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Examining Corrective Instruction with the Balanced Literacy Framework and Middle School Students' Academic Achievement in Reading

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Examining Corrective Instruction with the Balanced Literacy Framework and Middle
School Students' Academic Achievement in Reading

By
Reynelda Marie Babb-Brown

A Dissertation Submitted to the
Gardner-Webb University School of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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Approval Page

This dissertation was submitted by Reynelda Marie Babb-Brown under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Gardner-Webb University School of Education and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Gardner-Webb University.

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Abstract

Examining Corrective Instruction with the Balanced Literacy Framework and Middle School Students' Academic Achievement in Reading. Babb-Brown, Reynelda Marie, 2016: Dissertation, Gardner-Webb University, Reading Interest/Corrective Instruction/Action Planning/Data Dive/Teacher Efficacy/Middle Schools

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effects on reaching achievement for middle school students using Test one and Test three of the Discovery Education™ assessments. Students took the pretest and participated in corrective instruction and interventions. After interventions, students took Test three. A quantitative research design was used to examine data collected from 116 students from three southeastern state public schools from the school years of 2014-2015 and 2015-2016.

This research study explored teachers' perceptions of time using the 2014 North Carolina Working Conditions Survey time construct from the three public schools. An additional research question addressed the correlational relationships among the variables of students' reading growth and teachers' strongly agree and agree respondent percentages of action planning time as measured by the North Carolina Working Conditions Survey. This study found no significant relationships among the primary variables of student reading growth and teachers' perceptions of action planning time. However, statistically significant relationships were found between students' Test one to Test three scores who participated in interventions.

The findings in this study will be beneficial to elementary and secondary principals who are held accountable for literacy development, implementation, and evaluation as the school instructional leader. In addition, school leaders can use this in order to gain insight as to the skill sets and strategies to use to create positive working and learning conditions for their teachers and students. The findings in this study will also be beneficial to directors of curriculum instruction as well as district superintendents in how recommendations are made to school boards for changes in policies of implementation and monitoring effective reading interventions for students and building positive teacher morale and teacher efficacy.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Teachers are concerned with creating successful classrooms that are places of learning for all students. Educational researchers have found that there is a strong correlation between reading and academic success (Shoebottom, 2014). Therefore, better readers are more likely to do well in school than weak readers. According to Blumanfeld (2012), a functional illiterate is someone who may have spent up to 12 years in public schools and learned to recognize some words as whole configurations, like Chinese characters, but is incapable of decoding the written language. They are frustrated, handicapped readers who find reading so onerous that they avoid it. Consequently, teachers charged with literacy instruction are in a unique position to have a significant impact on students' development as literate and wise citizens (Mantle-Bromley & Foster, 2005). Certain skills, knowledge, and dispositions are needed for participation in a democratic society.

The Research Problem

Research by Appleton, Christenson, and Furlong, (2006) indicated a possible relationship between teacher morale and student engagement. Teachers who strive to design challenging, meaningful learning tasks may find that their students respond differently depending on the students' assumptions about intelligence. Students with a growth mindset may tackle such work with excitement, whereas students with a fixed mindset may feel threatened by learning tasks that require them to stretch or take risks (Dweck, 2010). How can teachers stretch students when they may not have the proper training on how to implement intervention tools to help them in deep reading or an understanding of when to use particular strategies to assist students in mastering reading

skills needed to be proficient readers?

The ability to read efficiently and effectively has clear implications for a student's overall academic performance. Reading comprehension leads to an increased emphasis on the role of problem solving which enables a student to critically think through the situation (Fahim, Barjesteh, & Vaseghi, 2012). Some students acquire the necessary prerequisite skills and become proficient readers, whereas others do not. These students are commonly referred to as "poor readers" (Spear-Swerling & Sternberg, 1994).

According to some estimates, reading problems affect as many as 10 million children in the United States alone (Simos et al., 2002). For those children who encounter difficulties in acquiring reading skills, the long-term consequences of reading failure are tremendous (Cunningham & Stanovich, 2001; Torgensen, 2000).

Although most students acquire language in a natural developmental manner, the ability to acquire basic reading skills is not a natural process (Lyon, 1999; Moats, 1999). Teachers encounter students who come to school with environmental, experiential, and individual differences (Lyon, 1999; Moats, 1999). Students at risk for learning difficulties tend to differ from their average-achieving peers in the areas of language processing, memory, learning strategies, and vocabulary (Kame'enui & Carnine, 1998). One of the most prevailing problems in today's schools is teaching students to read (Atkinson, Wilhite, Frey, & Williams, 2002).

A balanced literacy program allows room for growth and recognizes that reading instruction is changing (Guthrie & Greaney, 1991). More and more teachers are providing a balanced approach to instruction that includes a combination of authentic experiences, direct instruction, and the use of technology (Stevens, 1982; Strickland & Morrow, 1990). Balanced literacy is based on students' needs along with the standards

students are expected to master in both reading and writing. A preassessment is given at the beginning and a postassessment at the end (Hoffman, 2014). A balanced literacy program capitalizes on what most students already know when they come to school and expands those existing experiences.

Effective learning in school requires good teaching, and good teaching requires professionals who exercise judgment in constructing the education of their students (Porter & Brophy, 1988). Research by Brophy and Good (1986) has shown that students who receive active instruction and supervision from their teachers achieve more than those students who spend most of their time working through curriculum material on their own. Therefore, educators are the best models for students.

Training teachers to use appropriate intervention techniques at the right time will help students' misconceptions and increase their proficiency in mastering reading standards. It is imperative that teachers instruct students in such a way that they build student efficacy and foster the development of self-motivated learners. Effective teaching not only provides students with input, response opportunities, and feedback; but it also attracts their attention and interest. It stimulates them to activate information processing strategies, sense-making strategies, and other cognitive and metacognitive components of learning for meaningful understanding (Porter & Brophy, 1988). In addition, work by Kraft and Papay (2014) used student-teacher linked data and school-level teaching conditions as measured by the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions (NCTWC) survey to find that teachers who work in more supportive environments become more effective at raising student achievement on standardized tests over time. Building positive teacher morale and supporting teacher efficacy may have an impact on student academic achievement. Specific attention was given to examining the

seventh and eighth graders' growth in reading using the balanced literacy framework.

Significance of the Study

Cooper (1990) argued that the need to understand the importance of balance is especially acute in the area of beginning literacy. Cooper highlighted the need for balance between the affective dimension and the cognitive dimension in the teaching of literacy. A balance between time spent teaching reading and time spent teaching writing as well as opportunities to integrate the two is needed. Research also stressed the importance of moving from skills-oriented approaches involving the teaching of reading and writing as separate entities to a balanced approach where decoding and comprehension are necessary parts of beginning literacy instruction (Langer, 1986; Lipson, 1982; Many, 1991).

During the 1960s and 1970s, reading specialists believed that reading was an end product of decoding (Fries, 1962). According to Fries (1962), teachers believed that comprehension would occur automatically once students could name the words; however, as teachers placed greater emphasis on decoding, they found that many students still did not understand what they had read. Therefore, comprehension was not happening automatically.

Consequently, the emphasis in reading instruction shifted, and teachers began asking students a variety of questions at various levels (Clymer, 1968). By the late 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s, educators began to believe that the best way to develop reading comprehension was to identify a set of comprehension skills (Pearson, 1985). Rosenblatt (1983) proposed that reading was a transaction between the reader and the text and held the belief that readers had the right to construct their own meaning.

As a result of research and theories of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, many

educators have broadened their thinking and have started to focus on a literacy perspective rather than the isolated elements of reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and thinking (Pearson, 1985; Rosenblatt, 1983). Educators view reading as a process of constructing meaning by interacting with the text. Educators understand that reading is inseparable from the broad concepts of literacy and that reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and thinking develop simultaneously as learning grows into literacy (Tierney & Shanahan, 1991).

Research has found that

if all students are to truly achieve, their unique needs must be addressed within a learning environment that actually engages them in meaningful activities and at their multiple levels of ability. Rather than rely on test instruments, even nonstandardized ones such as informal reading inventories, teachers should initially gain insights into students' literacy abilities by observing their individual competence in areas such as oral reading, story retellings, written summaries, answers to key questions, and background knowledge. Thus, teachers must become not only more analytical and better observers of their students but also more knowledgeable about literacy learning and various methods and intervention for literacy instruction. (Gipe, 2005, p. 25)

Potential Significance

A review of literature indicated that the implementation of the balanced literacy framework provides children with the knowledge, abilities, and processes needed to become emergent readers who value reading (Smith & Dahl, 1984; Spache, 1982). The literature also indicated that language learning occurs naturally in the home and community as children see print and understand its function in their environment.

Children learn about literacy from adult models, particularly family members, and their knowledge of reading and writing develops concurrently (Mavrogenes, 1986).

If the balanced literacy framework utilizing corrective feedback and effective action planning contributes to an increase in students' reading abilities, the findings would be of value to school systems faced with functional illiteracy. School systems might be able to use the concepts of balanced literacy and refer to these concepts when restructuring and reforming the curriculum. In addition, teachers could use this information to refine their methods of teaching deep reading and incorporate components of balanced literacy and action planning into their regular curricula.

This study goes in-depth about the corrective instructional approach and how students respond to this method in language arts classrooms that use the balanced literacy framework. Guskey (2003) defined corrective instruction as instructional strategies provided to students who demonstrate nonmastery of standards. Corrective instruction is designed to correct specific misconceptions, and it involves different strategies than those used during initial instruction. It also requires the teacher to provide enrichment exercises to students who demonstrate mastery of standards.

This study explains the process of the three distinct components of data-driven instruction (DDI): assessment, analysis (dissecting the data and determining misconceptions), and action planning (developing corrective instructional plans) to help students master a deeper understanding of informational and literature texts. The most fundamental components of effective literacy instruction are the decisions teachers make in the classroom as they "work with children to support their individualized needs" (Leu & Kinzer, 2003, p. 6). By examining and reflecting on curricular initiatives, school principals can "find ways to support them as they figure out how to best meet the needs

of their students” (Allen, 2006, p. 43).

Overview of Methodology

A quantitative method was chosen to provide the most effective means for examining the effects of corrective instruction as it pertains to students being proficient in reading. This was measured by looking at student performance on their reading formative assessments from Discovery Education™ (DE). A paired sample *t* test was used to evaluate the statistical significance of students’ DE reading pretest to their posttest growth mean. A Pearson *r* correlation coefficient test was used to identify the correlation between students’ reading growth score means and teachers’ strongly agree and agree respondent percentages based on the NCTWC survey time construct.

Definition of Terms

The following terms central to this study are defined as follows.

Assessment. Gathering data about student learning in order to make instructional decisions in the best interest of student progress (Sedita, 2011).

Autonomy. Professional freedom to choose how to deliver curriculum to best meet the needs of the students in the classroom. In this study, autonomy refers specifically to teachers’ autonomy and pedagogical freedom. It includes the assumption that teachers are experts, having received specific instruction and training; they are best suited to choose how to differentiate instruction and provide specific intervention for their students (Harmer, 2007).

Balanced literacy. A comprehensive literacy framework that is based on the belief that all students cannot be taught with one program or philosophy. It includes four components of reading instruction and four components of writing instruction: Shared Reading, Guided Reading, Reader’s Workshop, Read Aloud, Writer’s Workshop, Guided

Writing, Shared Writing, and Interactive Writing. The approach incorporates various forms of performance-based assessments into these literacy strategies (Honig, 1996).

Cognitive skills. Any mental skills that are used in the process of acquiring knowledge (Pianta, 1997).

Comprehension. A strategic process by which readers construct or assume meaning to a text by using the clues in the text and using their own prior knowledge (Massey, 2003).

Corrective instruction. Presenting information using different instructional strategies than were presented during the initial instruction. It emphasizes metacognition, and it involves coaching behaviors. It is information given to learners regarding a linguistic error they have made (Loewen, 2012; Sheen, 2007).

DDI. The philosophy that schools should constantly focus on one simple question: Are our students learning? Using data-based methods, these schools break from the traditional emphasis on what teachers ostensibly taught in favor of a clear-eyed, fact-based focus on what students actually learn (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2010).

Data-driven decision making (DDDM). Quotient for making data-driven decisions as determined by a data-driven decision-making diagnostic (McLeod, 2005).

Decoding. The aspect of the reading process that involves deriving the pronunciation for a printed sequence of letters based on knowledge of spelling-sound correspondences (Carlisle & Stone, 2005).

Deep reading. Forces students to dig further into the text by asking them to reread, revisit, and search for the hidden intricacies of the text (Gallagher, 2004).

Emergent literacy. The idea that children grow into reading and writing with no

real beginning or ending point; that reading and writing develop concurrently, interrelatedly, and according to no one right sequence or order (Justice & Pullen, 2003).

Evaluation. A judgment of student progress based on assessments conducted by the teacher (Borman & Kimball, 2005).

Guided reading. A reading strategy whereby the teacher works with a small group that has similar reading processes. The teacher selects and introduces new books and supports children reading the whole text to themselves making teaching points during and after the reading (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001).

Independent reading. A reading strategy whereby children read on their own or with partners from a wide range of materials (Schwartz et al., 2002).

Intervention. A strategy or program supplementary to an existing literacy curriculum that is provided to students for the primary purpose of increasing reading levels. Such programs can be administered both in and out of the traditional classroom environment (Greenleaf & Roller, 2002).

Language acquisition. The social process of acquiring language (Kucer, 2005).

Literacy. The ability to read and write (National Governors Association [NGA], 2005).

Phonemic awareness. The knowledge that words are comprised of sounds (Strickland, 2011).

Read-aloud. A reading strategy whereby the teacher reads aloud a carefully selected body of literature to the whole class or small groups (Layne, 1996).

Reteaching. Presents information using the same instructional strategies implemented during the initial instructional strategy. Assigns additional writing or reading work for the students to complete. This is the opposite of corrective instruction.

Rich literacy experience. An experience in which children are immersed in the enjoyment and purposeful use of books (Smith, 2004).

Shared reading. An instructional approach in which the teacher explicitly models the strategies and skills of a proficient reader (Clay, 2002; Routman, 1994).

Teacher action plans. The strategic decision to reteach difficult standards according to teachers' strengths. It uses a creative approach to making teaching more effective (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2010).

Assumptions

For the purpose of this study, the researcher assumed that the participants completed a 48-hour training seminar in the district on the eight components of balanced literacy. In addition, the researcher assumed that the participants participated in DDI training in order to correctively instruct their students and be able to use students' data to better inform instruction. However, it must be understood that the level of training varied; and some of the participants were trained as many as 2-3 years ago, while some were trained within the past year. The researcher assumed that corrective instruction and action planning take a significant amount of time and this correlates to the time construct based on the NCTWC survey. The researcher assumed that students' DE Assessments (DEAs) are the best data source for this study and that the use of the corrective instruction and action planning within the balanced literacy framework is important when considering implementation of the program.

Delimitations of the Study

The limitations of a study provide useful parameters about possible weaknesses of a study which may affect results (Creswell, 2014). Outlining the possible limitations of a

study allows consumers of research to gauge the ability to generalize results and can be useful to other potential researchers who seek to conduct a similar study. The study of teachers' strongly agree and agree respondent percentages from the NCTWC survey time construct is limited by the number of teacher participants. In addition, there is a small data set or sample n used for the Pearson correlation coefficient.

This study was conducted in the seventh- and eighth-grade classrooms of three economically disadvantaged schools in a single school district of North Carolina, which limits the ability to generalize to other districts or schools. The teachers' working conditions were limited to those constructs assessed in the Teaching Empowering Leading and Learning (TELL) Survey which include instructional time. Other constructs of working conditions exist in the schools' settings that were not examined by the survey. The teachers who participated in the 2014 NCTWC survey may not be the same as those who provided language arts instruction for the students in the 2015-2016 school year. The researcher cannot ensure that they were the same teachers who provided instruction from the year 2014-2015 to 2015-2016 and contributed to the student DE reading data. Additionally, this research was limited to teachers' perceptions in low-performing schools. Therefore, generalizability of the results may be limited to low-achieving schools and cannot be generalized to other types of schools statewide.

This study relied upon the survey responses from teachers regarding morale to be honest about their attitudes about time. The NCTWC survey has been shortened to included only one construct, time. Although it has been validated, the exclusion of the other constructs limits the study.

Student reading growth was measured by DEA reading Test one and Test three. DEAs are reliable and validated to use as a precursor of students' end-of-grade (EOG)

tests. There are a total of four DE tests that students take over the course of a school year. The researcher only used reading data from Test one and Test three; this limits the study.

There was no treatment/control group in this study which may have jeopardized the internal validity of the study. Huck (1991) stated that threats to validity refer specifically to whether an experimental treatment/condition makes a difference or not and whether there is sufficient evidence to support the claim. The participants who took the pretest in this study may have learned things from the testing experience that improved their posttest performance on the dependent variable.

Organization of the Study

This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 provides the background and rationale for the study including the statement of purpose, research questions, significance of the study, limitations, and definition of terms. The review of literature is presented in Chapter 2 including a discussion of the history of the balanced literacy framework, deep reading, and the intervention strategies that are used simultaneously. Chapter 3 presents the design of the study including data collection methods and the methods of analyzing data. Chapter 4 includes the results of the data analysis. Chapter 5 contains the summary, conclusions, and recommendations for future research for school leaders and the personnel who assume the role of implementing corrective instructional training. Implications for further research are also discussed.

Research Questions

1. To what extent will the implementation of corrective instruction strategies impact students' reading pre and postassessment scores?
2. To what extent is there a correlation between student reading scores and

teacher action planning time as determined by the NCTWC survey?

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Knowing when to use appropriate intervention techniques at the right time will help students' misconceptions and increase their proficiency in mastering reading. This study goes in-depth about the corrective instructional approach and how students respond to this method in language arts classrooms that use the balanced literacy framework. In addition, this study explains the process of the three distinct components of DDI to help students master deep reading of informational and literature texts.

Overview

Today's teachers are under enormous pressure to ensure that their students achieve high academic standards whether or not these students are native speakers of English or have other special needs. Federal reform plans such as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2002) and the Elementary and Secondary Education Reauthorization Act of 2011-2012 (U.S. Department of Education, 2010) as well as the state-led Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Initiative (NGA Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010) combine to place a heavy layer of accountability on teachers, especially in the area of literacy.

Early childhood professionals have recognized the importance of language and literacy in preparing children to succeed in school. Ladd and Dinella (2009) demonstrated that levels of student engagement in primary grades are predictive of achievement through eighth grade. All children should have access to programs that reflect consistency and evidenced-based instruction that helps them become proficient readers. Teachers must teach students the steps of learning to read and then reading to learn.

North Carolina State Educational Mandates

The Read to Achieve program is a part of the Excellent Public Schools Act which became law in July 2012 and applies to all schools at the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year. The goal of the state is to ensure that every student reads at or above grade level by the end of third grade and continues to progress in reading proficiency so that he or she can read, comprehend, integrate, and apply complex texts needed for secondary education and career success (North Carolina Read to Achieve, 2012).

Reading by the end of third grade is a key milestone in a child's educational development and an indicator of future educational success. All children should be reading at a proficient level by the end of third grade. While different states use different tests to measure students' reading, many have measures of reading proficiency for public school students in fourth grade as required by the federal NCLB Act (Bruner, 2010).

According to Snow and Shattuck (2011), reading well at the third-grade level does not ensure school success. Children still have a lot to learn about reading in the middle school and secondary grades. They need to learn to process much more challenging text they will encounter with grammar, unfamiliar vocabulary, and complex ideas. They need to know how to read and be critical of what they read. Many children read well at the end of Grade 3 but encounter real difficulties in the higher grades because the task of reading to learn is different from the task of learning to read.

Some of the new educational laws require retention of third graders who cannot clear a proficiency bar on a state reading test. A new law in several states including Utah, Oklahoma, California, and New York and New Mexico requires a system of diagnostic reading tests at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year for pupils in kindergarten through third grade. Results must be reported to parents and interventions

have to be provided to address the weaknesses (Gewertz, 2011).

Third grade is a pivotal time for students to tackle informational text. There are literacy plans in place to help states. In Arizona, Grades K-3 educators use the plans to develop a “prevention” model. It all starts with the assessment system. In Grades K-2, the summative reading goal is measured by universal screening and progress-monitoring measures of essential elements of reading (phonological awareness, letter naming, phonemic awareness-segmenting and blending, listening comprehension). Universal screening is used at the beginning of the year to identify Grades K-2 students who are at risk for reading deficiencies. It is then administered two more times each year to determine if the student is making adequate growth in specific skills. Progress monitoring indicates whether students are on track to read at grade level or higher in Grade 3 and provides critical information to guide instruction. In Grade 3, the summative reading goal is measured by Arizona testing or Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) in 2014-2015 (Wennersten, 2013).

According to Rose and Schimke (2012), students not reading proficiently by the end of third grade are four times more likely than proficient readers to drop out of high school. This fact and other recent research on the importance of early literacy skills have culminated in an intense focus on improving third-grade reading proficiency. The challenges of improving literacy are causing more state leaders to confront the difficult question: Should students who do not have the requisite knowledge and reading skills to succeed in the next grade be retained? The growing number of state initiatives aimed at addressing third-grade reading proficiency includes the following three elements: (1) early identification of reading difficulties; (2) interventions that occur as close to the point of need as possible; and (3) retention.

Results from the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading test show that some improvements have been realized since 1992 for eighth-grade students, but fourth-grade students' reading scores have remained largely unchanged. Between 1992 and 2003, even with gains for most student groups at both grades, gaps have changed little. Between 2007 and 2009, there have been no significant changes in the racial/ethnic gaps, gender gaps, or gaps by type of school at either grade. Compared to 1992, only the White-Black gap at Grade 4 and the female-male gap at Grade 8 have narrowed.

While states such as Florida and major cities such as New York City have enacted so-called "promotion gates" in the past decade, the less-contentious aspects of their policies—early assessments to identify reading difficulties and the provision of "whatever-it-takes" interventions for struggling students—are the most effective drivers of achievement. That being said, proponents of retention credit the threat of retention as the mechanism that helps to ensure that reading difficulties are identified and interventions do occur. Research asserting that birth to age five are critical years for brain development is also encouraging a growing number of state leaders to target literacy development in the earliest years as well as the early grades. The strategy that is causing the most anxiety across the states is retention. It is also of importance to stress the need for early identification and intervention strategies.

There are state strategies to help ensure that a greater number of young readers leave the early grades at a proficient level of knowledge and skills. Strategies that were stated that help to increase literacy skills are intensive remediation in small groups, one-on-one tutoring on Saturdays especially during the summer months, and providing professional development to teachers on intensive reading instruction and differentiated

instruction (Rose & Schimke, 2012). Even though intensive remediation is costly, it costs more to retain students.

Hernandez (2012) reported that children who do not read proficiently by the end of third grade are four times more likely to leave school without a diploma than proficient readers. Hernandez also found that Black and Hispanic students who are not reading proficiently in third grade are twice as likely as similar White children to not graduate from high school. Furthermore, there are states that are adopting a “smart promotion” initiative to do whatever it takes to teach children and using retention as a last resort.

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction guidebook describes the structural framework of the North Carolina Read to Achieve Program. The Read to Achieve Program is part of the Excellent Public School Act which became law in July 2012. It applies to all schools at the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year. It states that students who complete the third grade and are proficient on their EOG reading assessment will be promoted to the fourth grade. However, if they are not proficient, the EOG assessment will be readministered or they will be given an alternate test. If the test is passed, then promotion will be granted. If not, the child qualifies for a “good cause exemption.”

A child only qualifies for a “good cause exemption” if they fall under one of the following: (1) Limited English Proficient (LEP) students with less than 2 school years of instruction in an English as a Second Language program; (2) students with disabilities as defined in G.S. 115C-106.3(1) and whose individualized education program indicates (i) the use of the NCEXTEND1 alternate assessment, (ii) at least a 2 school year delay in educational performance, or (iii) receipt of intensive reading interventions for at least 2 school years; (3) students who demonstrate reading proficiency appropriate for third-

grade students on an alternative assessment approved by the State Board of Education;

(4) students who demonstrate through a student reading portfolio reading proficiency appropriate for third-grade students. Student reading portfolio and review processes used by local school administrative units shall be approved by the State Board of Education; and (5) students who have (i) received reading intervention and (ii) previously been retained more than once in kindergarten, first, second, or third grade.

A child may go to camp if the student was found not be proficient on the EOG or alternate assessment and did not meet one of the “good cause exemptions.” However, if the parents decide to not allow their child to attend the summer reading camp, the child will be retained. In the summer reading camp, the child will take alternate reading comprehension assessments or complete a student reading portfolio. If the child is proficient, he/she will be promoted to the next grade level. If not, the child will be retained with a third-grade label. If the child has already been retained once, the Local School Agency (LEA) shall provide a plan for the child to read at home and include a contract with the parent/guardian.

If the child is retained, he or she will be in a third/fourth-grade transition class. They will meet fourth-grade performance standards and will be remediated in their areas of reading deficiencies within the class. If the child is proficient in reading, he or she will attend an accelerated reading class to increase their reading level at least two grades, receiving pull-out sessions. All students have the opportunity for mid-year promotion by November first (North Carolina Read to Achieve, 2012).

If the child is not proficient, the third-grade retained label remains and reading support is continued. The team may consider placement if the child is proficient and the retained label is removed. The student continues in fourth grade but is provided with

intensive reading support. The child will complete fourth grade. The principal has the final authority on the child's proficiency status; if the student passes, he/she will be promoted to the fifth grade. If the child is not proficient by November first, the student's portfolio will be used to pass third-grade reading and the child has to complete the fourth-grade reading EOG assessment. If the child is not proficient, the child can be retained or granted promotion based on the principal's recommendation (North Carolina Read to Achieve, 2012).

History of the Balanced Literacy Framework

Over the years, there have been two general philosophies that have governed approaches to reading: phonics and balanced literacy (Mason, 1984). Each of these philosophies promotes a very different approach for reading instruction. However, many schools have gone in the direction of balanced literacy (Anderson & Barnitz, 1985). According to research (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1989), a balanced approach to reading raises reading scores and increases students' level of confidence for reading.

The term balanced literacy originated in California in 1996 (California Department of Education, 1996; Honig, 1996). In response to low reading scores on a national examination, the state implemented a new curriculum called balanced reading instruction. Much debate has addressed which elements of reading and writing must be balanced to best promote literacy. Balanced literacy focuses on presenting skills and teaching meaning during separate literacy blocks. The focus of the new curriculum was the systematic and explicit teaching of phonics as a foundation for comprehension as well as presenting literature-based experiences (Asselin, 1999).

Defining Balanced Literacy

Researchers have offered varying definitions of the term balanced literacy. Honig (1996) defined a balanced approach as one that encompasses activities rich in language and literature while combining phonics skills with whole-language strategies. Rasinski and Padak (2001) saw balanced literacy in a similar way as encompassing the best parts of whole-language and phonics instruction: “Balanced reading instruction retains what is best from whole language—real reading for real purposes—and adds to it a limited amount of direct instruction in necessary strategies and skills for reading” (p. 3). Still another definition refers to literacy instruction in which there is a gradual release of responsibility toward student ownership: “The components of balanced literacy provide a framework of support as the student moves toward independently accessing and using strategies in reading and writing” (Nations & Alonso, 2001, p. 3).

In this study, the researcher considered the assessment strategies in balanced literacy and therefore prefers the definition offered by Cowen (2004): “A balanced approach to reading instruction is necessarily built on children’s strengths, and that balance refers to the assessed present and future language developmental needs of children” (p. xi). For this study, balanced literacy refers to a comprehensive literacy framework that encompasses four reading and four writing strategies. It has at its core an underlying belief that no one method, program, or philosophy will meet the needs of all children. Teachers who are educated in literacy and who know their children’s strengths, weaknesses, and subsequent instructional needs are the best equipped to choose appropriate instructional and assessment strategies. These instructional and assessment decisions cannot be prescribed or mandated by an omniscient literacy program.

According to Fountas and Pinnell (1996), literacy is often characterized in a

comprehensive and complex way. It is a philosophical orientation that assumes that reading and writing achievement are developed through instruction and it is supported in multiple environments by using various approaches that differ by level of teacher support and child control. Balanced literacy programs include community, home, and library involvement as well as structured classroom plans and the use of activities such as read aloud, guided reading, shared reading, independent reading, and writing (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001).

A balanced literacy approach helps students learn all the components of literacy and understand how everything is connected. Learning to spell words requires many of the same skills as decoding words. Reading and writing are intertwined, and speaking and listening skills greatly influence reading and writing skills. Experts disagree over preferences for whole-word versus phonics-based instruction, while others disagree with viewing reading instruction in such sequential ways (Fresch, 2008). By utilizing a balanced literacy approach, both methods can be used to address the fluid nature of literacy acquisition.

The balanced literacy theory supports the idea that all students learn differently. Vygotsky (1962), a psychologist who focused on cognitive development, viewed learning as being integrated and socially based. This view of learning follows suit with the balanced literacy approach as it focuses on learning to read as a social activity, an integrated activity that requires students to read, write, listen, and speak and requires engagement in classroom activities. All of these ideas from Vygotsky (1978) are found in a balanced instruction. Students interact in small groups, integrate the different pieces of reading, and engage in activities that allow students to interactively learn to read (Wilkinson, 2000).

Recent research (French, Morgan, Vanayan, & White, 2001; Frey, Lee, Tollefson, Pass, & Massengill, 2005; Taylor, Pressley, & Pearson, 2000) has supported what the major literacy studies showed. According to Frey et al. (2005), recent research has looked at the elements of balanced literacy instruction so that curriculum developers and educators set a good foundation for reading instruction. Frey et al. reported on the many school districts across the United States that have successfully incorporated a balanced literacy program. Tucson, Arizona and Austin, Texas in the United States as well as Toronto, Canada are among some of the districts implementing the program. Data from longitudinal studies have shown that students who have learned under a balanced literacy model have made literacy gains on seven of eight standardized measures (French et al., 2001).

Taylor et al. (2000) examined the research that had been conducted on students who are at risk for failure due to high poverty. They found that it takes a combination of the classroom and school to improve literacy. They also found that “effective literacy teachers provided good classroom management, scaffolded balanced literacy instruction with a focus on explicit skills and authentic opportunities to read and write and discuss the text” (Taylor et al., 2000, p. 5). Effective schools provided a “collaborative learning environment, shared the responsibility for student learning, reached out to families and supported the learning of teachers and students” (Taylor et al., 2000, p. 5).

Although the research shows that there is no one best method for teaching reading, the effectiveness of any particular method “depends too much on the details of how it is implemented” (Adams, 1990, p. 123). Despite the obsession in the 1960s with behavioral and instructional objectives that attempted to teacher-proof the curriculum “based on scientific laws and industrial metaphors for education” (Palmer, Bresler, &

Cooper, 2001, p. 248), the research emphatically stated that there is no one best method (Eisner 1995; Honig, 1996; Rasinski & Padak, 2001). In such a complex process as learning to read, it is not likely that any one method will ever be found which will be effective with all children. Just as children themselves are different, so must the methods of teaching reading be different (Barbe, 1961, p. 2).

Research on Balanced Approaches

A balanced approach could be generically described as “mixing some phonics with whole language,” but how this is accomplished in any particular classroom is unclear. The eclectic approach, as some have come to call it, sometimes involves teaching phonics first and then “graduating” to whole-language approaches. According to Ivey, Baumann, and Jarrard (2000), the properly implemented programs for balanced literacy fully immerse students in the literary experience with relevant skill lessons linked to the literature. There are commonalities that can be found in practices of widely differing philosophies and effective primary literacy instruction which incorporate whole-language and phonics instruction in conjunction to provide best practices in a balanced literacy environment for all students (Pressley, Rankin & Yokoi, 1996; Stahl, 1992).

Phonics

Teaching phonics is not the same as teaching reading. Phonics is an adaptable resource which can be combined with varying literacy instructional programs (Lapp & Flood, 1997; Stahl, 1992). Phonics is a prerequisite for good readers because it teaches all readers strategies that help them derive meaning from word formation and letter combinations (Freppon & Dahl, 1998; Mesmer & Griffith, 2005; Xue & Meisels, 1998). Research supports the idea that explicit phonics instruction is more effective than context based or immersion strategies and aids in pronunciation and fluency of emergent readers

(Ehri, Nunes, Stahl, & Willows, 2001; Xue & Meisels, 1998). As these are skills that students are assessed on regularly and are imperative for students to master before moving on to the next reading level, systematic phonics instruction proves to be an important component of an exemplary literacy program (Willows, 2001). Struggling readers need more than just short-term academic intervention strategies; they need small-group explicit instruction to model how to use phonics rules to make them better readers (Duffy-Hester, 1998).

Phonics instruction promotes favorable outcomes in reading and writing ability over whole-language groups by providing growth in vocabulary and improving comprehension through a structured approach (Chall, 1989; Turner, 1995). Systematic phonics instruction produced higher scores and superior skills and letter sounds in first grade over upper elementary grades (Chall, 1989; Pressley et al., 1996, as cited in Turner, 1995; Xue & Meisels, 1989). Phonics has also promoted higher scores on standardized tests over whole-language programs (Pressley et al., 1996; Xue & Meisels, 1998). One of the main goals of a properly implemented literacy program is to cultivate students' passion for reading, motivation to continue to read a variety of genres, and to challenge them through reading of higher-level texts (Chall, 1989). Children do not enjoy reading if they do not comprehend the text or struggle with their fluency. To tackle this problem in the classroom, it is imperative that teachers provide emergent readers with a solid foundation of letter-sound correspondence and the ability to apply this knowledge to help them recognize meaning in the words that they read through the implementation of explicit and systematic phonics instruction (Stahl, Duffy-Hester, & Dougherty Stahl, 1998). Phonics instruction in the classroom should encourage students to use phonics rules independently in an effort to help them become more fluent readers and promote

stronger comprehension skills.

Whole-Language Approach

Theorists believe that reading ability is obtained in the same sequential manner as oral language acquisition (McKenna, Robinson, & Miller, 1990). Children need to be immersed in rich literature to provide them with the opportunity to construct meaning from context clues in this sequential manner and in a purposeful way (McKenna et al., 1990). Whole-language theorists support student-centered learning environments in early childhood classrooms where phonics instruction is deemphasized (Goodman, 1989). This classroom environment provides opportunities for educators to model how oral language is initially obtained instead of restricted through the usage of a basal reader (Chall, 1989; Goodman, 1989; McKenna et al., 1990). Whole language is a nonprescriptive framework where educators have the ability to mold the instructional model to best meet the learning needs of the students in their classroom (Kennedy & Shiel, 2010).

Educators support a whole-language approach with exposure to rich literature and immersion because students learn phonics in a meaningful manner that increases comprehension rather than honing isolated skills that students later have a hard time applying (Goodman, 1989). The whole-language approach empowers students to take responsibility for their learning because they have the ability to independently apply the information from the text to word identification and context clue comprehension.

Balanced literacy instruction combines phonics and holistic instruction, scaffolding, personalized instruction, and the use of running records, anecdotal, rubrics and portfolios to connect reading and writing in the curriculum (Frey et al., 2005; Kennedy & Shiel, 2010; Turner, 1995; Xue & Meisels, 1998). Researchers and theorists promote balanced literacy approaches over direct literacy instruction where participants

are involved in meaningful activities (Ivey et al., 2000). An important element of balanced literacy is proper classroom management techniques to promote an educational setting conducive to learning (Ivey et al., 2000). The combination of accountable talk, independent reading and writing, and direct literacy instruction are main elements that promote higher levels of literacy in balanced literacy classroom environments (Frey et al., 2005). Practitioners suggest that there must be a balance between child-centered and teacher-centered approaches to teaching in a balanced literacy environment (Frey et al., 2005).

Research does not support one balanced literacy instructional program that will prove effective for every student population (Freppon & Dahl, 1998; Ivey et al., 2000). According to Xue and Meisels (1998), an integrated approach to teaching phonics and whole language for disadvantaged students does not significantly improve reading ability together than if taught separately. There are multiple programs available for teacher usage, but teachers are limited in their choice of materials for instructional practice due to political pressures; and they do not receive appropriate phonics training to make a true balance literacy program that addresses individual student needs and its implementation in the classroom (Freppon & Dahl, 1998; Shaffer, Campbell, & Rakes, 2000).

Adversaries to balanced literacy believe that many educators have an unfocused and eclectic style which is ineffective in promoting literacy comprehension; therefore, teachers need to have freedom of selection of reading resources and modify their teaching as they go along (Ivey et al., 2000).

Educators who embrace a comprehensive approach understand that “avoiding instructional extremes is at the heart of providing a balanced program of reading instruction” (Strickland, 1998, p. 52). In the balanced literacy approach, “The classroom

teacher is viewed not as the user of a particular system, but rather as a decision maker whose task it is to enhance the learning of his students” (Harris & Smith, 1972, p. iii). In fact, “busy, successful reading teachers often combine and modify a selection of established, well-researched practices with creative flair” (Sadoski, 2004, p. 119). A critical factor in a balanced approach is a teacher who systematically observes her students and becomes what Goodman (1978) termed a “kidwatcher.” Teachers may be the best judges of the literacy development of their students because they observe them day after day as they are engaged in literacy tasks (Allington & Walmsley, 1995; Graves, 1991; Johnston, 1987; Leu & Kinzer, 2003; Rasinski & Padak, 2001). The most effective reading teachers know how to use their insights about literacy to meet individual student needs (Anders, Hoffman, & Duffy, 2000; Sadoski, 2004; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

Assessment strategies are incorporated into the instructional components of the balanced literacy approach; these are a part of the instructional process, not separate from it (Gregory & Chapman, 2002). The components balanced literacy consist of Read Aloud, Shared Reading, Guided Reading, Literacy Work Stations, and Independent Reading. In Grades K-2, this is introduced and structured using the Daily 5 model. In Grades 3-5, it is typically structured into a three-block framework of Language/Word Study, Reading Workshop, and Writing Workshop (Barnett et al., 2008).

Read Aloud

A balanced reading program includes daily read aloud selections. Reading aloud to children expands a child’s imagination and knowledge-base, increases students’ language acquisition, demonstrates expression, and influences the child to become a better reader. Research states that reading aloud to young children is not only one of the best activities to stimulate language and cognitive skills, it also builds motivation,

curiosity, and memory (Bardige, 2009). Furthermore, reading aloud is widely recognized as the single most important activity leading to language development. Among other things, reading aloud builds word-sound awareness in children, a potent predictor of reading success.

In addition, children who fall seriously behind in the growth of critical early reading skills have fewer opportunities to practice reading. Evidence suggests that these lost practice opportunities make it extremely difficult for children who remain poor readers during the first 3 years of elementary school to ever acquire average levels of reading fluency (Torgeson, 2004).

Shared Reading

A shared reading experience occurs when children join in the reading of a big book or other enlarged text as guided by a teacher. It is through shared reading that the reading process and reading strategies that readers use are demonstrated. Shared reading provides an excellent opportunity for teachers to model the integrated use of the cueing system and strategies for reading that can be applied to unfamiliar reading. New concepts and strategies of any type are best introduced during shared reading before guided practice is given in the small group setting (Zevenbergen, Whitehurst, & Zevenbergen, 2003).

Coyne, Simmons, Kame'enui, and Stoolmiller, (2004) concluded that “explicitly teaching word meanings within the context of shared storybook reading is an effective method for increasing the vocabulary of young children at risk of experiencing reading difficulties” (p. 152). Moreover, this explicit instruction raises children’s levels of word consciousness which in turn might increase their abilities to notice and learn unknown words more independently and incidentally (Kesler, 2010).

Guided Reading

Guided reading is small-group reading instruction designed to provide differentiated teaching that supports students in developing reading proficiency. The teacher uses a tightly structured framework that allows for the incorporation of several research-based approaches into a coordinated whole. For the student, the guided reading lesson means reading and talking (and sometimes writing) about an interesting and engaging variety of fiction and nonfiction texts. For the teacher, guided reading means taking the opportunity for careful text selection and intentional and intensive teaching of systems of strategic activity for proficient reading (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

It is an essential part of the literacy program where the teacher meets with small groups of students to support them in reading materials that they cannot read totally independently. It is the context in which the teachers supports each reader's development of effective strategies for processing text at increasing levels of difficulty. The goal of guided reading is for students to become fluent readers who can problem solve strategically and read independently and silently. When the teacher is working with a small group of students in guided reading, other students are engaged in literacy work stations.

Research states that guided reading provides a setting within which the explicit teaching of comprehending strategies is ideal.

- Teachers select texts that are within students' ability to comprehend with teaching.
- Teachers select a variety of genres and a variety of text structures within those genres.
- Teachers introduce the text to students in a way that provides background

information and acquaints them with aspects of the text such as structure, content, vocabulary, and plot.

This introduction does not involve reading the text to the students; rather, it is a conversation that assures deeper understanding. In a comparison of three instructional methods, Stahl (2009) found that the text introduction yielded statistically significant effects in reading comprehension and science content acquisition.

Literacy Work Stations

Research was conducted in a fourth-grade classroom at a rural elementary school. Using two surveys, student participants were asked to reflect upon their interests and self-perceptions of their abilities in reading comprehension and reading fluency. Students were asked about their views of literacy work stations. Student surveys, a teacher survey, and observation notes were analyzed for common themes and trends. Data showed that students enjoy participating in literacy work stations and believed in the stations' ability to help improve their reading comprehension and fluency (Burns, 2009).

Literacy work stations include differing activities that reinforce what is being taught or extend learning. Examples include but are not limited to partner read, writing, word study, poetry, listening, science/social studies, and handwriting. Furthermore, teacher comments confirmed increases made in students' comprehension skills, and the data suggest that literacy work stations should be implemented in today's classrooms in order to increase students' skills in reading (Burns, 2009).

Disadvantages of Balanced Literacy

Time must be allotted for text reading, and effective instruction needs to be planned to develop active readers. Students need to be encouraged to discuss what they have read with one another and with the teacher because reading comprehension is not

only a cognitive process but also a social one (Gambell & Almasi, 1996; Graves, Watts-Taffe, & Graves, 1999; National Research Council, 1998). Models of peer teaching and cooperative learning have proven to be effective in providing students with multiple ways to expand and refine their thinking through discussion (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Meloth & Deering, 1994).

Teachers of literacy must forge partnerships with the home and community to promote reading growth. The role of the school library plays a significant role in involving parents and students in literacy activities after regular school hours (Heilman, Blair, & Rupley, 2001). Parents contribute a great deal to every stage of reading development (Paratore, 2002; Silvern & Silvern, 1990).

Corrective Instruction

Implementation of corrective instruction is needed in middle school reading classrooms. Most schools utilize the balanced literacy framework; however, there are still high percentages of students not reading at grade-level proficiency. Therefore, training teachers to use corrective action planning alongside balanced literacy is said to improve and increase students' proficiency in reading. According to Calhoun (1985), teachers with high conceptual levels provide more corrective feedback to students, give more praise, and use less negative and primitive thinking.

Setting objectives and providing feedback work in tandem. Teachers need to identify success criteria for learning objectives so students know when they have achieved those objectives (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Providing feedback is an ongoing process in which teachers communicate information to students that helps them better understand what they are to learn, what high-quality performance looks like, and what changes are necessary to improve their learning (Shute, 2008).

According to Hattie and Timperley (2007), feedback provides information that helps learners confirm, refine, or restructure various kinds of knowledge, strategies, and beliefs that are related to the learning objectives. When feedback provides explicit guidance that helps students adjust their learning (e.g., “Can you think of another way to approach this task?”), there is a greater impact on achievement, students are more likely to take risks with their learning, and they are more likely to keep trying until they succeed (Brookhart, 2008).

Corrective Instruction Strategies

Research states that an assessment must be followed by *high-quality*, corrective instruction designed to *remedy* whatever learning errors the assessment identified (Guskey, 1997). In addition, teachers must follow their assessments with instructional alternatives that present those concepts in *new ways* and engage students in *different* and *more appropriate* learning experiences (Guskey, 2003, p. 8).

Another corrective instructional strategy is direct teaching or explicit teaching. It requires structured presentations emphasizing systematic sequencing of lessons that follow the following steps: review, presentation of new content and skills in small steps, guided student practice, and present information using different strategies (Brophy, 1999; Walberg, 2007).

Walberg (2007) discussed another corrective instruction approach: reciprocal teaching. With this strategy, students start learning to learn; they become teachers; they become self-teaching and self-monitoring; and when they learn something well, they are able to teach it.

Deep reading falls within the broader scope of contemplative practices. It is the slowed, thoughtful, and intentional reading of material with reflection on how it relates to

the self and broader communities (Birkerts, 1994). Through the practice of deep reading, several foundational skills for developing as a learner and a productive member of society are developed (Kid & Castano, 2013). The development of these skills can be scaffolded by individual and group activities involving deep reading. Deep reading is a skill that is not privileged in a digital society that promotes skimming and fast consumption of information.

Deep reading involves comprehending written text. What children bring to a text influences the understanding they take away and the use they make of what is read (Gallagher, 2004). Teaching children to apply their knowledge and skills in meaningful situations has a significantly greater effect on their ability to learn to read. Today's early childhood teachers are expected to implement a more challenging and effective curriculum in language and literacy and to assess and document progress in complex ways. They must be able to monitor children's performances, adjust the methods when necessary, and assess frequently. This relates to the third-grade educational mandate, Read to Achieve, from the North Carolina State Legislatures and guides through the balanced literacy framework.

Hawes (2013) conducted a study and explored the ways close reading textual analysis influenced writing revision for four twelfth-grade students. After teaching reading and writing simultaneously, Hawes found students were able to read for deeper understanding and apply the same two techniques authors used in their own writing through the revision process. Students involved in this study developed a deeper understanding of expression through writing revision when closely looking at pieces of literature using close reading techniques. Reading and writing, as evidenced by Hawes's research, are reciprocal processes that develop together. Both skills are important

because they are forms of communication that are a necessity in school and career settings.

Action Planning

A schoolwide literacy action plan is an essential blueprint for improving student achievement. An effective plan requires the skillful use of data about student performance, literacy needs and expectations in the school and community, school capacity to support literacy development, current teaching practices, and effectiveness of the literacy program (Mickler & Irvin, 2015).

Student performance data constitute the most critical information that drives planning for literacy improvement. A good plan specifically indicates what types of student performance data are being collected and how the data will be used. However, to ensure that improvement is sustained, additional types of data are important to consider when developing and implementing a comprehensive literacy action plan. Literacy action plans must include literacy interventions for struggling readers as an important component of school improvement efforts. Deciding on the methods and types of programs to offer for these interventions will depend on data about student needs, school capacity, and teacher knowledge. After a plan has been developed and implemented, school leaders must then collect data to monitor its success including the effectiveness of specific literacy interventions (Irvin & Meltzer, 2007).

The biggest concern about developing a data-based literacy action plan is that it will not guide action. Too many times a plan is developed only to be “left on the shelf.” Schmoker (2006) pointed out that most strategic planning in education is ineffective because the documents produced are fragmented, complicated, and convoluted, and often do not lead to improved student outcomes. In other words, the improvement plans are

difficult to use, rarely used, or both. According to Schmoker, elaborate school improvement plans that do not focus exclusively and directly on curriculum implementation and improving instruction are not helpful to improving student achievement.

Conclusion

In spite of the emphasis placed on reading in the elementary years, many of America's youth lack the necessary basic reading skills to keep pace with their peers (Roberts, Torgensen, Boardman, & Scammacca, 2008). As a result, many students enter middle school and high school with reading skills far below that of their peers. Therefore, a variety of supports are needed in order to bridge the gap between proficient and struggling readers.

As the achievement gap in reading widens, a large number of middle school students struggle in all areas of academics—especially students from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds (Ikpa, 2004). The content-driven nature of secondary schools only perpetuates the frustration that these youth experience. Because secondary classrooms tend to be content-centered and rarely provide reading-centered instruction, secondary teachers grapple with how to best serve students with reading difficulties (Cole & McLeskey, 1997; Olson & Platt, 2004). For example, Falvey, Gage, and Eshilian (1995) pointed out that in a given day, a secondary school teacher may serve 150 to 180 diverse students which intensifies the challenge of meeting the varied needs of students, especially those of struggling readers.

With these challenges in middle schools, providing intense, direct, and explicit instruction in reading is critical to close the reading achievement gap (Foorman, Francis, Beeler, Winkates, & Fletcher, 1997; Salinger, 2003). Teaching reading is a complex

process requiring extensive training, practice with supervision, and considerable experience (Carnine, Silbert, Kame'enui, & Tarver, 2004). By providing explicit, intense, and rule-based reading instruction, teachers increase the likelihood that older poor readers will gain skills (Adams & Engelmann, 1996). An underlying philosophy in the balanced literacy approach is that no one method or approach will work with all children. In the present study, balanced literacy is defined as a literacy framework that includes four reading and four writing components. Cambourne's (1988) conditions of learning and Mooney's (1990) gradual release of responsibility are important tenets that form the basis for the approach. Students need appropriate, explicit instruction; modeling; interactive, guided activities; and ample time to practice new skills in a safe classroom learning environment.

In the following chapter, the methods of quantitative research outline the approach that was utilized while conducting research. The impact of action planning, corrective instruction, and deep reading provides a strong framework for this study. Finally, the chapter also provides a detailed instrumentation process, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine corrective instruction and action planning with the balanced literacy framework and middle school readers. This dissertation considered two questions.

1. To what extent will the implementation of corrective instruction strategies impact students' reading pre and postassessment scores?
2. To what extent is there a correlation between student reading scores and teacher action planning time as determined by the NCTWC survey?

The researcher used a quantitative methodology because this methodology presents the best opportunity to gain a clear picture about corrective instruction strategies used within the balanced literacy framework. The research questions asked “what” and “to what degree” and therefore explored quantitative aspects to research. The researcher hoped to gain what impact corrective instruction with action planning has on students' reading proficiency and growth scores.

Participants

Participants for this study were seventh and eighth graders, a total of 300 students who attended three different extended-day calendar schools that serve students in kindergarten through eighth grade. The schools had a total of four 80-minute instructional reading blocks. The seventh- and eighth-grade language arts classes were receiving the components of the balanced literacy framework for reading instruction. Every 6-8 weeks students were given DEAs. The teachers used the components of DDI to analyze student data and created action plans for corrective instruction. The teachers used the corrective instructional strategy for interventions for both grade levels. There

were 300 students who received the treatment.

The language arts teachers were trained on how to create and use action plans and utilize corrective instructional techniques to help students master their misconceptions in mastering the reading Common Core Standards. A total of eight teachers were teaching seventh- and eighth-grade language arts. To validate this study, the researcher used pre and posttests from reading DEAs. The researcher used the pre and posttest to analyze student performances. This was the process that may have enhanced the validity and reliability of the findings. The sixth-grade cohort for the 2014-2015 school year was the same as the seventh-grade cohort for the 2015-2016 school year. The seventh-grade cohort for the 2014-2015 school year was the same as the eighth-grade cohort for the 2015-2016 school year.

The student population consisted of 49% male and 51% female. The student demographics consisted of 72.5% African American, 3.5% White, 2% Hispanic, 4% Native American, 15% Asian American, and 3% Multi-racial. Sixteen percent of the students are identified as LEP. The majority of the students come from low income families with 95%-98% receiving free and reduced lunch; and a little over 8% of the students are McKinney-Vento. The McKinney-Vento Act defined “homeless children and youth” as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (Symposium on Homeless Education and Title I, 2001).

Teacher participants who serve students in Grades 6-8 in language arts completed the 2014 TELL NCTWC survey. This survey gave teachers’ perceptions about action planning time, instructional practices and support, and teacher leadership in their school. There were 100 teachers who completed the NCTWC survey. The researcher used the archived survey data from 2014-2015 to explore the connections between teachers’

perceptions about action planning time which measures the available time to plan, collaborate, provide instruction, and eliminate barriers in order to maximize instructional time during the school day and student reading achievement.

Ethical Considerations

All participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. The researcher is not a teacher at the schools and does not teach the grade levels of the student participants. Huck (1991) stated that threats to validity refer specifically to whether an experimental treatment/condition makes a difference or not and whether there is sufficient evidence to support the claim. The participants who took the pretest in this study may have learned things from the testing experience that improved their posttest performance on the dependent variable.

Data Collection

The researcher collected students' reading DEA scores. Test one was administered in August 2015, and Test three was administered in February 2016. Students took the assessments using a paper copy and then input their answers online via the DE website. Scores were sent immediately to the teachers and reading coaches. In addition, the researcher obtained permission from the TELL Initiative New Teacher Center (NTC) to view the 2014 survey results for each school in the study.

The researcher compared the eighth graders DE reading scale scores mean of year 2015-2016 to their seventh-grade DE reading scale scores mean of the 2014-2015 school year in order to determine reading growth. In addition, the researcher compared the seventh graders' DE reading scale scores mean of year 2015-2016 to their sixth-grade DE reading scale scores mean of the 2014-2015 school year to determine reading growth.

The researcher collected students' reading DEA scores from Test one to Test

three. The test was administered through the same process—paper copy and then students input their answers via the DE website. Scores were available to the teachers and the reading coaches. The researcher obtained permission to view the schools' reading DE data. The researcher compared Test one to Test three scale score mean results for growth for the 2015-2016 school year. In addition, the researcher compared students' scale score mean growth from their sixth-grade Test three score to their seventh-grade Test three scale score mean and the seventh-grade Test three scale score mean to their eighth-grade Test three scale score mean.

Instrumentation

DEA Test one was administered by classroom teachers in August 2015 and Test three in February 2016. Statistics describing the DEA have determined it to be reliable and valid. DEA testing took place in the fall and winter of the 2015-2016 school year. The DEA was administered to the students by paper copy and then students input their answers in the computer for scoring.

The test reliability provides evidence that test questions are consistently measuring a given construct, such as reading comprehension. Furthermore, high test reliability indicates that the measurement error for a test is low. Content validity evidence shows that test content is appropriate for the particular constructs that are being measured. Content validity is measured by agreement among subject matter experts about test material and alignment to state standards, by highly reliable training procedures for item writers, by thorough reviews of test material for accuracy and lack of bias, and by examination of depth of knowledge of test questions. Criterion validity evidence demonstrates that test scores predict scores on an important criterion variable such as a state's standardized test.

Proficiency predictive validity evidence supports the claim that a test can predict a state's proficiency levels. High accuracy levels show that a high degree of confidence can be placed in the vendor's prediction of student proficiency.

Consequential validity outlines how the use of these predictive assessments facilitates important consequences, such as the improvement of student learning and student performance on state standardized tests. (DEA, 2012, p. 10)

DEA benchmark assessments are highly reliable. In Grades 3 to 8, the median reading reliabilities range from .84 to .86. DEAs ensure content validity by using each state's curriculum standards for reading and mathematics. The DEA North Carolina reporting categories for reading and mathematics are based on the North Carolina EOG. DE Predictive Assessments predict proficiency levels, and there is a greater than 90% accuracy rate for predicting combined state proficiency percentages. The median state Proficiency Prediction Score for the reading tests ranged from 91-95% (DEA, 2008).

The researcher used the archived 2014-2015 NTC TELL NCTWC survey data. A summary of the results of this survey is available to the public on the NCTWC website. Access was obtained by the researcher to the complete the data set from this survey. Survey responses related to the three constructs were scored using Likert-type ratings ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4), with a "don't know" option.

Data were used for analysis with a specific focus on each item measured within the constructs of *time*: seven questions, which measures the available time to plan, collaborate, provide instruction, and eliminate barriers in order to maximize instructional time during the school day, Cronbach's alpha 0.861; *instructional practices and support*, 11 questions, which measures the extent to which schools provide support for data analysis and teachers' collaboration to improve teaching and learning, Cronbach's alpha

0.910; and *teacher leadership*, seven questions, which describes the extent of teacher involvement in decisions that influence the classroom and school, Cronbach's alpha 0.939.

The reliability testing was completed by North Carolina. It ensured that the survey instrument produced the same results across repeated measures either within the same population or with a similar population. A reliable survey is generalizable and is therefore expected to reproduce similar results across settings. The external review analyzes reliability using both the Rasch model and Cronbach's alpha. Swanlund (2011) concluded the survey is capable of producing consistent results across participant groups.

"Validity" generally refers to the process of ensuring that a survey accurately measures what it is intended to measure, in this case teaching and learning conditions. There are several approaches to testing validity. The external validity testing conducted for the NCTWC survey assesses the structure of the response scale and the alignment between survey items and the broader survey constructs identified. The review used the Rasch rating scale to examine the item-measure correlations, item fit, rating scale functioning, and unidimensionality and generalizability of the instrument.

In summary, the external analyses confirmed that the NCTWC survey offered a robust and statistically sound approach for measuring teaching and learning conditions. For a detailed review of the methods and results from the external analyses, consult Swanlund (2011). The researcher used the 2014 pilot survey to examine the correlation between teachers' action planning for corrective instruction and students' reading scores. All teachers were sent the NCTWC survey link via email to give their perceptions about the specific working conditions: action planning time, instructional practices and support, and teacher leadership in their schools.

Data Analysis

The researcher evaluated the data by using a paired t test for the dependent variables, pre and postreading tests from DE. For the NCTWC survey data, the researcher interpreted the data by the teacher mean for each question item specifically relating to time, instructional practices, and teacher leadership. The researcher evaluated and collected the data by the following.

- Step 1: Organized and prepared data for analysis.
- Step 2: Read and looked at data.
- Step 3: Determined the scale score mean for the students who showed growth from the pre and postreading DEA.
- Step 4: Generated a description of themes and trends in the data.
- Step 5: Used the NCTWC survey results to examine the correlation between teachers' action planning time, instructional practices, teacher leadership, and impact on students' reading scores.

Summary

In order for the researcher to conduct the study, the following protocol had to be addressed. The first instrument was the school district approval letter (Appendix A). This letter granted the researcher permission to use student participants' pre and posttest reading data from the three different schools in the study. The second instrument, the NTC approval letter (Appendix B), was granted to the researcher to have access to the NCTWC survey data. This survey was validated by Swanlund (2011). The third instrument was the NCTWC survey time construct statements (Appendix C).

This quantitative method of study allowed the researcher to gain knowledge about

the effectiveness of teacher usage of intervention strategies and action planning implementation and the student responses to the interventions used in their language arts classes. This study sought to understand the impact of using action planning and corrective instruction alongside the balanced literacy framework and its impact on seventh- and eighth-grade students mastering reading informational and literature Common Core Standards.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine corrective instruction and action planning with the balanced literacy framework and middle school readers. This dissertation considered two questions.

1. To what extent will the implementation of corrective instruction strategies impact students' reading pre and postassessment scores?
2. To what extent is there a correlation between student reading scores and teacher action planning time as determined by the NCTWC survey?

This study examined the results for Research Question 1 based upon the data analysis that focused on students' DE reading Test one and Test three scale score mean results and to determine whether a statistically significant correlation existed between teachers' perceptions of action planning time as determined by the NCTWC survey. Participants are described in detail. The research question that was used to guide this research study revolved around the following.

1. To what extent will the implementation of corrective instruction strategies impact students' reading pre and postassessment scores?

The reading test was administered by paper copy and then students inputted their answers via the DE website. Scores were available to the teachers and the reading coaches. The researcher obtained permission to view schools' reading DE data. The researcher evaluated the 2014-2015 sixth- and seventh-grade students' DE reading data for the three schools by comparing scale score means. The researcher evaluated the 2015-2016, seventh and eighth graders' reading data by using a paired *t* test to compare the dependent variables, pre (Test one) and post (Test three) reading tests from DE.

Access to this data was granted once IRB approval from both the university and cooperating district was received. The researcher determined the scale score mean for the students from the pre and post DE reading assessment (Test one and Test three). An alpha level of .05 was used for all analyses.

The researcher compared Test one to Test three scale score mean results for growth for the 2015-2016 school year across the three schools (School A, School B, and School C). Paired sample *t* tests were used to determine if there was a statistically significant reading growth difference between DEA Test one and Test three. The alpha level for significance was $p < .05$ (Freund & Perles, 2007). If for any of the three schools the paired *t* test results exceeded the alpha level, the null hypothesis of no difference was rejected.

School A

A paired sample *t* test was conducted to determine whether student performances differed from the reading pretest to the reading posttest as illustrated in Table 1 for School A 2015-2016 students in seventh grade. The results indicated the *t* statistic (0.510) did not exceed the upper critical value of 2.00 at alpha .05, for 68 degrees of freedom; therefore one cannot reject the null hypothesis of no difference. There was not a statistically significant finding.

Table 1

Result of Paired Samples t Test for School A, 2015-2016, Seventh Graders Pre and Post DE Reading

	Test A	Test C
Mean	1558.826087	1555.043478
Df	68	
t Stat	0.509756817	
t Critical two-tail	1.995468931	

Note. * $p < .05$.

When evaluating School A test data, the seventh-grade students had a mean of 1558.83 on the pretest before participating in the corrective feedback interventions. The posttest scores ($M=1555.04$) show the average growth made by the students who participated in interventions. These results demonstrated that the students were not able to make statistically significant growth in their reading ability. H_{01} : There was no change on students' reading abilities after participating in the corrective feedback and action planning interventions.

A paired sample t test was conducted to determine whether student performances differed from the reading pretest to the reading posttest as illustrated in Table 2 for School A 2015-2016 students in eighth grade. The results indicated the t statistic of 0.572 did not exceed the upper critical value of 2.01 at alpha .05, for 53 degrees of freedom; therefore one cannot reject the null hypothesis of no difference. This was not a statistically significant finding.

Table 2

Result of Paired Samples t Test for School A, 2015-2016, Eighth Graders Pre and Post DE Reading

	Test A	Test C
Mean	1549.592593	1542.962963
Df	53	
t Stat	0.572205264	
t Critical two-tail	2.005745995	

Note. * $p < .05$.

When evaluating School A test data, the eighth-grade students had a mean of 1549.59 on the pretest, indicating that before participating in the corrective feedback interventions, students were reading. The posttest scores ($M=1542.96$) show the average growth made by the students who participated in interventions. These results demonstrated that the students were not able to make statistical significant growth in their reading ability. H_0 : There was little demonstrated change on students' reading abilities after participating in the corrective feedback, action planning interventions.

School B

A paired sample t test was conducted to determine whether student performances differed from the reading pretest to the reading posttest as illustrated in Table 3 for School B 2015-2016 students in seventh grade. The results indicated the t statistic (2.80) does exceed the upper critical value of 2.01 at alpha .05, for 50 degrees of freedom; therefore one can reject the null hypothesis of no difference. This was a statistically significant finding.

Table 3

Result of Paired Samples t Test for School B, 2015-2016, Seventh Grade Pre and Post DE Reading

	Test A	Test C
Mean	1540.215686	1565.490196
Df	50	
t Stat	2.799791663	
t Critical two-tail	2.008559112	

Note. * $p < .05$.

When evaluating School B test data, the seventh-grade students had a mean of 1540.22 on the pretest, indicating that before participating in the corrective feedback interventions, students were reading. The posttest scores ($M=1565.49$) show the average growth made by the students who participated in interventions. These results demonstrated that the students were able to make statistically significant growth in their reading ability.

A paired sample t test was conducted to determine whether student performances differed from the reading pretest to the reading posttest as illustrated in Table 4 for School B 2015-2016 students in eighth grade. The results indicated the t statistic (0.82) did not exceed the upper critical value of 2.03 at alpha .05, for 35 degrees of freedom; therefore one cannot reject the null hypothesis of no difference. This was not a statistically significant finding.

Table 4

Result of Paired Samples t Test for School B, 2015-2016, Eighth Grade Pre and Post DE Reading

	Test A	Test C
Mean	1581.5	1589.194444
Df	35	
t Stat	-0.815472638	
t Critical two-tail	2.030107928	

Note. * $p < .05$.

When evaluating School B test data, the eighth-grade students had a mean of 1581.50 on the pretest, indicating that before participating in the corrective feedback interventions, students were reading. The posttest scores ($M=1589.19$) show the average growth made by the students who participated in interventions. These results demonstrated that the students were able to make statically significant growth in their reading ability.

School C

A paired sample t test was conducted to determine whether student performances differed from the reading pretest to the reading posttest as illustrated in Table 5 for School C 2015-2016 students in seventh grade. The results indicated the t statistic (2.18) did exceed the upper critical value of 2.06 at alpha .05, for 24 degrees of freedom; therefore one can reject the null hypothesis of no difference. This was a statistically significant finding.

Table 5

Result of Paired Samples t Test for School C, 2015-2016, Seventh Grade Pre and Post DE Reading

	Test A	Test C
Mean	1569.32	1549.32
Df	24	
t Stat	2.184911751	
t Critical two-tail	2.063898562	

Note. * $p < .05$.

When evaluating School C test data, the seventh-grade students had a mean of 1569.32 on the pretest, indicating that before participating in the corrective feedback interventions, students were reading. The posttest scores ($M=1549.32$) show the average growth made by the students who participated in interventions. These results demonstrated that the students were not able to make statistically significant growth in their reading ability. H_{01} : There was little demonstrated change on students' reading abilities after participating in the corrective feedback, action planning interventions.

A paired sample t test was conducted to determine whether student performances differed from the reading pretest to the reading posttest as illustrated in Table 6 for School C 2015-2016 students in eighth grade. The results indicated the t statistic (1.42) did not exceed the upper critical value of 2.04 at alpha .05, for 31 degrees of freedom; therefore one cannot reject the null hypothesis of no difference. The treatment did not make a statistically significant finding for this grade level.

Table 6

Result of Paired Samples t Test for School C, 2015-2016, Eighth Grade Pre and Post DE Reading

	Test A	Test C
Mean	1618.625	1636.90625
Df	31	
t Stat	-1.460247921	
t Critical two-tail	2.039513446	

Note. * $p < .05$.

When evaluating School C test data, the eighth-grade students had a mean of 1618.63 on the pretest, indicating that before participating in the corrective feedback interventions, students were reading. The posttest scores ($M=1636.91$) show the average growth made by the students who participated in interventions. These results demonstrated that the students were able to make statistically significant growth in their reading ability. There was a statistically significant change in students' reading abilities after participating in the corrective feedback and action planning interventions.

2014 NCTWC Survey Data

In addressing Research Question 2, "To what extent is there a correlation between student reading scores and teacher action planning time as determined by the NCTWC survey," the 2014 NCTWC survey time construct was examined for the three schools identified in the study.

A Pearson correlation coefficient r test was used to analyze the influence of the independent variable on the students' DE reading growth mean scores. Correlation procedures were used to determine a linear relationship between the two variables in the population of the DE reading growth scores and the NCTWC survey agreement

respondent percentage of time construct.

A relationship between two variables is considered linear if as the independent variable increases the dependent variable increases or decreases in equal units (Marascuilo & Serlin, 1988, p. 88). In nonlinear relationships between the independent and dependent variable, the sample correlation coefficient is invalid because it might underestimate the strength of the association (Marascuilo & Serlin, 1988, p. 89). The correlation coefficients obtained in this study depict the relationship that exists between the independent and dependent variables in the population from which the sample came and is represented by r and has a range from -1 to +1.

The equation for calculating Pearson r further, the null hypotheses in this study state that there is no correlation in the population regardless of the value obtained from the sample (Sprinthall, 1994, p. 213). To test the null hypotheses and determine if anyone should be rejected, the absolute value of r has to be equal to or greater than the critical table value r . In order to determine if a null hypothesis should be accepted, the absolute value of r has to be less than the critical table value r . In making these comparisons, the absolute value of r determines the significance of the correlation and a significant correlation means that the correlation between the reading DE growth score and the NCTWC survey time construct variable was not likely to be a result by chance.

The NTC reported that there were a total of 100 responses from North Carolina educators from the three schools that were included in the final data set. The data were reported back to each school and published online only if the school reached the required 40% response rate.

Time School A

NCTWC survey. In order to assess teacher perceptions of the time they had to

meet the needs of students and to collaborate with their peers, this research looked at the construct of time from the 2014 archived NCTWC survey. The 2014 NCTWC survey included seven statements regarding time and how teachers perceived the use of time in the school. The percentage of teachers actually responding to each question ranged from 30 to 57. Only the percentage of respondents who strongly agreed and agreed to each statement is reflected on Table 7 for School A.

Table 7

School A 2014 Teacher Responses to NCTWC Survey Questions Regarding Time as a Factor in Working Conditions

Question	% agreed
Teachers have reasonable class sizes.	32.1
Teachers have time available to collaborate with their colleagues.	57.1
Teachers are allowed to focus on educating students with minimal interruptions.	46.4
The noninstructional time provided for teachers is sufficient.	30.8
Efforts are made to minimize the amount of routine paperwork.	33.3
Teachers have sufficient instructional time to meet the needs of all students.	50.0
Teachers are protected from duties that interfere with educating students.	53.6
Total Mean Agree + Strongly Agree	43.33

The question that received the highest number of positive responses was “Teachers have time available to collaborate with their colleagues,” with five teachers of a total of 28 responding with strongly agree and 11 teachers responding with agree,

resulting in 16 of 28 possible responses or 57% positive responses for that question. The question that received the highest number of negative responses was “The noninstructional time provided for teacher is sufficient.” Eleven teachers responded with strongly disagree and seven teachers responded with disagree, resulting in 18 of 26 possible responses or 30%.

In summary, slightly over half of School A teachers agree that they have time to collaborate with their colleagues, sufficient instructional time, and have protected time from things that may interfere with student learning. However, based on the 2014 NCTWC survey data, teachers disagree with having reasonable class sizes and insufficient noninstructional time, and they have a great amount of routine paperwork that they are required to complete.

Time School B

The 2014 NCTWC survey included seven statements regarding time and how teachers perceived the use of time in the school. The percentage of teachers actually responding to each question ranged from 29 to 62. Table 8 details the seven statements and provides only the percentages of respondents who strongly agreed and agreed to each time statement for School B.

Table 8

School B 2014 Teacher Responses to NCTWC Survey Questions Regarding Time as a Factor in Working Conditions

Question	% agreed
Teachers have reasonable class sizes.	61.9
Teachers have time available to collaborate with their colleagues.	61.9
Teachers are allowed to focus on educating students with minimal interruptions.	52.4
The noninstructional time provided for teachers is sufficient.	28.6
Efforts are made to minimize the amount of routine paperwork.	63.3
Teachers have sufficient instructional time to meet the needs of all students.	32.5
Teachers are protected from duties that interfere with educating students.	83.3
Total Mean Agree + Strongly Agree	54.64

The question that received the highest number of positive responses was “Teachers have sufficient instructional time to meet the needs of all students,” with 10 teachers of a total of 42 responding with strongly agree and 25 teachers responding with agree, resulting in 35 of 42 possible responses or 83% positive responses for that question. The question that received the highest number of negative responses was “The noninstructional time provided for teacher is sufficient.” Ten teachers responded with strongly disagree and 20 teachers responded with disagree, resulting in 30 of 42 possible responses or 71% of teachers who disagree with that statement.

In addition, the three second highest number of positive responses from School B were ranked the same percentage of 61.9%. “Teachers have reasonable class sizes.” Ten teachers responded strongly agree and 16 teachers responded agree to this statement. “Teachers have time to collaborate with colleagues.” Six teachers responded strongly agree to this question and 22 teachers responded agree. “Teachers are protected from duties that interfere with their essential role of educating students.” Five teachers responded with strongly agree and 21 teachers responded with highly agree to this statement.

In summary, School B teachers agree that they have reasonable class sizes, they have time to collaborate with each other, and they have instructional time for their learners. However, teachers disagree with having efforts made to minimize routine paperwork and there is insufficient noninstructional time provided.

Time School C

The 2014 NCTWC Survey included seven statements regarding time and how teachers perceived the use of time in the school. The percentage of teachers actually responding to each question ranged from 30 to 57. Table 9 details the seven statements and provides the percentages of teachers who strongly agreed and agreed to each time statement for School C.

Table 9

School C 2014 Teacher Responses to NCTWC Survey Questions Regarding Time as a Factor in Working Conditions
School C DE Benchmark Reading Scale Score Mean Data

Question	% agreed
Teachers have reasonable class sizes.	83.3
Teachers have time available to collaborate with their colleagues.	80.0
Teachers are allowed to focus on educating students with minimal interruptions.	63.3
The noninstructional time provided for teachers is sufficient.	58.6
Efforts are made to minimize the amount of routine paperwork.	63.3
Teachers have sufficient instructional time to meet the needs of all students.	70.0
Teachers are protected from duties that interfere with educating students.	82.8
Total Mean Agree + Strongly Agree	71.61

The question that received the highest number of positive responses was “Teachers have time available to collaborate with their colleagues,” with five teachers of a total of 28 responding with strongly agree and 11 teachers responding with agree, resulting in 16 of 28 possible responses or 57% positive responses for that question. The question that received the highest number of negative responses was “The noninstructional time provided for teacher is sufficient.” Eleven teachers responded with strongly disagree and seven teachers responded with disagree, resulting in 18 of 26 possible responses or 30%.

School C has the highest ratings overall in the NCTWC survey construct of time. Teachers have reasonable class sizes, are able to collaborate, and have protected time from duties that interfere with educating their students. More than half of the teachers agreed that efforts are made to minimize the amount of routine paperwork, they have sufficient instructional time to meet their learners' needs, and they are able to focus on educating their students with minimal interruptions. However, more than half of the teachers stated that an insufficient amount of noninstructional time is provided at their school.

DE Growth Mean of Student Reading Scores and NCTWC Time Mean Construct

This study examined the results for Research Question 2 based upon the data analysis that focused on students' DE reading Test one and Test three growth score results and to determine whether a statistically significant correlation existed between teachers' perceptions of action planning time as determined by the NCTWC survey. The research question that was used to guide this research study revolved around the following.

2. To what extent is there a correlation between student reading scores and teacher action planning time as determined by the NCTWC survey?

A Pearson correlation coefficient r test was used to analyze the influence of the independent variable on the students' DE reading growth means. Correlation procedures were used to determine a linear relationship between the two variables in the population, DE growth scores, and the percentage of agreement on each TWC time construct.

A relationship between two variables is considered linear if as the independent variable increases the dependent variable increases or decreases in equal units (Marascuilo & Serlin, 1988, p. 88). In nonlinear relationships between the independent

and the dependent variable, the sample correlation coefficient is invalid because it might underestimate the strength of the association (Marascuilo & Serlin, 1988, p. 89). The correlation coefficients obtained in this study depict the relationship that exists between the independent and dependent variables in the population from which the sample came and is represented by r and has a range from -1 to +1.

Tables 10-12 display each school's 2014-2015 sixth and seventh graders' DE reading growth score means and the 2015-2016 seventh and eighth graders' DE reading growth score means.

Table 10

School A DE Benchmark Reading Scale Score Mean Data

Year Grade Level	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Change
2014-2015			
Grade 6	1523.41	1548.51	+25.1
Grade 7	1522.96	1543.27	+20.31
2015-2016			
Grade 7	1558.83	1555.04	-3.79
Grade 8	1549.59	1542.96	-6.63

According to Table 10, School A 2014-2015 school year students showed a significant amount of growth from Test one mean to Test three mean. However, for the 2015-2016 school year, the seventh- and eighth-grade students mean scores decreased from Test one to Test three. In addition, based on the NCTWC time construct, 43.33% of teachers agreed that they had available time to plan, collaborate, and provide instruction

and barriers to maximizing time during the school day.

Furthermore, in Table 10, more than half of the teachers, 56.67%, disagreed with the time construct statements. However, based on the students' scale mean scores, they showed growth from Test one to Test three by 45.41 points. Based on this study, this school has the highest growth points for 2014-2015 reading DE scores for the sixth and seventh graders between Test one and Test three. For the 2015-2016 reading DEA, the scale score means decreased by -10.42 points.

Table 11

School B DE Benchmark Reading Scale Score Mean Data

Year Grade Level	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Change
2014-2015			
Grade 6	1551.56	1571.30	+19.74
Grade 7	1559.26	1563.05	+3.79
2015-2016			
Grade 7	1540.23	1565.49	+25.26
Grade 8	1581.50	1589.19	+7.69

School B DE reading means data continued to show growth from 2014-2015 sixth and seventh graders. In addition, the seventh and eighth graders of 2015-2016 continued to show growth from Test one to Test three on the DEA.

Based on the NCTWC time construct, 54.64% of teachers agreed that they had available time to plan, collaborate, and provide instruction and barriers to maximizing time during the school day.

For the 2014 NCTWC time construct displayed on Table 11, less than half of the

teachers, 45.36%, disagreed with the time construct statements. However, based on the students' scale mean scores, they showed growth from Test one to Test three by 23.53 points. For 2015-2016 DE reading scale scores, the change in growth was 32.95 points. Overall, more students showed growth on their DE reading Test one and Test three assessments in the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years.

Table 12

School C DE Benchmark Reading Scale Score Mean Data

Year Grade Level	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Change
2014-2015			
Grade 6	1550.03	1565.69	+15.66
Grade 7	1561.66	1570.91	+9.25
2015-2016			
Grade 7	1569.32	1549.32	-20
Grade 8	1618.63	1636.91	+18.28

Table 12 illustrates that School C 2014-2015 sixth and seventh graders showed growth from the DE pre and postreading test. However, the seventh graders did not show growth in reading for the 2015-2016 school year. For the 2015-2016 school year, the eighth graders showed growth from Test one to Test three. On the 2014 NCTWC time construct, this school had the highest agree rate: 71.61% of teachers agreed that they had available time to plan, collaborate, and provide instruction and barriers to maximizing time during the school day.

To answer Research Question 2, “To what extent is there a correlation between student reading scores and teacher action planning time as determined by the TWC survey,” a Pearson correlation coefficient r test was used to analyze the influence of the independent variable on the students’ DE reading growth mean. Correlation procedures were used to determine a linear relationship between the two variables in the population, DE growth scores and the percentage of agreement on each NCTWC time construct.

Table 13

School A, School B, School C Pearson r Correlation between DE growth and NC Time Strongly Agree (SA) + Agree (A) Respondent Percentage

	Reading Growth	NC Time SA + A
Reading Growth	1	
Time	-0.12	1

Note. * $p < .05$.

The students’ DE reading growth scores did not show a statistically significant correlation with the 2014 NCTWC time construct based on the Pearson r value data. There was a statistically nonsignificant relationship between the DE reading growth scores and the NCTWC time strongly agree and agree respondent percentage, r $(.12) = 0.72$. The p value of 0.72 was greater than alpha ($p > .05$), at 10 degrees of freedom. Therefore one fails to reject the null hypothesis, and the result was statistically nonsignificant.

Summary

This quantitative method of study allowed the researcher to gain knowledge about the effectiveness of teachers’ usage of intervention strategies and action planning

implementation and the students' responses to the interventions used in their language arts classes. This study sought to understand the impact of using action planning and corrective instruction alongside the balanced literacy framework and its impact on seventh- and eighth-grade students mastering reading informational and literature Common Core Standards.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

This chapter summarizes the findings for Research Questions 1 and 2 based on the data analysis that focused on students' DE reading Test one and Test three scale score mean results of 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 and to determine whether a statistically significant correlation existed between teachers' perceptions of instructional action planning time based on the NCTWC survey.

Summary of Results

This study assessed how interventions and action planning impacted students' DE pre and postreading scores. The study also evaluated if there was a correlation between students' reading growth score means and teachers' respondent percentages of strongly agree and agree of the NCTWC survey time construct statements.

Feedback thrives in conditions of error or not knowing—not in environments where we already know and understand. Thus, teachers need to welcome error and misunderstanding in their classrooms. This attitude, of course, invokes trust. Students learn most easily in an environment in which they can get and use feedback about what they do not know without fearing negative reactions from their peers or their teacher (Hattie, 2012). Throughout this study, the following two questions guided the research.

1. To what extent will the implementation of corrective instruction strategies impact students' reading pre and postassessment scores?
2. To what extent is there a correlation between student reading scores and teacher action planning time as determined by the NCTWC survey?

The first research question examined the yearly mean gains in reading achievement scores from the pre (Test one) and post (Test three) test from the DEA.

Based on the data analysis of the paired sample t test, School A students in seventh and eighth grade demonstrated little change in their reading ability after participating in the corrective feedback and action planning interventions. This was not a statistically significant finding.

School B seventh graders had a mean of 1540.22 on the pretest and 1566.49 on the posttest. This showed the average growth mean by the students who participated in the interventions. The seventh-grade students made statistically significant growth in their reading ability. In addition, based on the paired sample t test, the eighth graders' reading results showed that there was a statistically significant finding. There was little demonstrated change in the eighth graders' reading abilities after participating in interventions.

School C seventh-grade students were not able to make statistically significant growth on their reading abilities after participating in interventions. The interventions given to students after the pretest had no effect on the students' posttest results. However, the eighth-grade students were able to make statistically significant growth after participating in the corrective feedback and action planning interventions.

This study found that School A, School B, and School C sixth- and seventh-grade students in the 2014-2015 school year showed growth in their reading DEAs from Test one to Test three. However, for the 2015-2016 school year, only School B seventh graders and eighth graders and School C eighth graders showed a statistically significant growth on their reading abilities after participating in action planning interventions.

The second research question addressed to what extent was there a correlation between students' reading growth scores and teachers' respondent percentages of agree and strongly agree to the time construct as determined by the NCTWC survey. Research

Question 2 was based on the analysis by Ladd (2009) that showed that teaching and learning conditions predict student achievement in mathematics and to a lesser degree in reading. Johnson, Kraft, and Papay (2012) indicated that positive conditions contribute to improved student achievement.

Both of these efforts used the NCTWC survey data from various states to estimate the impact of teaching and learning conditions on student learning. Additional work by Kraft and Papay (2014) also used student-teacher linked data and school-level teaching conditions as measured by the NCTWC survey to find that teachers who work in more supportive environments become more effective at raising student achievement on standardized tests over time than do teachers who work in less supportive environments, after controlling for student characteristics, prior test scores, and teacher and school characteristics.

Based on the Pearson r correlation results, this study showed that there was a statistically nonsignificant relationship between the students' DE reading growth scores and the NCTWC survey time strongly agree and agree respondent percentages. The Pearson r result of .12 is equal to the p value of 0.72. The p value of 0.72 was greater than the alpha ($p > .05$); therefore, one failed to reject the null hypothesis and the results were statistically nonsignificant.

Conclusions

The literature review for this study presented research by Appleton et al. (2006) which indicated a possible relationship between teacher morale and student engagement. However, this study indicated that there was a statistically insignificant relationship between student reading growth and teacher perceptions of action planning time. The results from this study were an unanticipated event that have further implications when it

comes to correlations between student reading growth and teacher perceptions of action planning time. Table 14 displays three of the time construct statements of each participating school's strongly agree and agree respondent percentages.

Table 14

2014 Teacher Working Conditions by School

	School A	School B	School C
Strongly Agree (SA) & Agree (A) with the statements:			
"Teachers have sufficient instructional time to meet the needs of all students."	50%	32.5%	70%
"Teachers have time available to collaborate with other colleagues."	51.7%	61.9%	80%
"Teachers are allowed to focus on educating students with minimal interruptions."	46.4%	52.4%	63.3%
Total (SA) + (A)	49.37%	51%	71%

According to Table 14, 49.37% of teachers in School A agreed with the three statements that were reflected in the 2014 NCTWC survey pertaining to time. In addition, School A had the least amount of students who showed reading growth from DEA Test one to Test three for the 2014-2015 school year to the 2015-2016 school year. Only two of four grade levels' totals showed reading growth after interventions.

According to Table 14, 51% of teachers in School B agreed with the three statements that were reflected in the 2014 NCTWC survey time construct. School B had four of four grade levels represented through school years 2014-2015 to 2015-2016 that showed growth between DEA Test one and Test three.

Table 14 displays 71% of the teachers working at School C agreed with the three statements that were reflected in the 2014 NCTWC survey. Three of four grade levels represented in this study from this school showed growth on the reading DEA Test one to Test three from the 2014-2015 to the 2015-2016 school year.

Research states that reading comprehension leads to an increased emphasis on the role of problem solving which enables a student to critically think through the situation (Fahim et al., 2012). Based on the 2014-2015 school year's DE reading data, School A, School B, and School C sixth- and seventh-grade students demonstrated growth between Test one and Test three. However, in 2015-2016, only School B seventh and eighth graders and School C eighth graders showed growth in their DE reading scores from Test one to Test three.

School A had the least amount of teachers who agreed to have time to collaborate with their colleagues, the least amount of teachers who agreed to having sufficient instructional time to meet student's needs, and the least amount of teachers agreeing to have allowed time to focus on educating students with minimal interruptions. In addition, School A teachers disagreed with having reasonable class sizes, agreed to have insufficient noninstructional time, and agreed to have a great amount of routine paperwork that they are required to complete. These results may have contributed to School A students having little demonstrated reading growth from DE Test one to Test three.

Over half of School B teachers agreed that they have reasonable class sizes; they have time to collaborate with each other; and they have allowed time to focus on educating students with minimal interruptions. However, 32.5% of School B teachers agreed to have sufficient time to meet the needs of all of their learners. Furthermore,

School B validates Kraft and Papay's (2014) study that showed teachers who work in more supportive environments become more effective at raising student achievement on standardized tests over time than do teachers who work in less supportive environments. School B students' reading growth was statistically significant for both consecutive school years.

When it comes to the NCTWC survey time construct, School C had the highest ratings overall. Teachers agreed to have reasonable class sizes; they are able to collaborate; and they have protected time from duties that interfere with educating their students. More than half of the teachers agreed that they are able to focus on educating their students with minimal interruptions. Seventy percent of teachers agreed that they have sufficient instructional time to meet their learners' needs, and 80% of teachers agreed to have available time to collaborate with other colleagues. School C DE reading data showed an increase in the scale score mean from Test one to Test three for the 2015-2016 eighth graders. However, only three of four of the grade levels showed growth in reading.

The findings of this study indicated a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.72, which was not statistically significant. This research does not support previous research claims of a direct relationship between student reading growth scores and teacher agreement percentages of action planning time. Students' reading achievement growth did not have a significant relationship with the overall teachers' perceptions of action planning time. This is a statistical support for further examination for this relationship between teacher leadership and student achievement growth as well as consideration at the school level of the level of teacher leadership as an additional factor influencing student achievement growth in reading.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study would be enhanced by future research if the same students were tracked by cohort, from third to twelfth grade to validate this study in the area of interventions in reading. According to Rose and Schimke (2012), students not reading proficiently by the end of third grade are four times more likely than proficient readers to drop out of high school. Therefore, tracking students beyond third grade in reading interventions will enhance this study. Future research is needed in the area of teachers' perceptions of working conditions in low-performing schools comparing 2014 NCTWC survey results to the 2016 NCTWC survey results and seeing the correlation to students' reading EOG scores.

This study would be enhanced by using the 2014-2015 NCTWC survey data, students' reading EOG exam scores, and EVASS growth scores to see correlations between the three in order to triangulate the data. In addition, of most interest to the researcher is the reason that some schools (static) did not improve when they received the same resources and support as the schools that were improving. A future study could explore conditions that hinder a school from improving its students' achievement scores despite receiving significant assistance and changing its teachers and school leaders (Ladd, 2009).

Summary

This study helps to answer the following questions.

1. To what extent will the implementation of corrective instruction strategies impact students' reading pre and postassessment scores?
2. To what extent is there a correlation between student reading scores and teacher action planning time as determined by the NCTWC survey?

Teachers' perceptions of working conditions are changing in schools that are experiencing increases in student achievement. However, teachers in static schools that continue to rank in the bottom fifth percentile of North Carolina schools are not recognizing any notable changes in their perceptions of working conditions.

The simple act of giving feedback will not result in improved student learning—the feedback has to be effective. When teachers listen to their students' learning, they know what worked, what did not, and what they need to change to foster student growth. Using feedback is not confined to a classroom. Consider its role in self-regulation and lifelong learning. We all stand to benefit from knowing when to seek feedback, how to seek it, and what to do with it when we get it (Hattie, 2012).

This study sought to identify and reaffirm relationships among the implementation of corrective instruction strategies that impact students' reading pre and postassessment scores. In addition, this study sought to identify the correlation between students' reading score growth means and teachers' perceptions of action planning time as determined by the NCTWC survey. Although there were some significant and direct relationships between the pairing of these variables, valuable insights were discovered in supporting the current constructs of teachers' perceptions of action planning time as well as key areas for further research in the influences of teacher morale and students showing growth on statewide reading assessments.

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Appendix A

School District Approval Letter

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

March 2, 2016

Reynelda Brown

[Redacted]

Dear Ms. Brown:

Based on my review of your request to complete research at the year around Project LIFT schools, I give permission for you to conduct the study, Examining the Effects of Corrective Instruction with the Balanced Literacy Framework on Middle School Students' Academic Achievement in Reading. I authorize you to use student Discovery Education Benchmark scores, Test A & C. Precautions will be put into place to ensure that participants' rights are protected and respected. Once student data is collected, students will be assigned a numerical code to protect their identity. All student data and names will be destroyed once the information has been utilized for the study.

Additionally, I understand that teacher participation in the study is voluntary and confidential and anonymity will be ensured. I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside the research team without permission from the Gardner-Webb University IRB.

Sincerely,

[Redacted]

cc: Dr. Mary Roth

Title of Research: Examining the Effects of Corrective Instruction with the Balanced Literacy Framework on Middle School Students' Academic Achievement in Reading.

[Redacted]

Appendix B

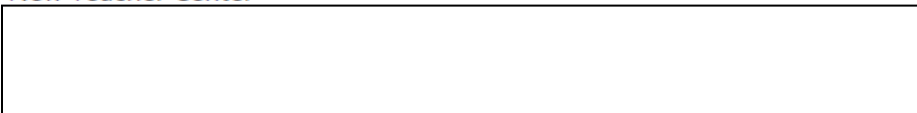
New Teacher Center Approval Letter

Hi Reynelda,

Your request has been approved. In the next day or so you will receive the terms and agreement. Once review please review and sign prior to data use.

--

Dawn Shephard, Associate Director
Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning (TELL) Initiative
New Teacher Center



When we focus on teachers, our students succeed.


Learn more at <http://www.newteachercenter.org>

Hello,

Your request to use the 2014 NC TWC data with demographics has been approved. To access the data, please go to www.ncteachingconditions.org/files

Use the following credentials to login:

Username: 

Password: 

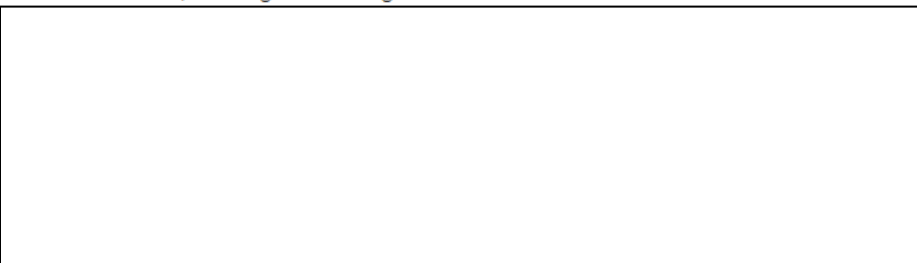
Once logged in, you will be directed to a page where you will find a zip file.. Click on the that you can download. This folder contains three files: the csv data file, an xlsx file with the response rate (can be used to decode schools and districts), and an xlsx file that is the codebook.

If you have any technical questions, please feel free to reach out to me.

Good luck in your research!

keri

Keri Feibelman
Associate Director, Teaching and Learning Conditions Initiative



Appendix C

Teacher Working Conditions Survey

Time

Q2.1. Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about the use of time in your school.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
a. Class sizes are reasonable such that teachers[1] have the time available to meet the needs of all students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Teachers have time available to collaborate with colleagues.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Teachers are allowed to focus on educating students with minimal interruptions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. The non-instructional time[2] provided for teachers in my school is sufficient.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Efforts are made to minimize the amount of routine paperwork[3] teachers are required to do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Teachers have sufficient instructional time to meet the needs of all students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Teachers are protected from duties that interfere with their essential role of educating students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

1. Teachers means a majority of teachers in your school.

2. Non-instructional time includes any time during the day without the responsibility for student contact, including collaboration planning, meetings/conferences with students and families, etc.

3. Routine paperwork means both electronic and paper forms and documentation that must be completed to comply with school, district, state, and federal policies.