizing multiple cases (several developmental readers) allowed the study to be more compelling and robust, versus a single case (single developmental reader) analysis (Yin, 2014). Holistic case studies are those that have one unit of analysis per case (Yin, 1998), which in this study was one single student. The multiple-case design was approached with replication logic in mind. In this way, case studies are compared analogously to experiments. One experiment is conducted and upon uncovering a significant finding, replication is desired in a second, third or further experiment (Yin, 2014). This indicates that common patterns, or conclusions, were sought across participants (cases) that could provide insight into who developmental readers are. Once one individual portrait was developed, a similar portrait was pursued in additional cases (literal replication). In this way, one overarching portrait could be derived from individual participant stories.

According to Lichtman (2014), the key features to the case study approach are that the objectives are to increase knowledge and bring about change in what is

being studied, rely on empirical inquiry, study a contemporary phenomenon, and is in a real-life context. This study sought to understand the phenomenon of the complex nature of developmental reading students in their real-life context to potentially change future instruction, expectations, and standards in developmental reading education at the college level.

**Unit of analysis.** Defining a case entails describing and defining the case in a case study (Yin, 2014). This was a multiple-case study, with each case defined as an individual student. As described by Yin, this study would be considered a holistic case study as only one student (case) was the unit of analysis in each case (Yin, 1998). Each case (participant) was viewed and analyzed holistically, or all-inclusively, and then compared against and across the other individual cases during analysis.

### **Context of the Study**

This section will describe the setting, participants, consent, and access regarding the study. Justification for the number of cases will also be explained. Finally, I will also clarify the use of my own students as part of the research.

#### **Setting**

This research study took place at State College (pseudonym), the institution in which I am a current assistant professor. State College is a two-year, open access community college in Northeast Ohio. There were 11,545 students enrolled in the Spring 2016 semester. Approximately 70% of these students worked full time while attending State College. The average age of a State College student was 29; 60% of

students were female and 35% attended as full- time students. Fifty-seven percent of the college's students lived within the college's county, 29% were minority and 46% were first generation college students.

Of the 11,545 students enrolled in the spring semester, 196 were registered for one of the two developmental reading courses offered at the college (49 in the introductory level developmental reading course, 147 in the higher level developmental reading course). Students were required to enroll in a developmental reading course based on their entering Compass reading score or previous ACT reading score. The Compass was an untimed, computerized test used to evaluate a student's skills to place him/her in appropriate courses (ACT, 2015). Students at State College who did not have a recent ACT score were tested using the Compass placement test upon entrance to State College and before creating their schedule. Compass was used to assess students' comprehension and vocabulary abilities to determine if they were ready for entry-level college courses. It was an adaptive test, ranging from 35-45 multiple choice questions, all based on provided passages. See Table 3 for placement criteria.

The introductory level developmental reading course, Technical Comprehension (IDS 101) was designed to help students develop and apply reading, vocabulary, study, and critical thinking skills to enhance their success with college-level work. The higher level developmental reading course, Critical Analysis (IDS 102) consisted of vocabulary skills, critical comprehension, and analysis of college-level reading material.

Table 3

*Placement Criteria*

<b>Compass Reading Test Score</b>	<b>ACT Reading Test Score</b>	<b>Course</b>
0-65	0-13	Technical Comprehension
66-79	14-17	Critical Analysis
75-79 and High School GPA 3.0+	16+ and High School GPA 3.0+	Requirement met
80+	18+	Requirement met

**Participants, Consent, and Access**

Students enrolled in either Technical Comprehension or Critical Analysis during the Spring 2016 semester provided the research population. Participants could have been enrolled in any of the eight full-time developmental reading instructors' main campus courses, including the researcher's since all data were student generated, rather than tied to specific classrooms or instruction. The research opportunity was presented to 137 students in 12 sections of these courses. One section of Technical Comprehension yielded study participants, while the remaining came from 11 sections of Critical Analysis. After visiting developmental classrooms and explaining the research opportunity, I collected or allowed the regular classroom instructor to collect the consent forms from those who agreed to participate. This all occurred after an application to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) was approved. For recruitment script that was used, see Appendix A.

**The number of cases.** When relying upon replication logic, the number of cases is not definitely set. Replication logic aims at “producing corroboratory evidence from two or more cases” (Yin, 1998, p. 240). Yin recommended basing the number of cases on how certain the researcher would like to be in refuting rival explanations to the ones stated in the case study propositions (no propositions were created in this study). Even then, Yin recommended numbers only between two and six (Yin, 1998).

After the recruitment period, I received 68 signed consent forms with 37 participants completing round one of data collection, 29 completing round two, 27 completing round three and 19 completing round four. Of the 19, 3 were English Language Learners (ELL) and their particular reading strengths, struggles, and role of literacy were beyond the scope of this study and therefore their data were not considered in the reported results. From the 16 remaining participants, five cases who represented the common thematic trends were drawn out and expanded upon in the findings chapter. These five were chosen through examining the quantitative data collected from the 16 final participants, resulting in participants who represented the average quantitative score results and therefore could be considered a typical developmental reading student. The process for selecting the participants who were the focus of the five cases will be further described in chapter four.

***Binding the case.*** Each case is one individual bounded in the study by a sixteen-week developmental reading course. These case subjects were developmental reading students enrolled in a developmental reading course in Spring

2016 at State College. Although the study focused on current strengths, struggles, attitudes, and daily literacy practices, it was allowable, and even necessary in some situations, for participants to reflect on past experiences as well.

**Use of own students.** The selection of participants was one of convenience due to my position and access within this setting. However, Merriam (1998) stated that to gain insight and explore an issue, a sample from which can most be learned should be chosen. Choosing this setting and participants allowed me to address and explore the answers to the proposed research questions.

Participants who came from my own classroom constituted 25% of the 16 participants. Jones (2002) stated the importance of the researcher understanding the “discernment about one’s own positionality and the influence of this positionality on who and what can be known” (p. 466). Creswell (2013) also warned, “To study one’s own workplace, for example, raises questions about whether good data can be collected when the act of data collection may introduce a power imbalance between the researcher and the individuals being studied” (p. 151). The power imbalance was an issue I remained aware of as a potential limitation and will be discussed later in this chapter.

### **The Researcher as a Reader**

In order to explore how others view reading and the role literacy played in their lives, it is essential that the researcher address these questions and his/her personal beliefs about reading as well. Academically and personally reading has always been a strength. From an early age, reading was a source of both education

and pleasure. Reading and writing were also a very social experience as I often read the same books my friends were reading so we could discuss them. Additionally, I spent abundant time writing in both personal and shared journals.

It was not until late elementary school that I realized reading did not come as easily to others as it did for me, nor did everyone find it to be a pleasant way to spend their time. It took me even longer to realize that because of my personal background (the oldest child from a white, middle class family) that I was given more opportunities to literacy both in my home and my school. Especially now as a developmental reading instructor, it is clear that not all students grew up with access to literacy materials in one or both of those environments, and this is quite possibly a large reason they end up in my classroom.

I believe reading is essential when navigating through daily life when communicating and understanding others' messages in both personal and professional capacities. Reading allows individuals to better their position in life, develop personally and professionally, and empowers people to rise above their current situation through enhancing social capital and marketability. It is also a way to connect to personal beliefs, cultural ties, and society in general. Reading is more than meaning making and communicating; reading is a socially connected practice. However, I also feel that this is reading on the "large scale." Though ultimately I would like my students to view reading as a way to connect to others and enhance their own lives, I also stress the importance in the classroom of having a strong vocabulary base, solid comprehension skills, and being able to read with fluency. It



is with these ideas in mind a reader starts to form and can then take their reading to advance their positions as students, parents, consumers, and professionals.

### **Teacher Researcher**

Along with my personal experiences and views on reading, I also had to consider my role as a teacher and a researcher within this study and setting. I worked on keeping my role as a teacher separate from my role as a researcher. While this research was not situated in my personal classroom, it did include some of my students and my role as an authority figure in the college was still a consideration. Therefore, I was, as Fecho (2003) described, straddling between two different communities. When interviewing participants asking for their honest thoughts and views on developmental reading and the developmental courses, of which I was an instructor for some, it was of extreme importance I made my researcher role clear. Despite my role as an instructor on the campus, I still felt the participants were open and honest with me in their responses.

Additionally, another aspect I kept in mind as a researcher in a teaching role in the study's setting was that the ideas and perspectives participants shared with me were but a portion of the full story. As Fecho (2003) stated, as a teacher researcher your research remains, "only a slice, a section, one possibility in the full story" (p. 282) of what occurs in the classroom. This is also true when participants shared with me their past experiences regarding literacy. As literacy is a socially and culturally shared experience, others would have been part of each participant's literacy stories;

though I was only able to hear my participant's voice. There is always more to the story, an idea I reminded myself through collection and analysis.

Ultimately literacy has played a very large role in my life from a young child to the reading educator I am today. It is with sadness that I observe when literacy is taken for granted, disliked, or misunderstood. With these thoughts, I am seeking to more fully understand the types of strengths, struggles, and attitudes my students bring with them in the classroom. As a teacher researcher, I am hoping to take this data to help assist in my own teaching practices. Through developing a portrait of these students, it can allow me as an educator to understand their needs and point to directions my instruction can take. Through understanding the role literacy plays in my students' lives, it will be possible for me to see their literacy values and help them to overcome or support their goals with the assistance of literacy devices.

### **Data Collection**

Case studies can use a variety of sources for evidence (Yin, 2009). In this study, I relied upon documentation in the form of a literacy log, semi-structured interviews, and physical artifacts in the forms of the Reading Ability Likert-type Scale Survey (RALSS), the Adult Survey of Reading Attitudes (ASRA), the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) and an Informal Reading Inventory (IRI). Each of these sources will be described in further detail in this section, including the piloting of these instruments.

Each set of data were collected during a specified week of the academic semester. The Spring 2016 semester began the week of January 19<sup>th</sup>. However, this

proposed study did not begin until the week of February 1<sup>st</sup>. For a timeline of data collection, see Table 4. Each type of data collected were assigned a specific period of time, rather than a specific date, which allowed participants and myself to find an agreed upon day and time to meet during each week the data were collected.

Literacy involves talk, interaction, values, and beliefs all beyond formal instruction (Davidson, 2010; Gee, 1997; Purcell-Gates, Degener, Jacobson, & Soler, 2002). However, for the purpose of this study in regard to data collection and this population of participants, literacy was defined with the participants only as reading and writing events. Limiting the definition of literacy with participants to reading and writing made recording literacy events for them more manageable and understandable. During analysis, however, the sociocultural framework still provided the guideline for which to explore the ways in which literacy was used or influenced by social or cultural backgrounds and/or by past experiences with literacy.

Table 4

*Data Collection Timeline*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Data Collected</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Week of January 19<sup>th</sup> and January 25<sup>th</sup></b>		*Visit classrooms to explain study and recruit participants. *Informed consent due by February 1 <sup>st</sup> . *Send first reminder e-mail to participants.
<b>Week of February 1<sup>st</sup></b>	*Administer Adult Survey of Reading Attitudes (ASRA). *Administer Reading Ability Likert-type Scale Survey (RALSS).	*Send 2 <sup>nd</sup> reminder e-mail before meeting. *Assign and explain Literacy Log.
<b>Week of February 8<sup>th</sup></b>	*Continue administration of ASRA and RALSS. *Administer IRI. *Administer PPVT. *Collect Literacy Log.	*Send 3 <sup>rd</sup> reminder e-mail before meeting. * Analyze ASRA and RALSS.
<b>Week of February 15<sup>th</sup></b>	*Continue administration of IRI and PPVT and collect literacy logs.	*Continue analysis of ASRA, RALSS. *Begin analysis of IRI and PPVT. *Begin Literacy Log analysis.
<b>Week of February 22<sup>nd</sup></b>	*Interview #1; member check. *Continue administration of IRI and PPVT.	*Send 4 <sup>th</sup> reminder e-mail before scheduled interviews. *Continue RALSS, ASRA, IRI and PPVT analysis.
<b>Week of February 29<sup>th</sup></b>	*Continue Interview #1.	*Begin interview transcriptions.
<b>Weeks of March 7<sup>th</sup> – March 21<sup>st</sup></b>	*Finish Interview #1 meetings.	*Analysis of interview data. *Meet with first peer debriefer regarding codes and interview data.

		*Continue analysis of IRI, PPVT, ASRA, RALSS and Literacy Log as needed. *Send interview transcripts to participants for member checking purposes. *Send 5 <sup>th</sup> reminder e-mail.
<b>Week of March 28<sup>th</sup></b>		* 2 <sup>nd</sup> Literacy Log tracking being completed by participants.
<b>Week of April 4<sup>th</sup></b>	*Collect 2 <sup>nd</sup> Literacy Log.	* Begin Literacy Log analysis.
<b>Week of April 11<sup>th</sup></b>	*Interview #2; member check.	
<b>Weeks of April 18<sup>th</sup> – May 2<sup>nd</sup></b>	*Follow up with any participant who still needs to be interviewed or submit Literacy Log.	*Begin Interview #2 analysis. *Continue Literacy Log analysis. *Meet with first peer debriefer regarding codes and interview data. *Meet with second peer debriefer to share initial findings. *Send interview transcripts to participants for member checking purposes (3-4 weeks after interviews are completed).
<b>June – August 2016</b>		*Follow up with participants for additional member checks.
<b>** Throughout the entire collection and analysis process, researcher memoing took place.</b>		

### **Piloting of Instruments**

Before formal data collection began, individual instruments were piloted with developmental students; this was not a full pilot study. The purpose of piloting these instruments was varied. For some, it was to ascertain if directions on the instrument were clear, and to verify the administration procedures. For others, it was to adjust the instruments based on the developmental readers' feedback. This section will describe the purpose and context surrounding the piloting of the dissertation data instruments. Following this section, details surrounding the data collection for the dissertation will be given, with more in-depth information on each instrument provided.

**Literacy Log.** Prior to use with the study participants, the Literacy Log directions and checklist were piloted in Fall 2015 with 38 State College developmental students. After the initial log was created, I asked students to read for clarity and potential additional literacy events to be added to the checklist. Through the piloting, the last four items on the checklist were added based on student recommendation as well as "reading mail" was changed to reflect that "mail" could be paper or electronic. The data gained from this pilot testing allowed me to get an initial picture of how these students used literacy, both in and out of the classroom. For the Literacy Log checklist, directions, and an excerpt of the spreadsheet used, see Appendix B.

**Interview questions.** Interview questions were piloted in the Fall 2015 semester with six developmental reading students. The selection of students in

which the questions were tested was purposeful. Of the six, two were struggling in their developmental course, three were average students, and one was excelling in the developmental course. This was done to ensure that the questions were tested on a diverse subset of students with different reading abilities and attitudes toward reading. Based on the field testing of the interview questions, adjustments were made to the wording and clarity of the questions. It was also made clear through the piloting of the research questions that reliance upon the study's survey and reading assessment results as reference points for more individualized and focused questions would be necessary. During the pilot testing, some students were not aware of potential areas of strengths or weaknesses regarding their reading behaviors. Referencing the assessment tools allowed me to give specific examples and cater each interview to the specific participant. Since the interviews were semi-structured, this allowed for some degree of flexibility in the interview questions. For the interview guide, see Appendix C.

**Reading Ability Likert-type Scale Survey (RALSS).** The instrument was piloted in Fall 2015 with 27 developmental reading students at State College. The purpose of the pilot was to ensure clarity in the questions the questionnaire asked and test whether the scale could give initial evidence of students' own self-evaluation of strengths or weakness in reading. Based on the pilot administration, items 6, 7, 10, 13, 17, 20, and 22 were edited for clarity purposes, while one item was deleted and one added based on relevance. Also, with an initial review of the student responses, the questionnaire seemed to give an accurate reflection of the

students' abilities based on what I knew about their performance in their developmental reading class. Thus, at least informally, the questionnaire generated data consistent with observed reading behaviors. For the RALSS, see Appendix D.

**Adult Survey of Reading Attitudes (ASRA).** The questionnaire, which was already adapted and field tested by previous researchers, was administered to 27 developmental reading students in Fall 2015 at State College. This was to ensure clarity of questions and directions. No items were adapted based on this piloting, though issues of clarity of directions were addressed. Students had difficulty with the ranking directions of some items. This resulted in repeated directions before the administration of the ASRA and specific attention to items 7,15,24,25,34, and 38 to ensure understanding of those questions in particular. For the ASRA, see Appendix E.

### **Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) and Informal Reading**

**Inventory (IRI).** Administration of the PPVT was practiced on one developmental student, not a participant, in February 2016 to ensure test administration procedures. Administration of the IRI was also practiced on the same developmental student, not a participant, to ensure test administration procedures. The directions were clear and the practice administration was helpful in ensuring smooth administration for dissertation data collection.

### **Dissertation Data Collection**

The piloting of the dissertation instruments assisted in preparation for full data collection in Spring 2016. This section will provide further detail on definitions



and psychometrics of the instruments used in the dissertation data collection.

Following this section, analysis procedures for each type of collected data will be discussed.

**Literacy Log.** A Literacy Log is a daily record of all literacy events in which a participant engages. A literacy event occurs when a participant interacts with written text (reading or writing) in the course of his/her day. Although literacy can take a range of forms, for practical purposes, limiting the understanding of literacy (for the literacy log purpose only) allowed participants to focus on a smaller and more manageable scope of literacy use throughout their day. The purpose of the Literacy Log was to understand the role literacy played in a developmental reading student's life. Information such as the time spent on literacy, the types of literacy engaged in, how participants viewed their daily literacy engagement, and what the participant identified as literacy was gleaned from these data. This information assisted in developing a portrait of a developmental reader.

In order for participants to complete their own log, I provided an example of a log to serve as a model. For the example log, see Appendix F. In addition, participants were given a checklist of sample reading or writing activities that could be considered literacy events to assist in filling out the log. Participants received a spreadsheet that included Monday – Sunday columns with cells broken into 15-minute time increments. At any time during the day that the participants found themselves reading or writing, they recorded when they engaged in the literacy event and what kind of reading/writing was involved. For example, participants would

indicate when they read/wrote for class, used reading or writing during their working hours, or if literacy was involved through daily events such as driving, texting, e-mailing or interacting with others.

Participants kept a Literacy Log twice throughout the course of the study. The first log assignment, along with log directions, was given after participants met with me for the first data collection appointment and all consent forms had been signed. Dates were flexible, but the goal was to have one-weeks' worth of events tracked. The flexibility of dates was due to the fact the first round of meeting with participants spanned two weeks. Therefore, participants did not receive the log on the same date in order to begin tracking during the same one-week time period. The second tracking was the week of March 28<sup>th</sup> through April 4<sup>th</sup> and was assigned after the third meeting with participants. This was the week of spring break in which all participants were given notice to collect during this same one-week time period. A reminder e-mail was sent to participants five days before they were to begin tracking their literacy events for the second Literacy Log collection period.

After each day during the week-long literacy tracking, participants were asked to answer three reflection questions found on their checklist. Responses could have been recorded on the checklist itself or additional paper as needed in complete sentences. The three questions were:

- Any other literacy events (reading or writing) I engaged in today that is not listed [on the literacy log checklist]?
- How long did you spend on these literacy events throughout the day?

- How do you feel about the events you engaged in? (were they mandatory or by choice? Did you enjoy them? Were these individual or group reading/writing events?)

The purpose of the reflection questions was for participants to consider any additional literacy events they may have engaged in throughout the week, how they felt about the time spent on and type of literacy events they engaged in, and after looking at their week in terms of literacy, the role they felt literacy played in their lives. On the seventh day, they were asked to reflect on the week's literacy events in addition to the daily questions included on their log. The end of week questions were:

- Now that a week has passed, how do you feel about the literacy events you engaged in?
- How would you describe the role literacy plays in your life after reflecting on this past week?
- Did any of these events in your opinion help you increase your reading/writing abilities? Why/why not or how so?

**Interviews.** Seidman (2013) stated interviewing allows the researcher to gain an understanding of “the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience” (p. 9). One of the most important sources of case study information comes from the interview (Yin, 1989). Since interviews are from participant viewpoints, they allow opportunities for insight into a situation and prior history that may be relevant to the research (Yin, 1989).

Throughout the study I used a phenomenological philosophy with participants. I was seeking the participants' point of view in order to strive for an understanding of the participant. Using the phenomenological approach to interviewing allows one to "come as close as possible to understanding the true 'is' of our participants' experience from their subjective point of view" (Seidman, 2013, p. 17). Finally, the phenomenological approach emphasizes the importance of making meaning of an experience (Seidman, 2013). Utilization of this approach throughout the study and specifically with interviewing, allowed participants to describe their reading strengths, struggles, attitudes, and the role literacy played in their lives.

For the purpose of this study, I relied on a focused interview, as described by Yin (1989). This involves interviews conducted for short periods of time, at different intervals, and includes open-ended questions. The manner of the interview can remain conversational, though I followed a certain set of questions to guide the conversation. During each interview, I had three tasks. The first was to follow the line of inquiry and the second was to ask actual conversational questions in an unbiased manner that served the line of inquiry (Yin, 2009). The final task was to probe for meaning through the participant responses. Yin (2009) recommended posing "how" questions throughout an interview as these are friendlier and nonthreatening. It was also necessary to word questions carefully in order to receive "fresh" responses from the interviewee (Yin, 2009). Because interviewees'

responses are subject to bias, other sources of evidence were also needed to corroborate information (Yin, 2009).

There were a total of two interviews throughout the course of the study. I chose to conduct two interviews to explore participant responses once in the beginning weeks of the semester, and the second toward the end of the semester. The purpose of this was for participants to evaluate their strengths, struggles, and attitudes at different points in the semester. In this way participants could have discovered new strengths, struggles, or developed different attitudes toward reading and could speak to that at two different points in time. The first interviews took place during the weeks of February 15<sup>th</sup> – March 7<sup>th</sup> while the second round of participant interviews took place the week of April 11<sup>th</sup>. Each interview was approximately ten to twenty minutes long. All interviews were audio recorded (with participant consent), and took place in an on-campus office. Immediately after the interview, as an initial member checking procedure, I summarized the interview based on notes taken during the interview and allowed for participants to add, change, or revoke a statement. No participants opted to make any changes based on these notes during either interview. Transcripts of the first interview were sent to participants via e-mail before their second interview to help with the member checking process. Transcripts of the second interview were sent four weeks after the second interview occurred, also via e-mail. Similarly, no participants made any changes to their first or second interview after transcripts were sent.

**Reading Ability Likert-type Scale Survey.** The Reading Ability Likert-type Scale Survey (RALSS) is a 25-statement questionnaire which asks participants to consider their confidence levels on different areas of reading. For each statement, participants were asked if they would rate being “not at all confident” up to “completely confident” on a scale from one to six. There is also space for students to write in additional areas they felt confident or not confident in regarding their reading ability not included in the questionnaire. The purpose of this questionnaire was to gain an understanding of the self-perceived strengths and struggles in reading according to each participant. This was also used as a reference point in each individual participant’s interview.

I adapted the Reading Ability Likert-type Scale Survey from Piercey (2013) who administered a reading self-efficacy questionnaire to elementary school children. Items 1,2,3,4,6,8,9,10,11, and 12 from the original questionnaire were duplicated and the additional items were designed to reflect the expectations and skills that should be mastered of readers in a college developmental reading setting such as identifying topics and main ideas, defining unfamiliar terms in context, and determining the difference between major and minor details.

This questionnaire was administered beginning the week of February 1<sup>st</sup> through the week of February 8<sup>th</sup> in an on-campus office or an empty classroom on campus. The directions and each statement were read aloud to the participant to ensure understanding of the questions and the directions of a Likert scale. The survey took approximately 5-10 minutes.

**Validity.** The original reading self-efficacy scale created by Piercey (2013) was tested for internal consistency of items. It was found to have a Cronbach's alpha score of .91. Ten items were transferred over from the original survey to the current study's instrument. However, no tests of validity or reliability were performed on the adapted RALSS.

**Adult Survey of Reading Attitudes.** The Adult Survey of Reading Attitudes (ASRA) is a 40-statement questionnaire that requires participants to regard their feelings and opinions toward reading. For each statement, participants were asked if they "strongly agree," "agree," "uncertain," "disagree," or "strongly disagree" with the statement. This questionnaire was originally created in 1977 and named the Survey of Reading Attitudes (Wallbrown, Brown, & Engin, 1977) which is a questionnaire of children's attitudes. This is a 92-item scale, of which 40 items were then later adapted by Smith in 1988 (see Table 5). The adapted version created by Smith was revised and pilot tested for this study's purpose to ensure they accurately reflected adults' reading attitudes, feelings, and behaviors. Smith (1988, 1990b, 1991) found the instrument had reasonable construct validity in assessing reading attitudes, with a Cronbach's alpha score of .93.

The purpose of the ASRA was to gauge participants' attitudes toward reading. Through the responses given on this assessment, initial understandings of participant attitudes and feelings developmental reading students held were gathered. Knowing that adults do not always act in accordance to their beliefs (Smith, 1991), additional sources of evidence were used to answer the study's main research

questions. This questionnaire was used to help form potential interview questions with each individual participant.

This questionnaire was administered beginning the week of February 1<sup>st</sup> through the week of February 8<sup>th</sup> in an on-campus office or an empty classroom on campus. The directions and each statement were read aloud to the participant to ensure understanding of the questions and the directions of a Likert scale. The survey took approximately 10 minutes.

Table 5

*ASRA Statements*

<b>Statements in Survey of Reading Attitude, Intermediate Form not adapted to ASRA*</b>	<b>Statements in the ASRA adapted/transferred from Survey of Reading Attitude, Intermediate Form**</b>
#39 My teacher thinks I need to improve my reading. #41 I enjoy reading most comic books. #51 My parents think I need to try to improve my reading. #60 I learn a lot in my reading group. #69 People sometimes laugh at me when I read out loud. #70 I get a sick feeling in my stomach when I read out loud. #78 The teacher has to help me a lot when we are in reading group. # 83 I usually read several books during the summer vacation.	#2 I need a lot of help in reading. #4 I get upset when I think about having to read. #18 When I am at home I read a lot. #25 I wish that I could have more books of my own. # 45 I quickly forget what I read even if I have just read it. #59 It is easier for me to understand what I read if pictures, charts and diagrams are included. #80 Reading is one of the things I enjoy most. #85 I have trouble understanding what I read.

\* Lists are not exhaustive

\*\* Numbers reflect the original survey items



**Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT).** The PPVT is a norm-referenced instrument that assesses receptive vocabulary for individuals, ages two through adult (Pearson Education, 2013). The PPVT was found to have split-half reliabilities ranging from .89 to .97 with test-retest correlations ranging from .92 to .96. The purpose of this assessment was to understand developmental reading students' ability levels with general vocabulary. Each form of the test uses 228 test items, each consisting of four pictures as response items. For each item, the examiner states a word and the participant selects the picture that best illustrates the word's meaning. This assessment addressed a critical aspect of reading and provided baseline information whether these developmental readers struggled or excelled in vocabulary. This also served as a reference during each individual participant's interview. Additionally, Willingham and Price (2009) believed that vocabulary is an area in which many developmental readers struggle. To compete with this struggle, vocabulary should be explicitly addressed and assessed with developmental readers (Willingham & Price, 2009). This tool is one such option for the assessment of developmental readers' vocabulary.

Participants in this study completed this assessment individually during the weeks of February 8<sup>th</sup> through February 22<sup>nd</sup>. Each test took approximately fifteen to twenty-five minutes. The directions were read aloud to the participant and their understanding was confirmed. This assessment started at set 10, ages 12-16, as this would encompass the grade level equivalency of incoming developmental reading students, and then continued until the participant reached his/her frustration level, as

determined by the PPVT administration protocol. Beginning at set 10 was hypothesized to be the participants' Basal set, or the set in which participants only made zero or one error in a set of 12. Frustration level is reached when a participant made 8 or more errors in a set of 12 questions.

For six of the 29 participants who completed the assessment, the initial starting level, set 10, was too difficult; set 10 was already the level of frustration. This was determined during the assessment when participants made 8 or more errors in this first set. Therefore, a backwards move to previous sets (9,8,7, etc.) to establish their true Basal set was necessary immediately after completing set 10. Three of the six participants who needed a lower Basal level were English Language Learners (ELLs). All other participants were able to continue moving forward from set 10.

**Informal Reading Inventory (IRI).** The Informal Reading Inventory is an assessment used to determine the oral, listening, and silent reading comprehension of each participant. As there are specific readings for each grade level, the assessment in this study started with the eighth-grade level readings. In Summer 2015 and Fall 2015 semesters, students' average Compass reading scores were 66 and 68, respectively. In grade equivalency, this equates to students entering their developmental reading courses with high eighth grade to low ninth grade reading levels, on average (State College, 2016). Therefore, having students read and be read to using passages from the eighth-grade level until they reached their frustration level, as determined by the IRI administration protocol, was thought to be a correct

starting point. If the eighth-grade reading was the frustration level, I went back to the seventh-grade readings, rather than moving ahead to the ninth-grade readings. With each oral reading a participant completed, a word correct per minute (WCPM) count was also calculated for fluency assessment. This consisted of marking in the examiner's copy of the passages when a participant has read for one minute during the oral reading. Then a count of how many words (minus errors in substitutions/mispronunciations, words pronounced by examiner, omissions, insertions, or reversals) were read correctly in that minute time frame were calculated to give a WCPM score.

Participants completed this assessment individually during the weeks of February 8<sup>th</sup> through February 22<sup>nd</sup> and took approximately twenty to thirty-five minutes. This IRI was administered after the PPVT during the same session. All oral and listening readings and subsequent questions with answers were recorded, as were the answers to the questions after silent readings. The scores on these assessments in comprehension and fluency helped to reveal additional possible areas of strengths or struggles. Scores were used as a reference during the individual interviews. In summary, Table 6 lists the research questions and the data sources utilized to answer each question.

Table 6

*Research Questions and Data Collected*

<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Data Collected to Answer the Questions</b>
1. What are the strengths, struggles, and attitudes of developmental reading students regarding academic reading?	1. 2 semi-structured interviews 2. Likert scale survey (RALSS) 3. Adult Survey of Reading Attitudes (ASRA) 4. Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) 5. Informal Reading Inventory (IRI).
2. What role does literacy play in the lives of developmental reading students?	1. Literacy Log tracked at 2 different times in the semester 2. 2 semi-structured interviews.

**Data Analysis**

In the current study, raw data included literacy log checklists and tracking sheets; interview transcripts; and RALSS, ASRA, PPVT, and IRI scores. This section will describe how data was prepared and organized, what tools and assistance were relied upon, how each type of data was analyzed, and how the case and cross-case analysis was completed. Finally, issues of transferability and trustworthiness will be addressed.

**Preparing and Organizing Data**

All data were stored in an on campus, locked office. After each assessment was administered, a quantitative analysis in the form of an average or creation of a frequency table was conducted. Textual data which included interview data and written responses in literacy logs, were subject to an analysis procedure. See Table 7 for data analysis procedures.

Table 7

*Data Analysis Procedures*

Step	Procedure
1	Pre-established codes created based on interview questions/ literacy log questions
2	Listened to interviews
3	Interviews transcribed; literacy log written responses typed in one document
4	Listened to interviews while reading transcripts; memoing occurring while listening; additional themes and patterns emerged
5	Created a table for each individual participant (of the 5) with their coded responses from each interview and their literacy log responses
6	Created a table for both interviews which included all participants' coded responses
7	Based on codes, categories were established
8	Categories were color coded to match the research question they answered
9	Interpretation in and across cases

Throughout analysis, I also kept in mind the sociocultural nature of readers and literacy practice in general. Therefore, during initial readings, memoing, and establishment of codes, I was attuned to responses and evidence in the data that suggested ties to sociocultural contexts. The memoing and code establishment processes will be described in later sections.

**Software tools and assistance.** To assist with the qualitative data analysis, NVivo was utilized. NVivo is a software program that helped me sort through the interview data in order to identify trends and match codes entered. Kent State's Research and Evaluation Bureau was also utilized to help with transcription of interview data. Once interviews were transcribed by Kent State's Research and

Evaluation Bureau, transcripts were uploaded into NVivo which assisted in the organization and identification of codes and patterns.

### **Types of Data Analysis**

Maxwell (2005) recommended that researchers begin data analysis after the first set of data is collected and continue the process of analysis throughout the collection procedure. Stake (1995) argued that analysis has no particular beginning, rather researchers give meaning to first impressions as well as to final compilations. This will help to assure the analysis methods are not overwhelming or discouraging. Therefore, analysis was ongoing throughout the entire data collection process.

**Analysis of literacy logs.** Each time a Literacy Log was completed, a frequency table for the number of occurrences each literacy event occurred was created, based on the list of literacy events participants were asked to check throughout their week's literacy tracking. This helped to indicate the incidence of each type of literacy event throughout a week as well as what types of literacy events participants were engaging in most frequently. Written responses were subject to coding, just as interview data, to look for patterns both within and across cases. Written responses were copied from the original participant sheet into one researcher Word document. The document was then loaded into NVivo where responses were coded based on both the pre-established codes as well as any codes that emerged through multiple readings of written responses. Data indicating how much time was spent on literacy each day, rounded to the nearest quarter of an hour, and during the

week, rounded to the nearest half an hour, were also tabulated and tracked in an Excel spreadsheet.

**Analysis of interviews.** As interview analysis is a complex process, several steps were taken in the analysis procedures dealing with interview data specifically. These analysis procedures were juxtaposed with the phenomenological approach to interview analysis. First, interviews were listened to before formal transcription. This was to get a general “feel” of the data. From the initial listening to interviews, pre-established codes were identified. Codes were first created based on the content of the interview questions since all participants were asked the same foundational questions. For instance, one planned interview question was, “How do you feel about being in a class that is designed to help your reading ability?” A pre-established code that aligned with this question was “Attitude toward remediation.” Any response or indication relating the participant’s feelings, perspective or outlook on developmental reading or the developmental course was placed into this code.

After transcription, any non-verbal communications (such as any facial expressions) were noted on the transcriptions. This was to aid in the overall understanding of the participant’s meaning (Hycner, 1985) and was assisted through utilization of the researcher’s memoing process during the data collection period. Also, when listening to the interviews and reading the transcriptions, the bracketing process was engaged in to allow for an openness, as much as possible, to whatever meanings emerged. Bracketing calls for the researcher to suspend his/her judgments

regarding what he/she expects the participant to say and to attempt to understand what they are actually saying (Hycner, 1985).

After getting a sense of the interviews, pre-established codes were verified through the identification of patterns that arose from the transcripts as well as the research journal (the memoing process). In addition to pre-established codes, emergent codes developed through the additional reading of the transcripts. One example of an emergent code was “Previous experience with reading.” Instances where participants described positive or negative memories with literacy (most often reading) was placed in this code. This was not a planned, or pre-established, question or code, rather it emerged through the conversation and general interview process. Coding was both a natural and deliberate process. Natural in that there are “repetitive patterns of actions and consistencies in human affairs, and deliberate because one of the coder’s primary goals is to find these repetitive patterns of action and consistencies in human affairs as documented in the data (Saldana, 2009, p. 5).

Next, to assist with verifying pre-established codes and the identification of emergent codes, interview transcripts were uploaded into NVivo. This program allowed for the organization of the codes (or nodes as named in NVivo), and provided an additional way to view the data. As a result of uploading transcripts into NVivo, a codebook was created. See Table 8 for an excerpt of the codebook used. The codebook consisted of a definition of each code and a brief data example of that code.



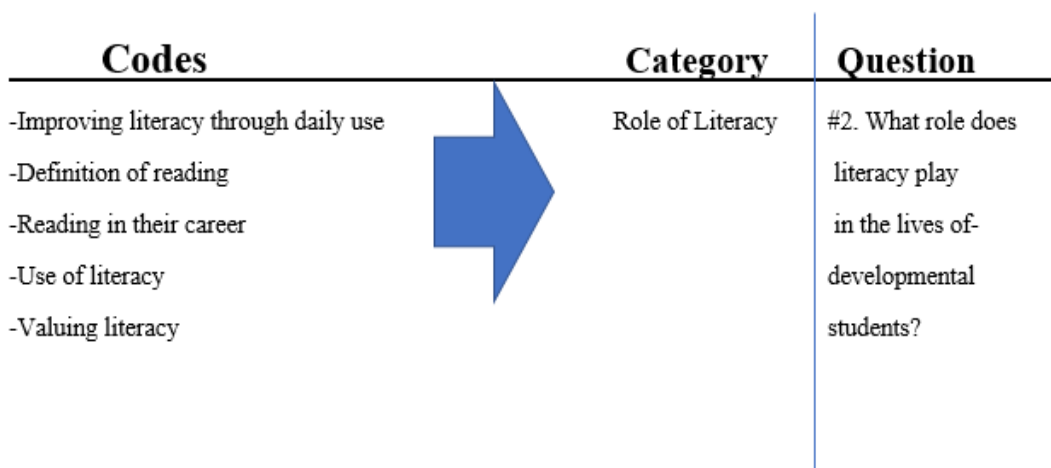
With assistance from the codebook, all codes and connected interview data that fit with each code were inserted into a table that allowed a picture of the individual participant to begin to develop. After each individual case was checked against the pre-established codes and patterns, analysis began to suggest an overall portrait of who developmental readers were based on the experiences and voices of the participants themselves. Since there were two interviews, codes changed and shifted as new patterns emerged or changed. This then allowed a table to be completed for coded responses across participants for both interviews, allowing for cross case interpretation.

Additionally, the codebook helped lead to the formation of categories, as recommended by Saldana (2009). According to Saldana (2009), once codes are established, they should be organized and grouped into “families” because “they share some characteristic – the beginning of a pattern” (p. 8). This further allowed for clarity in the coding process. See Figure 1 for an example of the code to category process. Next, after all codes were assigned to a category, each category was then color coded to relate to one of the two research questions. Throughout the establishment of codes and categories, it is important to note that coding is a judgment call since to this process we bring our own “subjectivities, our personalities, our predispositions, and our quirks” (Sipe & Ghiso, 2004, pp. 482-483). Additionally, as Merriam (1998) suggested, the analysis that is conducted and the interpretation of the findings will reflect the constructs, models, and theories that structured the study originally.

Table 8

*Excerpt from Codebook*

Code	Description	Example
Attitude toward remediation	Feelings, perspective, or outlook on being placed in a developmental reading course at the college	“Oh, it’s- well first off I had no choice because it’s a prerequisite class. But um- it’s gonna help me in the future, that’s for sure. I mean some of the things that have already been touched in class has helped me out, even with my labs. Uh, that has helped me out because um- even with the supporting details, I struggled and struggled and struggled on that and I finally just pushed myself to pass it. Um, so- there are some areas that I do need work in and I’m glad that I have the opportunity to work on ‘em because without the class I wouldn’t think that I needed help.”

*Figure 1. Code to Category*

**Analysis of RALSS.** As this questionnaire is a Likert-type scale, initial analysis consisted of adding item responses (responses ranging from “1” to “6” indicating levels of confidence). A score of 25 indicated overall low confidence levels in reading through 150 indicating complete confidence. The responses on this questionnaire were also a basis for follow up questions in the participant interview, targeting specific response areas of strength and struggle as indicated by the participant. When performing a cross-case analysis, a frequency table was created to determine if certain skills were rated as having low to complete confidence by the participants when searching for patterns. This allowed to see for which skills participants overall felt low to complete confidence. A line graph was also created to display the range of overall RALSS scores, which ranged from 77 to 147.

**Analysis of ASRA.** Scores on the ASRA can range from 40 to 200, with 40 indicating a poor or negative attitude and 200 indicating a good, or positive reading attitude. The responses on this questionnaire were also a basis for follow up questions in the participant interview. When looking at each participant, a total overall score was calculated which ranged from 88 to 155 across all participants and a line graph was also created to display the range of overall ASRA scores.

**Analysis of IRI and PPVT.** Each of these assessments was utilized to give a grade level ability for each participant. When developing a description for each participant, this data helped to provide information about areas of strengths and struggles. It also provided patterns across cases, average grade level or ability, and were used for the basis of individual interview questions. Scores for the PPVT, IRI

oral, IRI silent, and IRI listening were put into a Word table to compare and contrast across participants.

### **Case and Cross-Case Synthesis**

Within the multiple-case study design, descriptive cases emerged. A descriptive case study is one in which the purpose is to describe a phenomenon in its real-world context (Yin, 2014). The phenomenon being described was developmental reading students' experience with literacy both within and beyond their developmental reading course. This is the general analytic strategy that was used to tell the story of the evidence collected throughout the data collection phase (Yin, 2009). A descriptive strategy allows the formation of a portrait of who developmental readers are as revealed by the participants and supported by empirical evidence from surveys and assessments. The specific technique for analysis was a cross-case synthesis.

The cross-case synthesis technique is useful when a case study consists of at least two cases (Yin, 2009). In order to do this, Yin (2009) suggested creating a table that displays data from each individual case. Each case was first studied individually in order to gain an understanding of who each participant was as a reader; the participant's strengths, struggles, attitudes, and how each one viewed literacy's role in his/her life was captured. After a table was created for each individual participant including his/her assessment and questionnaire scores, and each of their two coded interviews, all data were considered and an understanding of participants as individuals was established. Once individual tables were created,

similarities, differences, and/or patterns were explored across all five individual cases.

During the cross-case analysis, cases are examined for patterns that allow for argumentative interpretation rather than numerical tallies across all cases (Yin, 2009). Cross-case analysis allowed for themes to emerge that transcended the individual cases, leading to the formation of categories, as previously described. Using the categories that emerged from the individual cases as they were analyzed across cases, allowed for a fuller picture of developmental readers.

**Mixture of quantitative and qualitative data.** This study relied on multiple sources of data, both quantitative and qualitative in nature. While the study used both, the qualitative data was weighed slightly heavier. Quantitative data were used to help inform interview questions and provide correlations with qualitative evidence provided by participants. However, both qualitative and quantitative data were necessary to help develop a holistic picture of the developmental reader.

**High quality analysis.** Yin (2009) pressed for four principles to conduct a quality analysis. First the researcher should attend and make apparent that all the evidence has been considered and attended to. Second, if possible and applicable, the analysis should address any rival interpretations. Third, analysis should address the most significant aspect of the case study. Finally, prior and expert knowledge should be demonstrated through awareness of the subject matter and current thinking on relevant information to the line of inquiry. In this study, all four criteria were consistently applied and successfully met.

### **Establishing Trustworthiness**

There are many ways to establish trustworthiness. This study aimed to establish trustworthiness through research practices in credibility, dependability, and transferability. In these ways the research aimed to meet Yin's (2009) qualifications for high quality analysis and Lincoln and Guba's (1985) standards of obtaining trustworthy findings.

#### **Credibility**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued that the term "credibility" takes the place of terms such as "internal" and "external validation" from the quantitative world. This study relied upon four practices to assist in credible research: peer debriefing, member checking, triangulation, and prolonged engagement. Each of these procedures reflected the desire to ensure trustworthiness.

**Peer debriefing.** I had one colleague and one fellow doctoral candidate review findings as they emerged. Lincoln and Guba (1985) described peer debriefing as allowing those who are disinterested to check understandings and keep the researcher honest. Therefore, in this study, two individuals who were informed on the dissertation process, but not invested in the research were involved. One was a colleague from State College in the developmental reading department who had experience teaching developmental reading. She assisted in assuring interpretations and writing clarity, identified patterns in participant responses, examined established codes from the interview transcripts, and checked for researcher bias. On our first meeting, I had interviewed 25 participants already in the first round of interviews. I

shared with her my general notes on the first round of interviews to that point, and then the first two interview transcripts. Not all interviews had been transcribed at this point, though allowing my colleague to read through two transcripts, coupled with my notes, allowed her to gain some insight to the questions and responses in the interviews. On our second meeting, all second interviews had been completed, though transcripts were not completed at this point for this round. Therefore, I shared my codes from round one, and notes from round two of the interviews. Additional communication after these meetings was to assist in editing and revising purposes.

The second peer debriefer was a doctoral student who was not in the field of developmental reading. Her role was to give an outside perspective on the interpretations and evidence collected from someone who is not familiar with the study's population of participants. During our first exchange of information, I shared my original codebook with example codes to discuss how I could create categories as well as my process of establishing and identifying the codes. Additional communication after this conversation was to assist in editing and revising purposes. See Table 9 for additional information on peer debriefing.

Table 9

*Peer Debriefing Results*

Colleague	Fellow Doctoral Student
<p><b><u>Date:</u></b> Monday March 7<sup>th</sup>  <b><u>Location:</u></b> Colleague's office  <b><u>Goal:</u></b> Review initial thoughts/potential patterns emerging  <b><u>Data Shared:</u></b> Interview notes, first 2 interview transcripts  <b><u>Accomplished:</u></b> I shared my notes from the first round of interviews to this point. From my notes and my research questions, my colleague talked with me about broad codes that I could start to create, tied back to my research questions as an initial starting point.</p>	<p><b><u>Date:</u></b> June 2016  <b><u>Location:</u></b> Informal phone call  <b><u>Goal:</u></b> Receive feedback from someone outside of developmental reading on themes included in the interview data  <b><u>Data Shared:</u></b> Codebook definitions and examples of codes  <b><u>Accomplished:</u></b> Discussed issues related to coding interview data, she provided feedback on clarity of pre-established and emergent codes.</p>
<p><b><u>Date:</u></b> Monday April 18<sup>th</sup>  <b><u>Location:</u></b> Colleague's office  <b><u>Goal:</u></b> Confirm use of pre-established codes, share initial thoughts and findings from second interviews.  <b><u>Data Shared:</u></b> Notes from round 2 of interviews, pre-established codes, possible emerging codes.  <b><u>Accomplished:</u></b> From this discussion I was able to start identifying other potential themes. She also suggested ways in which I could present each case, then ways in which I can present my cross-case analysis. Asked questions on my interpretations thus far to ensure researcher bias was not present</p>	<p><b><u>Date:</u></b> January 2017  <b><u>Location:</u></b> Via e-mail  <b><u>Goal:</u></b> To receive feedback on analysis in Chapter 4  <b><u>Data Shared:</u></b> Completed draft of Chapter 4  <b><u>Accomplished:</u></b> Revised based on suggestions</p>
<p><b><u>Date:</u></b> Late summer through late fall 2016  <b><u>Location:</u></b> Via e-mail  <b><u>Goal:</u></b> Checking in, clarifying questions or issues, suggestions on writing  <b><u>Data Shared:</u></b> Completed drafts of Chapters 1,2 and 3  <b><u>Accomplished:</u></b> Feedback on Chapters 1,2 and 3.</p>	
<p><b><u>Date:</u></b> January 2017  <b><u>Location:</u></b> Via e-mail  <b><u>Goal:</u></b> To receive feedback on analysis in Chapter 4  <b><u>Data Shared:</u></b> Completed draft of Chapter 4  <b><u>Accomplished:</u></b> Revised based on suggestions</p>	



**Member checking.** Member checking is the process of sharing interpretations, data, and conclusions with members from whom data were collected (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Member checking was done in three ways: direct review of comments after interviews, allowing participants to review transcripts, and allowing participants to review ongoing and final interpretations. Immediately after each interview, comments made throughout the interview were read, to check that they were understood correctly. After the first interview, a transcript was sent to each participant before the second interview occurred so a more formal member check could be completed. This was done via e-mail. Any revisions could be sent to my school e-mail address, office or mailbox, or brought to the second interview or final participant check in. No participant offered any revisions of the first transcript. Second interview transcripts were sent out four weeks after the interview occurred. Again, no participant offered revisions. Finally, at the conclusion of the study, the initial case study reports were shared with the five primary participants to ensure that these summary profiles captured their characteristics as developmental readers. This final member check was done through e-mail as students were not on campus during this time. Participants were asked to read their case study (only their individual case study was shared with each participant) and to address any issues or questions that arose as they read. No participants offered any feedback.

**Triangulation.** Yin (1998) stressed the importance of seeking converging lines of evidence. To do so, the same questions must be asked across three or more types of data. To be considered a robust fact, it must be established from three or

more different sources (Yin, 1998). In completing this study, the data begin to “satisfy one aspect of the basic definition of case studies – reliance on ‘multiple sources of evidence’” (Yin, 1998, p. 233). In order to triangulate data, data were collected from six different sources. Information gained from these sources was cross-checked in order to find overlapping and complimentary information to assist in establishing and confirming converging evidence. Comparison across all sources allowed for a fuller picture of each developmental reader’s reading identity.

**Prolonged engagement.** According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), prolonged engagement is, “the investment of sufficient time to achieve certain purposes” (p. 301). Developing and piloting research instruments, conducting both standardized and informal assessments, meeting with and interviewing participants on more than one occasion, and confirming content between sessions combine to demonstrate an investment in learning about the culture, needs, and characteristics of developmental reading students, thus helping to ensure credibility. A total of 32 days was spent collecting data from participants during the actual research period. In those 32 days, participants who completed all sessions met with me for 4 occasions covering approximately two to two and a half hours, total.

### **Dependability**

Practices of dependability assist in trustworthy findings. Three practices were relied upon to assist in dependable research: memoing, a case study database, and the utilization of informed consent and locked files. This section will explore these processes in more depth.

**Memoing.** The process of memoing was engaged in, as according to Creswell (2013) meaning the act of the researcher being able to capture “thinking about your data, but also *facilitate* such thinking, stimulating analytic insights” (p. 96). This allowed reflection and kept track of the valuable and notable information able to be gleaned from the data. This was done through a researcher journal, written in before and after each time evidence was collected from a participant, as well as through the analysis process. This also assisted in evaluating my own subjectivity through aiding in recognizing and acknowledging any biases, opinions, and general self-awareness. See Appendix G for excerpt from the memoing process.

**Case study database.** Creating a case study database is a formal way evidence can be organized (Yin, 1998). This goes beyond the materials simply collected through the data collection process. It also will include new notes that organizes and cites the fieldwork and field materials (Yin, 1998). This organization allows the researcher to arrange evidence into topics that reflect the design and line of inquiry. The database also allows for the circumstances in which data were collected (time and places). Creating a database allows for transparency in the collection and reporting aspects of the case study. See Table 10 for an excerpt of the case study database from a first appointment with a participant.

***Maintaining a chain of evidence.*** Ensuring a line of evidence from initial research questions to case study conclusions is essential in collecting and reporting case study research (Yin, 1998). This in turn allows readers to trace how the researcher reached conclusions and remained transparent in those conclusions. In

order to do this, all evidence as relevant to the case study database was carefully cited, tabulated, and secured. See Figure 2 for chain of evidence followed in this study.

Table 10

*Case Study Database Excerpt*

<b>Date, time, and location</b>	<b>Participant (pseudonym)</b>	<b>Data collected</b>	<b>Notes/initial analysis/patterns emerging</b>
<b>Monday Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>; 3:15pm; researcher office</b>	Shaliyah	ASRA and RALSS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-During the administration of the RALSS she mentioned three times how she dislikes reading out loud.</li> <li>-Aspires to become a lawyer. Seems very dedicated and serious about her academic goals.</li> <li>-Literacy log “assignment” assigned to be turned in our next meeting.</li> <li>- Oral reading might be a potential struggle OR if the IRI in the next meeting does not indicate this is a struggle, then perhaps it is an attitude issue rather than an ability one. If oral reading is an issue for either ability or attitude, how might this impact her use of literacy in her daily life?</li> </ul>



*Figure 2.* Chain of Evidence

**Informed consent and locked files.** Each participant was informed of the purpose, potential risks and harm, as well as his/her role as a participant. The purpose of informed consent is to provide participants “with the opportunity to choose what shall or shall not happen to them” (Schram, 2006, p. 142). Through this step, the researcher also establishes trust with the participants themselves. All files and data were also in an on campus locked office, and any electronically stored information was on a password protected computer.

**Transferability**

Case study analysis is not intended for statistical generalization, rather for analytic generalizations (Yin, 2012). In this way, theories or information gained from a case study analysis can be applied to or inform other situations. The information learned from the case studies in this study can be applied to future developmental reading students within the research institution as well as potentially other students in developmental programs in community colleges nationwide. The detailed descriptions of each case and cross-case conclusions help advance the collective understanding of the diverse developmental population in need of literacy support in higher education. See Table 11 for a summary of research practices to help ensure trustworthiness.

**Ethical Considerations and Limitations**

An IRB was issued from the research site's institute in December 2015 allowing the study to begin data collection in February 2016. Prior to this, approval was granted from my dissertation committee. Names and identities of study participants and study's setting have been protected using pseudonyms in the dissertation as well as in future potential publications. Member checking was also completed with participants to ensure their reading identities and portrayal in the case studies were based on their voice and perspective.

Table 11

*Practices for Establishing Trustworthiness*

<b>Establishing Trustworthiness</b>	<b>Research Practices</b>
<b>Credibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Peer debriefing               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review of writing, codes, researcher bias by colleague and peer.</li> </ul> </li> <li>* Member checking               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sharing interpretations, data and conclusions with participants.</li> </ul> </li> <li>* Triangulation               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inclusion of multiple data sources (interviews, surveys, reading assessments).</li> <li>- Inclusion of multiple cases.</li> <li>- Interviews at different points in the data collection period.</li> </ul> </li> <li>* Prolonged engagement               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Investment of sufficient time and effort in the research setting and collecting data.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Dependability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Memoing               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Written after each piece of data were collected.</li> </ul> </li> <li>* Case study database               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Formal organization of evidence.</li> </ul> </li> <li>* Informed consent and data security               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All participants were informed of any potential risks and benefits. Data were also secured in a locked-on campus office and on a password protected computer.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Transferability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Thick description               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Detailed descriptions of each case.</li> <li>- Description of context.</li> <li>- Connections to similar contexts.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

This research study had several limitations. First, participants volunteered to be involved in the research study. Those who volunteered and persisted throughout the research may have been biased about their reading or developmental course, with overly positive or negative reading or course experience, though this did not appear to be the case. Second, only participants from the main campus were represented, therefore not representing all students at State College. Moreover, a large majority of these students were from the second tier, Critical Analysis, class. This could indicate participants were higher achieving and may not have necessarily represented all developmental reading students.

Third, of the 16 participants whose data is represented, the ratio of female to male participants was 7:1. This limits the male perspective. Additionally, only one of the participants was above the average of a typical Stark State student. Madison, at 40 years old, was the oldest participant and was the only one who represented a nontraditional student's perspective. A fourth limitation was the self-reporting of the questionnaire and literacy log instruments. As a researcher, I had to trust the tracking they completed through their literacy log was complete to their best of their ability and represented their true views and use of literacy. This is also why the data was triangulated to the best of my ability and confirmed in various additional data collection instruments. Another limitation connected to instrumentation was the absence of tests of reliability or validity on the RALSS instrument and no reliability information provided on the Informal Reading Inventory by Burns and Roe (1999).



A final limitation was my position as an instructor in the college. Though participants were recruited from multiple developmental reading classrooms, recruiting of participants from my own courses did occur. Though this might have presented an issue with my role as an authority figure, only 4 of the 16 participants, and 1 of the 5 case studies, whose data is represented in this study were from my own classroom. Additionally, participants were informed of the potential risks and benefits of participating. I also ensured their grade would not be impacted based on their decision to consent or continue participation in the study through the consent form as well as verbally while recruiting and before beginning any data collection. Despite these limitations, this research adds to a limited body of research on qualitative studies regarding college developmental readers.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this study was to explore developmental reading students' strengths, struggles, and attitudes on reading as well as understanding the role literacy played in their lives. This was accomplished through a holistic multiple case design. Within this design, evidence gathered from participants included data, interviews, and physical artifacts. These data sources were analyzed through cross case analysis, resulting in comprehensive descriptive portraits of developmental reading students' literacy experiences, attitudes, and abilities in an academic context. Table 12 summarizes the study procedures. The next chapter will discuss the findings related to the study's research questions.

Table 12

*Summary of Study Phases*

<b><u>Phase of the Study</u></b>	<b><u>Procedures</u></b>
Institution Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State College IRB approval.</li> <li>• Kent State University Authorization Agreement.</li> </ul>
Participant Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact full time faculty for permission to visit their classrooms for recruitment purposes.</li> <li>• Visit classrooms to recruit participants.</li> <li>• Send reminder e-mails for each appointment with participants.</li> </ul>
Data Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administer RALSS and ASRA. Assign Literacy Log #1.</li> <li>• Administer PPVT and IRI.</li> <li>• Interview #1 and assign Literacy Log #2.</li> <li>• Interview #2.</li> </ul>
Data Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create frequency tables from Literacy Log and RALSS data.</li> <li>• Calculate mean from ASRA data.</li> <li>• Determine grade levels from PPVT and IRI.</li> <li>• Transcribe interview data and import into NVivo.</li> <li>• Read and code data.</li> <li>• Create codebook.</li> <li>• Create categories.</li> <li>• Maintain trustworthiness through peer debriefing, member checking, triangulation, case study database and transferability.</li> </ul>

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **FINDINGS**

The purpose of this study was to explore developmental reading students' abilities and attitudes in reading, as well as the role literacy played in their lives. My study explored developmental reading students' reading identities through an investigation of their reading abilities, attitudes, and daily literacy practices. This chapter presents findings for the following research questions:

1. What are the strengths, struggles, and attitudes of developmental reading students regarding academic reading?
2. What role does literacy play in the lives of developmental reading students?

First, I present the results of questions one and two drawing upon the larger group of 16 developmental readers who participated through the full length of the study.

Utilizing all 16 participant responses to questions regarding developmental reading strengths, struggles, reading attitude, and literacy use allowed for patterns to emerge and potential generalizations to develop. These results present a snapshot of reading characteristics (strengths, struggles, and attitudes) and literacy use tied to developmental readers

Next, to explore answers to questions one and two more in-depth, five participants were selected from the original 16 for descriptive case studies. Exploring five participants in depth highlights individual reading identities and experiences that are overlooked in the broad sweep of the quantitative reporting of all 16 participants.

Finally, utilizing the five participants, a case and cross-case analysis is presented. This allowed for findings to emerge both within and across the five participants connected to both research questions. In doing this, commonalities and differences of developmental readers' reading identities and experiences can be discussed, with implications for this population.

### **Strengths, Struggles, and Attitudes of Developmental Reading Students**

In this section, research question one will be answered using data collected from all 16 participants. Each subsection will discuss one aspect of this question: strengths, struggles, and then reading attitudes. These findings present a broad investigation into developmental readers' self-reporting of these reading characteristics as well as their actual demonstrations of ability on standardized reading assessments.

#### **Strengths**

Reading strengths were determined to be those particular tasks or skills participants self-identified feeling confident in performing. A reading skill was also considered a strength if a participant could demonstrate a skill with 80% or higher accuracy on the standardized assessments. Three different measures were used to determine students' reading strengths:

1. Self-perceived identification of strengths on the Reading Ability Likert-type Scale Survey
2. Reading ability as demonstrated through the Informal Reading Inventory
3. Vocabulary ability as demonstrated through the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test

To consider a reading skill a strength, participants evaluated their confidence level with skills through reflection on their current and/or past experiences with reading using the Reading Ability Likert-type Scale Survey (RALSS). Reading skills in this study were first introduced to participants through the RALSS (e.g. identifying topics in paragraphs or reading critically). Participants also had opportunities to reflect and consider if they could identify any additional reading skills or reading strengths not mentioned on the RALSS.

Asking participants to self-identify their strengths first and then be assessed allowed for an evaluation into perceived strengths versus actual demonstrated ability. Several participants self-identified certain skills as strengths, yet struggled with the same skill when formally assessed. Formally assessing reading skills also allowed for participants to demonstrate strengths on reading skills they were not even aware were strengths. Investigating strengths from both self-identification measures and formal assessments allowed a fuller picture of the developmental reader to emerge. This section will discuss areas in which participants both self-identified areas of strengths as well as which skills were considered strengths through reading assessments.

**Reading Ability Likert-type Scale Survey (RALSS).** Throughout the course of the study, participants were given multiple opportunities to reflect upon their reading strengths. The first way was through the Reading Ability Likert-type Scale Survey, adapted from Piercey (2013), in which students were asked to rate their confidence levels on 25 items relating to the reading process on a scale of 1 (low confidence) to 6 (complete confidence). Examples of items related to the reading process found on the

RALSS are: understanding all the words on a page in a textbook (item #2), figuring out the meaning of an unknown word in a sentence (#4), and identify and understand the main idea of a paragraph (#6). This resulted in a score between a 25, indicating overall low confidence, and a 150, indicating complete confidence, in those specific reading abilities. The full survey can be found in Appendix D. Through the completion of the RALSS, there were 8 skills which were marked a 5 or 6, indicating high to complete confidence by 75% or more of the participants. See Table 13 for the items ranked with the most confidence and the reading category to which they belong.

Table 13

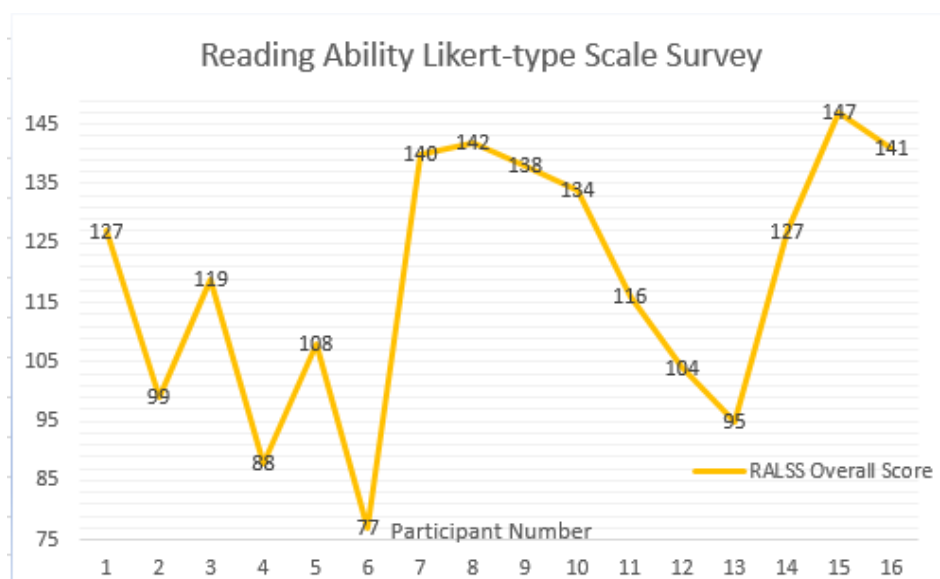
*Strengths According to RALSS*

<b>RALSS item number</b>	<b>RALSS reading skill</b>	<b>Category of reading</b>	<b>Percent indicating high to complete confidence</b>
5	Locating topics in a paragraph	Aspects of reading comprehension	94%
6	Identify and understand the main idea of a paragraph	Aspects of reading comprehension	88%
9	Making predictions about the reading	Before reading	88%
15	Distinguish between fact and opinion in text	Aspects of reading comprehension/critical thinking	81%
11	Understanding the reading when reading to myself	Modality of reading	75%
19	Connecting what they are reading to previous learning	Making personal connections	75%
21	Apply what you read to real life situations	Making personal connections	75%
22	Connecting the reading to their own personal life	Making personal connections	75%

As demonstrated in the table above, the largest percent of participants marked high to complete confidence in areas related to reading comprehension. Furthermore, 15 of the 16 participants indicated high confidence in “locating topics in a paragraph.” This may be a result of when the participants took the RALSS. The RALSS was administered in weeks 3 and 4 of the semester, around the instructional time developmental educators were introducing and practicing identifying finding topics in a paragraph. Nonetheless, participants indicated they were very confident in their ability to find the topic of a paragraph.

Overall, participants’ scores ranged from 77 to 149 out of a possible 150 on the RALSS. Using 87.5 as the average confidence level score, only one participant self-assessed as having below average confidence in regard to their reading ability. See Figure 3 for scores across participants. Ultimately, participants self-assessed reading, (contained to the abilities ranked on the RALSS) as an overall strength. However, as discussed in later sections, it appeared some participants believed their abilities to be higher than their actual capability to demonstrate the skills in the context of an assessment.

**Informal Reading Inventory (IRI).** The Informal Reading Inventory (Burns & Roe, 1999), an assessment used to determine the oral, listening, and silent reading comprehension of each participant, was administered in weeks three through five of the study. This assessment offered a way to compare the self-assessed reading abilities from the RALSS to observed reading ability demonstrations. During the IRI, participants were presented texts through three different modalities: oral (participant read aloud), silent



*Figure 3.* RALSS Overall Results

(participant read silently), and listening (researcher read aloud). After each modality, participants were asked questions about the passages read. These questions were grouped into six categories: main idea of the passages, details of the passages, vocabulary in context, cause and effect relationships within the passage, making inferences from the text, and sequencing events that occurred within the passage. After each modality of the IRI was completed, a grade level score was calculated to determine if they were on grade level, as well as if a certain modality was a strength or struggle. As there are specific readings for each grade level, the assessment in this study started with the eighth-grade level readings and continued forward until frustration levels were reached. One participant needed lower than the starting grade level, as eighth grade reading level was already a point of frustration. The assessment concluded after twelfth grade levels were



read, regardless if participants reached frustration or not. See Table 14 for grade level results for each participant across the three modalities.

Table 14

*IRI Overall Grade Level Results*

<b>Participant Number</b>	<b>Oral Grade Level</b>	<b>Silent Grade Level</b>	<b>Listening Grade Level</b>	<b>Average Reading Grade Level</b>
<b>1</b>	11	11	11	11.0
<b>2</b>	7	7	6	6.6
<b>3</b>	12	12	12	12.0
<b>4</b>	11	11	11	11.0
<b>5</b>	10	10	9	9.6
<b>6</b>	10	10	12	10.6
<b>7</b>	12	12	10	11.3
<b>8</b>	12	12	12	12.0
<b>9</b>	11	11	12	11.3
<b>10</b>	10	10	9	9.6
<b>11</b>	11	11	11	11.0
<b>12</b>	11	11	9	10.3
<b>13</b>	11	11	10	10.6
<b>14</b>	12	12	12	12.0
<b>15</b>	10	10	10	10.0
<b>16</b>	10	10	8	9.3
<b>Average</b>	10.69	10.69	10.25	10.5

\*Highlighted rows indicate the final five case study participants.

According to the results of the IRI, seven of the participants were able to answer more questions correctly after they read orally or silently. The oral and silent reading modalities also grade level averaged slightly higher than the listening comprehension modality. Despite this, only three participants were able to reach twelfth grade level across all three modalities. However, the average Compass reading comprehension test score of developmental reading students in Summer and Fall 2015 was 67, or eighth grade reading level (State College, 2016). Based on this, 15 of the 16 participants were

reading above the average State College developmental reader. Nevertheless, while 94% of the participants were averaging higher overall reading comprehension scores than the average State College developmental reader, only 19% were reading at the level expected of a first-year college student.

**Informal Reading Inventory item breakdown.** While overall participants answered more questions correctly after the oral and silent readings than after listening, further examination into the IRI unveiled more strengths *within* the oral reading modality specifically (see Table 15). A percent correct across all participants was calculated for each category of question asked during the assessment. Through this examination, it was found that participants performed more strongly when they read a passage orally.

***Oral modality strengths.*** Participants were most likely to answer cause and effect (75%), main idea (74%), and vocabulary (70%) in context questions correct the highest percent of time throughout their oral reading. Additionally, throughout the assessment, participants answered the greatest percent of questions correctly in five of the six categories of questions after reading orally. The average overall correct responses percentage was 68.5%, the highest of the three modalities.

***Silent and listening modality strengths.*** Participants answered detail questions the highest percent of time throughout their silent reading, doing so 62% of the time. Participants collectively were not able to demonstrate strengths through the listening modality. This modality will be further explored in the struggles section.

Table 15

*IRI Strengths*

	Oral Reading	Silent Reading	Listening
<b>Main Idea</b>	46 correct answers out of 62  74%	34 correct answers out of 59  58%	22.5 correct answers out of 35  64%
<b>Details</b>	99.5 correct answers out of 164  61%	95.5 correct answers out of 155  62%	31.5 correct answers out of 78  40%
<b>Vocabulary</b>	103 correct answers out of 148  70%	98.5 correct answers out of 146  68%	45.5 correct answers out of 77  59%
<b>Cause and Effect</b>	64 correct answers out of 85  75%	51.5 correct answers out of 80  64%	26.5 correct answers out of 41  65%
<b>Inference</b>	65.5 correct answers out of 100  66%	58 correct answers out of 96  60%	33.5 correct answers out of 53  63%
<b>Sequence</b>	28.5 correct answers out of 44  65%	28 correct answers out of 47  60%	13.5 correct answers out of 25  54%

\* Green boxes indicate areas with the highest scores overall.

\*\*Shaded boxes indicate the highest score of the three modalities.

**Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT).** The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (Pearson Education, 2013) is a norm-referenced instrument designed to assess receptive vocabulary for individuals, ages two through adult, administered in weeks three through five of the study. This assessment offered a way to compare the self-assessed reading abilities from the RALSS to observed reading ability demonstrations. In the

assessment, reaching set 13 indicated age 17 and older receptive vocabulary levels. All participants moved beyond set 13 indicating adult level receptive vocabulary levels.

Table 16 provides the grade level equivalent scores attained through the PPVT assessment. Based on the PPVT, on the surface, receptive vocabulary was a strength for these participants.

Table 16

*PPVT Grade Level Results*

<b>Participant Number</b>	<b>PPVT Grade Level Score</b>
<b>1</b>	17
<b>2</b>	15
<b>3</b>	17
<b>4</b>	16
<b>5</b>	15
<b>6</b>	16
<b>7</b>	15
<b>8</b>	16
<b>9</b>	16
<b>10</b>	17
<b>11</b>	14
<b>12</b>	15
<b>13</b>	15
<b>14</b>	17
<b>15</b>	16
<b>16</b>	15

\*Highlighted rows indicate the final five case study participants

### **Strengths Summary**

Through the RALSS, IRI, and PPVT, participants indicated and demonstrated strengths in multiple areas. Eight subsets of the reading process were self-identified as strengths on the RALSS. Administration of the IRI and PPVT supported that oral and

silent reading comprehension were areas of strength, along with overall receptive vocabulary. Main idea, vocabulary in context, and cause and effect after oral reading were also demonstrated strengths through the IRI assessment. The next section will discuss areas in which participants struggled.

### **Struggles**

Reading struggles were determined to be those tasks or skills participants self-identified feeling a lack of confidence in performing. A reading skill was also considered a struggle if a participant struggled significantly on the standardized assessments, earning less than 60% accuracy. Three different measures were used to determine students' reading struggles:

1. Self-perceived identification of struggles on the Reading Ability Likert-type Scale Survey
2. Reading ability as demonstrated through the Informal Reading Inventory
3. Vocabulary ability as demonstrated through the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test

To consider a reading skill a struggle, participants evaluated their confidence level with skills through reflection on their current and/or past experiences with reading using the Reading Ability Likert-type Scale Survey (RALSS). Reading skills in this study were first introduced to participants through the RALSS (e.g. identifying topics in paragraphs or reading critically). Participants also had opportunities to reflect and consider if they could identify any additional reading skills or reading struggles not mentioned on the RALSS.

Asking participants to self-identify their struggles and then be formally assessed allowed for an evaluation of perceived struggles versus actual demonstrated ability. Several participants self-identified certain skills as struggles, yet were able to demonstrate the skill with some success when formally assessed. Formally assessing reading skills also allowed participants to demonstrate struggles on reading skills in which they were not aware they needed improvement. This section will discuss areas in which participants both self-identified areas of struggles as well as which skills were considered struggles through reading assessments.

**Reading Ability Likert-type Scale Survey.** Through the completion of the RALSS, adapted by Piercey (2013), 50% or less participants were confident in seven different reading skills, as displayed in Table 17. Despite the fact that participants indicated they saw strength in areas of comprehension on the same instrument, areas such as identifying topics, identifying main ideas, and distinguishing between fact and opinion, overall, they believed they struggled in understanding their textbooks. This might indicate that while participants reported comfortability working with small passages of text, full college level textbooks were still viewed as difficult to understand. Understandably then, participants also indicated vocabulary in terms of understanding *all* the words on a page as a struggle.

Table 17

*Struggles According to RALSS*

<b>RALSS item number</b>	<b>RALSS reading skill</b>	<b>Category of reading</b>	<b>Percent indicating high to complete confidence</b>
10	Sound like a good reader when reading out loud	Modality of reading	50%
12	Read and understand your textbooks	Aspects of reading comprehension	50%
25	Determine if a text is biased or unbiased	Critical thinking	50%
4	Figure out the meaning of an unknown word in a sentence	Dealing with words	44%
7	Identify and understand the thesis of many paragraphs	Aspects of reading comprehension	44%
20	Read for deeper than surface level understanding	Critical thinking	44%
2	Understand all the words on a page in one of your textbooks	Dealing with words	38%

**Informal Reading Inventory.** During the administration of the IRI, (Burns & Roe, 1999), participants overall struggled more when they had to listen to a passage read to them and respond to questions regarding that reading. Again, Table 14 presents grade level results compared across the oral, silent, and listening comprehension scores. Overall, participants in this study struggled with reading comprehension. Only three participants were reading on the twelfth-grade reading level, leaving 81% of the participants reading at an eleventh-grade reading level or below. One of those participants was several grade levels below, scoring at grade level six.

Further examination into struggles reveals specific struggles with certain modalities within particular categories of questions. Table 18 displays the struggles

participants had on the IRI within the different modalities. As demonstrated in this table, participants struggled when responding to main idea questions when reading silently; and detail, vocabulary, and sequencing questions when the passage was read aloud to them.

Table 18

*IRI Struggles*

	Oral Reading	Silent Reading	Listening
<b>Main Idea</b>	46 correct answers out of 62  74%	34 correct answers out of 59  58%	22.5 correct answers out of 35  64%
<b>Details</b>	99.5 correct answers out of 164  61%	95.5 correct answers out of 155  62%	31.5 correct answers out of 78  40%
<b>Vocabulary</b>	103 correct answers out of 148  70%	98.5 correct answers out of 146  68%	45.5 correct answers out of 77  59%
<b>Cause and Effect</b>	64 correct answers out of 85  75%	51.5 correct answers out of 80  64%	26.5 correct answers out of 41  65%
<b>Inference</b>	65.5 correct answers out of 100  66%	58 correct answers out of 96  60%	33.5 correct answers out of 53  63%
<b>Sequence</b>	28.5 correct answers out of 44  65%	28 correct answers out of 47  60%	13.5 correct answers out of 25  54%

\* Red boxes indicate areas with the lowest scores overall.

\*\*Shaded boxes indicate the lowest score of the three modalities.



***Oral modality struggles.*** When looking at the results of the IRI, there were no scores below 60%, which were the qualifications for a skill to be considered a struggle. In fact, five of the six categories had the highest percent correct in the oral modality. However, no skill met the benchmark 80% or higher in this (or any) modality, confirming that overall reading comprehension was in fact a struggle.

***Silent modality struggles.*** When reading silently, participants struggled to identify the main idea correctly, being able to do so only 58% of the time. This was the only skill in this modality to meet the lower than 60% qualifier. However, of the six type of category questions, three were struggles within the silent modality: main idea (58%), inference (60%), and cause and effect (64%).

***Listening modality struggles.*** Participants showed the most struggles after listening to a passage. The greatest struggle was detail questions, only answering 40% of the detail questions correctly. Sequence questions also posed difficulties after listening to a passage, with a 54% correct rate. Another area of difficulty on the IRI was vocabulary questions after being read passages, participants being able to correctly define an unfamiliar term 59% of the time. All three of these categories were below the 60% qualifier and reflected true struggles in this modality.

***Reflection.*** An additional area in which participants indicated they were moderate to moderately high in confidence was in their ability to make inferences based on the text. While this was not a noticeable struggle in any of the three modalities of IRI comprehension, participants did not prove it to be a strength. Their ability to make appropriate inferences ranged from 60% (silently) accurate to 66% (orally) accurate.

Once again, though participants identified on the RALSS some areas of struggle, on the IRI it was dependent upon the modality of the passage as to which skills with which they would struggle. Looking at the assessment holistically, overall 81% of participants were below twelfth grade reading level and the IRI highlighted their struggles with overall reading comprehension. Again, Table 14 presents grade level results for each participant across the three modalities.

**Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test.** During the PPVT, I read a list of words to each participant and they had to select, from four images, the visual that best represented each word. During the assessment, I could read the word, but could not spell it, show it to the participant, define it, or use it in a sentence. Words were organized into sets, with each set containing 12 words. Each set increased in difficulty level and the assessment continued until a participant answered eight or more questions incorrectly within one set.

While viewing the PPVT (Pearson Education, 2013) from grade level scores only, receptive vocabulary holistically could be considered a strength. However, item breakdown indicated that there was still a struggle with receptive vocabulary. In developmental reading at State College, students must earn an 80% as an overall score to qualify as having met the requirements of the course. Using 80% as a benchmark for this assessment, only one participant was able to score an 80% or higher by the end of the assessment by looking at performance within each set of vocabulary groupings. See Table 19 for overall scores and percentage of correct items.

Table 19

*PPVT Item Analysis Results*

Participant Number	PPVT Grade Level Score	Number of items correct/number of items answered	Percentage of items correct
1	17	66/96	69%
2	15	53/72	74%
3	17	73/96	76%
4	16	49/84	58%
5	15	41/72	57%
6	16	62/84	74%
7	15	53/72	74%
8	16	66/84	79%
9	16	63/84	75%
10	17	55/96	57%
11	14	43/60	72%
12	15	55/72	76%
13	15	56/72	78%
14	17	81/96	84%
15	16	65/84	77%
16	15	52/84	62%

\*Highlighted rows indicate the final five case study participants

**Struggles Summary**

Through the RALSS, IRI, and PPVT, participants indicated and demonstrated struggles in multiple areas. Seven skills of the reading process were self-identified as struggles on the RALSS. Administration of the IRI and PPVT demonstrated that listening comprehension was an area of struggle, along with receptive vocabulary. Main idea after silent reading; and details, vocabulary in context, and sequencing after listening to a passage were also demonstrated struggles through the IRI assessment. The next section will discuss participants' reading attitudes.

## **Attitudes**

Along with reading strengths and struggles, research question one also sought to explore the attitudes developmental readers had toward reading. The Adult Survey of Reading Attitudes (ASRA) (Smith, 1988; 1990a) is a survey designed to measure adult attitudes toward reading on a scale from 40 to 200, indicating negative to positive reading attitudes, respectively. Participants in this study scored between 88 and 155. Based on the self-reporting of items related to reading attitudes, and using 120 as the average ASRA score, only five of the participants scored below a 120 and were considered to have evidenced a poor reading attitude. Questions on the ASRA did not ask, however, questions connected to a reading course. Therefore, the responses on this assessment measured reading attitudes out of context of needing developmental reading assistance.

Of those participants indicating a poor reading attitude, two of which are included in the final five case studies and their reading attitudes, along with the other case study participants, will be explored further in later sections. The remaining participants indicated an average or more positive attitude toward reading. For results across participants, see Figure 4. While research has found in the past that developmental reading students display negative attitudes toward reading, the results of the ASRA found that while some identified as having a poor reading attitude, 69% of the participants identified as having average or positive attitudes and relationships with reading.

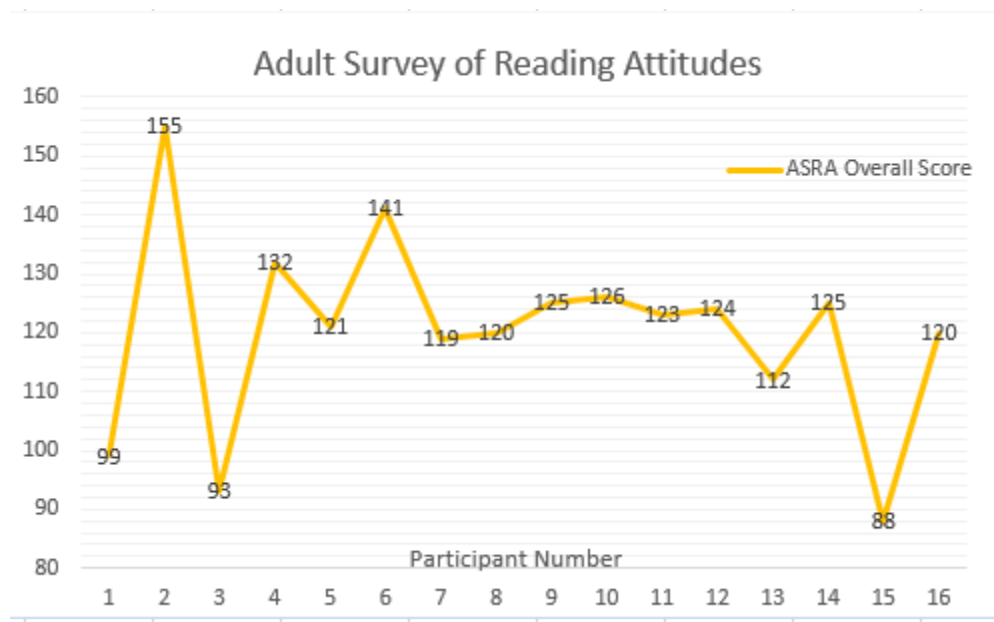


Figure 4. ASRA Overall Results

### Summary

As the results of the RALSS and IRI demonstrate, participants overall were limited in their ability to accurately identify their strengths and struggles. In addition, the modality in which participants demonstrated the different reading skills on the IRI was extremely important. Oral reading allowed the most opportunities for students to display their strengths in reading; having passages read to them limited their ability to answer questions correctly. Participants also demonstrated that contrary to previous research, they displayed mostly positive reading attitudes. In the next section, results which answer question two will be discussed.

### **Literacy's Role in Developmental Reading Students' Lives**

The second research question investigated the role, or literacy practices, of literacy in developmental reading students' daily lives. This was done using the literacy log instrument; this section will present findings from the administration of the literacy log. Results in this section are based off all 16 participants and all names used are pseudonyms.

#### **Literacy Log Results**

The literacy log was the primary instrument utilized to answer research question two. Participants were asked to track their literacy use over a one-week period, twice throughout the study. Part of this process required participants to "check" if they engaged in a specific literacy event during the day, though the instrument only allowed for one "check" and not a check for each time the participant engaged in that particular literacy event (for instance, only one check for "send or read a received a text message" even if a participant did this multiple times a day). As evidenced in Table 20, students indicated they most often engaged in reading while driving – street and traffic signs in particular. Behind this, the most common daily use of literacy was reading and sending text messages. Despite being enrolled in the spring semester, participants engaged in seven other more common literacy events than reading or writing for academic purposes. Participants made mention of how often they used reading and writing in their daily lives, however, academic reading and writing was not a most commonly engaged in activity, or at the very least, one in which they recognized as practiced during their typical day.

When responding through writing to daily and weekly questions based on their literacy tracking, the amount of time spent daily on reading and/or writing ranged from 30 minutes to what one participant claimed was “all day.” Those who responded as stating they spent several hours to all day was due to the fact that they spent so much time on a phone reading or communicating through texting or e-mailing. For instance, Preston wrote, “I mainly use literacy to keep track of what is going on in my friends lives and news I want to know more about” (Preston, Literacy Log, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016) while Kim stated, “I felt I use social media way too much” (Kim, Literacy Log, February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016). These participants utilized literacy frequently daily, though more for personal and social reasons. Participants also responded that they valued the time they spent engaging in literacy as it kept them connected to others and informed in their place of work or in their academics.

Participants offered that the literacy they engaged in was a mixture of mandatory (for work or school purposes) and by choice (such as social media or reading with a child in their life). Jamie was the only participant on the literacy log who recognized that although the reading and writing she engaged in for academic purposes was mandatory for the coursework requirements, going to school was in fact her choice: “I chose to go to school but its [reading] mandatory for school” (Jamie, Literacy Log, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016). Jamie displayed personal awareness of her role and choices as not only a student, but one who engaged in literacy events daily.

When asked if the mandatory or by choice literacy events were engaged in individually or with others, an overwhelming response to each time that question was

asked was, “individual.” Participants consistently viewed their literacy events as individual with no interaction wanted or needed with others beyond what was minimally required of them by their place of employment or instructor in a classroom. Each participant even saw texting, e-mailing, and social media as individual activities, despite the obvious fact that they were texting, e-mailing, or sharing information between one or more persons. Academic literacy was also viewed as something to be engaged in alone, only sharing reading or writing when explicitly asked or told to while in the classroom. With participants not being open to sharing their academic reading and writing with others, or even acknowledging when literacy interactions were taking place, their use and understanding of how literacy could work in their life was very limited.

Finally, through the literacy logs and tracking of literacy events, several participants made realizations on either how much (or little) they read daily or how literacy was all around them and until this collection, they did not notice it. Through these realizations, participants began to understand just how valuable literacy was in their daily life, though up until this point it was underappreciated. For literacy log realizations, see Table 21.

### **Literacy Log Summary**

Overall, participants acknowledged they engaged in some type of reading or writing every single day. While the amount of time and the purpose for use varied, the majority of participants came to realize how important literacy was to them for social, academic, and/or personal uses. However, participants also largely viewed literacy as an activity to engage in alone and perhaps were not truly engaging in academic literacy as



Table 20

*Literacy Log's Most Frequent Literacy Events*

<b>Literacy Event</b>	<b>Week 1 (week of participants choosing)</b>	<b>Week 2 (week of researcher's choosing: Spring break)</b>	<b>Total occurrences</b>
Drive with the assistance if street and/or traffic signs	16/16 engaged throughout the week	16/16 engaged throughout the week	155
	6/13 engaged every day	11/16 engaged every day	
Send or receive a text message	16/16 engaged throughout the week	16/16 engaged throughout the week	146
	13/16 engaged every day	7/16 engaged every day	
Post a status or read other statuses on social media	16/16 engaged throughout the week	16/16 engaged throughout the week	144
	13/16 engaged every day	7/16 engaged every day	
Send or read an e-mail	16/16 engaged throughout the week	16/16 engaged throughout the week	104
	7/16 engaged every day	4/16 engaged every day	
Read a logo	16/16 engaged throughout the week	16/16 engaged throughout the week	118
	7/16 engaged every day	6/16 engaged every day	
Read the news	16/16 engaged throughout the week	13/16 engaged throughout the week	94
	3/16 engaged every day	2/16 engaged every day	
Read signs in people's yards	12/16 engaged throughout the week	14/16 engaged throughout the week	91
	1/16 engaged every day	4/16 engaged every day	
Read for a class as homework or read while attending a class	16/16 engaged throughout the week	12/16 engaged throughout the week	79
	1/16 engaged every day	0/16 engaged every day	
Write (or type) for a class as homework or while in class	16/16 engaged throughout the week	11/16 engaged throughout the week	69
	1/16 engaged every day	0/16 engaged every day	

Table 21

*Literacy Log Realization*

<b>Alice</b>	<b>Andrea</b>	<b>Billy</b>	<b>Breanna</b>	<b>Bree</b>	<b>Brenda</b>
I realized that even though I don't get in a lot of my recreational reading, I do use reading and writing a lot more than I initially realized.	I definitely read and write a lot more than I previously thought I did. People often ask me if I'm a big reader and I usually say, 'no' but based on this observation, I really do read a lot.	I feel that literacy is mandatory in everyday life. It's all around you. You can't avoid it.	I feel like I read <b>so</b> much and I don't even realize it. It [literacy] plays a huge role in everything I do.	I read a lot each and every day and I don't even notice it a lot.	It plays a huge role because reading is an everyday thing.
<b>Janelle</b>	<b>Jamie</b>	<b>Renee</b>	<b>Madison</b>	<b>Melanie</b>	
I never knew I read so much each day.	So I didn't notice how much I read and write.	I didn't relize [sic] how much reading I do.	I think I need to read more often.	I feel pretty proud of myself because I read a lot more than I expected. Literacy is a major role in my life, and I'm amazed at how much I use it.	

much as needed to help support their academic and career goals. The following section will now further explore the five case study participants and their personal strengths, struggles, reading attitudes, and use of literacy.

### **Selection of Case Study Participants**

The following sections will describe each of the final five case study participants' strengths, struggles, attitudes, and role of literacy using a mixture of all data collection instruments. All participants participated in the study from February to May of 2016. Case study participants were chosen using the averages of the PPVT and three forms of the IRI, +/- 10 of the RALSS, and +/- 20 of the ASRA. Those who met the largest number of the qualifiers described above were chosen for focus as a case study. See Table 22 for results for all participants. Highlighted yellow are the five case study participants. Madison, Jamie, Janelle, and Bree represented the averages of the scores. Two other female participants did as well, however, their interviews were limited in terms of full responses to questions and their literacy log data were incomplete. With all the final case study participants being female, to also include a male point of view, Billy was included based on his averaged results on the quantitative data.

Each case begins with a general overview of the participant, followed by an examination of his/her reading strengths, reading struggles, reading attitudes, and role of literacy in his/her life. Following the individual cases, I will provide a cross-case analysis which will examine the five cases as a collective study. This cross-case analysis presents an examination of both the similarities and differences among the individual cases.

Table 22

*Overall Results of Assessments*

Participant Number	PPVT Age Equivalent Score (Highest possible is 17)	Informal Reading Inventory Oral Grade Level	Informal Reading Inventory Silent Grade Level	Informal Reading Inventory Listening Grade Level	RALSS score (Possible range 25-150)	ASRA score (Possible range 40-200)
<b>1</b>	17	11	11	11	127	99
<b>2</b>	15	7	7	6	99	155
<b>3</b>	17	12	12	12	119	93
<b>4</b>	16	11	11	11	88	132
<b>5</b>	15	10	10	9	108	121
<b>6</b>	16	10	10	12	77	141
<b>7</b>	15	12	12	10	140	119
<b>8</b>	16	12	12	12	142	120
<b>9</b>	16	11	11	12	138	125
<b>10</b>	17	10	10	9	134	126
<b>11</b>	14	11	11	11	116	123
<b>12</b>	15	11	11	9	104	124
<b>13</b>	15	11	11	10	95	112
<b>14</b>	17	12	12	12	127	125
<b>15</b>	16	10	10	10	147	88
<b>16</b>	15	10	10	8	141	120
Average	<b>15.75</b>	<b>10.69</b>	<b>10.69</b>	<b>10.25</b>	<b>118.88</b>	<b>120.18</b>

**Billy**

In addition to being a participant in my study, Billy was a student in my developmental reading class in Spring 2016. He was a 23-year-old white male who grew up in and graduated from a neighboring community of State College. During this study, Billy was working on his two-year degree in drug and alcohol dependency counseling with hopes of later attaining his four-year degree in this field. Billy attended school part

time, while working full time. He was not the first person in his family to attend college as his mother attended, but did not graduate from, a local community college as well.

In the classroom, Billy was a quiet student, participating when called upon and asking questions when needed. Beyond this, he did not interact with his classmates often nor went out of his way to engage in class discussions. However, as a research participant, Billy came to life. He spoke about his feelings toward reading and beliefs in his abilities with a quick tempo and confidence. As his teacher, he opened up to me more in the research appointments than in the classroom. Billy was candid with the difficult childhood he overcame; one that consisted of family members being incarcerated and the flow of drugs entering his home. Despite, or possibly because of, the hand he was dealt, he decided to work hard to become licensed in a field where he could assist others to escape the control of drug and alcohol abuse. His passion for this was exhibited when he said:

I plan on going to a four-year degree college and I would like to get an actual counseling certificate because that is my ultimate goal. I like to help people, as of background wise, I grew up in a very rough environment. I grew up in gang activity and drugs and all that stuff and I hated it and uh- I don't wanna go back to it. I wanna help people through their struggles and situations that they're going through because it is very hard for people to make it out, most of the people that I have friended back in the day are either in prison or dead which is very sad but nevertheless. (Billy, Interview, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016)

Throughout his time as my student and research participant, Billy remained unpretentious, eager, and honest. In the following sections I describe Billy's experiences with reading regarding his reading strengths and struggles, attitude toward reading, and the literacy practices he used.

### **Reading Strengths and Struggles**

Billy had the opportunity to demonstrate his reading strengths and struggles through several instruments. Four different measures were used to determine Billy's reading strengths and struggles:

1. A self-assessment in the form of the Reading Ability Likert-type Scale Survey (RALSS)
2. A reading assessment in the form of the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT)
3. A reading assessment in the form of the Informal Reading Inventory (IRI)
4. Two semi-structured interviews.

Through these formats, he was able to discuss both areas in which he was confident in his abilities as well as where he needed to improve.

**Self-assessed and standardized assessment results of reading strengths and struggles.** Billy was a reserved student who initially was unsure of how to talk about his strengths and struggles in reading. When asked about his feelings regarding reading and his reading ability, he stated "I'm not gonna say that I'm good, not gonna say that I'm bad- that'd be putting myself up on a pedestal and I don't like that. I mean, I'm not the best, I'm not the worst" (Billy, Interview, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016). However, he did complete

the RALSS and based on his self-assessment of his reading abilities, he scored a 104 out of 150, using 87.5 as the average confidence score, 104 indicated moderate overall reading confidence. The skills reflected upon were reading skills presented to him on the RALSS, not skills he identified without any prompting. On this assessment, Billy strongly identified eight out of 25 skills as strengths and five skills as struggles. See Table 23 for specific areas identified.

Table 23

*Billy's Self-Identified Reading Strengths and Struggles*

Self-identified Strengths	Self-identified Struggles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• take information previously learned and connect it to new information being gained</li> <li>• was able to determine the meaning of unknown terms from context</li> <li>• could identify the topic of a paragraph</li> <li>• effectively skim text to pick out important information</li> <li>• make predictions while reading</li> <li>• could understand text better while reading to himself</li> <li>• could identify the author purpose and tone</li> <li>• could distinguish between fact and opinion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify a thesis statement in a longer piece of text</li> <li>• sounding out unfamiliar terms as they are read</li> <li>• sounding like a good when reading aloud</li> <li>• connecting and using graphics in conjunction with the text</li> <li>• critical reading and thinking.</li> </ul>

Even after completing the RALSS, PPVT, and IRI, during our first interview Billy still had difficulty identifying a strength or struggle regarding reading ability. Instead of one of the skills reviewed or assessed, he described a preference in reading. Nonfiction books, particularly accounts of or information on World War II, or horror

books written by his favorite author Joe McKinney, were of high interest to Billy. This awareness of preference indicated a strength outside of skills based reading. When asked to reevaluate his reading strengths during the second interview, Billy mentioned his note taking was becoming stronger. While note taking certainly has its place in the reading process, it was not a specific reading ability discussed in previous sessions. However, later in the second interview Billy expressed his frustration with being able to pick out the main point of a text he was reading, specifically on the computerized modules of the reading course in which he was enrolled. Despite this expression of frustration, he demonstrated that main idea was actually a strength according to his performance on the oral and listening sections of the IRI assessment (scoring an overall 100% and 83% respectively on the main idea category questions). See Tables 24-27 for his oral, silent, and listening performance. Nevertheless, it took examples and reminders of previously assessed reading skills for Billy to discuss his particular strengths and struggles during interview sessions.



Table 24

*Billy's IRI Oral Performance*

IRI ORAL		Grade Level Readings			
	8	9	10	11	Total
Question Category					
Main Idea	1/1=100%	1/1=100%	1/1=100%	1/1=100%	4/4=100%
Details	1/3=33%	2.5/3=83%	2/3=67%	1/2=50%	6.5/11=59%
Vocabulary	2/2=100%	2/3=67%	.5/1=50%	1/2=50%	5.5/8=69%
Cause and Effect	1/1=100%	2/2=100%	1/2=50%	1/1=100%	5/6=83%
Inference	2/2=100%	0/1=0%	1.5/2=75%	.5/3=17%	4/8=50%
Sequence	1/1=100%	N/A	0/1=0%	.5/1=50%	1.5/3=50%
<b>Overall Score</b>	<b>8/10=80%</b>	<b>7/10=70%</b>	<b>5.5/10=55%</b>	<b>5/10=50%</b>	
	158wcpm	188wcpm	150wcpm	144wcpm	160wcpm average

\*Highlighted green scores indicate a strength

\*\* Highlighted red scores indicate a struggle

\*\*\*Highlighted blue indicates highest grade level score across all modalities

Table 25

*Billy's IRI Silent Performance*

IRI SILENT		Grade Level Readings			
	8	9	10	11	Total
Question Category					
Main Idea	.5/1=50%	1/1=100%	.5/1=100%	0/1=0%	2/4=50%
Details	2/3=67%	0/2=0%	3/3=100%	0/1=0%	5/9=55%
Vocabulary	1/3=33%	2/2=100%	2/3=67%	1/3=33%	6/11=55%
Cause and Effect	1/1=100%	0/1=0%	1/1=100%	1/1=100%	3/4=75%
Inference	.5/1=50%	1/3=33%	1/1=100%	1.5/3=50%	4/8=50%
Sequence	0/1=0%	0/1=0%	0/1=0%	1/1=100%	1/4=25%
<b>Overall Score</b>	<b>5.5/10=55%</b>	<b>4/10=40%</b>	<b>7.5/10=75%</b>	<b>4/10=40%</b>	

\* Highlighted red scores indicate a struggle

\*\*Highlighted blue indicates highest grade level score across all modalities

Table 26

*Billy's IRI Listening Performance*

IRI LISTENING	Grade Level Readings			
	11	10	9	Total
Question Category				
Main Idea	.5/1=50%	1/1=100%	1/1=100%	2.5/3=83%
Details	1/4=25%	0/2=0%	3/3=100%	4/9=44%
Vocabulary	1/1=100%	3/3=100%	3/3=100%	7/7=100%
Cause and Effect	1/2=50%	1/2=50%	1.5/2=75%	3.5/6=58%
Inference	.5/1=50%	1/1=100%	1/1=100%	2.5/3=83%
Sequence	.5/1=50%	1/1=100%	NA	1.5/2=75%
<b>Overall Score</b>	<b>4.5/10=45%</b>	<b>7/10=70%</b>	<b>9.5/10=95%</b>	

\*Highlighted green scores indicate a strength

\*\* Highlighted red scores indicate a struggle

\*\*\*Highlighted blue indicates highest grade level score across all modalities

Table 27

*Billy's Overall Performance Across Modalities and Grade Levels*

Question Category	Overall score across all grade levels and modalities
Main Idea	77%
Details	53%
Vocabulary	71%
Cause and Effect	72%
Inference	55%
Sequence	44%

\* Highlighted red scores indicate a struggle

Also through informal interviews, Billy discussed how interest played a key role in his ability to either excel or struggle with a topic or text: "If it's [the text] uninteresting I definitely have a hard time, not necessarily comprehending it, just keeping – keeping in touch with what I'm reading" (Billy, Interview, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016). This was confirmed when Billy was assessed during the IRI on his silent reading comprehension. The first

silent reading text was an eighth-grade passage on the Civil War, a topic he previously expressed a dislike toward:

Now when it comes to like world- World War II or um- the Holocaust, those are the things in history that I really enjoy to read because my family and my background comes from World War II and from Germany and from Israel and even dates back to Ireland, the native Americans. I love that kind of learning too but when it comes to certain things like the Civil War, and whatnot that's- that just doesn't appeal to me, so it doesn't really stick in my brain, my storage is like nahh, it just kinda pushes it out. (Billy, Interview, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016)

This may have contributed to Billy's low performance on the first silent comprehension reading, in which he only answered 50% of the questions correctly. Though he struggled with the silent comprehension section at first, he was passing the oral readings according to the IRI protocol (attaining 80% and 75% on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade readings, respectively) and I wanted to continue with the assessment in both modalities, attributing initial silent reading struggles as a lack of interest in the text.

At the beginning of the same assessment, oral portion, Billy described his hesitancy to read aloud in front of peers during a class, but did not mind doing so for me. As Billy read, his voice was loud and full of confidence, in spite of the fact he earlier mentioned his stutter was a source of personal frustration. Billy met his comprehension frustration levels in oral and silent comprehension at grade level 11, where grade level nine was his grade level equivalent for listening comprehension. For the listening comprehension, IRI administration stated to begin at the highest oral or silent grade level

and continue moving backward or forward until the reader reaches an overall score of 75% or higher. As I read to Billy, he seemed to relax and focus on the selection, making eye contact with me and the sheet from which I was reading. Despite this, he still struggled to answer the questions at a higher correct percentage rate than after his oral readings. Overall with the IRI, Billy struggled with detail, inference, and sequence questions across all modalities. Again, Tables 24-27 illustrate Billy's IRI performance.

One area Billy identified as a strength in his RALSS but did not mention in either interview was vocabulary. Vocabulary plays a fundamental role in the reading process and is one area in which readers could demonstrate as a strength or struggle. Billy demonstrated his receptive vocabulary, the words which can be comprehended and responded to, through the PPVT, and in context vocabulary through the IRI. Billy showed eagerness at completing the PPVT in particular, perhaps due to feeling that identifying vocabulary, though in context, was a strength. Billy began at set 10 on the PPVT, the predetermined starting level for every participant, and answered very quickly through the next several sets, slowing when he reached set 14. He displayed confidence in his responses, until set 14 when he began to take more time with each response and often second guessed his answers. For instance, one word he lingered on was "perpendicular," mentioning he had forgotten some math related vocabulary. While he struggled between two images, one showing perpendicular lines and another simply showing two lines crossing at less than 90 degrees, Billy chose the incorrect answer.

In a similar fashion, Billy began the IRI vocabulary specific questions with confidence, and then began to struggle as the grade levels increased. For instance, on the

oral IRI vocabulary questions in grade levels eight through 11, there was a steady decrease in the percent of correct responses. This pattern was also found in his silent IRI vocabulary performance on grade levels 9 through eleven. On the PPVT Billy demonstrated adequate vocabulary knowledge overall, displaying adult levels of receptive vocabulary. This indicated levels of expected receptive vocabulary one would have entering higher education. However, his PPVT itemized scores and the IRI silent vocabulary revealed otherwise. Billy's itemized score throughout the PPVT was 76% which indicated slightly lower than the benchmark 80% which developmental students were expected to attain. While he was able to reach adult level sets, his responses within the sets themselves showed he slightly struggled to retain adult level receptive vocabulary. To illustrate, Billy missed 17 vocabulary words total throughout the PPVT; 82% of the items missed were in the last three sets, all part of the adult leveled sets. Another indication of frustration was that despite initially being excited for the assessment, after his last set was finished, Billy expressed appreciation that the test was over, playfully stating "thank goodness" when the assessment concluded. Likewise, in the silent IRI Billy was only able to answer 55% of the vocabulary questions correctly, though excelling in vocabulary on the IRI listening, answering 100% of the questions correct. His mixed performance on the PPVT and IRI demonstrated that Billy's strongest vocabulary ability was determining meaning from words in context, as he indicated on the RALSS, but best done after listening to a reading. For Billy's full PPVT performance, see Table 28.

Table 28

*Billy's PPVT Performance*

PPVT Overall Level	Set 10 Correct	Set 11 Correct	Set 12 Correct	Set 13 Correct	Set 14 Correct	Set 15 Correct	Average Correct
15	12/12= 100%	10/12= 83%	11/12= 92%	10/12= 83%	8/12= 67%	4/12= 33%	55/72= 76%

\*Set 10 was Basal and Set 15 was Frustration

**Reflection on Billy's strengths and struggles.** When comparing his self-assessment on the RALSS, to his performance on the IRI and PPVT, Billy had difficulty accurately identifying his strengths and struggles. Billy reported that he understood text better while reading to himself, which on the IRI his grade level was an 11 after silent reading, compared to the grade level of his listening comprehension grade level which was nine. However, in the 6 type of category questions (main idea, details, vocabulary, cause and effect, inference, and sequencing), he answered more questions accurately after reading orally and listening to a text read, versus reading to himself silently. In fact, looking at category breakdown, the most struggles Billy encountered was within the silent modality. Billy also believed defining vocabulary from context was a strength. Looking at the IRI oral and silent together, he only was able to correctly define vocabulary 62% of the time, but 100% of the time after listening to a passage read aloud. Therefore, vocabulary was demonstrated to only be a strength in the listening modality.

While Billy possibly overestimated his strengths, he also contradicted his self-assessment when he completed the IRI readings. Billy believed his stutter impeded his oral reading – both comprehension and ability to sound like a good reader. However, he was able to reach grade level 11 after answering comprehension questions following his

oral readings. Even though Billy's proclamation that his stutter was a frustration and previous hindrance to his oral reading, his words correct per minute score on the eleventh-grade reading passage was 144wcpm. The wcpm is the rate at which a person is able to read with fluency during a timed text selection. Billy's eleventh-grade wcpm rate was approaching a college freshman's wcpm average, which was found to be 153wcpm, according to a study by Rasinski et al. (2017). While his rate was not at the level of an average college student, it was higher than he alluded it would be due to his stutter.

One area in particular Billy eventually identified as a struggle during his interviews, after some prompting and examples, was identifying supporting details in text. When asked to think about the Critical Analysis course and his progress in that class, he discussed how "the supporting details, I struggled and struggled and struggled on that" (Billy, Interview, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016). He had a particularly difficult time distinguishing between major and minor details on the computerized modules in the developmental reading course and on in class practice exercises. During the IRI, Billy supported that statement in each of the three modalities, scoring less than 60% correct answers overall across grade levels and modalities. Supporting details was one area in particular he mentioned was a struggle during his interview, though did not identify on the RALSS, and reinforced that statement in his demonstrations of reading.

Additionally, through the IRI assessments, Billy did struggle on finding the main idea in the silent modality, only able to identify it correctly 50% of the time. However, when reading orally, he was able to accurately express the main idea 100% of the time. He initially claimed finding the main idea was a source of frustration or struggle, yet he

excelled at doing so when reading aloud. Though not all areas Billy indicated were strengths or struggles on the RALSS were formally assessed, it appeared Billy was not truly aware of his potential nor his limitations at that time as a reader, or at the very least was not aware which modality of reading he could comprehend text at higher grade levels.

### **Attitude Toward Reading**

Billy had the opportunity to demonstrate his reading attitude through different instruments. Two different measures were used to determine Billy's reading attitude:

1. A self-assessment in the form of the Adult Survey of Reading Attitude (ASRA)
2. Two semi-structured interviews.

Through these formats, he was able to discuss his feelings and views on reading.

Based on the Adult Survey of Reading Attitudes, Billy had a 124 score out of 200. Using 120 as the average attitude score, his score of 124 indicated a slightly positive attitude toward reading. However, to talk to Billy, he appeared to be *very* upbeat and positive. During the first interview, while describing his background and collegiate goals he stated, "I am hoping for the best and I am expecting the best because my motivation and my drive is super high" (Billy, Interview, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Billy did indicate that interest played a large role in how he regarded reading. For instance, in his Critical Analysis course, they were reading a chapter on family relationships within the field of human services. Billy explained:

when it comes to something that I really enjoy like in my- like in the chapter we're reading right now in my Critical Analysis class, that chapter appeals to me.



I mean I really enjoy reading that because I grew up in a blended family.

(Interview, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016)

The chapter he was referring to combined the general field of social work with understanding blended families. Having that personal background allowed Billy to be more engaged and show more interest in this particular chapter.

In his second interview, he supported the importance of interest saying, “it just depends on what I read, I mean sometimes I love it, I can get trapped in a book, in a text, uh- and sometimes it just drags on and drags on” (Billy, Interview, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016). He recognized he was average in his abilities but did not view them as advanced, and echoed how he felt about himself as a reader from the first interview maintaining “I mean I’m not the best, I’m not the worst, I’m somewhere in the gray area.” (Billy, Interview, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Based on this evaluation, Billy welcomed the opportunity to be in a developmental reading course to improve upon the skills he knew he needed to enhance, though this was a gradual realization.

Billy’s attitude toward remediation, particularly in the beginning of the semester was slightly above the average attitude score, according to the ASRA. He stated that, “first off I had no choice [to take the class] because it’s a prerequisite class” (Billy, Interview, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016). However, he recognized the importance of the class as he also stated, “everybody needs help.... I feel that everybody would need help eventually. And would I accept the help? Heck yes. Everybody needs help and uh- it’s great to have it” (Billy, Interview, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016). When asked again about his attitude regarding the developmental course he took during the semester the second time we met for an

interview, Billy stated, “I’m pretty pleased with myself and I’m happy that I actually took the course because I’ve learned things that I probably wouldn’t have even thought of and brushed up on topics I forgot about” (Billy, Interview, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Billy also expressed a positive attitude toward reading in general as he recognized its importance for everyone. Overall, Billy displayed a positive attitude toward reading and remediation, but the more interest in a text, the more positive the reading attitude.

### **Role of Literacy**

Billy recognized that literacy is all around us; - it is mandatory and necessary to career success, “to me reading is necessary... people have to read to learn” (Billy, Interview, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016). However, he made a distinction between the type of literacy that is part of our surroundings (street signs, labels, posters, etc.) versus what he called “actual” reading which consists of books, passages, and more intellectual literacy related activities. As Billy said, “words and writing is all around us. I mean that is not actual reading to me, personally. That is just things that you see” (Billy, Interview, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Billy felt that while he used and came in contact with multiple forms of literacy daily, not all literacy was created equal.

Billy spoke fondly about one teacher in high school, his English teacher, who played a large role in his continuing appreciation for, as Billy called it, intellectual literacy. He indicated that Mr. S. motivated all his students to do the best they could and it pushed Billy to read and write more. Billy also specified that as an aspiring drug and alcohol abuse counselor, reading and writing will play a particularly important role in his

future career. Again, however, he emphasized the literacy with the most impact on him now and in the future, was the literacy found within academic contexts.

Billy described his typical literacy use as 30-45 minutes of actual (academic) reading and writing a day. He spent this time writing flashcards and practicing his vocabulary, as well as editing and proofing papers for his composition class. Though he spent time on social media, on his phone reading text messages, and seeing environmental print all around, he did not consider this “actual” reading time. As for interacting with others in his literacy use, he did not often share his writing with anyone other than his instructors, nor did he choose to read with others unless he was reading aloud in class. Only once throughout the semester did he allow a fellow student to read a draft and provide him writing tips. Though, he did mention he would be open to the possibility of letting that same student read a piece of his writing again in the future.

The only other literacy behavior with others that Billy described was reading aloud to his young cousins, though he described it as “not academic reading, that’s the bird blue kinda stuff” (Billy, Interview, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016) indicating it was not valuable or intellectual literacy. Billy viewed literacy as mostly an individual activity, despite the fact he was sharing literacy practices with his instructors (at the very least), daily. Furthermore, even though he spent time on social media, he still felt this was an individual literacy activity as, “I really don’t engage [on social media], I really don’t share, I get on there I look at things that are funny, just to keep myself up and get myself a break from the world for a little bit” (Billy, Interview, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016). He still viewed this as an activity in which he used literacy individually.

Additional literacy use Billy described was the time he spent reading the newspaper:

I mean I read the [hard copy] newspaper, I'm like a grandpa. When I read the newspaper I really value it, I like to keep up on current events and know what's going on in my town. Um, I like to read the Dear Abby so it's definitely enjoyable. (Billy, Interview, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016)

While the newspaper was not necessarily connected to his academic endeavors, he still enjoyed and valued the time spent reading it. Additionally, Billy spoke about his complicated affection for writing saying:

I enjoy writing, writing's actually one of my favorite things I had when I was a kid. I used to write short stories all the freaking time and I got a lot of pleasure out of it, um... some of the things that I'm writing about myself as of right now, it's a little more complicated because I have a hard time talking about myself because I don't wanna put past experiences into it, I wanna keep it current. Uh, keep the positive energy going. (Billy, Interview, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016)

Billy presented unique views toward his use of literacy, and therefore the role it played in his life. He did not understand all literacy to be important, though took pleasure in engaging in some literacy practices, such as the newspaper, that were not directly applied to his academic literacy. Writing, once a source of pleasure, had become a source of internal conflict as he struggled with introspection and including his past in his writings, which was asked of him in his writing course the semester the research study

took place. Though he regularly engaged in multiple types of literacy events daily, Billy only valued and saw literacy as important in academic capacities.

While Billy recognized reading as all around, playing a role in almost everything we do, Billy's perception of what constituted reading and text was different. When describing what is known as environmental print, Billy said:

that is just things that you see...that is not actual reading because those are things that you see on a daily basis... and ...I consider actual reading like a passage...when I say actual reading I mean like a book or a passage or a paragraph or something along those lines. (Interview, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016)

So, while Billy valued reading, "reading is necessary, I mean there's no other way to put it" (Billy, Interview, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016), he limited the power and influence reading could have by dismissing environmental text as not being "real" reading.

Billy tracked his literacy a for a total of two weeks. As the instructions were to mark events in which literacy was practiced, Billy checked off multiple items on the literacy log checklist and his tracking sheet itself was filled with various literacy events. However, on his literacy log responses and through interviews, Billy did not formally acknowledge all of those literacy events, only the ones that included an academic component. Billy engaged in literacy events consistently in his daily schedule, yet stated he only spent on average 45 minutes a day with some form of literacy. His informal acknowledgement of literacy events on paper did not match his recognized literacy views as described in his interviews. Billy's overall literacy understanding and use was contradictory.

### **Madison**

Madison was a 40-year-old white female who grew up in and graduated from a neighboring community near State College. Madison was working on her degree in phlebotomy, and worked full time while attending school part time. She was the first person in her family to attend college. I had Madison as a participant of this study from February until May 2016.

In our first appointment together, Madison wanted to complete the two questionnaires as quickly as possible. She made it clear she was a busy, working, single mother and was always concerned about time as she rode the bus and was restricted by bus schedules. Initial interactions suggested she was not truly interested in being a participant in the study. As we began our first interview, Madison seemed to be less concerned about the time, attributed to the fact she recently bought a used car and no longer had to worry about city bus schedules. However, she still kept her responses fairly short, requiring more prompting from me as an interviewer. For instance, one exchange during an interview on March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016 went as follows:

L: Is there anything you struggle with when it comes to reading?

M: Yeah, sometimes I have to reread stuff a lot of times.

L: Why do you think that is a struggle?

M: Because I'll be in the middle of a paragraph and I'll be thinking what happened that day or what's going on.

L: So you get easily distracted when you are reading? Why is this a struggle?

M: Yes, I will read the whole entire page and I will realize, what did I just read? That happens a lot for me.

L: So then you have to go back and reread. Is that frustrating for you?

M: Yeah

Though Madison answered my questions, she needed more encouragement and guidance in completing the interviews and other data collection instruments. Throughout our entire collection period Madison continued her short responses and laid-back approach to the study. In the following sections I describe Madison's experiences with reading regarding her reading strengths and struggles, attitude toward reading, and the literacy practices she used.

### **Reading Strengths and Struggles**

Madison had the opportunity to demonstrate her reading strengths and struggles through several instruments. Four different measures were used to determine Madison's reading strengths and struggles:

1. A self-assessment in the form of the Reading Ability Likert-type Scale Survey (RALSS)
2. A reading assessment in the form of the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT)
3. A reading assessment in the form of the Informal Reading Inventory (IRI)
4. Two semi-structured interviews.

Through these formats, she was able to discuss both areas in which she was confident in her abilities as well as where she needed to improve.

**Self-assessed and standardized assessment results of reading strengths and struggles.** Madison was a quiet student who was indecisive regarding her evaluation of

reading abilities. When asked about her feelings regarding reading and her reading ability, she stated, “I don’t know. Um. I guess I can improve” (Madison, Interview, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016). However, she did complete the RALSS and based on her self-assessment of her reading abilities, she scored a 147 out of 150 on the RALSS, which indicated very high overall reading confidence, contradicting her interview response. The skills reflected upon were reading skills presented to her on the RALSS, not skills she identified without any prompting. On this assessment, Madison strongly identified 22 out of 25 skills as strengths, and three skills as having high confidence. No skills were identified as struggles on the RALSS. See Table 29 for specific areas identified.

When evaluating her strengths and weaknesses, Madison kept her evaluations short and vague, needing continuous follow-up questions for clarification. For instance, she claimed that she did well with oral reading, but did not know what that meant other than she could read well aloud, stating it meant “I’d say reading out loud to kids or something” (Madison, Interview, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Areas in which Madison self-identified as struggles in her interviews related to being easily distracted and not reading the kind of text that helped her academically. Madison discussed how before her academic semester started, she spent a lot of time on social media, but she also felt that type of reading was not beneficial: “I didn’t feel like I was feeding my brain at all looking at anything on social media. At all. I felt, if anything, dumber. Just like what the heck?” (Madison, Interview, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016). She viewed her time spent on non-academic text as an area she wanted to improve, meaning more time spent on academic literacy tasks. Despite marking every single reading skill on the RALSS as



Table 29

*Madison's Self-Identified Reading Strengths and Struggles*

<b>Indicated as having complete confidence</b>	<b>Indicated as having complete confidence</b>	<b>Indicated as having high confidence</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sound out words</li> <li>• understand all the words on a page in a textbook</li> <li>• figure out the meaning of an unknown word in a sentence</li> <li>• could identify the topic of a paragraph</li> <li>• identify and understand the main idea of a paragraph</li> <li>• effectively skim text to pick out important information</li> <li>• make predictions while reading</li> <li>• sounding like a good when reading aloud</li> <li>• could understand text better while reading to herself</li> <li>• read and understand textbooks</li> <li>• set a purpose for reading before and check to see if the goal was met during or after reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• could distinguish between fact and opinion.</li> <li>• make appropriate inferences</li> <li>• connecting and using graphics in conjunction with the text</li> <li>• identify supporting details</li> <li>• critical reading and thinking</li> <li>• take information previously learned and connect it to new information being gained</li> <li>• apply reading to real life situations</li> <li>• connect reading to personal life</li> <li>• summarize a reading</li> <li>• evaluate the credibility and reliability of a text</li> <li>• determine bias</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• break big words into smaller parts</li> <li>• identify a thesis statement in a longer piece of text</li> <li>• identify the author purpose and tone</li> </ul>

having high or complete confidence in performing, Madison did not speak any further in regard to those reading skills.

Moreover, in light of conversations about elements of reading and the reading process, Madison kept her evaluations firm and did not dig any deeper during the interviews as to what were strengths and struggles for her personally. After discussing different reading skills and expectations of a college level reader, Madison would not, or possibly could not, seem to identify areas of reading in which she could pinpoint as strengths or struggles, despite being given examples through the RALSS, PPVT, and IRI. Additionally, her self-assessment on the RALSS and the demonstrations of reading on the IRI and PPVT established that ultimately Madison truly was not self-aware of her actual reading strengths and struggles. See Tables 30-33 for her oral, silent, and listening performance.

Table 30

*Madison's IRI Oral Performance*

IRI ORAL	Grade Level Readings			
	8	9	10	Total
Question Category				
Main Idea	0/1=0%	1/1=100%	0/1=0%	1/3=33%
Details	1.5/3=50%	3/3=100%	1/3=33%	5.5/9=61%
Vocabulary	2/2=100%	3/3=100%	0/1=0%	5/6=83%
Cause and Effect	1/1=100%	2/2=100%	0/2=0%	3/5=60%
Inference	2/2=100%	0/1=0%	.5/2=25%	2.5/5=50%
Sequence	1/1=100%	N/A	1/1=100%	2/2=100%
<b>Overall Score</b>	<b>7.5/10=75%</b>	<b>9/10=90%</b>	<b>2.5/10=25%</b>	
	161wcpm	155wcpm	138wcpm	151wcpm average

\*Highlighted green scores indicate a strength

\*\* Highlighted red scores indicate a struggle

\*\*\*Highlighted blue indicates highest grade level score across all modalities

Table 31

*Madison's IRI Silent Performance*

IRI SILENT	Grade Level Readings			
	8	9	10	Total
Question Category				
Main Idea	.5/1=50%	.5/1=50%	0/1=0%	1/3=33%
Details	2/3=67%	.5/2=25%	.5/3=17%	3/8=38%
Vocabulary	2/3=67%	2/2=100%	3/3=100%	7/8=88%
Cause and Effect	1/1=100%	1/1=100%	0/1=0%	2/3=67%
Inference	1/1=100%	1/3=33%	1/1=100%	3/5=60%
Sequence	1/1=100%	0/1=0%	1/1=100%	2/3=67%
<b>Overall Score</b>	<b>7.5/10=75%</b>	<b>5/10=50%</b>	<b>5.5/10=55%</b>	

\*Highlighted green scores indicate a strength

\*\*Highlighted red scores indicate a struggle

\*\*\*Highlighted blue indicates highest grade level score across all modalities

Table 32

*Madison's IRI Listening Performance*

IRI LISTENING	Grade Level Readings		
	10	9	Total
Question Category			
Main Idea	0/1=0%	1/1=100%	1/2=50%
Details	1/2=50%	1.5/3=50%	2.5/5=50%
Vocabulary	2/3=67%	3/3=100%	5/6=83%
Cause and Effect	.5/2=25%	2/2=100%	2.5/4=63%
Inference	1/1=100%	1/1=100%	2/2=100%
Sequence	1/1=100%	NA	1/1=100%
<b>Overall Score</b>	<b>5.5/10=55%</b>	<b>8.5/10=85%</b>	

\*Highlighted green scores indicate a strength

\*\* Highlighted red scores indicate a struggle

\*\*\*Highlighted blue indicates highest grade level score across all modalities

Table 33

*Madison's Overall Performance Across Modalities and Grade Levels*

Question Category	Overall score across all grade levels and modalities
Main Idea	39%
Details	50%
Vocabulary	85%
Cause and Effect	63%
Inference	70%
Sequence	89%

\*Highlighted green scores indicate a strength

\*\* Highlighted red scores indicate a struggle

When reflecting upon her IRI performance, Madison was able to recognize that she did not do as well as she could have on the assessments such as the IRI and PPVT. She believed this as she recognized she was distracted during the assessments, which led to her performing more poorly than she had hoped. When asked how she felt about her performance, she stated, “Um. Bad. I feel like because I had other stuff on my mind, like what I was reading, I wasn’t like keeping in my head” (Madison, Interview, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Madison did struggle throughout the assessment, tenth grade being the highest grade level reached in any modality. During the assessment, Madison responded “I don’t know” often, even after answering a question correctly. This demonstrated a lack of confidence, contrary to her initial RALSS self-assessments. During her oral reading, I had to move the audio recorder closer to Madison as she was very quiet and seemed uncomfortable reading aloud, often shifting in her chair and pulling the paper close to her

face. This behavior contradicted her claim later in her interview that oral reading was a strength.

Another area Madison strongly identified as a strength on the RALSS was vocabulary. Vocabulary plays a fundamental role in the reading process and is one area in which readers could demonstrate as a strength or struggle. Madison demonstrated her receptive vocabulary, the words which can be comprehended and responded to, through the PPVT, and in context vocabulary through the IRI. At the beginning of the PPVT assessment, Madison's basal level was set 10. This was the predetermined starting level for every participant. If participants missed zero or one on this set, they continued to move forward, with each set increasing in difficulty. She answered steadily through the next several sets, missing more terms when she reached set 15. By set 15 Madison began to make comments which indicated she was not familiar with the words she was expected to identify. For instance, in set 15 the term "mercantile" was met with Madison's statement of "I've never heard of that" and in set 16 the term "coniferous" prompted her to ask, "does anyone ever know that?" On the PPVT Madison demonstrated adequate vocabulary knowledge overall, displaying adult levels of receptive vocabulary. This indicated levels of expected receptive vocabulary one would have entering higher education. Madison's ceiling, or when she demonstrated struggles by missing eight or more answers in one set, was set 16 which falls into the 17 and older scoring category. However, Madison's itemized score throughout the assessment was 77% which indicated slightly lower than the benchmark 80% which developmental students were expected to attain. The 77% pertained to the number of correct vocabulary responses throughout

Madison's entire testing session with the PPVT. While she was able to reach adult level sets, her responses within the sets themselves showed she slightly struggled to reach adult level receptive vocabulary, especially in her last set with only 25% of words identified correctly. For Madison's full PPVT performance, see Table 34.

In contrast to her struggles on the PPVT vocabulary, Madison demonstrated strengths within the IRI vocabulary, in all modalities. She was able to answer 85% of the vocabulary questions correctly. However, she was only able to reach the tenth-grade level at the highest, so while she demonstrated vocabulary to be a strength in the IRI, it was at several lower reading comprehension grade levels than where a college freshman should be reading.

Table 34

*Madison's PPVT Performance*

PPVT Overall Level	Set 10 Correct	Set 11 Correct	Set 12 Correct	Set 13 Correct	Set 14 Correct	Set 15 Correct	Set 16 Correct	Average Correct
16	12/12= 100%	12/12= 100%	12/12= 100%	10/12= 83%	9/12= 75%	7/12= 58%	3/12=25 %	65/84= 77%

\*Set 10 was Basal and Set 16 was Frustration

**Reflection on Madison's strengths and struggles.** Though Madison perceived herself to be a very confident reader through the RALSS, her performance on the IRI did not completely support this perception. Madison was only able to correctly identify the main idea of the passages on the IRI 33% (after oral reading), 33% (after silent reading), and 50% (after listening to a passage) of the time. She also demonstrated struggles with detail and cause and effect questions. She did, however, answer the vocabulary questions correctly 85% of the time and inference 89% across the three modalities. The reason she

may have indicated high confidence in her ability on all of the reading items on the RALSS was due to the fact she initially believed she did not need developmental reading courses. When asked about her need for developmental reading during our first interview, Madison responded by saying, “I wouldn’t say I need. But um. No I don’t think so” (Madison, Interview, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016).

Also on the RALSS and during her interview, Madison mentioned her strength in reading orally. In contradiction to this self-assessment, Madison struggled on the oral IRI section. Initially, Madison answered the majority of questions correctly on the IRI oral grade levels eight and nine. However, her frustration level, grade level ten, she was only able to answer 25% of the questions correctly. Additionally, her words correct per minute score on the tenth-grade level was 138wcpm, below where a college freshman should be reading on a twelfth-grade level, and therefore should be higher on the tenth-grade level.

On the RALSS, all items were marked as confident, though Madison was only able to demonstrate true strengths on two reading skills, vocabulary and making inferences. Though this was only done at grade levels eight through ten. Madison did describe a phenomenon in which she felt explained her struggles (though she did not acknowledge her struggles in initial assessments):

I was never taught in school if you read something and you’re not you know, there’s some words in there you don’t understand, you can figure out the word by reading what other words are around it. And as an adult, I figured that out myself. I was never taught any of them [reading strategies]. Like what the heck? What

happened when I was in school? (Madison, Interview, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016)

According to Madison, as a college student she was just now being introduced to reading tips and instruction that would help assist her overall comprehension. Because of this, she was still learning and navigating text in order to truly understand it.

Ultimately Madison's self-assessment was ranked far higher than her ability to demonstrate the reading skills assessed. However, Madison also showed her willingness to accept that she was in fact in need of assistance with her reading, going from believing she did not need the developmental reading course to, "maybe I did need it" (Madison, Interview, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016). While through the RALSS, Madison believed she was very confident in her reading ability, after taking the IRI and PPVT, and having a chance to reflect on her reading with me during her interviews, she came to the realization she was indeed a struggling reader in many areas and wanted to work on those areas needing improvement.

### **Attitude Toward Reading**

Madison had the opportunity to demonstrate her reading attitude through different instruments. Two different measures were used to determine Madison's reading attitude:

1. A self-assessment in the form of the Adult Survey of Reading Attitude (ASRA)
2. Two semi-structured interviews.

Through these formats, she was able to discuss her feelings and views on reading.

Based on the Adult Survey of Reading Attitudes, Madison scored an 88 out of 200. Using 120 as the average attitude score, her score of 88 indicated a slightly negative attitude toward reading. Through conversation, Madison mentioned on more than one



occasion how she viewed herself as a “decent” reader (despite indicating she was very confident in reading on the RALSS) though she knew she could improve, however she did not spend a lot of time devoted to reading. Madison described her views on reading as “I think I’m a decent reader. I don’t read very—I don’t read books or anything like that but I like to read articles, I like to read the newspaper, um. I like to read. I don’t dislike it” (Madison, Interview, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Her initial belief that she did not need developmental reading courses and viewed herself as a decent reader already could explain her negative results on the ASRA.

Conversely, Madison, being older than the other participants by 13 or more years, seemed to have a different outlook on reading than her younger peers. Madison recognized the importance and value reading had, especially as she had returned to school after many years in the workforce. After spending time outside of school, and especially after learning more about her literacy views and practices in this study, Madison expressed how appreciative she was of her ability to read. She realized how often she was surrounded by and utilized reading saying she was “so much more appreciative that I can read” (Madison, Interview, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016). These kinds of statements contradict her self-assessment of a negative attitude on the ASRA assessment.

Additionally, Madison’s attitude seemed to have shifted a bit as evidenced through her interview on April 12<sup>th</sup> when she indicated that she was “more grateful that I-I guess that I did get- I don’t wanna say take advantage but... I couldn’t imagine not being able to read and there are people that can’t read” (Madison, Interview, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Madison continued throughout the course of the study and semester to realize

how important reading was and how positively she viewed it. One reason for this is she realized how much reading of all kinds she did on a daily and weekly basis and, through this, felt more positively toward her abilities as a reader when she recognized she was constantly reading. Despite an initial negative self-assessment on the ASRA, Madison's attitude toward reading shifted from one of apathy to appreciation throughout the course of the study.

### **Role of Literacy**

Throughout the data collection period, Madison made several comments how she recognized how important reading was, though she needed to engage in it more often. Sentiments expressed in her literacy log reflections after tracking her literacy for one week were, "I would be lost if I couldn't read; reading is so important" (Madison, Literacy Log, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016) and "I think I need to read more often and not [watch] so much TV" (Madison, Literacy Log, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016). In her reflections, Madison began to view literacy as necessary but not engaging in it as much as she believed she should.

Madison also recognized how literacy, reading in particular, could help people through difficult times in their lives. When her son was in the hospital as a child, Madison recalled reading a book that helped her process and have the strength to endure the difficult time in both of their lives, "it was really like therapeutic for me to be reading that and it was almost how like while my son was going through the same instances, it like—I guess it kind of kept me from going loony" (Madison, Interview, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016). She viewed reading as calming and necessary in one of the most challenging times in her personal life. As an aspiring phlebotomist, Madison also acknowledged how

important it will be to be a careful and considerate reader when working with patients, blood orders, and doctors' instructions. She took into consideration how important reading is not only now, but also the role it will play in her future career.

Before enrolling in college Madison's literacy practices were mostly focused on social media, "Yeah I didn't feel like I was feeding my brain at all looking at anything on social media. At all. I felt, if anything, dumber. Just like what the heck?" (Madison, Interview, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016). However, as she entered school she believed that was a waste of her time and energy and not in fact the kind of information that was "feeding my brain" (Madison, Interview, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016) so she deactivated all social media and refocused on her academics. While tracking her literacy for two weeks, Madison still found "I did notice that I don't read enough, so like I'm like wow, what am I doing- like filling this [literacy] log out like every day. What do I read besides text messages?" (Madison, Interview, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Though her intention was to become more focused on what she considered worthwhile reading, she did not focus her efforts on academic texts nor work toward reading anything beyond environmental print or for social reasons.

In addition, her only recognition of when she used literacy with others was when she read to her grandson. Literacy then, like with Billy, was viewed as mostly an individual activity despite the fact that she was enrolled in college courses, engaging in some form of reading and writing every day. However, Madison was allowing her definition and use of reading to expand, initially defining reading as simply "extremely important" (Madison, Interview, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016). As the semester progressed, she was

able to focus her definition a little more clearly, stating that reading was “letters put together with sounds that make up your everyday life” (Madison, Interview, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Initially Madison also believed she might not benefit from the developmental reading course, though just a little over a month later, Madison recognized the class, “actually helps, so maybe I did need it” (Madison, Interview, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Madison explained this shift through her progression in her ability to use vocabulary terms correctly in context:

And each week on vocabulary words, we have to use the word in sentences. And she used me as an example, like she said [in the] beginning I needed like to step my game up with my [vocabulary] sentences. She said she could tell I hadn’t written anything in a long time. And she said now that I don’t think that at all.

You’re getting extra credit on your sentences now and I don’t even have to correct anything. (Madison, Interview, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016)

Madison tracked her literacy a for a total of two weeks. As the instructions were to mark events in which literacy was practiced, Madison checked off multiple items on the literacy log checklist and her tracking sheet itself was filled primarily with text messages and e-mails. However, in her interview responses, Madison acknowledged the importance of literacy, specifically reading, though this was not evidenced in her literacy log tracking. Madison engaged in literacy events throughout her daily schedule, stating she would sometimes spend up to three hours a day on literacy. However, Madison’s views on literacy use and how she actually spent her time on literacy events was contradictory.

### **Bree**

Bree was a 20-year-old African American female who grew up in and graduated from a high school approximately one-hour north of State College. During this study, Bree was working on her two-year degree in psychology with hopes of later attaining her four-year degree in this field. Bree was working part time while attending school full time. She was not the first person in her family to attend college, as her mother and father graduated from college, and sister was attending college at the same time. I had Bree as a participant of this study from February until May 2016.

Throughout the study, Bree was very upbeat and positive in her interactions with me. She recognized she needed assistance with her reading, but was actively working on improving:

I feel like I'm a developing reader. Um, in high school my ACT/SAT scores wasn't as strong as I was hoping, so I've tried to read more and do different strategies to actually see what skills can be developed [relating] as to comprehending. Because I could read something but don't remember it or don't understand it. (Bree, Interview, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016)

Bree remained cognizant of the fact that reading was an area she has, and continued to, struggle with, but was willing to find strategies to assist in becoming a stronger reader. Bree remained positive in her responses and transparent with her thoughts as we progressed throughout the research. In the following sections I describe Bree's experiences with reading regarding her reading strengths and struggles, attitude toward reading, and the literacy practices she used.

### **Reading Strengths and Struggles**

Bree had the opportunity to demonstrate her reading strengths and struggles through several instruments. Four different measures were used to determine Bree's reading strengths and struggles:

1. A self-assessment in the form of the Reading Ability Likert-type Scale Survey (RALSS)
2. A reading assessment in the form of the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT)
3. A reading assessment in the form of the Informal Reading Inventory (IRI)
4. Two semi-structured interviews.

Through these formats, she was able to discuss both areas in which she was confident in her abilities as well as where she needed to improve.

**Self-assessed and standardized assessment results of reading strengths and struggles.** When asked about her reading abilities, Bree answered with, "I would say I'm a developing reader" (Bree, Interview, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016) and "I think I'm intermediate" (Bree, Interview, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016). However, based on Bree's self-assessment of her reading abilities, she scored a 134 out of 150 on the RALSS, which indicated high overall reading confidence. The skills reflected upon were reading skills presented to her on the RALSS, not skills she identified without any prompting. On this assessment, Bree strongly identified fourteen out of 25 skills as strengths and one skill as a struggle. See Table 35 for specific areas identified.

Table 35

*Bree's Self-Identified Reading Strengths and Struggles*

Self-identified Strengths		Self-identified Struggles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sound out words</li> <li>• break big words into smaller parts</li> <li>• could identify the topic of a paragraph</li> <li>• identify and understand the main idea of a paragraph</li> <li>• effectively skim text to pick out important information</li> <li>• make predictions while reading</li> <li>• could understand text better while reading to herself</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• could distinguish between fact and opinion.</li> <li>• make appropriate inferences</li> <li>• apply reading to real life situations</li> <li>• connect reading to personal life</li> <li>• summarize a reading</li> <li>• evaluate the credibility and reliability of a text</li> <li>• determine bias</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• figure out the meaning of an unknown word in a sentence</li> </ul>

When questioned as to why Bree believed vocabulary was an area of struggle, Bree responded, “well I’ve just been told that I struggle with vocabulary” (Bree, Interview, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015). Due to her high school teachers alerting her to vocabulary issues, Bree internalized those criticisms and carried them as her own insecurities in reading. However, while Bree struggled on five of the six type of category questions on the IRI, vocabulary was not an area of struggle. In fact, during the listening section of the IRI, Bree demonstrated vocabulary to be a strength. Through the RALSS Bree indicated she was confident in several areas related to reading. However, the one

area identified as a struggle on the RALSS and in her interviews, vocabulary, ironically was the one area in which she demonstrated higher percentage of correct answers.

Along with demonstrating her vocabulary on the IRI, Bree was also assessed using the PPVT, in which she was able to demonstrate her receptive vocabulary, defined as the words which can be comprehended and responded to. Vocabulary plays a fundamental role in the reading process and is one area in which readers could demonstrate as a strength or struggle. At the beginning of this assessment, Bree was willing and seemed happy to complete the assessment for me, though she indicated it would be a difficult assessment for her, as she believed vocabulary was a struggle. At the beginning of the assessment, Bree's basal level was set 10. This was the predetermined starting level for every participant; if participants missed zero or one on this set, they continued to move forward, with each set increasing in difficulty. She answered steadily through the next several sets, only missing two to four in sets 10 through 13. However, beginning at set 14, Bree started to slow down and break the vocabulary down into word parts, a strength she indicated she had on the RALSS. For instance, in set 15 the word "quintet" was presented to Bree. Using word parts, Bree recognized that "quin" dealt with five of something. Once she realized this, she correctly identified the picture that corresponded to the term, quintet.

Bree also relied upon word parts during the IRI assessment on some vocabulary questions. During the oral reading at the tenth-grade level, Bree was asked to define "depressed" in the phrase, "the depressed ground." She was able to recognize that the prefix "de" meant down or away, and was able to define depressed as "deep, or sank into



the ground.” Despite her use of word parts, Bree began to struggle significantly in sets 15-17 on the PPVT. By reaching the highest set (set 17) on the PPVT, she demonstrated adequate vocabulary knowledge at first glance, as she did reach the adult levels of receptive vocabulary, or levels of expected receptive vocabulary one would have entering higher education. However, her itemized score throughout the assessment was 57%, which indicated significantly lower than the benchmark 80% which developmental students were expected to attain. The 57% pertained to the number of correct vocabulary responses throughout Bree’s entire testing session with the PPVT. This indicated that while she was able to reach one of the highest sets in the assessment, she struggled significantly throughout to do so. For instance, she only answered one question correctly during the last set of the PPVT. See Tables 36-39 for her oral, silent, and listening performance and Table 40 for PPVT performance.

Table 36

*Bree’s IRI Oral Performance*

IRI ORAL	Grade Level Readings			
	8	9	10	Total
Question Category				
Main Idea	1/1=100%	.5/1=50%	.5/1=50%	3/3=67%
Details	1/3=33%	1/2=50%	.5/3=17%	2.5/8=31%
Vocabulary	2/3=67%	2/2=100%	1/3=33%	5/8=63%
Cause and Effect	.5/1=50%	1/1=100%	.5/1=50%	2/3=67%
Inference	.5/1=50%	1.5/3=50%	1/1=100%	3/5=60%
Sequence	0/1=0%	0/1=0%	0/1=0%	0/3=0%
<b>Overall Score</b>	<b>5/10=50%</b>	<b>6/10=60%</b>	<b>3.5/10=35%</b>	
	93wcpm	116wcpm	77wcpm	95wcpm average

\* Highlighted red scores indicate a struggle

\*\*Highlighted blue indicates highest grade level score across all modalities

Table 37

*Bree's IRI Silent Performance*

IRI SILENT	Grade Level Readings			
	8	9	10	Total
Question Category				
Main Idea	.5/1=50%	1/1=100%	0/1=0%	1.5/3=50%
Details	0/3=0%	1/3=33%	0/2=0%	1/8=13%
Vocabulary	4/4=100%	2/3=67%	1/3=33%	7/10=70%
Cause and Effect	.5/1=50%	.5/2=25%	0/2=0%	1/5=20%
Inference	.5/1=50%	0/1=0%	0/1=0%	5/3=17%
Sequence	NA	NA	0/1=0%	0/1=0%
<b>Overall Score</b>	<b>5.5/10=55%</b>	<b>4.5/10=45%</b>	<b>1/10=10%</b>	

\* Highlighted red scores indicate a struggle

\*\*Highlighted blue indicates highest grade level score across all modalities

Table 38

*Bree's IRI Listening Performance*

IRI LISTENING	Grade Level Readings		
	10	9	Total
Question Category			
Main Idea	0/1=0%	1/1=100%	1/2=50%
Details	0/3=0%	1.5/3=50%	1.5/6=25%
Vocabulary	1/1=100%	2.5/3=67%	3.5/4=88%
Cause and Effect	1/2=50%	2/2=100%	3/4=75%
Inference	.5/2=25%	.5/1=50%	1/3=33%
Sequence	0/1=0%	NA	0/1=0%
<b>Overall Score</b>	<b>2.5/10=25%</b>	<b>7.5/10=75%</b>	

\*Highlighted green scores indicate a strength

\*\* Highlighted red scores indicate a struggle

\*\*\*Highlighted blue indicates highest grade level score across all modalities

Table 39

*Bree's Overall Performance Across Modalities and Grade Levels*

Question Category	Overall score across all grade levels and modalities
Main Idea	56%
Details	23%
Vocabulary	74%
Cause and Effect	54%
Inference	37%
Sequence	0%

\* Highlighted red scores indicate a struggle

Table 40

*Bree's PPVT Performance*

PPVT Overall Level	Set 10 Correct	Set 11 Correct	Set 12 Correct	Set 13 Correct	Set 14 Correct	Set 15 Correct	Set 16 Correct	Set 17 Correct	Average Correct
17	11/12= 92%	9/12= 75%	10/12= 83%	8/12= 67%	6/12= 50%	5/12= 42%	5/12= 42%	1/12=8 %	55/96= 57%

\*Set 10 was Basal and Set 17 was Frustration

During our first interview together, I asked Bree to reflect on the reading assessments she completed. After reflecting, she stated, "I feel kind of, I don't know. Iffy about it. Like did I do well or am I on the level that I need to be as a reader? You never know" (Bree, Interview, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Bree was able to recognize she did not do very well, and questioned if she was on the level she needed to be. Additionally, she contradicted her RALSS assessment as she marked reading to herself as a strength, among many other skills. During the IRI she had a difficult time responding to answers

correctly after reading silently and then in her interview stated, “I think I pick up more things if you read to me rather than me reading myself” (Bree, Interview, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016). The inconsistent statements and self-assessments demonstrated a lack of awareness of her actual reading abilities.

In addition to questioning her reading ability, Bree also explained why she believed she was struggling, stating:

I was just talking to my professor today about how high school don't really prepare you for college all the way. Especially with the skills that they focus on. When you come to college you should be more advanced, you should know this, you continue education. So I would say my preparation then and now, I don't think it really taught me anything about how to be a strong reader. (Bree, Interview, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016).

Bree did not feel she received adequate preparation in her high school years and was now playing catch-up with her basic reading and writing abilities.

**Reflection on Bree's strengths and struggles.** While Bree was told in the past she struggled with vocabulary and she specifically stated vocabulary was a struggle in her interviews and on the RALSS, on the IRI Bree answered vocabulary questions correctly 74% of the time across all three modalities. This was higher than any other category of question averaged across the modalities. Bree had internalized others' assessments of her abilities that she was initially unable to recognize vocabulary was not as large of a struggle as she perceived it to be.

Bree also indicated she struggled with sounding like a good reader when reading aloud. Through the oral reading this perception was supported as Bree often mispronounced, omitted, or replaced words. She also was very thorough with each word as she read, which slowed her reading pace. This could account for her difficulty in answering many of the questions that followed her oral readings. Her average words correct per minute score on the three oral readings was a 95wcpm. This is not an adequate wcpm fluency rate, as typically readers are reaching this wcpm in the second grade. Ultimately Bree was not fully in tune with her strengths and struggles, initially indicating complete confidence in her reading abilities, but demonstrating severe struggles within the IRI and PPVT.

When evaluating her strengths and struggles, she was not able to pick out a specific strength during her interview, other than reading summaries versus full texts, which demonstrated more of a preference. A weakness she discussed was with vocabulary. During the PPVT she reached set 17, though struggled to get there. During the IRI with in context vocabulary, Bree only got 74% of the vocabulary correct (though this was also the highest overall score throughout the types of questions asked). Bree was accurate in stating that vocabulary was an area of concern, though by the end of the semester she believed, "I'm getting good at vocabulary 'cause I'm understanding words more" (Bree, Interview, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Bree made an interesting statement to possibly explain why vocabulary had been an issue in the past, "So it's kind of like in my head, I got it as I'm a weak reader because I've been told this. But if I use my own strategies and my own skills then I'll probably do better" (Bree, Interview, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016).

Instead of relying on her own evaluation of her abilities, she internalized the feedback of others and carried that with her into her college experience. This could potentially have hindered her from doing better in her courses. Ultimately Bree was not aware of her strengths and struggles, often contradicting her own self-assessments through demonstrating her reading ability.

### **Attitude Toward Reading**

Bree had the opportunity to demonstrate her reading attitude through different instruments. Two different measures were used to determine Bree's reading attitude:

1. A self-assessment in the form of the Adult Survey of Reading Attitude (ASRA)
2. Two semi-structured interviews.

Through these formats, she was able to discuss her feelings and views on reading.

Based on the Adult Survey of Reading Attitudes, Bree had a score of 126 out of 200. Using 120 as the average attitude score, her score of 126 indicated a slightly positive attitude toward reading. Through conversation, Bree mentioned on more than one occasion how she viewed herself as a “developing” reader. She admitted she had room to improve regarding her reading abilities. Part of the reason Bree felt she had a positive attitude toward reading was her early experiences with reading, stating:

My father read to me more than my mother did. And my sister, we would read books together. She's 18 months older than me. So we was kinda really close in age, so if I didn't understand something she would help me out. So it was nice reading magazines, books, yeah. (Bree, Interview, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016)

Bree recalled positive early experiences with reading in a family setting. Though

Bree also discussed conflicting feelings regarding reading:

And I remember my mother was like you probably don't understand things. You probably just need to read it over again. And um, I usually would be the first person to be like done with reading. Like okay I get it. But then the teacher would ask me a question and I would know nothing about it. So then I have to be slower so, as I tried to prolong the process and reading things, I guess that's where—do you really just understand what you just read? Cuz you just took a long time to read, you know. So it's kind of like in my head, I got it as I'm a weak reader because I've been told this. But [now] if I use my own strategies and skills then I'll probably do better. (Bree, Interview, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016).

This led to her viewing reading at times in a negative way, but she came to the realization she was in charge of her reading progress and it seemed through taking accountability of her reading progress, she began to view reading in a more positive light.

Although Bree recognized she needed improvement in her reading, she believed it was her responsibility alone to improve, not necessarily with the assistance of a class (such as the developmental reading course). Bree first believed she should not be in a developmental reading course. She stated, “I think that even though I'm developing it's something that I should do myself” (Bree, Interview, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016). However, by the next time we met when asked about her feelings toward her developmental reading class she said “I'm sad that it's ending. Because I like that class and I'm learning a lot” (Bree, Interview, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Bree also enjoyed the text used in the class as it was a health contextualized textbook, “our book is really small, but there's so much

information in that book so I really like it. I think I'll continue to like, work on my reading skills as I continue to use the book" (Bree, Interview, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Bree remained open to learning from the developmental course and considered how she could continue to progress after the course finished.

Interest also played a large role in how Bree regarded and approached a text, as she stated, "if I don't like it [the text's content] then I don't think I take it as serious" (Bree, Interview, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Likewise, she also viewed reading as, "fun when I like the topic" (Bree, Interview, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Through these statements, Bree alluded to the fact that her reading attitude sometimes hinged upon whether or not she was interested in the text she was reading.

### **Role of Literacy**

Through the exercise of tracking literacy habits for one week, Bree realized, "literacy plays a[n] enormous role in my life. I read a lot each and every day and I don't even notice it a lot. I'm reading as I text, as I drive, as I study, just a lot of reading" (Bree, Literacy Log, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Bree also recognized that a lot of her reading and writing, outside of school, came from her texting and e-mailing socially. This was something she became more aware of after tracking for a total of two weeks.

One area in which she showed the most interest was how she did not realize until tracking her literacy how much she read every day. Bree eagerly said, "I mean, it's interesting. Um, after doing this, I didn't know I read as much you know, so I think it's pretty cool you actually read so often" (Bree, Interview, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Though shifting her understanding of what constituted reading, she said later in the same



interview, “I didn’t really consider reading the label on food or anything like that to be reading. You just look at it, you know?” (Bree, Interview, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Despite recognizing that we read all the time, some of that reading she did not truly consider to be reading.

Something that made Bree stand apart from other participants was her stance on literacy with others. When reflecting on if she engaged with literacy with others, Bree paused to really consider the question. Her initial response was “Yeah. I guess so. If it’s like a group activity” (Bree, Interview, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Bree originally only regarded shared literacy when it occurred in a classroom. On her literacy tracking, Bree spent a lot of time with social media, texting, and emailing. When asked to consider if this was done interactively with others, she admitted, “I guess that is [with others]. I haven’t really noticed that. I mean if I’m e-mailing somebody, yeah I’m reading—they’re reading what I’m saying. We’re writing back to each other. I text a lot I would say” (Bree, Interview, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Despite the fact she spent a great deal of time interacting with people through technology with reading and writing, she did not initially recognize this to be engaging with others in literate activities.

In our second interview Bree discussed instances of literacy interaction with a friend, “Me and my friend uh, she goes to Kent and we always talk about our school work and what’s interesting this week that we learned so we give each other little segments or like, articles to read about” (Bree, Interview, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Bree began to recognize that she did in fact use literacy with others, both academically and socially. This contrasted to her literacy log responses that in writing, she overwhelmingly stated

she believed literacy was an individual activity, “My reading events are usually individual” (Bree, Literacy Log, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016).

As an aspiring psychologist, Bree also stated how literacy would be important to her in her future career:

It’s important because I wanna be a psychotherapist and I have to read um, charts, I have to read like, patients’ problems and stuff, so I need to understand what’s going on and even just without understanding or reading the seg-, like um, paper that I get it, I just probably need to understand what they’re talking about. Say if they write something down and I can’t read it or understand it, then how am I gonna do my job? (Bree, Interview, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016)

She recognized reading would be very important in her career. However, while she tracked her literacy, most of her literacy time was spent on texting, social media, and the reading she had to do at her place of employment:

I read, um, like a daily schedule of who goes on break, who’s doing what, are they processing, or are they on a floor? I work at Gabriel Brothers so basically, just schedules for each person to be in a different department. And if we have something we want to register, training—I will help train and learn about the register. And I learn stuff everyday about the register too (Bree, Interview, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016)

Literacy, specifically reading, was important in her current job and she believed it would play a large role in her future career, however the way in which she spent her time did not support her academic goals.

Overall through tracking her literacy for two weeks and reflecting on her literacy use, Bree made several realizations about herself as a reader and writer. First, she recognized the immense amount of text that is around us at all times. Regardless of this realization, she only valued some of the text – not the environmental print. Second, there are times when she did engage with others in literate activities, not just in the classroom context or through texting or social media. Last, reading will play a very important role in her future career. However, again as with previous participants, despite knowing the importance of literacy now and in the future, her current use of literacy did not support her goals.

### **Janelle**

Janelle was a 19-year-old African American female who grew up in and graduated from a neighboring community from State College. She was working on her two-year degree in the medical field with hopes of later attaining a medical degree in pediatrics. Janelle was working part time while attending school part time. She was the first person in her family to attend college. I had Janelle as a participant of this study from February until May 2016.

Janelle was very upbeat while speaking to me throughout the entire research study. She had high energy and enjoyed talking about her son. Confidence exuded from her when she spoke about her future goals, her current abilities, and even the things in which she was struggling. As she recognized she had areas to work on, she stated:

I can always take something and learn better. I can always take stuff and run with it. I'm not going to just stop there and be like 'Oh, I can learn this on my own'

No, I like getting help. (Janelle, Interview, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016)

Janelle brought a positive energy to the research sessions and was always candid with how she felt and believed. When registering for her Fall 2016 classes, Janelle felt she was comfortable around me and signed up for a course I was teaching (non-developmental reading course). In the following sections I describe Janelle's experiences with reading regarding her reading strengths and struggles, attitude toward reading, and the literacy practices she used.

### **Reading Strengths and Struggles**

Janelle had the opportunity to demonstrate her reading strengths and struggles through several instruments. Four different measures were used to determine Janelle's reading strengths and struggles:

1. A self-assessment in the form of the Reading Ability Likert-type Scale Survey (RALSS)
2. A reading assessment in the form of the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT)
3. A reading assessment in the form of the Informal Reading Inventory (IRI)
4. Two semi-structured interviews.

Through these formats, she was able to discuss both areas in which she was confident in her abilities as well as where she needed to improve.

**Self-assessed and standardized assessment results of reading strengths and struggles.** When asked about her reading strengths, Janelle needed some examples to help her think about possible areas of reading. After we discussed some examples of reading skills, she said “I mean, I’d say like finding the main idea- we was just talking about that in Critical Analysis” (Janelle, Interview, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016). On the other hand, Janelle seemed to know exactly what her struggles were in reading. When asked about reading struggles, right away she answered:

Vocabularies. Big words, trying to understand. Trying to put together words that I don’t know, that’s one the biggest things I struggle with. Like if you throw a word at me and say ‘What do you think this word means?’ I’d be like ‘I don’t know...’ I gotta look it up for me to figure it out. (Janelle, Interview, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016)

When completing the RALSS, she scored a 108 out of 150 on the RALSS, using 87.5 as the average, a score of 108 indicated a moderate overall reading confidence. The skills reflected upon were reading skills presented to her on the RALSS, not skills she identified without any prompting. On this assessment, Janelle strongly identified six out of 25 skills as strengths and four skills as struggles. See Table 41 for specific areas identified.

Table 41

*Janelle's Self-Identified Reading Strengths and Struggles*

Self-identified Strengths	Self-identified Struggles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• could identify the topic of a paragraph</li> <li>• effectively skim text to pick out important information</li> <li>• make predictions while reading</li> <li>• could understand text better while reading to herself</li> <li>• read and understand textbooks</li> <li>• take information previously learned and connect it to new information being gained</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• break big words into smaller parts</li> <li>• figure out the meaning of an unknown word in a sentence</li> <li>• identify supporting details</li> <li>• determine bias</li> </ul>

During her interviews, Janelle focused specifically on vocabulary and figuring out the meanings of unknown words as something in which she would like to improve. She recognized that as someone going into the medical field, being able to understand word parts and meanings of unknown words would be very important. During the IRI assessment, Janelle demonstrated she was accurate in her identification of vocabulary as a reading struggle. Across all modalities she was only able to answer 52% of the vocabulary questions correctly.

Additionally, in the PPVT, Janelle struggled to demonstrate her receptive vocabulary, the words which can be comprehended and responded to. At the beginning of the assessment, Janelle's basal level was set 10. This was the predetermined starting level for every participant. If participants missed zero or one on this set, they continued to move forward, with each set increasing in difficulty. Janelle expressed that while she

would try her best on the PPVT, she knew she would struggle. In fact, the further into the assessment, the more she laughed after each word read. Janelle stated she was laughing because she had no idea what most of the words meant, nor had she ever heard of half of them, specifically “gaff,” “entomologist,” and “mercantile.” During this assessment, while she was able to reach set 15, which demonstrated adequate receptive vocabulary knowledge overall, or levels of expected receptive vocabulary one would have entering higher education. However, her itemized score throughout the assessment was 57%, which indicated significantly lower than the benchmark 80% which developmental students were expected to attain. The 57% pertained to the number of correct vocabulary responses throughout Janelle’s entire testing session with the PPVT. In both the IRI vocabulary and PPVT, a clear downward trend was noticeable in the amount of correct answers given as the readings and levels became more advanced. See Tables 42-45 for her oral, silent, and listening IRI performance and Table 46 for PPVT performance.

Janelle was accurate in her identification of vocabulary as a struggle, only answering 52% correct across all modalities. She was also accurate in her self-assessment in struggling with detail questions. On the IRI across all modalities, she only answered 52% of details correctly. While she did not specifically discuss supporting details in her interviews, she did mark she was not confident in performing this skill on her RALSS. Janelle was very aware of the areas in which she struggled with in regard to her reading ability. On the tenth-grade silent reading during the IRI, after the test was

Table 42

*Janelle's IRI Oral Performance*

IRI ORAL	Grade Level Readings			
	8	9	10	Total
Question Category				
Main Idea	1/1=100%	1/1=100%	.5/1=50%	2.5/3=83%
Details	1/3=33%	2/3=67%	0/2=0%	3/8=38%
Vocabulary	3/4=75%	2/3=67%	1/3=33%	6/10=60%
Cause and Effect	.5/1=50%	2/2=100%	1/2=50%	3.5/5=70%
Inference	1/1=100%	1/1=100%	1/1=100%	3/3=100%
Sequence	NA	N/A	1/1=100%	1/1=100%
<b>Overall Score</b>	<b>6.5/10=65%</b>	<b>8/10=80%</b>	<b>4.5/10=45%</b>	
	119wcpm	185wcpm	157wcpm	153wcpm average

\*Highlighted green scores indicate a strength

\*\* Highlighted red scores indicate a struggle

\*\*\*Highlighted blue indicates highest grade level score across all modalities

Table 43

*Janelle's IRI Silent Performance*

IRI SILENT	Grade Level Readings			
	8	9	10	Total
Question Category				
Main Idea	1/1=100%	.5/1=50%	.5/1=50%	2/3=67%
Details	2.5/3=83%	1.5/3=50%	2/3=67%	6/9=67%
Vocabulary	2/2=100%	1/3=33%	0/1=0%	3/6=50%
Cause and Effect	1/1=100%	2/2=100%	.5/2=25%	3.5/5=70%
Inference	1/2=50%	0/1=0%	1/2=50%	2/5=40%
Sequence	.5/1=50%	NA	0/1=0%	.5/2=25%
<b>Overall Score</b>	<b>8/10=80%</b>	<b>5/10=50%</b>	<b>4/10=40%</b>	

\*Highlighted red scores indicate a struggle

\*\*Highlighted blue indicates highest grade level score across all modalities



Table 44

*Janelle's IRI Listening Performance*

IRI LISTENING	Grade Level Readings		
	10	9	Total
Question Category			
Main Idea	1/1=100%	.5/1=50%	1.5/2=75%
Details	1.5/3=50%	1/2=50%	2.5/5=50%
Vocabulary	1/3=33%	1/2=50%	2/5=40%
Cause and Effect	1/1=100%	1/1=100%	2/2=100%
Inference	1/1=100%	0/3=0%	1/4=25%
Sequence	1/1=100%	1/1=100%	2/2=100%
<b>Overall Score</b>	<b>6.5/10=55%</b>	<b>4.5/10=45%</b>	

\*Highlighted green scores indicate a strength

\*\* Highlighted red scores indicate a struggle

\*\*\*Highlighted blue indicates highest grade level score across all modalities

Table 45

*Janelle's Overall Performance Across Modalities and Grade Levels*

Question Category	Overall score across all grade levels and modalities
Main Idea	75%
Details	52%
Vocabulary	52%
Cause and Effect	75%
Inference	50%
Sequence	70%

\* Highlighted red scores indicate a struggle

Table 46

*Janelle's PPVT Performance*

<b>PPVT Overall Level</b>	<b>Set 10 Correct</b>	<b>Set 11 Correct</b>	<b>Set 12 Correct</b>	<b>Set 13 Correct</b>	<b>Set 14 Correct</b>	<b>Set 15 Correct</b>	<b>Average Correct</b>
<b>15</b>	11/12= 92%	9/12= 75%	6/12= 50%	7/12= 58%	5/12= 42%	3/12= 25%	41/72= 57%

---

\*Set 10 was Basal and Set 15 was Frustration

---

read and questions were asked, she even stated, “this is the one I am frustrated at”

(Janelle, IRI, February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016), further demonstrating her awareness of when she struggles.

Alternatively, when it came to identifying her strengths, Janelle was not quite as accurate. Through the RALSS and her interviews, Janelle mentioned that identifying the topic and main idea of a sentence was something she felt confident in performing. However, on the IRI she only showed this to be a strength when reading orally. Even then, her frustration level was reached at grade level ten, still grade levels below where a college freshman should be performing. In the silent and listening modalities Janelle did not necessarily struggle to answer main idea questions, but was not able to demonstrate main ideas as a strength as she previously believed she could. She described her process as:

But you gotta literally just sit there, try to figure out the topic, the main ideas, the important stuff that you're reading... because you won't understand it [if not].

Cause I know I wouldn't, personally, wouldn't understand it unless I actually sit

and be like ‘Okay, what am I reading? What is this? What is that word? Let me connect this word like that. (Janelle, Interview, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016)

Though Janelle was able to talk about the importance of finding topics and main ideas, she was not consistently able to find them within the text on the IRI.

Another area she marked as having complete confidence in performing on RALSS was understanding text when reading to herself. During her silent reading on the IRI, Janelle was only able to reach grade level ten before she demonstrated frustration. In addition, she demonstrated no strengths within this modality and even showed substantial struggles in three of the six type of category questions: vocabulary, inference, and sequence.

When reflecting together on her assessment performances, I spoke to Janelle in regard to where she demonstrated strengths and struggles. As I told her that she scored higher overall when reading orally, she responded:

I didn’t even know that, that’s something I just learned! I mean, cause maybe cause I read more to myself than to anybody else. So, that’s why I probably, why I feel like that was more [of a strength]. But sitting here reading to you, and learning that maybe I do do better reading out loud out to somebody than to myself. (Janelle, Interview, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016)

While she was surprised at her results at first, she was able to think about why she perhaps thought silently reading was more advantageous. Even more so, it was something she would consider trying in the future to help her reading. Based on Janelle’s

original self-assessments and subsequent scores on the IRI and PPVT, she was more aware of her struggles than strengths.

**Reflection on Janelle's strengths and struggles.** When comparing Janelle's RALSS self-assessment with her actual performance on the IRI and PPVT, Janelle was more in tune with her reading struggles than her strengths. However, four of the six reading skills she marked as having complete confidence were not assessed through either of the standardized assessment measures. Janelle acknowledged that she had work to do, especially when it came to vocabulary issues in her reading. By the second interview, and after a few more weeks in her developmental reading course, she believed she had started to make those improvements, "we do these things [in class activities] where we do word parts from the vocabulary words, that's what's helping more now, knowing word parts that'll put the word together that'll give you the definition so that's something that I worked on" (Janelle, Interview, April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016). She was beginning to see herself improving on issues revolving vocabulary.

As our second interview progressed, Janelle began to focus more on the writing issues she was seeing as a result of the developmental class. In her course, she found her instructor criticizing her writing on class tests and quizzes. While Janelle felt her instructor was not kind about it, it made her realize her writing ability needed improvement as well:

I feel like I can read good as everybody else [in the developmental reading course] it's just writing sometimes, come in play like I feel like I could be better when I'm writing, especially having Dr. K. She's so belligerent, she'd tell you

off rip, now this not right, you need help, you need help with the writing center, like- that's what made me feel like- okay I do need help with writing. (Janelle, Interview, April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016)

As writing is used to help support reading skills in the developmental reading courses at State College, Janelle was realizing another area she could use improvement.

An additional area on the RALSS Janelle marked as having high confidence in performing was sounding like a good reader when reading aloud. Though Janelle performed the highest on the oral reading, she was only able to reach grade ten. Also, her average wcpm score was 153. As an average college freshman has a wcpm score of 153, Janelle's 153wcpm average on eighth through tenth grade readings did not demonstrate an oral reading strength. Again, Tables 42-45 illustrate Janelle's IRI performance.

Finally, though active reading was not a skill assessed through the IRI or PPVT, Janelle did believe she was advancing in this area:

I learned that when you reading something, I never paid attention to the questions before you read, like it's like a page, the first page, where the title is and then there's questions like you'll learn about- you should be able to answer these after that. I never sat there and read them before, so my teacher mentioned it to us instead of us going in there and reading everything, you really just look at the questions and go by that and then that's what you supposed to read, answer them questions. But normally I just used to go in and read and not just think about the questions at all and I've paid attention to those questions, I feel like that helped

me better because now I don't have to sit there and read all this, I'm just reading what I need to read, saving me time. (Janelle, Interview, April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016)

Through mentioning her improving in areas such as vocabulary and active reading, Janelle acknowledged that the developmental reading course was assisting her in enhancing her reading abilities. Overall, of all the participants up to this point, Janelle was more aware of her reading abilities, specifically her struggles.

### **Attitude Toward Reading**

Janelle had the opportunity to demonstrate her reading attitude through different instruments. Two different measures were used to determine Janelle's reading attitude:

1. A self-assessment in the form of the Adult Survey of Reading Attitude (ASRA)
2. Two semi-structured interviews.

Through these formats, she was able to discuss her feelings and views on reading.

Based on the Adult Survey of Reading Attitudes, Janelle had a 121 score out of 200. Using 120 as the average, this indicated a slightly positive attitude toward reading. When asked how she viewed her reading, Janelle stated "I feel confident, cool" (Janelle, Interview, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016). She also saw value in her developmental reading course as she particularly appreciated when the class focused on breaking words down and discovering the meanings of unknown words from context, an area previously discussed as a struggle. She saw this as a direct area of assistance to her needs in the medical field, "I like getting help...cause I'm going to have to be doing a lot of reading and a lot of writing, especially with medicine and all that" (Janelle, Interview, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016).

One aspect of reading attitude Janelle did discuss frustration with was her developmental teacher:

[I have] all this frustration toward my teacher right now. Because I feel like- she helps, but at the same time, she throws that help at you. I can't explain it like...okay she'll say I'll help you- like one class, it'll be a Monday class, she like- okay, when I come in, I help you and when that class come, you say something about it, and she like, oh I'm not talking about that now. And it's like okay, well you told me you was gonna help me so. (Janelle, Interview, April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016)

Even to discuss her teacher, Janelle spoke very quickly and seemed frustrated while speaking to me. There was a paradox of recognizing she was making gains with her reading in the class, but holding a negative attitude toward the class because of her teacher. Her mixed feeling on the subject were demonstrated when she stated:

But she's a good teacher and all it's just the way she come at the students. It's like she feel like we should be on her level right now, but at the same time, we can't be on the same level as you if we're learning from you. Feel me? Like- I don't know, I just feel like- she feel like we should be up there with her. Like- okay yeah, we are in college but at the same time you have to learn and get steps to get to where you're at- you can't just be- oh, I know how to write like you, like- oh I know how to read like you- like you can't expect that out of fresh students. That's how I feel. But she's a good teacher though, she do help me with a lot. (Janelle, Interview, April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016)

Janelle recognized her teacher's assistance, but resented the way in which the help was given.

Finally, Janelle said she has always, until recently, been viewed by her teachers as being a successful reader and therefore felt positively toward reading, "A lot of my teachers said I was good at reading and writing [in high school]" (Janelle, Interview, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2106). Having her previous teachers view her in this way helped to maintain her own positive attitude toward reading. Ultimately, Janelle had a positive attitude toward reading and remediation, though mixed feelings when it came to her developmental teacher.

### **Role of Literacy**

"Literacy plays a huge role in my daily life" (Janelle, Literacy Log, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016) and "I never knew I read so much in one day" (Janelle, Literacy Log, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016) were realizations Janelle made while tracking her literacy events for one week. When asked how much of her day was consumed with literacy, Janelle responded with, "All day. I'm either on my phone all day reading something, or I'm reading bills, reading my mail. I read the news, I watch CNN a lot. I write down a lot of stuff that I need to do each week" (Janelle, Interview, February 24<sup>th</sup>). Janelle recognized that however much of her time spent with literacy is with social media and for social uses. To Janelle, literacy was a way to communicate, catch up with people, and "gossiping basically about Facebook status, Twitter status" (Janelle, Interview, April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016).

Even Janelle's definition of reading was more of a recognition of the role literacy plays in people's lives, "I would say reading is like a development of your brain...So I



feel like reading plays a huge role in your daily life. Because if you can't read, then what are you going to do?" (Janelle, Interview, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016). When asked to define reading again weeks later, Janelle had a similar definition though expanded it to include text she did not previously consider to be text, "reading is something you do every day in your life whether you notice it or you don't, that's what I learned because when we was doing a literacy log, I was like, oh this is reading [social media]? I didn't even know!" (Janelle, Interview, April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Despite Janelle spending a large amount of time with social media, until this point she did not consider that to be reading. Janelle slowly began to expand how she viewed reading and the way in which she could engage with text.

Nevertheless, even though she knew the importance of reading in her life, especially as it related to her field of study, Janelle did not engage in a lot of academic reading. She stated she spent time using literacy in some way, though, "I'm either on my phone all day reading something, or I'm reading bills, reading my mail. I read the news, I watch CNN a lot. I write down a lot of stuff I need to do each week" (Janelle, Interview, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016).

Though it seemed most of her literacy use stemmed from social media, to do lists, and texting, Janelle said she also shared literacy with her son. She did not recognize any literacy sharing in an academic context, despite taking courses that semester. Through her literacy log responses, Janelle noted several times that the literacy she interacted with each day was, "an individual thing" (Janelle, Literacy Log, February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Literacy was again, like several previous participants, an activity in which was viewed to be

engaged in alone – despite the many interactions (social media, texting, discussing text in class) that occurred on a weekly basis.

When looking at Janelle’s actual tracking of her literacy events, her calendar was filled with texting, “FB,” and when she set and used her alarms. Even though she was in class for one of the two weeks of the literacy tracking, she rarely made note of her time spent reading or writing in an academic sense. She did admit she spent too much time on social media, saying ““I be trying to get books to read, instead of being on social networks all day. To keep me off of social networks, because it’s the devil. I feel like it’s so addictive” (Janelle, Interview, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016). One way to bring together her constant use of technology and reading more was to incorporate more electronic books. Janelle stated she looked into, “Nook. I got apps like that. And I try to find like, the free ones on Apple” (Janelle, Interview, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016). This was her solution to try to curb her social media use.

Ultimately Janelle understood the importance of literacy, even recognizing she used it more than she was aware of initially. However, she continued to use it primarily for reasons beyond how she could to advance her career goals, something she stated she needed to do. Literacy was a vehicle through which she communicated, though recognized it held much value and importance, even if she did not always treat it as such.

### **Jamie**

Jamie was a 23-year-old white female who grew up in and graduated from a high school approximately thirty minutes from State College. Jamie previously attended and earned an associate’s degree in education from a university northeast of State College

prior to attending State College. Jamie was working on her two-year degree in dental assisting, attending school full time while working full time. She was the first person in her family to attend college. I had Jamie as a participant of this study from February until May 2016.

Jamie was a very confident and assured reader and student. When she talked about her abilities, she believed “I mean, I’m sure I could use improvement, obviously, with like, context clues. But that said, I’m a pretty confident reader.” (Jamie, Interview, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016). Though she was very confident, she still admitted the developmental reading class was beneficial to her, “Yeah, it’s definitely beneficial” (Jamie, Interview, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016). She remained this confident throughout our research sessions. In the following sections I describe Jamie’s experiences with reading regarding her reading strengths and struggles, attitude toward reading, and the literacy practices she used.

### **Reading Strengths and Struggles**

Jamie had the opportunity to demonstrate her reading strengths and struggles through several instruments. Four different measures were used to determine Jamie’s reading strengths and struggles:

1. A self-assessment in the form of the Reading Ability Likert-type Scale Survey (RALSS)
2. A reading assessment in the form of the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT)
3. A reading assessment in the form of the Informal Reading Inventory (IRI)

#### 4. Two semi-structured interviews.

Through these formats, she was able to discuss both areas in which she was confident in her abilities as well as where she needed to improve.

**Self-assessed and standardized assessment results of reading strengths and struggles.** When discussing her strengths, Jamie initially needed examples of reading skills in which she could choose from in order to decide what she considered her strengths to be. After some examples, Jamie was able to respond “Oh, I think, um, looking at the main idea. I do well” (Jamie, Interview, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016). When considering her strengths, Jamie quickly was able to identify finding the meaning of words through context, saying:

Like whenever I’m reading I try to figure it [the meaning of a word] out, and usually it doesn’t happen. Sometimes I’ll try to put like the root words and the suffixes and prefixes together, and try to figure out the meaning. But usually that’s really difficult. (Jamie, Interview, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016)

Based on Jamie’s self-assessment of her reading abilities, she scored a 140 out of 150 on the RALSS, which indicated very high overall reading confidence. Jamie rated herself as having complete confidence on 18 of 25 items, with only three items marked as moderately high (a “4”). These were reading skills presented to her on the RALSS, not skills she identified without any prompting. See Table 47 for specific areas identified.

Table 47

*Jamie's Self-Identified Reading Strengths and Struggles*

<b>Indicated as having complete confidence</b>	<b>Indicated as having complete confidence</b>	<b>Indicated as having moderately high confidence</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• break big words into smaller parts</li> <li>• could identify the topic of a paragraph</li> <li>• identify and understand the main idea of a paragraph</li> <li>• effectively skim text to pick out important information</li> <li>• make predictions while reading</li> <li>• sounding like a good when reading aloud</li> <li>• could understand text while reading to herself</li> <li>• read and understand textbooks</li> <li>• could distinguish between fact and opinion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• make appropriate inferences</li> <li>• connecting and using graphics in conjunction with the text</li> <li>• identify supporting details</li> <li>• take information previously learned and connect it to new information being gained</li> <li>• apply reading to real life situations</li> <li>• connect reading to personal life</li> <li>• summarize a reading</li> <li>• evaluate the credibility and reliability of a text</li> <li>• determine bias</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understand all the words on a page in a textbook</li> <li>• figure out the meaning of an unknown word in a sentence</li> <li>• identify a thesis statement in a longer piece of text</li> </ul>

Through comparison to the skills in which Jamie indicated were strengths on the RALSS and her performance on the IRI, Jamie was not able to demonstrate the previously mentioned self-assessed strengths. Of the six type of category questions, Jamie indicated main ideas and details were strengths. Yet, across all modalities she was only able to answer main idea questions correctly 58% of the time and details 58% of the

time. Not only were these skills not strengths, she struggled on demonstrating her abilities.

One explanation for not performing well on a listening modality reading, was her lack of interest in the topic, “I didn’t like the one, it was about outer space, maybe? Yeah, I didn’t really enjoy that one. But that’s because I’m not really in to- I’m more into Dolly Parton. It was interesting to me” (Jamie, Interview, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016). The Dolly Parton reading she referred to was a ninth-grade level oral reading, in which she answered 80% of the questions correctly. The passage dealing with Buzz Aldrin (the outer space text) was an eleventh-grade oral passage in which she only answered 35% of the questions correctly. Though the readings were on two different grade levels and modalities, she seemed to believe the level of interest prohibited her from performing well on the questions. See Tables 48-51 for her oral, silent, and listening performance.

Table 48

*Jamie’s IRI Oral Performance*

IRI ORAL	Grade Level Readings					Total
	8	9	10	11	12	
Question Category						
Main Idea	.5/1=50%	.5/1=50%	1/1=100%	1/1=100%	0/1=0%	3/5=60%
Details	.5/3=17%	3/3=100%	3/3=100%	1/2=50%	2/3=67%	9.5/14=68%
Vocabulary	2/2=100%	2/3=67%	0/1=0%	2/2=100%	1/3=33%	7/11=64%
Cause and Effect	1/1=100%	2/2=100%	2/2=100%	.5/1=50%	1/1=100%	6.5/7=93%
Inference	1/2=50%	.5/1=50%	1/2=50%	1/3=33%	1.5/2=75%	5/10=50%
Sequence	1/1=100%	N/A	1/1=100%	0/1=0%	NA	2/3=67%
Overall Score	6/10=60%	8/10=80%	8/10=80%	5.5/10=55%	5.5/10=55%	
	151wcpm	194wcpm	171wcpm	155wcpm	123wcpm	159wcpm average

\*Highlighted green scores indicate a strength

\*\* Highlighted red scores indicate a struggle

\*\*\*Highlighted blue indicates highest grade level score across all modalities

Table 49

*Jamie's IRI Silent Performance*

IRI SILENT	Grade Level Readings					Total
	8	9	10	11	12	
Question Category						
Main Idea	.5/1=50%	1/1=100%	1/1=100%	1/1=100%	0/1=0%	3.5/5=70%
Details	.5/3=17%	1/2=50%	2.5/3=83%	1/1=100%	1/2=50%	6/11=55%
Vocabulary	1/3=33%	2/2=100%	3/3=100%	0/3=0%	1/2=50%	7/13=54%
Cause and Effect	1/1=100%	1/1=100%	1/1=100%	1/1=100%	0/1=0%	4/5=80%
Inference	1/1=100%	3/3=100%	0/1=0%	3/3=100%	0/2=0%	7/10=70%
Sequence	1/1=100%	0/1=0%	.5/1=50%	1/1=100%	.5/2=25%	3/6=50%
Overall Score	5/10=50%	8/10=80%	8/10=80%	7/10=70%	5.5/10=55%	

\*Highlighted green scores indicate a strength

\*\* Highlighted red scores indicate a struggle

\*\*\*Highlighted blue indicates highest grade level score across all modalities

Table 50

*Jamie's IRI Listening Performance*

IRI LISTENING	Grade Level Readings			Total
	12	11	10	
Question Category				
Main Idea	.5/1=50%	0/1=0%	.5/1=50%	1/3=33%
Details	1/2=50%	2.5/4=63%	0/2=0%	3.5/8=44%
Vocabulary	1/2=50%	0/1=0%	2/3=67%	3/6=50%
Cause and Effect	0/1=0%	0/2=0%	2/2=100%	2/5=40%
Inference	3/3=100%	.5/1=50%	1/1=100%	4.5/5=90%
Sequence	1/1=100%	.5/1=50%	1/1=100%	2.5/3=83%
Overall Score	6.5/10=65%	3.5/10=35%	6.5/10=95%	

\*Highlighted green scores indicate a strength

\*\* Highlighted red scores indicate a struggle

\*\*\*Highlighted blue indicates highest grade level score across all modalities

Table 51

*Jamie's Overall Performance Across Modalities and Grade Levels*

Question Category	Overall score across all grade levels and modalities
Main Idea	58%
Details	58%
Vocabulary	57%
Cause and Effect	74%
Inference	66%
Sequence	63%

\* Highlighted red scores indicate a struggle

Jamie also indicated that she was very confident in both reading orally and silently. She did reach the twelfth grade leveled readings in both of those modalities, farther than any other case study participant. Though she did struggle more in the silent modality across the different category questions. Jamie discussed her oral reading saying, “Even like if I’m reading like textbook to myself and I don’t understand it, I’ll read it out loud and for some reason it just makes more sense to me if I say it out loud” (Jamie, Interview, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016). Her preference was oral reading, though her frustration level for both oral and silent were both on twelfth grade levels.

Additionally, as it related to oral reading, Jamie’s average words correct per minute score on the five oral readings was a 159wcpm. On average, her words correct per minute score is that of an average college freshman according to Rasinski et al. (2017). However, on the twelfth grade reading her words correct per minute was only 123wcpm. Her highest wcpm score was during the reading on Dolly Parton, one she expressed she found interesting.



Another area Jamie mentioned during her interview and indicated on the RALSS as a struggle, was vocabulary. She was accurate in this assessment as she struggled to answer vocabulary questions correctly through the silent and listening modalities, and only answered 57% of the vocabulary questions correctly overall. Through the assessment of the PPVT, Jamie demonstrated her receptive vocabulary, the words which can be comprehended and responded to. At the beginning of the assessment, Jamie's basal level was set 10, the predetermined starting level for every participant. If participants missed zero or one on this set, they continued to move forward, with each set increasing in difficulty. Throughout the assessment, with each Jamie missed progressively more. Despite showing struggles as the set difficulty increased, her pace of answering was very quick. She even noted in an interview regarding the PPVT, "Um, but towards the end, those pictures, I had no idea what they meant" (Jamie, Interview, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016). Ultimately her frustration level was set 15. This demonstrated adequate receptive vocabulary knowledge overall as she displayed adult levels of receptive vocabulary, or levels of expected receptive vocabulary one would have entering higher education. However, Jamie's itemized score throughout the assessment was 74% which indicated slightly lower than the benchmark 80% which developmental students were expected to attain. The 74% pertained to the number of correct vocabulary responses throughout Jamie's entire testing session with the PPVT. While she was able to reach adult level sets, her responses within the sets themselves showed she slightly struggled to reach adult level receptive vocabulary. For Jamie's full PPVT performance, see Table 52.

Table 52

*Jamie's PPVT Performance*

PPVT Overall Level	Set 10 Correct	Set 11 Correct	Set 12 Correct	Set 13 Correct	Set 14 Correct	Set 15 Correct	Average Correct
15	11/12= 92%	11/12= 92%	11/12= 92%	9/12= 75%	7/12= 58%	4/12= 33%	53/72= 74%

\*Set 10 was Basal and Set 15 was Frustration

**Reflection on Jamie's strengths and struggles.** Jamie rated herself very highly on the RALSS. However, she was not able to perform as highly as she described herself. Despite reaching grade level twelve in the IRI, within each reading, she did struggle with main ideas, details, and vocabulary specifically. While she admitted vocabulary was a struggle, she described identifying main ideas a strength. In fact, in regard to main ideas, Jamie further explained "Yeah, like in Critical Analysis, we have the main idea on the website, and I completed that. It was pretty easy for me" (Jamie, Interview, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016). Though on the IRI across all three modalities, she was only able to respond with the correct main idea 58% of the time, which would appear to make main ideas a source of struggle. Jamie's overall perception of her abilities was quite higher than her ability to demonstrate on these assessments.

Jamie also had a very high confidence in reading overall stating, "I think I'm a little above some kids in my like, Critical Analysis [developmental reading] class" (Jamie, Interview, April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016) and that she was confident with her reading. However, when asked to define reading, she was not able to provide a definition. Rather she commented on how she viewed reading as a "very important part of life" (Jamie, Interview, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016) and "it's an everyday skill that you need to have" (Jamie,

Interview, April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Ultimately, Jamie was aware of her struggles, particularly in vocabulary, though over estimated her ability to demonstrate the skills she indicated were strengths.

### **Attitude Toward Reading**

Jamie had the opportunity to demonstrate her reading attitude through different instruments. Two different measures were used to determine Jamie's reading attitude:

1. A self-assessment in the form of the Adult Survey of Reading Attitude (ASRA)
2. Two semi-structured interviews.

Through these formats, she was able to discuss her feelings and views on reading.

Based on the Adult Survey of Reading Attitudes, Jamie had a 119 score out of 200. Using 120 as the average attitude score, her score of 119 indicated a slight negative attitude toward reading. When talking about how she felt about reading and herself as a reader, Jamie said, "I guess it depends what it is. If it's something I want to read, like a biography or maybe something in history. But if it's like, I don't know, a science textbook, I don't want to read it" (Jamie, Interview, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016). Interest was a large part of how she felt about a text, as she demonstrated on the IRI through the readings she specifically mentioned either liking or disliking.

She also expressed that though she is confident in reading, it has no overall impact on her life, "It doesn't bother me. Like, I think 'cause I think I'm good at it. Like, doesn't like, have any effect on me" (Jamie, Interview, April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016). However, later in the same interview (April 11<sup>th</sup>), Jamie expressed her appreciation of her ability to read because of a family member's difficulty doing so. As Jamie explained, "Like, he [a

brother] doesn't know how to spell and like, he can't have a license because he can't read...And I think that's kind of like, why I think reading is so important" (Jamie, Interview, April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016). So, while she believed reading did not impact her because she was "good" at it, she appreciated her skills, recognizing that not all are able to read well.

Despite scoring below the 120 average on the ASRA, Jamie's attitude toward reading as deemed through her interviews was moderately high, and her attitude toward remediation, despite feeling confident in her reading, was also high. Jamie expressed "actually, that's [Critical Analysis] my favorite class...it like correlates with what your major is, so that's nice too" and she understood the benefit of the class as it was teaching "techniques in reading I can improve on" (Jamie, Interview, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016). Jamie continued positive comments toward the class, stating:

Well I like the teacher a lot too, but uh, I don't know. I like doing the stuff on the computer, and then she goes through it with us in class, which is nice. And they're like, all the different topics that you need to know. (Jamie, Interview, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016)

Jamie viewed her developmental reading class in a positive light. She also felt positively toward reading itself, despite scoring slightly negative on the ASRA.

### **Role of Literacy**

Through living with and witnessing an adult brother who was not able to read and write above a third-grade level, Jamie was able to express that literacy was very

important to her, but also to all who need to function daily. She explained his struggle more by saying:

But um, like, my mom's like, she does everything for him. Like, his bills she does, like, she drives him to work, picks him up from work, um, if he's cooking something and you're home, he'll like, say oh, how do you make this, and he'll give you the package or um, uh, you know, like text messaging or like, if he's writing something on Facebook, he'll ask somebody how to spell something. I mean, he knows a couple like, he knows some words. But not a lot. (Jamie, Interview, April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016)

This helped Jamie recognize literacy's value and importance from the simple to more complex tasks.

Jamie also indicated that you read everywhere and it becomes an integral part of your day. Despite this recognition, most of her literacy came from environmental print, reading and writing at work, and social media, saying "well like reading, obviously when driving, like, showering- um, I work a lot, or I'm at work a lot, cooking. I mean, you like read everywhere, so." (Jamie, Interview, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016). After tracking her literacy use for two weeks during the study, Jamie also made a few realizations stating "I think my days are pretty routine. I do the same thing every day. So I don't notice how much I read and write" (Jamie, Literacy Log, February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016) and "I would not be able to hold a job or go to class if I could not read" (Jamie, Literacy Log, February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016). She acknowledged how reading played a vital role in her life in many facets.

Jamie recognized that literacy was found everywhere, “anywhere you go, I guess, you read” (Jamie, Interview, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016). Particularly in her work was when she found herself using literacy the most often, with social media being the next most common use of literacy. At work she found herself needing to engage with both reading and writing:

Well like, at work, if I’m filling out a cake order the person is standing right there next to me. Um, obviously writing down what she says. And then, there’s another cake decorator that I work beside like every day almost with, and we communicate a lot. Even if she’s not there, like me reading her order forms and her reading my order forms. (Interview, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016).

In terms of engaging with others, she limited her literacy interactions to the work context and socially on social media sites. Sharing her reading or writing with others was not a practice she often engaged in outside of the required work and school literacy interactions. Repeatedly on her literacy log responses Jamie indicated she only engaged in literacy individually when it was for academic related purposes.

When thinking back to her past experiences with literacy, Jamie had positive memories and recalled being surrounded by literacy at home and school:

Um...well my mom always enjoyed reading, so she always had books at the house. And we lived down the street from the library, so I went there a lot when I was a kid. And a lot of my classes, like in high school- my senior year English class, you had to have a book with you every day. And um, you had to read every

day, basically. And he made you carry it around, because he said ‘If it’s with you, you’re going to read it. (Jamie, Interview, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016)

She was brought up in a home with a strong literacy support as well as had strong educators who reinforced her literacy as a student.

Finally, when discussing her future goals, Jamie recognized that reading and writing would be very important as someone aspiring to be in the medical field:

Um, well I wanna go into the medical field if I um, so I’m gonna have to be able to read charts and like, I’ll have to be able to write down like, what’s wrong with the patient. I mean, the doctor’s gonna have to know-, I’m gonna have to tell the doctor things, I’m gonna have to write down things for him to know about a patient so. (Jamie, Interview, April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016)

Jamie’s views on reading and how she described the role of reading in her life were often not aligned. For instance, she recognized how important reading was to her in an everyday context, at her current job, and in her future career. However, she spent most of her day reading and writing on social media or on environmental print. Very little of her time tracked on her actual log reflected literacy use for academic purposes. Jamie valued literacy, though did not engage in practices that supported her future goals which would involve reading and writing.

### **Summary**

Some commonalities can be viewed through the cases presented. First, not all participants were accurate in their self-perceptions of their abilities. Throughout each case, participants either were confident in areas in which they could not support through

assessment; or in some cases they lacked confidence in areas in which they were actually able to demonstrate adequate ability. This reveals that these participants were not self-aware of their reading strengths and struggles in reading. This may have implications on their use of literacy and/or success in the reading classroom and beyond.

Second, all participants demonstrated a positive reading attitude along with a positive attitude toward remediation. If they did not reveal this positive attitude at first, they eventually did as the research study, and semester, progressed. These participants were receptive to developing as readers through the developmental reading course they were enrolled. This goes against much of the literature currently published on developmental readers.

Third, the participants had varying views and uses for literacy in their lives. Each participant defined reading in a different way but still understood its role as important to their life. Literacy was also a very individual practice, despite the research which supports the importance of engaging in literacy with others. Chapter five will present implications of each of these three commonalities to the developmental reader, the developmental teacher, and the developmental classroom. The next section will now discuss the findings which emerged in participant interviews through the cross-case analysis of the five individual cases.

### **Cross-Case Analysis**

Individual cases were analyzed to provide portraits of Billy, Madison, Bree, Janelle, and Jamie's reading abilities, attitudes, and the role of literacy in their lives. These things together helped to describe their reading identity. The emergent findings



from the five cases were examined for their similarities and differences. This cross-case analysis was completed to provide a better portrait of developmental readers at the community college level.

Emerging from the cross-case analysis were five findings. First, developmental reading students did recognize the necessity and importance of reading in their daily lives. Second, the participants described their reading abilities as developing, open for improvement, and with an overall positive attitude toward reading and remediation. Third, the case study participants had positive early experiences with reading. Fourth, each participant understood literacy in their own unique way, often shifting their understanding as the study progressed. Last, variation occurred on how others influenced the participants' personal literacy practices and understandings.

### **Role of Reading**

All five participants indicated the central role reading played in not only daily life, but also in their pending respective careers. While they each used reading in varying ways, they still understood it to be vital to their daily routines, both personally and often academically. Throughout the course of the study, each participant began to understand the role reading played in their life in a new and unexamined way. Their overall understanding of what reading could mean also shifted.

When asked to define reading, instead of providing a traditional definition, four of the participants described the necessity of reading. Janelle asked, "so I feel like reading plays a huge role in your daily life. Because if you can't read, then what you are going to do?" (Janelle, Interview, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Janelle believed that there existed a

relationship between lack of literate abilities and trusting those around you. She drew comparisons to famous athletes who were rumored to have difficulty reading, stating that people around them could be doing anything with their money and assets without the athlete's knowledge if they were unable to read the financial or legal documents. For Janelle, reading would also play a large function in her ability to do well in her medical career, as she stated, "It's gonna play a huge role in my career because I'm gonna have to learn all types of medicine, how to read them, how to prescribe them...all that so reading will come in handy" (Janelle, Interview, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Overall, Janelle viewed reading as both an essential way to ensure one's own personal security (mostly financial) but also as something from which a person cannot escape.

Likewise, Jamie viewed reading as something that surrounds a person at all times, "I mean, reading is everywhere, so if you can't read, then that, like will affect your whole life, I think" (Jamie, Interview, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016). Not only did Jamie mention how she was currently using reading in her job, but she will also need strong reading skills as she interacts with doctors and patients once she enters the medical field. However, the most valuable lesson she talked about with reading was how appreciative she was to be able to read. With a learning-disabled brother, Jamie learned early on how important reading and writing were to be able to function in school and society. She described her brother's struggle as him having to rely on their mother for everyday needs:

she [mom] does everything for him. Like, his bills she does, like, she drives him to work, picks him up from work, um, if he's cooking something and you're home, he'll like, say oh, how do you make this, and he'll give you the package or

um, uh, you know, like text messaging or like, if he's writing something on Facebook, he'll ask somebody how to spell something. (Jamie, Interview, April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016).

To Jamie, reading was all around us. But more importantly she viewed it as a skill that not all people have and it is a heavy burden to live life without.

Madison, as an older student, shared similar sentiments with Jamie. Though not having anyone in her family struggle with literacy, Madison also expressed that without the ability to read, it will impact your whole life:

It's amazing to me now that- thinking about like- how do those people [who can't read] function? They have to feel dumb. And you're not dumb just because you can't read, someone just needs to show you how. But you have to feel that every day because how do you cook or, drive. Like how do you do anything? (Madison, Interview, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016).

To Madison, completing any daily activity – cooking, driving, reading mail, modern communication (e-mail, texting) – involved a level of reading. Without this ability, one is left unconnected and dependent on others. As another participant looking to enter the medical field, Madison knew that reading will be extremely vital. She believed that “there's no room for error and we're only human. We're gonna make – you know there's gonna be errors so it's just extremely important that you are reading and re-reading things, you know?” (Madison, Interview, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Madison believed reading assists people in doing their best work and allows people to be functional in society.

Bree's outlook on the necessity in reading was focused mostly on her career path. Wanting to go into the field of psychology, Bree recognized that she would be reading and writing a large part of her career: "if I can't read or understand it [patient charts/information], then how am I gonna do my job?" (Bree, Interview, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016). However, veering a little from the other participants, instead of focusing on how reading is needed to function, Bree focused on how reading could be enjoyable, stating that "reading is fun when I like the topic" (Bree, Interview, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Bree saw reading as a way to spend time recreationally as well as utilize it in her future career. In addition, Bree understood reading to exclude environmental print, such as text found on labels or signs. Those items are just something "you look at, you know?" (Bree, Interview, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016).

Finally, Billy believed the role of reading was one that required attention to detail and concentration. Billy reported "reading is necessary, I mean there's no other way to put it" (Billy, Interview, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016) but like Bree, Billy only included certain kinds of text to be true reading:

When I say actual literacy events, I consider actual reading like a passage. Um, because words and writing is all around us. I mean that is not actual reading to me, personally. That is just things that you see, I mean for instance I see "no problems please" [reading a poster in the room] and that's- that is not actual reading because those are things that you just see on a daily basis and uh- signs or posters or- just things in my work, like I read dates all night long um, and I read

boxes and that's not actual reading, when I say actual reading I mean like a book or a passage or a paragraph or something along those lines. (Billy, Interview, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016).

Billy excluded environmental print from his understanding of reading because he expressed he was simply seeing it versus reading to understand it. At some point, the text he came across daily began to lack real meaning, and only when he worked with academic text did he feel he was truly reading, or exercising his mind.

While there certainly were some common beliefs on the necessity of reading, they all did feel reading was important in some way to their (as well as others') life: to function, to excel in their field, and/or to relax and use for entertainment. One such necessity that only one of the five participants vaguely discussed, ironically, was the importance of reading to their *current* academic career. Though while Billy believed reading is only reading when it is for academic purposes, he did not bring it into the specific context of how important it is to excel as a student. The other four participants discussed needing reading to function and to be successful in their *future* careers. They did not express how they need it to travel the path that will lead to the earning of their degree. Regardless, these developmental readers did in fact recognize the role reading could play in multiple aspects of a person's life, despite literature that cites them stating they do not value nor understand the importance of reading.

### **Reading as a Developing Ability and Reading Attitude**

As the title "developmental" suggests, students come into developmental classes with identified skill deficiencies. The case study participants recognized the need for

improvement in their reading (and even writing) abilities individually as well as through the enrollment of a developmental reading course. All participants expressed willingness to learn from the course and were open to allowing the course to help shape them as readers.

When discussing the developmental reading course at two different points in the semester (the first and second interviews), Janelle stated she did “like the class because it’s helping me a lot with my reading, and them suffixes” (Janelle, Interview, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Janelle described herself as an average reader “but I can feel I can always take something and learn better” (Janelle, Interview, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Not only did Janelle see value in the developmental reading class, she was able to identify specifically a skill in which she needed improvement and saw it was being addressed in her class. Janelle described her willingness to improve as well as how the developmental reading class was assisting in developing her reading skills, specifically her vocabulary struggles.

Although Jamie described her abilities as above her peers in her developmental reading class, she also stated that she could benefit from the developmental reading course. When asked if she believed she needed help in reading, she explained “not in reading itself, but like techniques in reading I can improve on. Like context clues.” (Jamie, Interview, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016). This statement indicated that Jamie did not view vocabulary as part of the reading process, rather a separate skill needing to be mastered, unrelated to reading. She also described the course as beneficial and enjoyed the class by the end of the semester. Jamie was the only participant in the case study who reported

she was more experienced and confident in reading than her peers, but still expressed the developmental reading class was advantageous.

When Madison first considered her reading abilities and if she needed a developmental reading class, her initial response was “I wouldn’t say I need. But um. No I don’t think so.” (Madison, Interview, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016). However, after talking about her strengths and weaknesses, Madison admitted she could use some improvement in her reading and that the developmental reading class “actually helps, so maybe I did need it.” (Madison, Interview, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Although Madison described herself as a decent reader and reluctant to admit at first, she was in need of help, after a few moments of reflection she was able to acknowledge how the developmental reading course was actually a positive assistance.

Billy was the only participant who acknowledged the fact that the developmental reading course was a pre-requisite class, so regardless of his personal feelings he had to be there. Nevertheless, Billy was also the only participant who recognized the benefits of developmental reading beyond the current semester:

It’s gonna help me in the future, that’s for sure. I mean some of the things that have already been touched in class has helped me out... so- there are some areas that I do need work in and I’m glad that I have the opportunity to work on ‘em because without the class I wouldn’t think that I needed help. (Billy, Interview, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016)

In addition, Billy was optimistic regarding receiving help in this class, claiming it was great to have the help and was “pleased with myself and I’m happy that I actually took

the course” (Billy, Interview, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Though Billy understood the requirement of the course, he welcomed the opportunity to advance his skills.

Bree had an alternate view on the developmental reading course, pointing out that “I think that even though I’m developing [as a reader] it’s something that I should do myself. I think they’re more helping me with writing than reading” (Bree, Interview, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Bree was very independent and believed the responsibility of improving her reading skills fell to her and no one else. However, by the end of the semester she expressed sadness that the class was ending and that she in fact did learn and improve a lot. Despite seeming to be hesitant at the thought of taking this course, she allowed the opportunity to help her grow as a reader and ended with an appreciation for the course, the teacher, and the content.

All five participants could not only identify themselves as either average, decent, developing, or in need of improvement, but were also appreciative of the chance to improve on the reading abilities they needed to enhance. If they were not welcoming of the course in the beginning of the semester, they became more open to it as the semester progressed. Their growing acceptance of their placement in the course was a result of them recognizing they were improving in their abilities regarding their reading skills. This helps to dispel a common idea that developmental readers cannot recognize that they need assistance with their reading and approach remediation with hesitation or with reluctance.

In addition to acknowledging their developing reading needs and benefitting from remediation, the participants also had positive attitudes toward reading in general. Bree



enjoyed reading, especially if it was in a subject she enjoyed. Similarly, Janelle, Jamie, Madison, and Billy all mentioned reading was something they don't mind doing, all the way up through enjoyable, based on the topic. This, coupled with the sentiments they all expressed toward their developmental course, showed that these students were approaching reading with positive attitudes and willing to work on their reading abilities.

### **Early Experiences with Reading**

When asked about previous experiences, all case study participants were able to recall more positive early experiences with text and reading, both with family and in school. Janelle reported that in elementary into high school, reading was her best subject. She described having good teachers and being told by those teachers that she was good at reading and writing. One of her high school teachers would use her essays as an example for the rest of the class. It was not until her last year of high school and when she reached the college level that she noticed the reading was getting more complicated. However, she stated she was using the increasing difficulty to allow her to open to new ideas and "expand my reading" (Janelle, Interview, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016). While Janelle did not have any negative experiences come to mind from her early encounters with reading, her positive ones she recalled were found within the academic environment. No home or personal examples, positive or negative, surfaced during our conversations.

As an older student, Madison had trouble remembering early or even later academic experiences so she recalled an experience with reading while her son was in the hospital as an infant. Madison read a biography of a man who had been hospitalized from extensive first-degree burns, a similar experience for which her son had just been

hospitalized. She said this book helped her to cope and as she said, “it kind of kept me from going loony” (Madison, Interview, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016). When asked if anything negative sprung to mind based on previous experiences with reading, she could not think of any examples. Though this is not an academic connection, reading meant a lot to Madison at a very difficult time in her life.

Billy described his high school experience as one in which he just slid by. He was focused on graduating and entering the work force right away. According to Billy, “I never brought a book home, uh, I don’t know how I passed” (Billy, Interview, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Despite not putting much effort into his academics in general, when he thinks of reading, he recalled his 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade English teacher who was a source of motivation. While in his other classes Billy made little to no effort, his English teacher encouraged him and pushed him to do his best. So, while Billy was not an ideal high school student, he recalled reading and writing in his last two years of high school as positive experiences and ones in which helped him to feel like college may not be out of his reach.

The only participant who could recall negative experiences with reading was Bree. She described how both a teacher and her mother told her that she struggled with vocabulary and comprehension. Looking back on it now, Bree described the experience and being told she struggled as “it was kind of in my head. I got it as I’m a weak reader because I’ve been told this” (Bree, Interview, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Now a few years removed from those voices, Bree recognized that if she focused on her own abilities to work through a reading, and not listen to a voice telling her she was not good enough, she

would do better. Conversely, Bree was also able to recall being surrounded by literacy as a child. Her father read to her, and her sister would help her with her reading. Bree expressed that having this kind of support from these two-family members helped keep her positive and moving forward as a reader.

According to prior literature, most of the five case study participants should have entered their developmental reading class with negative prior reading experiences. While Billy and Bree had some less than successful experiences with school and reading, even they could also admit the positive experiences, and talk about them with more enthusiasm and detail. Perhaps it was because of these previous positive experiences, these readers who were in need of some support and growth in reading, continued on in the developmental reading class; not needing the class due to negative experiences.

### **Understanding of Literacy**

It is understandable that people will have differing ideas, definitions, and approaches to reading. However, one constant that the participants demonstrated was their lack of a clear definition of what reading is. Additionally, throughout the course of the study, their understanding of what could constitute as literacy expanded. It was a paradox that presented itself throughout the study. Participants were asked to define reading in their first interview and then again in their second interview, which on average was 5-7 weeks after the first time we met for an interview. For responses to the question “How would you define reading?”, see Table 53.

As viewed in Table 53, in the first interview, the definitions participants provided were more how they felt about reading or how a person might use it. A “typical”

definition was not given. When participants were interviewed for the second time, Madison and Billy began to shape more of a characteristic definition of reading. The rest still considered how reading was used or what kind of reading in which a person could engage.

As it related to how literacy was used, each participant tracked time spent on literacy events, both reading and writing, that they engaged in for one week, two times throughout the course of the study. Each participant used literacy in three broad ways: at work, at school, or for personal reasons. However, for Bree and Billy, the reading and writing that they did at work and in many cases socially, they did not consider to be true reading or writing (even though they made note of those occurrences). Janelle, on the other hand, did not consider social media, texting, and environmental print to be considered examples of reading and writing before this study: “I was like, oh, this is reading? I didn’t even know! Facebook, Twitter, all of that like I didn’t think of that as reading but it really is reading something so reading is an everyday thing...” (Janelle, Interview, April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016).

Madison and Jamie both were surprised with the kinds of reading and writing they saw themselves engaging in daily. Madison claimed, “I don’t read enough, so like I’m like wow, what am I doing?” (Madison, Interview, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Jamie on the other hand described that most of her daily reading and writing came from social media. Both realizations from these participants made them look again at their reading and writing practices, especially considering the fact they were college students, to see how they could be using their time to be more effective readers and writers.

Table 53

*Participants' Definition of Reading*

	Original Definition – First Interview	Reading redefined – Second Definition
Bree	Reading is fun when I like the topic.	I mean, it's interesting. Um, after doing this, I didn't know I read as much as you know, so I think it's pretty cool you actually read.
Janelle	I would say reading is like a development of your brain. So you read and stuff to learn new stuff, cause without reading you wouldn't learn anything.	Reading. Um, reading is something you do every day in your life whether you notice it or you don't, that's what I learned because when we was doing a literacy log, I was like, oh this is reading? I didn't even know! Facebook, twitter, all of that like I didn't even think of that as reading but it really is reading something so reading is an everyday thing you do so like that's my definition.
Jamie	A very important part of life.	Uh, I think it's an everyday skill that you need to have.
Madison	Extremely important.	Um... it's letters put together with sounds that makes up your everyday life and if you can't read I don't know how people function.
Billy	People have to read to learn and if they don't read they listen but reading to me actually paints me a full picture	I define reading as understanding the text that you read. I mean the way I understand it myself is I try to paint a picture in my head so I get a clear understanding of what the author is trying to say. Sometimes it's hard depending on who wrote it, how they wrote it and what the writing's about. But reading, it's simple it's simple, just words on a page, trying to figure out what the person's saying.

### **Influence of Others on Personal Literacy**

When each participant was asked about the kinds of literacy they engaged in with others, all initially responded with a variation of none or very limited. These case study participants could not acknowledge the role others played in their literacy lives. Even after some examples were given on how they could be influenced by or interactive with others in their literacy use, most could only discuss how social media and/or texting/e-mailing was the main source of literate engagement taking place most frequently.

Bree and Jamie were the only two who specifically acknowledged a family member's role in helping to shape who they were as a reader and why they felt positively and appreciative toward reading. In general, Billy's background did help to shape the way in which he viewed and appreciated his academics today. Billy, Janelle, and Bree also discussed educators who helped them realize things about themselves regarding reading and/or writing. In the semester of the study, only Billy admitted he allowed someone other than a teacher to read one of the papers he had written. All others stated they only shared literacy – read aloud or peer swapped a paper – in class because they had to at the direction of the teacher.

Despite literacy being a social and cultural engagement, the case study participants believed they entered literacy practices alone or only at the instruction of an educator. Even social media and electronic conversing was not at first considered to be a form of sharing literacy practices with others. It is difficult to truly consider who one is as a reader without acknowledging the social and cultural influences on one's reading

ability. This was not something these participants reflected upon, nor considered as they evaluated their lives as readers.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the findings for Billy's, Madison's, Bree's, Janelle's, and Jamie's, case studies and cross-case analysis. The findings revealed each participant had individual strengths and struggles, though all had mostly positive attitudes toward reading and their developmental class. Literacy also played a large role in their lives in many contexts. All participants understood how important reading was in the larger context of life, recognizing that their reading abilities needed development. Additionally, the participants in this study recalled mostly positive connections with previous reading activities. Furthermore, these participants had difficulty establishing a definition of what reading is and did not understand literacy to be a social or cultural activity. These findings have implications for both developmental readers, their instructors, and the overall institutions which houses these programs.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

Approximately two-thirds of students entering community college are not college ready (The Century Foundation, 2016; Edgecombe, 2011). In fact, nearly half of the 7.3 million students enrolling in community colleges each year require developmental education in at least one subject area (Gallard, Albritton, & Morgan, 2010; Rutschow & Schneider, 2011). Of those, only 44% referred to developmental reading courses in particular will complete the recommended developmental reading course(s) within three years; 22% when they are required to complete the lowest level of developmental reading (Edgecombe, 2011). Additionally, one-third of the students who tested into developmental reading will not enroll in *any* developmental course within three years, despite the recommendation to do so (Bailey & Cho, 2010). This lack of developmental enrollment ultimately leads to stopping (temporary withdraw) or dropping out of the institution, as students are not able to enroll in many college or career related courses until their developmental requirements are met.

These numbers paint a dismal picture of the success of developmental reading and developmental education programs in general, despite the annual four-billion-dollar national investment in developmental education from institutions and developmental students themselves (The Century Foundation, 2016). Additionally, research regarding developmental readers depicts students who display negative attitudes toward reading, undervalue reading, and resent developmental coursework. However, instead of relying



upon methods which allowed developmental readers' voices to be heard, these studies mostly utilized assessment or questionnaire results. Relying solely on quantitative measures overlooks the chance for the reader to convey his/her thoughts or discuss results to assessment scores. Talking with students and collecting information from them is key to better understanding their experiences and needs (The Century Foundation, 2016).

### **Overview of the Research Study**

I collected qualitative and quantitative data from 16 developmental reading students enrolled in a developmental reading course at a state community college in Spring 2016. My goal was to explore student reading identities through an investigation into developmental readers' reading abilities, attitudes, and daily literacy practice as evidenced through participants' own perspectives and demonstrations of reading. My research was guided by two questions:

1. What are the strengths, struggles, and attitudes of developmental reading students regarding academic reading?
2. What role does literacy play in the lives of developmental reading students?

This research study took place at State College, a two-year, open access community college in Northeast Ohio. At the time of data collection there were 11,545 students enrolled in the college. The average age of a State College student was 29, 60% of students were female, 29% were minority, 46% were first generation college students, and 35% attended as full- time students. Of the 11,545 students enrolled in the semester of the study, 196 were registered for one of the two developmental reading courses

offered at the college (49 in the introductory level developmental reading course, 147 in the higher level developmental reading course).

Regarding the 16 research participants specifically, 14 were female and two were male, their average age was 20. Twelve of the participants were Caucasian, while four were African American. All 16 were in the second tier, Critical Analysis, course. I first reported on findings related to my two research questions based on data from all 16 participants. I then further explored findings related to questions one and two with five of the 16 participants through multiple cases, via a holistic case study research design. Of those five case studies, four were female and one was male, two were African American and three were Caucasian, their average age was 25, two were attending full time, and three were first generation college students.

All 16 participants completed two questionnaires, one regarding perceived reading abilities and one regarding reading attitudes. All 16 participants were also asked to track literacy events for two weeks throughout the course of the study, as well as complete reading and vocabulary assessments. All 16 participants were interviewed twice in the study. However, only the five case study participants' interviews were used for the purpose of a cross-case analysis.

The study's preliminary findings were confirmed through a case and cross-case analysis which yielded several findings. Regarding the case studies, there were three consistent patterns noticed. First, participants were not completely accurate in their self-perceptions based on their ability to demonstrate reading skills. Second, participants had overall positive reading attitudes and were generally positive about remediation. Third,

participants had varying uses for literacy in their lives beyond the academic setting.

After a cross-case analysis was conducted, there were five synthesized findings. First, developmental reading students did recognize the necessity and importance of reading in their daily lives. Second, the participants described their reading abilities as developing, were willing to work toward improving their reading, and expressed an overall positive attitude toward reading and remediation. Third, all the case study participants had positive early experiences with reading. Fourth, each participant understood literacy in their own unique way, often shifting their understanding as the study progressed. Last, variation occurred on how others influenced the participants' personal literacy practices and understandings. As there is some overlap in the case and cross-case findings, for the purpose of the discussion, some findings will be merged.

In this chapter, I describe the conclusions of my overall findings with the participants, and more specifically with the five-primary case study research participants, their instructors, and the research setting. I also discuss the resulting implications for developmental students, educators, and institutions. Limitations of the study are outlined, as well as topics which may benefit from future research.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The case study yielded five common findings between the assessment results and the case and cross-case analyses. First, participants were not accurate in their self-perceptions based on their demonstrated reading skills. Second, developmental reading students did recognize the necessity and importance of literacy, specifically reading, in their daily lives. Additionally, each participant understood and used literacy in his/her

own unique way, often adjusting perceptions as the study progressed. Third, the participants described their reading abilities as developing, were willing to work toward improving their reading, and expressed an overall positive attitude toward reading and remediation. Fourth, all the case study participants had positive early experiences with reading. Last, variations were noted about how others influenced the participants' personal literacy practices and understandings. In this section I discuss how each finding aligns with or clarifies existing literature or, in some cases, contradicts previous research.

### **Accuracy of Self-Perceptions Regarding Reading Ability**

A survey of developmental students found most believed they were prepared for college; the unexpected gap between their understanding of their own skills and discouraging results of assessments caused some students to be frustrated and leave college (Bailey & Cho, 2010). Furthermore, Morris (2016) and the Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCCSE) (2016) found that there was a strong disconnect between a student's perception of his/her ability and reality. To illustrate this, CCCSE (2016) reported that 80% of students believed they were academically prepared for college level work, yet 67% were placed in a developmental course. Thus, the literature suggests developmental students are not fully able to identify their true strengths and/or struggles.

While the participants in the current study were not always accurate in their self-perceptions of their reading ability, frustration was not indicated. In fact, participants were willing to acknowledge they needed assistance in their reading, though not always accurate in which areas, and were motivated to work on advancing their skills.

Throughout the course of the research, each case study participant even indicated how the developmental course was assisting in improving reading struggles, even struggles which were not initially self-realized. Additionally, participants were often surprised when hearing what their strengths were, according to the reading assessments administered, since they were not fully aware of their abilities.

This study's results reinforced the finding that developmental readers are not able to accurately identify their strengths and struggles. However, these participants provided evidence that they sought to improve lacking skills and appreciated the chance to do so. In addition, of the five case study participants in the Spring 2016 data collection semester, four continued through Spring 2017; one was furthered registered for Fall 2017 courses as well. This helps to refute the claim that students become discouraged after realizing they were not as academically prepared as they once believed.

Also contradicting the conclusions by Morris (2016) and CCCSE (2016), the majority of participants were able to accurately identify and then support one particular area identified as a struggle: vocabulary. Willingham and Price (2009) found vocabulary to be a key area of struggle for developmental readers. When looking across all 16 participants' responses on the RALSS and results of the IRI and PPVT, developmental readers' performance supported research conclusions stating vocabulary is a weakness for this population of readers. Throughout the assessments, participants did indicate on the RALSS that vocabulary was a struggle. Then, most participants demonstrated this through struggling within the PPVT on receptive vocabulary and when answering vocabulary questions after listening to a passage read aloud. Self-identified struggles and

overall demonstrations of reading by these participants both established they were aware of this particular struggle, and supported previous research stating this is an area of concern for developmental readers.

Looking further into self-identified reading strengths or struggles, there were mixed responses on the RALSS when participants had to identify whether their strength or struggle was in reading silently or orally. Through the IRI, participants demonstrated more strengths when answering questions after reading a passage orally; participants struggled with answering after having a passage read aloud to them. According to Sticht, Beck, Hauke, Kleiman, & James (1974), although younger children have higher listening comprehension, most literate adults understand complex texts better by eye than by ear. With 14 of the participants scoring higher in their oral and silent comprehension, or at the very least, on the same grade level across all three modalities, this assertion stands true to these developmental readers.

Also on the RALSS, participants indicated they felt very confident in areas related to reading comprehension. Aspects of reading comprehension were a central assessment focus in the college's placement testing. The fact that each participant self-assessed that aspects of reading comprehension was a strength, is contradictory to the reasoning of his/her placement in developmental reading. Participants were placed in developmental reading because they showed struggles in areas of reading, particularly comprehension, as demonstrated by their Compass reading placement score. Therefore, there appeared to be a disconnect between their belief in abilities related to reading comprehension, and their previous scores on the college's entrance examination. Overall, participants were

not fully aware of their reading strengths or struggles, particularly when considering which modality of reading in which they were engaged.

### **Value and Role of Reading, Understanding Literacy**

Developmental reading students have often been described as not understanding the role and importance of reading (Lei, Bartlett, Gorney & Herschbach, 2010; Morris & Price, 2008). Yet, each case study participant acknowledged the importance of both their ability to read and the frequency with which they read throughout their day. However, developmental readers in this study demonstrated a disconnect between what they expressed was important and how they conducted their literacy lives. For instance, participants all stated how necessary reading would be in their professional careers and acknowledged the need to improve their reading abilities. Still, their daily literacy tracking demonstrated more of their literacy time was spent on environmental print (which is necessary) and non-academic related digital literacy such as texting, e-mail, and/or social media than on sustained reading for information or recreation.

Given the fact that participants were working and attending school, it was understandable that environmental print such as street signs while driving, text on and within buildings, yard or house signs, and text at their place of work would be marked as occurring most frequently. However, participants still indicated they spent more time on texting, social media, and e-mail than on academic related literacy. As evidenced through interviews, participants acknowledged they spent more time than necessary on literacy for non-academic purposes. Yet from interview one to interview two, and between the first and second week of literacy tracking, participants did not adjust their

literacy practices to reflect their acknowledgement of needing to focus more of their time on academic related reading and writing.

Furthermore, when all 16 participants tracked and talked about their reading and writing within academic contexts, it was superficial at best. Participants described their reading and writing time as, “read text,” “wrote draft,” “made flashcards,” “worked in My Labs” (a computerized required reading program in the developmental classes), “homework,” “went to class,” and “took a test.” While these were literacy events, there seemed to be a lack of awareness (both in the tracking, log questions, and in interviews) in recognizing the extent to which reading and writing truly played in these activities. For instance, writing a draft should consist of brainstorming, reading sources, editing, critical thinking, rereading what has been written, among many other literacy activities. Students may not have gone into depth on their literacy logs with detailed descriptions of their reading and writing use, as previously discussed as a potential limitation. Or, as it appeared, students truly viewed these as simple events to engage in without conducting critical thought or analysis with the reading and writing they were using to complete these literacy activities.

Ultimately, while previous research has documented developmental readers do not value reading, participants stated the opposite. The current study’s participants valued reading particularly in contexts outside of the academic and classroom usage. Participants spent most of their acknowledged literacy time while driving, utilizing social media, navigating their surroundings, and on typical environmental print (e.g. logos, labels, signs) and recognized how vital this type of reading was to their daily routine.



Therefore, it would be inaccurate to say developmental readers do not value reading, as for personal and social reasons they viewed reading as very valuable. While participants also recognized they valued reading in their academic and career pursuits, they did not necessarily support that value through time spent on literacy. Through interviews, participants acknowledged they could be spending more time on literacy activities that would enhance their reading abilities, which would move them closer to attaining their academic and/or career goals. Though the findings of this study describe readers who articulated a value, they did not always act in accordance with that value.

Throughout the course of the study, participants also allowed their understanding of what literacy meant and constituted, to evolve. This demonstrated that initial understandings of literacy were very limited. At the beginning of the study, some participants viewed only academic text as worthwhile literacy, while others never originally considered environmental print as a potential literacy source. Furthermore, the use of and interaction with digital literacy – particularly texting, social media, and e-mail – were eventually viewed as another potential source of literacy, one many did not consider before the study. Though of concern was the lack of a clear definition of reading. Participants were not able to fully describe or define what “reading” meant. This is troublesome as approximately 85% of college learning involves reading (Isakson, Isakson, Plummer, & Chapman, 2016). Without a clear definition of reading and if not provided one, developmental readers may not know if or when they have successfully met reading objectives. However, just because they were not able to completely articulate a definition of reading, which can be flexible and context dependent, did not

mean they did not understand its value or role in life, as stated through their attempts at a definition and recognition of the importance of reading in their daily life.

### **Reading as a Developing Ability and Reading Attitude**

All but one of the 16 participants indicated on the RALSS that they had average or high confidence in reading. Despite this, participants still recognized that their ability to read was a developing skill. Each of the five case study participants either described their ability as average, developing, or could use improvement. These developmental readers were able to recognize that there was progress to be made in regard to their reading abilities and believed the developmental course could help them in this improvement process.

Regardless of the fact these participants demonstrated willingness to improve their reading, developmental reading students in the past have been described as having a negative reading attitude and feeling resentful toward remediation (Caverly, Nicholson, & Radcliffe, 2004; Conradi, Jang, Bryant, Craft, & McKenna, 2013; Faigley, Daly, & Witte, 1981; Kush, Watkins, & Brookhart, 2005; Paulson, 2006). This is an area of concern since reading attitude impacts reading achievement and behaviors (Isakson, Isakson, Plummer, & Chapman, 2016; Rodrigo, Greenberg, & Segal, 2014). However, 69% of the participants indicated an average or positive reading attitude as measured on the Adult Survey of Reading Attitudes (ASRA). Furthermore, throughout the course of the current study, all five case study participants reported feeling positively both toward reading and the developmental reading course in which they were enrolled.

The current case study's participants described reading as necessary and at different times in their lives, took pleasure in the engagement of reading. Additionally, each participant expressed that the developmental reading course was helping them to improve in areas of their reading. While this may not have been their initial attitude toward the course, through reflection, each participant commented on ways in which the course was helpful. The results of the present study contradict findings of previous research. Perhaps having developmental reading students reflect upon their reading abilities and feelings toward reading and their developmental reading course at different points in a semester, allowed them the hindsight and opportunity to realize they did in fact benefit from the remediation. They also became more appreciative of their ability to read, as they began to realize what a large role reading did play in their lives. Overall, participants in this study contradicted previous research stating developmental readers have negative attitudes toward reading and remediation.

### **Early Experiences with Reading**

Previous encounters with reading can shape current attitudes, abilities, and understandings of reading. Participants in this study recalled mostly positive experiences with literacy, particularly reading, in their youth and early adulthood. Perin (2013) described developmental readers as those having negative high school academic experiences in one or multiple areas. Yet, only two of the case study participants could recall a negative experience involving reading. First, Billy was able to recognize his negative experience was due to his own personal lack of motivation and direction with his studies. Second, Bree's negative connection remained in her mind, though she was

beginning to work through how to overcome this experience. All other reading and writing connections for these participants were positive in nature.

Other participants noted at times being complimented on their literacy skills while in K-12 education, or had positive associations with reading in the past. No participants indicated their placement in developmental reading was associated with their past experiences, though they came to the realization that they did need the assistance. Placement in the course may have been correlated more with gaps in between time in the academic environment – of the five case study participants only one began working on a degree right out of high school - higher demand on critical thinking in the reading process at the college level, lingering ability struggles from their reading issues in the past, or issues with the placement test in general. However, there was no indication from the results of this study that developmental readers brought with them negative early reading experiences into their higher education career.

### **Influence of Others on Personal Literacy**

Literacy is influenced by being situated in a particular sociocultural group; these include ways of talking, interacting, valuing, and believing, which go beyond reading words on a page or searching for simple meanings (Gee, 2015). While theorists and researchers framing studies in the sociocultural perspective view literacy as embedded and shaped by social, cultural, and historical contexts, the participants in this study did not acknowledge this. Each participant discussed a family member or past educator with whom they were influenced by, but no participant made connections between their home, social, or cultural environments in relation to their current literacy lives. Participants also

were constantly engaging with people in ways that were sharing social and cultural practices (e.g. social media, reading with family members, reading in their work contexts), though even these were not fully recognized by participants as sharing literacy with others. Participants had difficulty recognizing how they were sharing literacy with others, even after given specific examples of interactive literacy events. Literacy remained an activity they viewed as an independent practice.

Beyond sharing memories of reading or writing with family members in their past or limited ways they did so currently, participants expressed they felt literacy was mostly an individual event. The majority of time literacy was shared with others was when they were instructed to in an in-class activity. Participants failed to recognize how often they were engaging in the sharing of literacy in their school, work, and personal lives as well as how their views regarding literacy were shaped by sociocultural influences. Despite the research knowledge stating literacy is shaped by multiple factors, case study participants did not acknowledge this nor recognize this concept in their current literacy use.

### **Implications**

There are implications connected to each of the five common findings. These implications concern developmental readers, developmental educators, and institutions which house developmental programs. This section connects each finding with the respective curricular implication.

### **Accuracy of Self-Perceptions Regarding Reading Ability**

Based on this study, as well as past research, developmental readers are not always accurately aware of areas of reading which warrant their attention. From an institutional stand point, utilizing assessments which only give a composite reading score can be a disservice both to the student and the teacher. According to Saxon and Morante (2014), no test gives an accurate measure of skills and is but a snapshot, rather than a full picture. Placement assessments need to be reconsidered for diagnosis of skill deficiencies (Saxon & Morante, 2014; Edgecombe, 2011). Alerting college-level instructors about identified reading skill deficiencies can assist both students and teachers to assist in focusing attention on deserving aspects of reading. This can aid developmental reading students in completing their college-level courses successfully.

Additionally, in the classroom, instructors should encourage thoughtful reflection on areas in need of attention. One way in which to do this is through reading conferences. Reading conferences are a fairly common practice in elementary classrooms (Costello, 2014), yet are not a common college classroom practice. A reading conference can allow for conversations with students to talk about their reading strengths, needs, and about themselves as readers in general. Through reflection and conversation, students and teachers can review strengths and struggles in relation to perceived versus real literacy abilities, and collaboratively develop intervention strategies.

Based on the results of the assessments in this study, there are also other areas to consider when teaching in the classroom. Developmental readers, though indicated identifying topics and main ideas as areas of confidence in performing, were not able to

consistently demonstrate these as strengths through formal assessments. Therefore, ensuring students are in fact comfortable with these skills is necessary as these are perceived to be areas of strength, with little proof to validate the perceptions.

Additionally, developmental readers in this study struggled with listening comprehension during the IRI assessment and were able to answer more questions correctly after orally reading a passage. This has implications in the classroom as it would indicate students need more opportunities to read their text material orally, or be encouraged to do so when out of the classroom. In college courses, students spend most of their time with reading material in the silent modality; encouraging oral reading in and out of class has the potential to assist students with overall reading comprehension.

### **Value and Role of Reading, Understanding Literacy**

According to Burgess and Jones (2010), literacy behaviors and interests of college students have received little attention in previous research. This is important as time spent reading is positively associated with better performance in school, higher scores on critical thinking assessments, and the development of larger vocabularies (Burgess & Jones, 2010). Knowing how developmental readers view and use literacy, specifically reading, is important in helping to shape more successful readers and supportive programs. Time spent reading is a concern as, in 2007, the National Endowment for the Arts found time spent reading declined significantly since 1981; barely half of college-aged students regularly engage in reading literature. Additionally, fewer than 16 hours a week are spent on studying, reading, and/or writing (National Endowment for the Arts, 2007). With all the positive correlations between time spent reading and reading success

(Burgess & Jones, 2010; Gambrell, 2011; Huang, Orellana, & Capps, 2016; Mellard, Patterson, & Prewett, 2007), and previous research stating this is an area of concern, researching and studying developmental readers' reading behaviors is advantageous.

Another key idea related to how developmental readers view and use reading is for educators to expand on their own instructional use and view of literacy in the classroom. The definition of reading is changing to reflect new technologies as they emerge. Students at all levels are incorporating Internet use in their reading practices – particularly social media (Huang, Orellana, & Capps, 2016). The reading and writing practices college students rely on today are different from those in the past. Knowing this, educators can begin to adjust methods and tools in the classroom to align with and support these views and usage. For instance, E-learning is no longer optional, it has become necessary in some capacity (Huang, Orellana, & Capps, 2016). One way to incorporate this digital dimension of reading is to integrate social media for educational purposes (e.g. class social media pages, discussion forums, blogs). Developmental readers value literacy, though in ways that support their social and practical lives, versus academics. While developmental educators are working to enhance students' academic valuation of reading, incorporating the ways in which these readers currently value reading can help to bridge that gap that often exists between instructors' messages and students' perceptions and behaviors.

Finally, taking into consideration that developmental readers are not clear about what reading actually means (unable to define reading), this is an issue which can be addressed in the classroom. First, knowing the reader and understanding who they would



like to become in their reading is necessary (Hall, 2010). Discussing characteristics of adult readers, as well as the ways in which reading can be used, is critical. Second, making reading expectations clear to the student is important in ensuring students are aware of how reading will be used in each classroom context. Moreover, exploring the ways in which reading can be utilized in *multiple* contexts is helpful for students to understand the limitless power reading can have in both academic and personal circumstances. This is necessary to allow students to engage with texts in more meaningful and sophisticated ways (Hall, 2010).

### **Reading as a Developing Ability and Reading Attitude**

When given a choice between leisure and academic reading, many students would choose leisure (Isakson, Isakson, Plummer, & Chapman, 2016). Leisure reading is associated with relaxation, flexibility, and choice, often resulting in more positive reading attitudes toward leisure reading materials. Although participants in this study had an overall positive attitude toward reading, other research suggests the opposite. Therefore, this study suggests additional recommendations for the developmental reading classroom. Since leisure reading generally leads to higher overall reading attitudes, incorporating more leisure and/or choice reading in the classroom would be beneficial for improving student reading attitudes, which positively correlate with higher literacy and academic achievement. Incorporating rich reading materials such as books of various genres, text types, magazines, Internet sources and multiple resources can enhance motivation and reading achievement (Gambrell, 2011).

Additionally, college developmental reading textbooks focus on presenting skills sequentially and linearly (CRLA, 2013). They are often out of context of the areas in which developmental students are studying, and therefore could result in lower interest or avoidance in reading. Contextualizing readings to match the interests and areas of study of developmental students could assist in heightening reading interest, motivation, and attitude toward academic reading (Perin, 2011). In addition to these benefits, contextualization of reading courses and textbooks improves reading comprehension (Bongancisco, 2016). Through this method, students could both continue to develop their reading abilities, as well as work to build toward a more positive reading attitude where a negative one may exist.

### **Early Experiences with Reading**

Developmental reading research often leaves instructors with the impression that readers' past experiences with reading are something they need to overcome. However, based on the current study's results, these experiences are worth building upon. Instead of viewing developmental readers as those placed in developmental reading *because of* negative experiences, it should be considered that their willingness to enroll and continue in a developmental reading course may in fact be in part due to their previous *positive* reading connections. Asking developmental educators to reflect on their perceptions of the students in their classroom can ultimately have an impact on instruction, student achievement (Timmermans, de Boer, & van der Werf, 2016) and interaction with developmental reading students. Additionally, being aware of the experiences developmental readers in a classroom have had with reading is essential in helping to

build upon those positive experiences. This requires both reflection and deliberate engagement between teacher and student to understand previous reading experiences and build learning experiences in the classroom which will work to support reading success.

### **Influence of Others on Personal Literacy**

As the participants in this study did not truly consider how others impacted their literacy views, nor did they willingly share literacy with many in their lives, there are ways in which educators can help students recognize how their literacy lives have been shaped. First, reflection has been and continues to be a long-standing tradition in education (Bokhorst-Heng, Flagg-Williams, & West, 2014). One way to encourage reflection, specifically on how students' literacy lives were influenced by others and past experiences, is through a literacy autobiography. Literacy autobiographies are reflective and interpretative accounts of one's development as a literate person. Engaging in this process allows students to be able to "think about how the memories and experiences we have had with reading and writing continue to shape us as literate persons" (Bokhorst-Heng, Flagg-Williams, & West, 2014, p.345).

Another way in which to help readers engage more with one another and viewing literacy as a shared experience is through implementing strategies such as literature circles or paired writing practices. Literature circles have seen success in the K-12 classroom (Levy, 2011) and can also be incorporated into college developmental reading classrooms for similar outcomes (Levy, 2011). Approaching text through the literature circle method allows readers to be engaged, more focused on specific tasks in their reading, and creates an atmosphere in which readers are sharing interpretations and

conclusions with one another. In a similar way, incorporating peer reviewing allows students to not only improve their own writing, critical thinking, and assessment skills, but also to view work from their own and multiple perspectives (Baker, 2016). Utilizing peer review allows another opportunity for students to engage in shared writing experiences, allowing for social and cultural experiences to help shape current writing practices.

Ultimately, students' motivation to read is strengthened, along with attaining higher achievement and improved critical thinking skills when there are opportunities to socially interact with others regarding reading (Gambrell, 2011). Allowing for these opportunities in the classroom is one way in which to encourage students to engage with literacy events with other students. Making them aware of out of classroom literacy interaction, such as through social media, sharing reading and writing with classmates, and talking about text with others socially, is essential as well.

### **Limitations**

As previously discussed in chapter three, there are several limitations to the current study. First, participants were volunteers from the developmental reading courses on the college campus. Reporting findings from a small number of volunteers rather than selecting from a larger population limited the diversity of experiences represented. Second, the study was conducted at a single site during one academic semester. As students' abilities, attitudes, and use of literacy is not static, this study only captured one point in time. Third, findings from the male, non-traditional student, and other minorities were limited or not at all represented in this study. All participants also came from the

highest developmental reading course on the campus, limiting perspective to those who, based on college entrance exams, were stronger readers. Fourth, some instruments relied upon participants' own detail and self-reporting of literacy practices. The RALSS and IRI were also not tested for reliability or validity. Finally, my position at the college as an instructor may have influenced participant responses to reflect more positive developmental reading experiences.

It is also worth noting, conducting qualitative research with developmental readers can be difficult for multiple reasons. First, developmental students in general are at high risk for dropping or stopping out. This leads to difficulty with subject mortality in a research study. Second, because this population consisted of adult learners, they also contend with the various complexities of adult responsibilities, including family and work obligations, that limit academic time and energy. Asking students to participate in an out of class study competes with their other demands such as work or child care. Navigating these issues is often difficult with this population of participants. Despite these limitations, this study yielded findings which assist in further describing and understanding developmental readers.

### **Future Research**

Due to the limitations above, and the gaps in the professional literature related to the affective dimensions of developmental learners, future research is warranted. First, exploring developmental reading student experiences from a larger initial population could allow for developmental readers placed at all levels of developmental reading, as well as from additional campus satellites and locations, to have their perspectives shared.

Second, more longitudinal studies are needed to determine how developmental readers' reading abilities, attitudes, and/or role of literacy in their lives change as they progress through their college level and career related courses. Third, the experiences of males and non-traditional aged students were not significantly represented in this study. Future research should investigate their experiences. Finally, experiences of all minorities and non-native English speakers deserve study as their experiences may differ than those in the current study as increasing numbers of ELL students are attending colleges in this country with little or no language support. This is an area that warrants attention as well.

### **Conclusion**

Students who enroll in developmental coursework experience lower graduation rates than those who are deemed college ready when they enter post-secondary education (The Century Foundation, 2016; Barnett, 2010; U.S. Department of Education, 2017). This impacts the student, the college, and the community in which the college is situated. As higher education is now funded based on student performance, it is in all college stakeholders' interest to help all students, including developmental learners, succeed. Moving beyond the statistics, and getting to know these students has been proven to be advantageous in understanding their experiences and assisting with their academic success.

Much was learned by examining the experiences of the five case study participants and overall quantitative results of all 16 participants. Questionnaires and assessments can report reading levels, attitudes, and literacy usage in quantitative measures, but there are qualitative factors missed by these analyses. My research found

developmental reading students were open to improving their abilities and viewed the developmental course as a medium through which to do this. They also appreciated and valued reading, though not always in ways academia would require. Finally, developmental readers, including the participants in this study, were not always able to accurately identify their reading needs and do not view literacy as a social or cultural experience. This placed limitations on how literacy could be understood and utilized, but gives educators opportunities to address these issues in the classroom.

Developmental educators and/or institutions have influence over the above-mentioned areas. Instructors can provide meaningful opportunities for both reflection on reading abilities and attitudes to both learn more about each reader and also to help with instructional strategies. Additionally, institutions can incorporate placement measures which not only place students but also diagnose their specific literacy needs. Classroom experiences can incorporate and expand on the different types of literacy students are using outside of the classroom as well as support literacy use with others. In these ways, developmental educators and institutions can enhance the ways in which they are supporting these students as they progress toward both academic and vocational success.

## **APPENDICES**



## **APPENDIX A**

### **PERSONAL (FACE TO FACE) RECRUITMENT SCRIPT**

## **Appendix A**

### **Personal (face to face) recruitment script**

Hello, my name is Linda Remark. I am a Kent State University graduate student. As part of my doctoral requirement in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in Literacy, I am conducting a research study about developmental reading students' strengths, struggles, attitudes and the role literacy plays in their lives. I am seeking participants who would be willing to meet with me four times throughout the semester starting in February and ending in April, with potential follow-ups in May. During these four sessions you would be completing two surveys, two reading assessments, two interviews and keeping a log of your daily reading and writing for two weeks (nonconsecutive) during the semester (and will be reminded of these meetings through e-mail).

Participation is entirely voluntary. Any personally identifiable information collected during the research study will be kept strictly confidential and in locked files in my office. I will only use pseudonyms in my research report. Do you have any questions about the research study? Here is the consent form that outlines my study and what will be asked of my participants (pass out consent form and go over each section). You may take this home to consider if you like. If you are willing to participate and fulfill these study requirements, please sign and return this form to your instructor or myself no later than January 28<sup>th</sup>. I can be reached at extension 5249, [lremark@starkstate.edu](mailto:lremark@starkstate.edu) or office G107a. Please feel free to contact me with any further questions.

**APPENDIX B**  
**LITERACY LOG**

## **Appendix B**

### **Literacy Log**

Reflecting on the literacy events I may have engaged in today, did I (place a check by each item you completed today):

- ☐ Post a status or read other statuses on social media (including message boards)
- ☐ Read the news (newspaper or online) which includes sports, comics, classifieds, local, national
- ☐ Drive with the assistance of street signs and/or traffic signs
- ☐ Read signs in people's yards
- ☐ Read logos (clothing brands, restaurants, appliances, toys, etc.)
- ☐ Read to a child
- ☐ Write down a "to-do" list or grocery shopping list
- ☐ Send or read an e-mail
- ☐ Read for a class as homework or read while attending a class
- ☐ Write (type) for a class as homework or write while attending a class
- ☐ Send or read a receive text message
- ☐ Walk around a building with signs, room numbers, directions, maps, etc.
- ☐ Watch a television show that had subtitles on the screen or signs, letters, lyrics or any type of text within the show itself
- ☐ Read for pleasure a self-selected book, magazine, website, article, brochure or any other type of reading
- ☐ Write in a journal or diary

- ☐ Follow a recipe when cooking (including reading the food labels)
- ☐ Read a religious text
- ☐ Follow directions (on an assignment, when putting something together, etc.) or write directions for someone else
- ☐ Write a letter
- ☐ Balance my checkbook/paying bills
- ☐ Sign my name (on a check, permission slip, any type of document)
- ☐ Read my mail (electronic or paper)
- ☐ Read a calendar or other appointment setting device
- ☐ Read a remote control for settings (volume, channel, color...) or other electronic devices (phone, tablet, music player)
- ☐ Read a patient chart
- ☐ Read or write about a piece of art
- ☐ Take medication and read the label, warnings or side effects
- ☐ Read the temperature, radio station dials, clocks/watches or other information that includes numbers
- ☐ Read or write poetry
- ☐ Read a movie poster or other type of advertisement
- ☐ Read or write music
- ☐ Read the directions on a GPS
- ☐ Read or write a PowerPoint presentation
- ☐ Read the directions/scenarios in a video/computer game

\*Any other literacy events (reading or writing) I engaged in today that is not listed:

\*How long did you spend on these literacy events throughout the day?

\*How do you feel about the events you engaged in? (were they mandatory or by choice?

Did you enjoy them? Were these individual or group reading/writing events?)

\*\*Now that a week has passed, how do you feel about the literacy events you engaged in?

\*\*How would you describe the role literacy plays in your life after reflecting on this past week?

\*\* Did any of these events in your opinion help you increase your reading/writing abilities? Why/why not or how so?

\* These questions will be included on the actual time tracking spreadsheet to be answered daily

\*\*To be answered after the last day tracked for the week

Directions: For each day, please record (in the corresponding day/time box) any reading or writing events you have engaged in. If additional explanation is needed, please use the space in the “notes” column or on the additional paper provided. Refer to the Literacy Log checklist for reference on the types of literacy events you **may** engage in on a daily basis (the list is not a complete one). After each day, please spend a few minutes and respond to the daily questions. After the week is completed, please respond to the weekly questions. Be sure to fill in the date and which day (Monday, Tuesday, etc.) you began tracking your literacy events (place “1” by Tuesday for instance through “7” the following Monday if you begin tracking on a Tuesday).

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	Saturday	Sunday	Notes
5:00 AM								
5:15 AM								
5:30 AM								
5:45 AM								
6:00 AM								
6:15 AM								
6:30 AM								
6:45 AM								
7:00 AM								
7:15 AM								

7:30 AM								
7:45 AM								
8:00 AM								
8:15 AM								
8:30 AM								
8:45 AM								
9:00 AM								
9:15 AM								
9:30 AM								
9:45 AM								
10:00 AM								



**APPENDIX C**  
**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS GUIDE**

## Appendix C

### Interview Questions Guide

	Interview #1	Interview #2
Introductory questions:	<p>Tell me about yourself as a reader.</p> <p>What does reading mean to you (<b>how</b> would you define reading?</p>	<p>Are you the first person in your family to attend college? Do you work full or part time? Full/part time student? What is your major?</p> <p><b>How</b> do you define reading?</p>
Questions revolving around strengths, struggles and attitudes:	<p>Tell me about an area of reading you feel strong in (refer to RALSS for example reading areas). Can you give me an example/evidence of a time you excelled in this area? <b>Why</b> do you feel this is a strength? <b>How</b> did you come to excel in this area?</p> <p>Tell me about an area of reading you feel you struggle with (refer to RALSS for example reading areas). Can you give me an example/evidence of a time this area was a struggle? <b>Why</b> do you feel this is a struggle for you? What have you done or can you do to try to improve this area of reading?</p> <p><b>How</b> do you feel about yourself as a reader? When you compare yourself to your classmates, <b>how</b> do you feel about your reading abilities? <b>Why</b> do you feel this way? What criteria are you using to</p>	<p>Tell me about an area of reading you feel strong in (In our first interview, you mentioned _____, is this still the case? Any new strengths you have discovered?). <b>Why</b> do you feel this is a strength? Can you give me an example/evidence?</p> <p>Tell me about an area of reading you struggle with (In our first interview you mentioned _____, is this still the case? Any new struggles you have discovered?) <b>Why</b> do you feel like this is a struggle? Can you give me an example/evidence?</p> <p><b>How</b> do you feel about yourself as a reader? When you compare yourself to your classmates, <b>how</b> do you feel about your reading abilities? <b>Why</b> do you feel this way? (In our previous interview,</p>

	<p>make those judgments?</p> <p>When you think about reading, <b>how</b> does it make you feel?</p> <p>Do you feel you need help in reading? <b>How</b> do you feel about being in a class that is designed to help your reading ability?</p>	<p>you mentioned _____, has this view changed since the last time we spoke?)</p> <p><b>How</b> does reading make you feel?</p> <p><b>How</b> do you feel about your reading class as the semester is ending?</p>
<p>Questions revolving around the role of literacy in their lives:</p>	<p>Tell me about the kinds of reading and writing you do on a daily basis.</p> <p><b>How</b> much time during the day do you think you spend on reading and/or writing? Do you enjoy/value that time?</p> <p>Do you engage in reading or writing with others? <b>Why/why</b> not?</p> <p>Thinking about the kind of reading and writing you do each day, do you think it helps you become a better reader/writer?</p>	<p>Tell me about the kinds of reading and writing you do on a daily basis (our last interview you mentioned _____, has this changed at all?)</p> <p><b>How</b> much time during the day do you think you spend on reading and/or writing? Do you enjoy/value that time?</p> <p>Do you engage in reading or writing with others? <b>Why/why</b> not?</p> <p><b>How</b> will reading play a role in your career? <b>Why</b> will reading be important to you professionally?</p>
Wrap up:	Is there anything else you would like for me to know that I have not asked you?	Is there anything else you would like for me to know that I have not asked you?
Prompts for more information:	<p>Tell me more about this</p> <p>How do you feel about....</p> <p>I would like to hear more about....</p>	<p>Tell me more about this</p> <p>How do you feel about....</p> <p>I would like to hear more about....</p>

**APPENDIX D**

**READING ABILITY LIKERT-TYPE SCALE SURVEY**

## Appendix D

### Reading Ability Likert-type Scale Survey

Directions: Using the provided scale, please rate how much confidence you have that you can succeed at exercises related to the following reading topics.

Remember that you can circle any number from 1 (not confident at all) to 6 (completely confident).

How confident are you that you can...	Not at all confident				Completely confident	
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. sound out words	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. understand all the words on a page in one of your textbooks	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. break big words into smaller parts (prefixes and suffixes)	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. figure out the meaning of an unknown word in a sentence	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. locate the topic of a paragraph	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. identify and understand the main idea of a paragraph	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. identify and understand the thesis of many paragraphs	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. skim a passage for important information	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. make predictions about what you are reading	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. sound like a good reader when reading out loud (use expression, appropriate speed, read words accurately)	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. understand what I am reading when I read to myself	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. read and understand your textbooks	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. set a purpose (goal) for reading before and check to see if your goal is being met during or after reading	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. identify the author's purpose and tone of a text	1	2	3	4	5	6

15. distinguish between fact and opinion in text	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. read and understand how graphics support the information in the text	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. make appropriate inferences (conclusions) based on author's implied main ideas or messages	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. identify supporting details (major and minor) and how they support the text's main idea or thesis	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. read a text and connect new learning to previous information learned	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. read for deeper than surface level understanding (a critical reader/thinker)	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. apply what you read to real life situations	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. connect what you are reading to your own personal life (create your own examples)	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. summarize what you are reading	1	2	3	4	5	6
24. evaluate the credibility and reliability of what you are reading	1	2	3	4	5	6
25. determine if a text is biased or unbiased	1	2	3	4	5	6

Any other areas of reading (not listed) you feel not at all confident in up through completely confident in?

---



---

**APPENDIX E**  
**ADULT SURVEY OF READING ATTITUDES**

## Appendix E

### Adult Survey of Reading Attitudes

#### **DIRECTIONS:**

The statements in this survey are concerned with the way you feel about reading. **THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS** because people have different opinions and feelings about reading. For example, if I say, "reading is a source of pleasure for me" I'm sure many people would say that this statement is not true for them. Therefore, it is important that you indicate how **YOU** really feel.

Please read each of the statements carefully. After you read each statement, decide if you agree or disagree with the statement.

Following each statement is a scale from 5 to 1:

Circle 5 if you **STRONGLY AGREE** with the statement.

Circle 4 if you **AGREE** with the statement.

Circle 3 if you are **UNCERTAIN** how you feel about the statement.

Circle 2 if you **DISAGREE** with the statement.

Circle 1 if you **STRONGLY DISAGREE** with the statement.

**THERE ARE 40 STATEMENTS. PLEASE RESPOND TO EACH ONE**



	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I learn better when someone shows me what to do than if I just read what to do.	5	4	3	2	1
2. I need a lot of help in reading.	5	4	3	2	1
3. I get a lot of satisfaction when I help other people with their reading problems, or when I read to others.	5	4	3	2	1
4. I get upset when I think about having to read.	5	4	3	2	1
5. Whenever my friends read a good book, they usually tell me about it.	5	4	3	2	1
6. I can read but I don't understand what I've read.	5	4	3	2	1
7. There are better ways to learn new things than by reading a	5	4	3	2	1
10. When I am at home I read a lot.	5	4	3	2	1
11. Reading is one of the best ways for me to learn things.	5	4	3	2	1
12. Most books in the public library are too difficult for me.	5	4	3	2	1
13. Reading is one of my favorite activities.	5	4	3	2	1
14. I want to have more books of my own.	5	4	3	2	1
15. I would rather have someone explain something to me than to try to learn it from a book.	5	4	3	2	1
16. I often feel anxious when I have a lot of reading to do.	5	4	3	2	1
17. I read when I have the time to enjoy it.	5	4	3	2	1
18. I try very hard, but I just can't read very well.	5	4	3	2	1
19. I quickly forget what I have read even if I have just read it	5	4	3	2	1
20. I get nervous if I have to read a lot of information for my job or for some social activity.	5	4	3	2	1

21. Encountering unfamiliar words is the hardest part of reading.	5	4	3	2	1
22. My friends and I often discuss the books we have read.	5	4	3	2	1
23. I get a lot of enjoyment from reading.	5	4	3	2	1
24. I would rather read what to do than to have someone tell me what to do.	5	4	3	2	1
25. I remember the things people tell me better than the things I	5	4	3	2	1
26. I worry a lot about my reading.	5	4	3	2	1
27. I like going to the library for books.	5	4	3	2	1
28. When I read an interesting book, story, or article I like to tell my friends about it.	5	4	3	2	1
29. It is easier for me to understand what I am reading if pictures, charts, and diagrams are included.	5	4	3	2	1
30. I like to listen to other people talk about the books they have read.	5	4	3	2	1
31. Reading is one of the most interesting things which I do.	5	4	3	2	1
32. When I read I usually get tired and sleepy.	5	4	3	2	1
33. I'm the kind of person who enjoys a good book.	5	4	3	2	1
34. I have a lot in common with people who are poor readers.	5	4	3	2	1
35. I enjoy it when someone asks me to explain unfamiliar words or ideas to them.	5	4	3	2	1
36. I try to avoid reading because it makes me feel anxious.	5	4	3	2	1
37. I have trouble understanding what I read.	5	4	3	2	1
38. I'm afraid that people may find out what a poor reader I am.	5	4	3	2	1
39. I spend a lot of my spare time reading.	5	4	3	2	1
40. I enjoy receiving books as gifts.	5	4	3	2	1

## **APPENDIX F**

### **RESEARCHER LITERACY LOG EXCERPT EXAMPLE**

## Appendix F

### Researcher Literacy Log Excerpt Example

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
	Jan. 25	Jan. 26	Jan. 27	Jan. 28	Jan. 29	Jan. 30	Jan. 31
11:45 AM	Teaching a class w/ assistance of textbook, PowerPoints, and handouts	Teaching a class w/ assistance of textbook, PowerPoints, and handouts	Teaching a class w/ assistance of textbook, PowerPoints, and handouts	Teaching a class w/ assistance of textbook, PowerPoints, and handouts	Balance checkbook	Read and respond to student e-mails	Read church bulletin - announcements, scriptures, prayer requests
12:00 PM	Teaching...	Teaching...	Teaching...	Teaching...	Still balancing checkbook...	Social media - reading posts and articles	" "
12:15 PM	Read and respond to student e-mails	Read and respond to student e-mails	Read and respond to student e-mails	Read and respond to student e-mails	Wrote in my dissertation research journal - reflected on data collection so far		Driving home - street signs, yard signs, etc
12:30 PM	Grade papers - analyze essay responses and grade sentences based on accurate use of vocabulary terms	Grade papers - analyze essay responses and grade sentences based on accurate use of vocabulary terms	Lesson planning for next week - organizing materials, re-reading chapters	Student meeting to discuss MLP - example MLP questions - process of elimination and interpretation of questions	Read an article for Chapter 3 - highlighted relevant pieces and took notes on how to incorporate into existing chapter 3 sections		Lunch - read a few package containers for serving sizes
12:45 PM	Grade papers...	Grade papers...	E-mail	Grade papers	" "		
1:00 PM	Grade papers...	Grade papers...	Lunch - microwave timer #s	" "			
1:15 PM	Wrote in my dissertation research journal - reflected on data collection so far	Grade papers...	AQIP committee work - read and researched on financial and technological infrastructure processes	Wrote in my dissertation research journal - reflected on data collection so far	Read a book with 2 youngest - talked about the pictures	Built Lego sets with my boys. Read and interpreted directions and pictures	TV - misc commercials and print

## **APPENDIX G**

### **EXAMPLE OF MEMOING DURING THE ANALYSIS PROCEDURES WITH A CASE STUDY PARTICIPANT'S DATA**

## Appendix G

### Example of memoing during the analysis procedures with a case study participant's data

[redacted] - pseudonym = Billy

Majoring in drug and alcohol counseling. Plans on furthering education after his 2 yr. degree.

Grew up in and around gangs and violence. Many friends and family are in jail or have passed away.

Has a very positive attitude. High expectations for himself.

Really enjoys reading - has particular interest in history. Interest - this came up a few times. Has to strike his interest.

Believes reading is necessary but has an interesting view on it. Does not consider environmental print (specifically mentioned posters, street signs, even social media/e-mail) to be actual reading because we (society) are too used to it and do not actually spend time to read and understand it.

- Actual (used that word) reading is academic in nature.

→ I found this interesting considering his home background. Making money (in sometimes illegal ways) was a priority - not a stress on academics or reading - makes it a wonder he has an appreciation for his education that he does.

- Something else he has mentioned several times was how he would not compare himself to others. Said he does not know their stories/background - just has heard them read aloud. Not enough to base a comparison on.

Strengths  
Context clues

Struggles  
When lack of interest main idea / thesis

PDVT 15

→ low confidence - thesis, oral rdg, graphics

RALSS - 104 - moderate confidence. Said he puts himself in the "gray" area (not best/worse)

ASRA - 124 - learns positive reading attitude

IRI - Silent comprehension / main idea - 2/4  
oral 4/4  
listening 2 1/2 / 3

→ did better than expected - noted this as a strength

dispite claiming vocab/context clues as a strength, struggled on the reading part

Silent vocab 6/11  
oral 5 1/2 / 8  
listening 7/7

## REFERENCES

## REFERENCES

- Alvermann, D. E. (2001). Reading adolescents' reading identities: Looking back to see ahead. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 44(8), 676-690.
- Alvermann, D.E. & Guthrie, J.T. (1993). Themes and directions of the National Reading Research Center. *Perspectives in Reading Research*, 1, 1-11.
- Alexander, J. E., & Cobb, J. B. (1992). Assessing attitudes in middle and secondary schools and community colleges. *Journal of Reading*, 36, 146-149.
- Alexander, P.A. & Fox, E. (2011). Adolescents as readers. In M.L. Kamil, P.B. Mosenthal, P.D. Pearson & R. Barr (Eds.) *Handbook of reading research IV*, (157-176. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). (2016). *AACC 2016 fact sheet*. Retrieved from <http://www.aacc.nche.edu/AboutCC/Pages/fastfactsfactsheet.aspx>.
- American College Test (ACT). (2006). Reading between the lines: What the ACT reveals about college readiness in reading. Iowa City, IA: ACT. Retrieved from <http://www.act.org/path/policy/reports/reading.html>.
- American College Test (ACT). (2015). *Things to know about ACT Compass*. Retrieved from <http://www.act.org/compass/student/>
- Anderson, R., Wilson, P. T., & Fielding, L. G. (1988). Growth in reading and how children spend their time outside of school. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 23, 285-303.
- Applegate, A. J., Applegate, M. D., Mercantini, M. A., McGeehan, C. M., Cobb, J. B., DeBoy, J. R., & ... Lewinski, K. E. (2014). The Peter Effect Revisited: Reading



- habits and attitudes of college students. *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 53(3), 188-204.
- Armstrong, S.L., & Newman, M. (2011). Teaching textual conversations: Intertextuality in the college reading classroom. *Journal of College Reading and Learning*, 41(2), 6-21.
- Armstrong, S.L., Stahl, N.A., & Kanter, M.J. (2015). Investigating academic literacy expectations: A curriculum audit model. *Journal of Developmental Education*, 38(2), 2-23.
- Bailey, T., Cho, S. (2010). Issue Brief: *Developmental education in community colleges*. Community College Research Center Brief.
- Baker, K. M. (2016). Peer review as a strategy for improving students' writing process. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 17(3), 179-192.
- Baker, L., & Wigfield, A. (1999). Dimensions of children's motivation for reading and their relations to reading activity and reading achievement. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 34(4), 452-477.
- Bandura, A. (1993). Perceived self-efficacy in cognitive development and functioning. *Educational Psychology*, 28(2), 117-148.
- Barnett, E. A. (2010). Validation experiences and persistence among community college students. *The Review of Higher Education*, 34(2), 193-230.
- Barton, D. (2001). Literacy in everyday contexts. In L. Verhoeven, C. Snow, L. Verhoeven, C. Snow (Eds.). *Literacy and motivation: Reading engagement in*

- individuals and groups* (pp. 23-37). Mahwah, NJ, US: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Bassham, H., & Murphy, M., & Murphy, K. (1964) Attitude and achievement in arithmetic. *The Arithmetic Teacher*, 11, 66-72.
- Becnel, K., & Moeller, R. A. (2015). What, why, and how they read. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 59(3), 299-307.
- Bettinger, E. P., & Long, B. T. (2009). Addressing the needs of underprepared students in higher education: Does college remediation work? *Journal of Human Resources*, 44(3), 736-771.
- Blosser, P. E. (1984). Attitude research in science education, (Information bulletin No. 1). Columbus, OH: Eric Clearinghouse for Science, Mathematics, and Environmental Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 259941).
- Bokhorst-Heng, W. D., Flagg-Williams, J. B., & West, S. (2014). The palimpsest layers of pre-service teachers' literacy autobiographies. *Pedagogies*, 9(4), 343-364.
- Bonganciso, R.T. (2016). Effects of contextualization on the reading comprehension performance of Filipino learners. *Asia Pacific Higher Education Research Journal*, 3(1), 1-13.
- Bowen, G., Burton, C., Cooper, C., Cruz, L., McFadden, A., Reich, C., & Wargo, M. (2011). Listening to the voices of today's undergraduates: Implications for teaching and learning. *Journal of The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 11(3), 21-33.

- Boylan, H. (2003). Developmental education: What's it about? In N. A. Stahl & H. Boylan (Eds.), *Teaching developmental reading: Historical, theoretical, and practical background readings* (pp. 1-10). Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's.
- Brooman, S., Darwent, S., & Pimor, A. (2015). The student voice in higher education curriculum design: is there value in listening? *Innovations in Education & Teaching International*, 52(6), 663-674.
- Buly, M. R., & Valencia, S. W. (2002). Below the bar: Profiles of students who fail state reading assessments. *Educational Evaluation & Policy Analysis*, 24(3), 219-239.
- Burgess, S. R., & Jones, K. K. (2010). Reading and media habits of college students varying by sex and remedial status. *College Student Journal*, 44(2), 492-508.
- Burns, P. C., & Roe, B. D. (1999). *Informal Reading Inventory: Preprimer to Twelfth Grade. Fifth Edition*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Cain, M.S. (1999). *The community college in the twenty-first century: A systems approach*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- Caverly, D.C., Nicholson, S.A., & Radcliffe, R. (2004). The effectiveness of strategic reading instruction for college developmental readers. *Journal of College Reading and Learning* 35(1), 25-49.
- Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCCSE). (2016). *Expectations meet reality: The underprepared student and community colleges*. Austin, TX: The University of Texas at Austin, College of Education, Department of Educational Administration, Program in Higher Education Leadership.

- Chall, J.S. (1967). *Learning to read: The great debate*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Chambers Cantrell, S.C., Correll, P., Clouse, J., Creech, K., Bridges, S. & Owens, D. (2013). Patterns of self-efficacy among college students in developmental reading. *Journal of College Reading and Learning*, 44 (1), 8-34.
- Cheng, R.W-y., & Lam, S-f. (2007). Self-construal and social comparison effects. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 77(1), 197-211.
- Clark, C., Rumbold, K. (2006). *Reading for pleasure: A research overview*. London: National Literacy Trust.
- Clotfelter, C. C., Ladd, H., Muschkin, C. M., & Vigdor, J. (2013). Success in community college: Do institutions differ? *Research in Higher Education*, 54(7), 805-824.
- Cohen, A.M., Brawer, F.B., Kisker, C.B. (2014). *The American community college* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Cohen, D. J., White, S., & Cohen, S. B. (2011). A time use diary study of adult everyday writing behavior. *Written Communication*, 28(1), 3-33.
- Coley, R.J. (2000). *The American community college turns 100: a look at its students, programs, and prospects*. Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing Service.
- College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA). (2013). *The terrain of college developmental reading*. Texas State University: Holschuh, J.P. & Paulson, E.J.
- Complete College America. (2013). *The game changers: Are states implementing the best reforms to get more college graduates?* Retrieved from <http://completecollege.org/college-completion-data/>.

- Complete College American (2014). *Four-year myth: Make college more affordable. Restore the promise of graduating on time*. Retrieved from <http://completecollege.org/college-completion-data/>.
- Compton-Lilly, C. (2009). Disparate reading identities of adult students in one GED program. *Adult Basic Education & Literacy Journal*, 3(1), 34-43.
- Connor, D. J. (2013). Who “owns” disability? The cultural work of critical special educators as insider-outsiders. *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 41(4), 494-513.
- Conradi, K., Jang, B., Bryant, C., Craft, A., & McKenna, M. (2013). Measuring adolescents' attitudes toward reading: A classroom survey. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 56(7), 565-576.
- Cook-Sather, A. (2006). Sound, presence, and power: “Student voice” in educational research and reform. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 36(4), 359-390.
- Costello, D. (2014). Transforming reading comprehension instruction through student conferencing and teacher journaling. *Canadian Journal of Action Research*, 15(2), 41-53.
- Cothorn, N. B., & Collins, M. D. (1992). An exploration: attitude acquisition and reading instruction. *Reading Research & Instruction*, 31, 84-97.
- Creswell, J.W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Davidson, K. (2010). The integration of cognitive and sociocultural theories of literacy development: Why? How? *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 56(3), 246-256.
- Davies, B., & Harre, R. (1990). Positioning: The discursive production of selves. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior*, 20(1), 43-63.
- Dennis, D. V. (2009). "I'm not stupid": How assessment drives (in)appropriate reading instruction. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 53(4), 283-290.
- Dewey, J. (1933). *How we think: A restatement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process*. New York, NY: Heath and company.
- Edgecombe, N. (2011). *Accelerating the academic achievement of students referred to developmental education*. CCRC Working Paper No. 30.
- Elisha-Primo, I., Sandler, S., & Goldfrad, K. (2015). Listening to more voices: Why being heard matters. *The Electronic Journal for English as a Second Language*, 19(3), 1-20.
- Engin, A. W., Wallbrown, F. H., & Brown, D. H. (1976). The dimensions of reading attitude for children in the intermediate grades. *Psychology in The Schools*, 13(3), 309-316.
- Enstrom, C., & Tinto, V. (2008). Access without support is not opportunity. *Change*, 40(1), 46-50.
- Erickson, F., and Shultz, J. (1992). Students' experience of the curriculum. In P. W. Jackson (Ed.), *Handbook of Research on Curriculum* (465-485). New York: Macmillan.

- Faigley, L., Daly, J.A., & Witte, S.P. (1981). The role of writing apprehension in writing performance and competence. *Journal of Educational Research*, 75(1), 16-21.
- Farris, P. J. (1992). *Achieving adult literacy*. Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation.
- Fecho, B. (2003). Yeki bood/yeki na bood: Writing and publishing as a teacher researcher. *Research in The Teaching Of English*, 37(3), 281-294.
- Ferdman, B. M. (1990). Literacy and cultural identity. *Harvard Educational Review*, 60, 181-204.
- Fingeret, H. A. (1991). Meaning, experience and literacy. *Adult Basic Education*, 14-11.
- Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. (1975). *Belief, attitude, intention, and behavior: An introduction to theory and research*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Foertsch, M. A. (1992). *Reading in and out of school: Factors influencing the literacy achievement of American students in grades 4, 8, and 12 in 1988 and 1990* (Vol. 2). Washington, D. C.: National Center for Education Statistics.
- Förster, N., & Souvignier, E. (2014). Learning progress assessment and goal setting: Effects on reading achievement, reading motivation and reading self-concept. *Learning & Instruction*, 32, 91-100.
- Fox, R. (1980). Treatment of writing apprehension and its effects on composition. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 14(1), 39-49.
- Gallard, A. J., Albritton, F., & Morgan, M. W. (2010). A comprehensive cost/benefit model: Developmental student success impact. *Journal of Developmental Education*, 34(1), 10-25.

- Gallego, M.A. & Hollingsworth, S. (2000). *What Counts as Literacy? Challenging a Single Standard*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Gallik, J. D. (1999). Do they read for pleasure? Recreational reading habits of college students. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 42(6), 480.
- Gambrell, L. B. Seven rules of engagement: What's most important to know about motivation to read. *The Reading Teacher*, 65(3), 172-178.
- Gardner P. L. (1975). Attitudes to Science. *Science Education*, 2, 1-41.
- Gauld, C. F., & Hukins, A. A. (1980). Scientific attitudes: A review. *Studies in Science Education*, 7, 129-61.
- Gee, J.P. (1996). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses* (2nd ed.). London: Taylor & Francis.
- Gee, J.P. (1997). Thinking, learning, and reading: The situated sociocultural mind. In D. Kirshner & J.A. Whitson (Eds.), *Situated cognition: Social, semiotic, and psychological perspectives* (pp. 235-260). Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Gee, J.P. (2001). A sociocultural perspective on early literacy development. In S.B. Neuman & D.K. Dickinson (Eds.), *Handbook of early literacy research* (pp. 30-42). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Gee, J.P. (2015). *Literacy and education*. New York: Routledge.
- Ghaith, G.M. & Bouzeinddine, A.R. (2003). Relationship between reading attitudes, achievement, and learners' perceptions of their Jigsaw II cooperative learning experience. *Reading Psychology*, 24(2), 105-120.



- Gillespie, C. S. (1993). College students' reflections on reading. *Reading Horizons*, 33(4), 329-340.
- Givens, S.M., (2010). Using affective assessment to understand our students' identities as readers (and non-readers). *Identity*, 15(1), 5-19.
- Greaney, V. (1980). Factors related to amount and type of leisure time reading. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 15(3), 337-357.
- Guay, F., Marsh, H. W., & Boivin, M. (2003). Academic self-concept and academic achievement: Developmental perspectives on their causal ordering. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 95(1), 124-136.
- Guthrie, J. (1984). Relationships among competencies and practices of reading. *Reading Competencies and Practices*. Technical Report #7. Final Report.
- Guthrie, J., & Greaney, V. (1991). Literacy acts. In R. Barr, M. Kamil, P. Mosenthal, & P.D. Pearson (Eds.), *Handbook of reading*, Vol. 2 (pp. 68-96). New York: Longman.
- Hall, L. A. (2010). The negative consequences of becoming a good reader: Identity theory as a lens for understanding struggling readers, teachers, and reading instruction. *Teachers College Record*, 112(7), 1792-1829.
- Hall, L. A. (2016). The role of identity in reading comprehension development. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 32(1), 56-80.
- Henk, W., Marinak, B., & Melnick, S. (2012). Measuring the reader self-perceptions of adolescents: Introducing the RSPS2. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 56(4), 311-320.

- Henk, W.A. & Melnick, S.A. (1995). The reader self-perception scale (RSPS): A new tool for measuring how children feel about themselves as readers. *The Reading Teacher*, 48(6), 470-482.
- Hodges, R. & Agee, K.S. (2000). Program evaluation. In R.F. Flippo & D.C. Caverly (Eds.), *Handbook of College Reading and Study Strategy Research* (pp. 351-407). New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Hogsten, J.F. & Peregoy, P.A. (1999). An investigation of reading attitudes and self-perceptions of students reading on and below grade level. University of Virginia. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED449432).
- Hsu, H. & Wang, S. (2010). The impact of using blogs on college students' reading comprehension and learning motivation. *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 50(1), 68-88.
- Huang, S., Orellana, P., & Capps, M. (2016). U.S. and Chilean college students' reading practices: A cross-cultural perspective. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 51(4), 455-471.
- Hycner, R. H. (1985). Some guidelines for the phenomenological analysis of interview data. *Human Studies*, 8(3), 279-303.
- Illich, P.A., Hagan, C., & McCallister, L. (2004). Performance in college-level courses among students concurrently enrolled in remedial courses: Policy implications. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 28, 435-453.

- Isakson, R. L., Isakson, M. B., Plummer, K. J., & Chapman, S. B. (2016). Development and validation of the Isakson Survey of Academic Reading Attitudes (ISARA). *Journal of College Reading and Learning*, 46(2), 113-138.
- Ivey, G., & Broaddus, K. (2001). "Just plain reading": A survey of what makes students want to read in middle school classrooms. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 36(4), 350-377.
- Johannessen, L. R. (2004). Helping "struggling" students achieve success. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 47(8), 638-647.
- Jones, S. R., (2002). (Re)writing the word: Methodological strategies and issues in qualitative research. *Journal of College Student Development*, 43(4), 461-473.
- Karlsson, A. (2009). Positioned by reading and writing: Literacy practices, roles, and genres in common occupations. *Written Communication*, 26(1), 53-76.
- Kim, H. (2003). The effect of attitude toward reading and exposure to reading on English competence. *Language Research* 39(2), 441-471.
- Kirsch, I. S., & Guthrie, J. T. (1984). Adult reading practices for work and leisure. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 34, 213-232.
- Kirsch, I.S., Jungblut, A., Jenkins, L., & Kolstad, A. (1993). Adult literacy in America: A first look at the results of the National Adult Literacy Survey.
- Kush, J. C., & Watkins, M. W. (1996). Long-term stability of children's attitudes toward reading. *Journal of Educational Research*, 89, 315-319.

- Kush, J. C., Watkins, M. W., & Brookhart, S. M. (2005). The temporal-interactive influence of reading achievement and reading attitude. *Educational Research and Evaluation, 11*(1), 29-44.
- Kwon, H., & Linderholm, T. (2015). Reading speed as a constraint of accuracy of self-perception of reading skill. *Journal of Research in Reading, 38*(2), 159-171.
- LaForgia, J. (1988). The affective domain related to science education and its evaluation. *Science Education, 72*, 407-421.
- Lei, S. A., Bartlett, K.A., Gorney, S.E., & Herschbach, T. R. (2010). Resistance to reading compliance among college students: Instructors perspective. *College Student Journal, 44* (2), 219-229.
- Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D., & Hackett, G. (1994). Toward a unifying social cognitive theory of career and academic interest, choice, and performance. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 45*, 79-122.
- Levy, R. J. (2011). Literature circles go to college. *Journal of Basic Writing (CUNY), 30*(2), 53-83.
- Lewis, R., & Teale, W. H. (1980). Another look at secondary school students' attitudes toward reading. *Journal of Reading Behavior, 12*(3), 187-201.
- Ley, T., Schaer, B., & Dismukes, B. (1994). Longitudinal study of the reading attitudes and behaviours of middle school students. *Reading Psychology: An International Quarterly, 15*, 11-38.
- Lichtman, M. (2014). *Qualitative research for the social sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

- Lincoln, Y.S. & E.G. Guba (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Long, B. H., & Henderson, E. H. (1973). Children's use of time: Some personal and social correlates. *Elementary School Journal*, 73(4), 193-199.
- Lorenzo, A. L. (1994). The mission and functions of the community college. In G.A. Baker III, J. Dudziak, & P. Tyler (Eds.), *A handbook on the community college in America: Its history, mission, and management* (111-122). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Luke, A. (2003). Literacy and the other: A sociological approach to literacy research and policy in multilingual societies. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 38(1), 132-141.
- Mac Iver, D. J., Stipek, D. J., & Daniels, D. H. (1991). Explaining within-semester changes in student effort in junior high school and senior high school courses. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 83(2), 201.
- Mansfield, K. C. (2014). How listening to student voices informs and strengthens social justice research and practice. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 50(3), 392-430.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- McCabe, P. P., & Miller, P. M. (2003). Attitude changes reported by college students who tutored children in reading. *Journal of College Reading & Learning*, 34(1), 44-60.
- McCarthy, S. J. (2001). Identity construction in elementary readers and writers. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 36(2), 122-151.

- McGrath, D., & Spear, M. B. (1987). The politics of remediation. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 57, 11-21.
- McLeod, J. (2011). Student voice and the politics of listening in higher education. *Critical Studies in Education*, 52(2), 179-189.
- McKenna, M. C., Conradi, K., Lawrence, C., Jang, B. G., & Meyer, J. P. (2012). Reading attitudes of middle school students: Results of a U.S. survey. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 47(3), 283-306.
- McKenna, M. C., & Kear, D. J. (1990). Measuring attitude toward reading: a new tool for teachers. *Reading Teacher*, 43, 626-639.
- McKenna, M. C., Kear, D. J., & Ellsworth, R. A. (1995). Children's attitudes toward reading: A national survey. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 30, 934-956.
- Mellard, D., Patterson, M. B., & Prewett, S. (2007). Reading practices among adult education participants. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 42(2), 188-213.
- Merriam, S.B. (1998). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Morris, R. C. (2016). The Inequality of Self-Efficacy between Junior College and Traditional University Students. *Current Issues in Education*, 19(2), 1-17.
- Morris, D., & Price, D. (2008). Transformative teaching in a developmental reading program. *Journal of College Reading and Learning*, 39(1), 88-93.
- National Association of Developmental Education (NADE). (2016). *NADE 2015-2016 facts*. Retrieved from <http://www.nade.net/aboutnade.html>.
- National Endowment for the Arts. (2007). *To read or not to read: A question of national*

- consequence* (Research Report #47). Washington, D.C.: U.S..
- Nippold, M. A., Duthie, J. K., & Larsen, J. (2005). Literacy as a leisure activity: Free-time preferences of older children and young adolescents. *Language, Speech & Hearing Services in Schools, 36*(2), 93-102.
- Padak, N. D., & Bardine, B. A. (2004). Engaging readers and writers in adult education contexts. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 48*(2), 126-137.
- Parr, S. (1992). Everyday reading and writing practices of normal adults: Implications for aphasia assessment. *Aphasiology, 6*(3), 273-283.
- Paulson, E.J. (2006). Self-selected reading for enjoyment as a college developmental reading approach. *Journal of College Reading and Learning, 36*(2), 51-58.
- Paulson, E. J. (2014). Analogical processes and college development reading. *Journal of Developmental Education, 37*(3), 2-13.
- Pearson Education, Inc. (2013). *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, 4<sup>th</sup> edition*. New York, New York: Pearson Education.
- Perin, D. (2011). Facilitating student learning through contextualization: A review of evidence. *Community College Review, 39*(3), 268-295.
- Perin, D. (2013). Literacy skills among academically underprepared students. *Community College Review, 41*(2), 118-136.
- Perry, K. H. (2009). Genres, contexts, and literacy practices: Literacy brokering among Sudanese refugee families. *Reading Research Quarterly, 44*(3), 256-276.
- Piercey, R.R. (2013). *Reading self-efficacy in early adolescence: Which measure works best?* (Doctoral dissertation).

- Prat-Sala, M., & Redford, P. (2010). The interplay between motivation, self-efficacy, and approaches to studying. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 80, 283-305.
- Purcell-Gates, V., Degener, S.C., Jacobson, E. & Soler, M. (2002). Impact of authentic adult literacy instruction on adult literacy practices. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 37, 70-72.
- Purcell-Gates, V., Melzi, G., Najafi, B., & Orellana, M. F. (2011). Building literacy instruction from children's sociocultural worlds. *Child Development Perspectives*, 5(1), 22-27.
- Quinn, B. & Jadav, A.D. (1987). Causal relationship between attitude and achievement for elementary grade mathematics and reading. *Journal of Educational Research*, 80(6), 366–372.
- Randel, M. A. (2014). Labeled reading disabled and "Doing Reading": One college student's reading history. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education*, 10(2), 51-67.
- Rasinski, T. V., Chang, S., Edmondson, E., Nageldinger, J., Nigh, J., Remark, L., & ... Rupley, W. H. (2017). Reading fluency and college readiness. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 60(4), 453-460.
- Rodrigo, V., Greenberg, D., & Segal, D. (2014). Changes in reading habits by low literate adults through extensive reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 26(1), 73-91.
- Rutschow, E. Z., Schneider, E., & MDRC. (2011). *Unlocking the Gate: What We Know about Improving Developmental Education*. Executive Summary.



- Sainsbury, M., & Schagen, I. (2004). Attitudes to reading at ages nine and eleven. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 27(4), 373-386.
- Saldana, J. (2009). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Sanacore, J. (2002). Struggling literacy learners benefit from lifetime literacy. *Reading Psychology*, 23(2), 67-86.
- Saxon, D. P., Levine-Brown, P., & Boylan, H. R. (2008). Affective assessment for developmental students, part 1. *Research in Developmental Education*, 22(1), 1- 4.
- Saxon, D. P., & Morante, E. A. (2014). Effective student assessment and placement: challenges and recommendations. *Journal of Developmental Education*, 37(3), 24-31.
- Scales, A. M., & Rhee, O. (2001). Adult reading habits and patterns. *Reading Psychology*, 22(3), 175-203.
- Schibeci, R. A. (1983). Selecting appropriate attitudinal objectives for school science. *Science Education*, 67, 595-603.
- Schieffelin, B. B., & Ochs, E. (1986). Language Socialization. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 15, 163-191.
- Schram, T.H. (2006). *Conceptualizing and proposing qualitative research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Columbus, OH: Pearson.
- Schunk, D. H. (1984). Self-efficacy perspective on achievement behavior. *Educational Psychologist*, 19, 48-58.

- Seidman, I. (2013). *Interviewing as qualitative research* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Teacher's College Press.
- Sharon, A. T. (1973-74). What do adults read? *Reading Research Quarterly*, 9(2), 148-169.
- Shavelson, R. J., & Bolus, R. (1982). Self-concept: The interplay of theory and methods. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 74(1), 3-17.
- Shavelson, R. J., Hubner, J. J., & Stanton, G. C. (1976). Self-concept: Validation of construct interpretations. *Review of Educational Research*, 46(3), 407-441.
- Sheorey, R., & Mokhtari, K. (1994). The reading habits of developmental college students at different levels of reading proficiency. *Reading Improvement*, 31, 156-166.
- Shore, J. R., Sabatini, J. P., Lentini, J., & Holtzman, S. (2013). Changes in reading practices and perceptions in low-literacy-level adult learners. *Reading Psychology*, 34(6), 550-568.
- Simmons, H.L. (1994). Diversity among community college student populations. In G.A. Baker III, J. Dudziak, & P. Tyler (Eds.), *A handbook on the community college in America: Its history, mission, and management* (454-461). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Sipe, L. R., & Ghiso, M. P. (2004). Developing conceptual categories in classroom descriptive research: Some problems and possibilities. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 35(4), 472-485.
- Smith, M C. (1988, November). The development of a measure to assess adults' attitudes

toward reading. Submitted to Northern Illinois University Graduate Council on Research & Artistry.

Smith, M.C. (1990a). A longitudinal investigation of reading attitude development from childhood to adulthood. *Journal of Educational Research*, 83(4), 215-219.

Smith, M.C. (1990b). The relationship of adult's reading attitude to actual reading behavior. *Reading Improvement*, 27(2), 116-121.

Smith, M.C. (1990c). Reading habits and attitudes of adults at different levels of education and occupation. *Reading Research and Instruction*, 30(1), 50-58.

Smith, M.C. (1991, November). *An investigation of construct validity of the Adult Survey of Reading Attitude*. Paper presented at the meeting of the College Reading Association, Alexandria, VA.

Smith, M.C. (1992). A comparison of good and poor readers on a measure of adult's reading attitudes. *Research and Teaching in Developmental Education*, 8(2), 51-56.

Smith, M C. (1995). Reading activity, reading skills, and cognitive growth in adulthood. *The Journal of Adult Development*, 2, 241-256.

Smith, M C. (1996). Differences in reading practices and literacy proficiencies among adults. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 31, 196-219.

Smith, M. C. (2000). The real-world reading practices of adults. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 32(1), 25-52.

- Smith, M C. (2001). *Literacy practices among low-education adults in the Longitudinal Study of Adult Learning*. Technical report for the Longitudinal Study of Adult Literacy, Portland State University.
- Smith, M. C., & Stahl, N. A. (1999). Adults' Reading Practices and Activities: Age, Educational and Occupational Effects. Report Retrieved from ERIC <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED450339>.
- Spann, M.G. & McCrimmon, S. (1994). Remedial/developmental education: Past, present, and future. In G. A. Baker, J. Dudziak & P. Tyler (Eds.), *A handbook on the community college in America: Its history, mission and management* (pp. 161-175). Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press.
- Stake, R. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Sticht, T. G., Beck, L. J., Hauke, R. N., Kleiman, G. M., & James, J. H. (1974). *Auditing and reading: A developmental model*. Alexandria, VA: Human Resources Research Organization
- Stone, N. R. (1994). Self-evaluation and self-motivation for college developmental readers. *Research and Teaching in Developmental Education*, 10(2), 53-62.
- Street, B.V. (1984). *Literacy in theory and practice*. London, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Taylor, B. M., Frye, B. J., & Maruyama, G. (1990). Time spent reading and reading growth. *American Educational Research Journal*, 27, 351-362.
- The Century Foundation (2016). *When college students start behind* (Part 5). New York, New York: Bailey, T. & Smith-Jaggers, S.

- The Chronicle of Higher Education. (2013). *College Completion: Who graduates from college, who doesn't, and why it matters*. Retrieved from <http://collegecompletion.chronicle.com>.
- Timmermans, A. C., de Boer, H., & van der Werf, M. C. (2016). An investigation of the relationship between teachers' expectations and teachers' perceptions of student attributes. *Social Psychology of Education, 19*(2), 217-240.
- Tinto, V. (2008). *When Access Is Not Enough. Carnegie Perspectives*. Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.
- Tinto, V. (1987). *Leaving College: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Triplett, C. F. (2004). Looking for a struggle: Exploring the emotions of a middle school reader. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 48*(3), 214-222.
- Turley, S. (1994, April). The way teachers teach is, like, totally whacked: The student voice on classroom practice. Paper presented at the annual meeting of American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.
- United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2008). *The Global Literacy Challenge: A profile of youth and adult literacy at the mid-point of the United Nations Literacy Decade 2003 – 2012*. Paris, France: United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization.
- United States of America Department of Education. (2017). *Developmental education challenges and strategies for reform*. Washington D.C., U.S.: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development

- Vogt, M. & Shearer, B.A. (2003). *Reading specialists in the real world: A sociocultural view*. New York: Pearson.
- Wallbrown, F. H. , Brown, D. H., and Engin, A. W. (1977). A Survey of Reading Attitudes-Intermediate Form A (3rd ed.). Unpublished test.
- White, S., Chen, J., & Forsyth, B. (2010). Reading-related literacy activities of American adults: Time spent, task types, and cognitive skills used. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 42(3), 276-307.
- Wigfield, A., & Guthrie, J. T. (1997). Relations of children's motivation for reading to the amount and breadth of their reading. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 89, 420-432.
- Williams, B. T. (2004). "A puzzle to the rest of us": Who is a "reader" anyway? *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 47(8), 686-689.
- Willingham, D., & Price, D. (2009). Theory to practice vocabulary instruction in community college developmental education reading classes: What the research tells us. *Journal of College Reading & Learning*, 40(1), 91-105.
- Wortham, S. (2010). Listening for identity beyond the speech event. *Teachers College Record*, 112(11), 2850-2873.
- Yin, R.K. (1989). *Case study research: Design and methods* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Yin, R.K. (1992). The role of theory in doing case study research and evaluations. In H. Chen & P.H. Rossi (Eds.), *Using theory to improve program and policy evaluations* (pp. 97- 114). New York: Greenwood Press.

- Yin, R.K. (1998). The abridged version of case study research: Design and method. In L. Bickman & D.J. Rog (Eds.). *Handbook of applied social research methods* (pp. 229-260). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Yin, R.K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington D.C.: Sage.
- Yin, R.K. (2012). *Applications of case study research* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Washington D.C.: Sage.
- Yin, R.K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington D.C.: Sage.
- Williamson, G. L. (2008). A text readability continuum for postsecondary readiness. *Journal of Advanced Academics*, 19(4), 602-632.
- Zimmerman, B. J., & Ringle, J. (1981). Effects of model persistence and statements of confidence on children's self-efficacy and problem solving. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 73(4), 485-93.