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Filling the Reading Void: Studying Reading Stamina in a Rural High School through Action Research: A Companion Research Study

Meredith Eubanks Lynch

Filling the Reading Void: Studying Reading Stamina in a Rural High School through Action Research: A Companion Research Study

By
Meredith E. Lynch

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Approval Page

This dissertation was submitted by Meredith E. Lynch 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.

_____ _____

Sydney Brown, Ph.D. Date
Committee Chair

_____ _____

Jennifer Putnam, Ed.D. Date
Committee Member

_____ _____

Kelsey Greer, Ed.D. Date
Committee Member

_____ _____

Sydney K. Brown, Ph.D. Date
Dean of the Gayle Bolt Price School
of Graduate Studies

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Abstract

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Experts agree best practice in elementary education allows students time for silent reading during school due to the benefits to students in vocabulary development and reading stamina. As students age, this practice typically declines in favor of activities meant to teach vocabulary, prepare for standardized tests, and study novels together as a class to explore and analyze literature, resulting in less reading and subsequently decreasing reading stamina.

Teachers at a high poverty South Carolina high school, recognizing reading stamina as an issue, implemented a protocol described by Penny Kittle (2013) in *Book Love: Developing Depth, Stamina, and Passion in Adolescent Readers*, a method of individualized instruction centered on silent reading of choice material. A researcher studied the project called the Book Love Initiative guided by the central question, "what happens in a secondary English classroom when a teacher creates and utilizes a balanced approach of appropriate level choice reading, text study, and novel study?"

Employing a QUAN + QUAL mixed-methods approach, the researcher used Kittle's (2013) reading survey, the Sydney Attribution Scale (Marsh, 1983), student conferencing data, weekly reading records, behavioral observation checklists, and interviews with teacher participants to measure the impact on four constructs identified in research questions: attitudes toward reading, reading volume, stamina behaviors, and classroom environments.

A companion study at a low poverty high school in North Carolina employed similar methods so researchers could determine if there were further reaching implications. Findings at both sites determined the initiative positively impacted the constructs identified in research questions. Companion researchers made recommendations for practice, policy, and research as a result of the study's findings.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

The United States is currently plagued with a compliant educational system, a system consumed with test scores and academic credentials that only serve to highlight symptoms of its persistent problems of declining abilities and an unprepared work force rather than to offer solutions to those problems. Alarming quantities of data and literature suggest students are not prepared with critical thinking or reading skills needed to compete in a global postsecondary educational or economic market (Friedman & Mandelbaum, 2011). Only one third of United States high school students graduate ready for college (Conley, 2007a). In a society faced with increasing global challenges, students must graduate high school equipped to develop their innovative capacities in order to successfully compete in the 21st century. This development is hindered by currently accepted practice of teaching literature in secondary school.

Phi Delta Kappan Magazine, in its forty-eighth annual *PDK Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools* (Richardson, 2016), published statistics showing that while Americans do not agree with each other about the purpose of education, they did agree on the necessity of strong literacy skills. In the survey, 45% of respondents said the main goal of public education is to prepare students academically; 26% said citizenship should be the first priority; and 25% said the purpose of public education is to prepare students for careers. These survey results indicated 96% of those polled thought the goal of public education was to prepare students to be functioning members of society, either through furthering their education or performing a job, as well as participating as an informed citizen in the democratic process, all of which require literacy skills (Richardson, 2016).

A nation of readers is critical to the country's survival. The Alliance for Excellent Education (2004) stated,

> being literate is closely linked to one's ability to access power and negotiate the world around them. Young people need to develop strong literacy skills to communicate effectively, gain respect from peers and authority, participate in their communities in a meaningful way, and fully contribute to society. (p. 1)

Friedman and Mandelbaum (2011) echoed this assertion. They argued the jobs of the future would mandate a better educated, more literate society able to adapt quickly to changes in technology and challenges posed by competition from other places in the world. Other experts in educational change also called for educational leaders to rethink how students should become college and career ready, the newest buzz phrase to describe the aspirations of successful high school graduates. Dintersmith and Wagner (2016) wrote that while these aspirations were admirable, most college and career pathways were still defined by success on standardized testing, for which passive rather than active learning was the norm.

Dintersmith and Wagner (2016) also asserted the need for students to learn real-world reading skills that could translate into reading ability. Real-world reading skills, according to Wagner (2014), enable students to read documents such as manuals, handbooks, and certification guidelines required in employment. Wagner (2014) argued these skills were more important than knowledge about the literary canon and literary analysis, skills needed for college perhaps but not work or citizenry. The literary canon is defined as a body of literary texts considered as high quality and important for students to know in preparation for college (Morgan & Pytash, 2014). Wagner (2012) also argued that preparing students for real-world literacy should not in any way take away from

preparing them for studying the type of literature needed for college preparation; that in fact, both types of study could complement each other when done the right way. While Dintersmith and Wagner (2016) did not disagree with teaching literature from the literary canon, their argument was to keep learning authentic and applicable to real-world skills, which has also been documented to help solve a persistent lack of student engagement in schools. A 2013 Gallup Poll revealed that with each progressive year of school, students became less engaged (Busteed, 2013). High school students indicated they felt school was irrelevant and too focused on testing. Wagner (2014) also suggested that school, while focused on standardized testing, was less focused on skills to prepare students for the changes and challenges of the 21st century.

The key to 21st century preparedness is literacy. Whether students continue their education after high school or enter the work force or military, being literate helps them be more successful. For the most part, high schools determine English curricula with college preparedness in mind, which according to Dintersmith and Wagner (2016), is a mistake. It is true that college is important, and a college education improves chances for both employment and higher wages; however, as college becomes more expensive, students are more often questioning the value of a college education in relation to other professions in which they may be interested. Many students, concerned with how to pay for college, prepare for jobs they can do while they attend college in order for higher education to be a viable alternative, indicating a need for emphasis on both college as well as career preparation in high school in the same population of students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). The statistics alluded to a need for educators to address issues of preparedness in their curricula to allow for more meaningful, relevant learning that prepares students to follow many different paths after graduation, not

exclusively the path of college.

Problem and Purpose of the Study

To prepare for any large task, practice is required. A runner does not become ready to run a marathon instantly; training for a marathon takes many months of preparation. Additionally, once one is prepared to run the first race, regular conditioning is required to run subsequent races. Such is the case with tasks in education as well. There is overwhelming evidence supporting the elementary pedagogy of reading silently in class. Researchers recognize reading's importance in building vocabulary skills, comprehension, and fluency; all of which, along with silent reading, compose the skill of stamina (Hiebert, 2014; Rasinski, 2004; Routman,1998; Smith, 1976). Hiebert (2014) described the skill of stamina as a "forgotten proficiency" (p. 1) and emphasized the importance of increased reading stamina as a necessary skill to be conditioned over time continuously through all grades, kindergarten through twelfth. She made the case that silent reading was essential in increasing stamina because testing and real-world reading are situations where students must read silently. She advocated that all skills composing literacy proficiency – comprehension, accuracy and automaticity, fluency, and expanded vocabulary – were best nurtured through opportunities for students to read often and silently.

In a study of elementary reading best practices, Mosenthal, Lipson, Mekkelsen, Russ, and Sortino (2001) found that schools with the most successful reading programs allowed students to read silently at least 30 minutes per day. Their research was supported by Rasinski (2004), who said the best way for elementary students to develop fluency, a key component of literacy (and stamina), was to read silently in class in addition to listening to stories for at least 30 minutes a day. Swanson (2013) also focused

her research on the effects of silent independent reading during the school day and found teachers who allowed their students to choose books and read those books for at least 30 minutes had better test scores. While silent reading during school time may not be common practice in every elementary school, it is recognized by researchers as best practice and is the norm in the districts involved in this particular study.

As students age, as their engagement in school decreases, school emphasis on reading does as well (Busteed, 2013; Hiebert, 2014; Rasinski, 2004; Smith, 1976). Smith (1976), Routman (1998), and Hiebert (2015) also stressed that allotting reading time during the school day signals to students that reading is important, important enough to set aside class time to do it. The practice increases student capacity to handle more complex texts so they can increase their levels of text complexity at a rate that suits their own abilities and pace. Ironically, as students progress through school, less time is devoted in class to reading; thus, its communicated importance is diminished (Smith, 1976). Gallagher and Kittle (2018) also asserted that if teachers could not find time to let students read in school, they certainly would not read at home. Smith (1976) concluded *not* allocating reading time resulted in a signal to students that reading at an older age was not as important, and subsequently, older student reading skills weakened because they were no longer conditioned regularly as they were when they were young (Broz, 2011; Gallagher, 2009; Hiebert, 2014; Kittle, 2013). "Bookthinking (reading) achieves importance only when it is given a significant or prominent place in learning activity," (Smith, 1976, p. 512) whether in elementary, middle, or high school.

There is a plethora of research related to reading stamina in elementary learners indicating student choice and independent reading go hand in hand to build such stamina in younger children, yet there is very little research related to the potentially positive

impact of independent reading at the high school level (Hiebert, 2015; Rasinski, 2004). Many important components of literacy exist: vocabulary, fluency, accuracy and automaticity, and comprehension. These components, together with silent reading, compose the skill of reading stamina, the ability to read and understand more complex texts while reading silently (Boushey & Moser, 2017; Hiebert, 2014). Rasinski (2000) also did extensive research on reading rate and argued its importance in helping with fluency as well as automaticity. Hiebert (2014) contended that building stamina was the best way to assist students in preparing for reading comprehension passages on tests like WIN (a career-ready test mandated by states), the ACT, and the SAT as well as the high reading demands of college.

A leading author and expert in reading, Kittle (2013), investigated ways to solve the problem of stamina in her own high school classroom. Kittle's methods were detailed in her book where over a period of years, she developed ways to increase reading rate, volume, and stamina and to ignite passion in her high school students in part by allowing them to choose to read books that were not part of the traditional canon, a method advocated by Morgan and Pytash (2014). Kittle argued that by providing appropriate texts along with structured class time, teachers could create a culture leading to more complex and elongated reading behaviors. She provided strategies to increase the quantity, capacity, and complexity of student reading over time. She created a method balancing independent reading, text study, and novel study to help students deepen their thinking through reading and writing about reading; and using her methods, changed the school culture to focus on the love of reading (Kittle, 2013).

Studies also show that it is not *what* students read, but *how much* they read that prepares them for college reading success (Bowen, Chingos, & McPherson, 2011;

Schlafly, 2007). Stankovich (1986), Broz (2011), and Allington (2001) all asserted that typical high school reading programs cover four to six novels per year, with an average total of 800 to 1,200 pages read; however, most colleges require that the average freshman should be able to read between 300 and 600 pages per week. Hiebert (2014), Rasinski (2004), and Smith (1976) proposed in separate studies that reading more makes better readers but found that high school programs typically mandated less reading through whole class text study and analysis and were therefore a detriment to students, even though this required reading may be considered to be higher quality than the reading materials students may choose on their own. Kittle (2013) believed that building the capacity to read included building volume and that in order to develop stamina for reading, high school teachers must find a way to facilitate more opportunities for students to read while simultaneously increasing rigor as they challenge each student to read more complex texts.

Though some educators, specifically secondary English teachers, may argue students should only read the canon during structured instructional time, Kittle's (2013) approach signaled that reading, *any reading*, is important, could improve skills, and could become an avenue for growth and reflection as long as students continually challenged themselves with a diet of more complex texts. In her classroom, she offered students time to read novels of their own choice. She also conferred with them about what they were reading to hold them accountable as well as to challenge their choices to increase text complexity. In addition, students completed journals about what they were reading. Further class activities included studying mentor texts and reading canonical literature together. Her method was designed to meet the varied ability levels in her class, rather than to create a curriculum based on the assumption that all students had the same ability

and could read and understand the same material.

While at the time, Kittle's (2013) methods seemed unorthodox in her conservative, traditional high school setting, they were successful with her particular population. Her methods were the guideline for the research in this study, as they advocated providing students choice in reading to help spark interest while challenging them to read more complex texts. Her methods were never tested in a formal way, and while her argument was compelling and her anecdotal evidence persuasive, there was little reading research on secondary students to support her method of offering choice. As Gioia (2007) said in a National Endowment for the Arts annual report on reading,

> Although there has been measurable progress in recent years in reading ability at the elementary school level, all progress seems to halt as children enter their teenage years. There is a general decline in reading among teenage and adult Americans…these declines have demonstrable social, economic, cultural, and civic implications. (p. 5)

Kittle, in stressing the rationale for her reading program, emphasized that in current practice of whole class novel reading as the only required reading in secondary school, teachers were actually contributing to the decline of student reading skills. She also argued requiring students to read books that were beyond their ability level put them further behind because they were unsuccessful and did not read because they could not.

Kittle's (2013) argument promoted quantity of reading over perceived reading quality as a way to build the stamina students need to read selections they were required to read and were *not* their choice. The rationale was that students who were allowed to choose reading materials would read more; would in turn become better readers; and as a result, would be capable of reading more complex canonical texts, as the more complex

texts would not seem as difficult because of the stamina they had built through increasing reading volume (Gallagher, 2009; Kittle, 2013). Kittle's pedagogy addressed her concerns regarding her students' "zone of proximal development" (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976, p. 90) by encouraging students in one-on-one conferences to challenge themselves to increase complexity in their reading. Hiebert (2014) considered this practice Scaffolded Silent Reading (ScSR) and endorsed it in her research with younger students as well. Kittle's formula was to engage students with choice reading, which subsequently increased reading volume, which in turn gave students the needed tools to increase complexity. This action research study paralleled a cycle of improvement and further investigated how Kittle's method applied to settings beyond her realm to help fill the reading void experienced by so many adolescent readers.

Problem statement and purpose of the study. In assigning whole class text study, high school teachers essentially limit the amount of required reading, which is a problem with the vast majority of secondary reading programs based on current research. As reading opportunities decrease, so do reading skills and, along with them, reading stamina (Hiebert, 2014; Rasinski, 2004; Smith, 1976). This study proposed to extend the research on methods teachers may use to assist secondary students in developing stronger reading stamina in an effort to improve skills needed for high stakes testing (such as the ACT and SAT), college readiness, career preparation, and the basic responsibilities of an educated citizenry.

Conceptual Base of the Study

The study involved investigating whether Kittle's (2013) methods might also apply to larger settings. The conceptual base of the study had four legs: the conceptual framework, the theoretical framework, the action research methodology, and the

companion research model. Ravitch and Riggan (2017) argued the conceptual framework should serve as a guiding force behind methodology and research questions. Likewise, they posited the composition of a conceptual framework as the basis for any solid research.

The conceptual framework, together with the theoretical basis of the study, dictated the action research methodology to be employed by the researchers, as action research involves convenience sampling and study of ongoing practice guided by research questions (Herr & Anderson, 2015). The research took place in a North Carolina suburban, low poverty high school, hereafter called Stateline, and in a high poverty South Carolina rural high school, hereafter called Foothills. By working together to research in disparate settings and combining their findings, the researchers found that a companion study model made a stronger pedagogical argument and helped determine that Kittle's (2013) methods were applicable not only to one type of school setting but were successful in a wider range of educational situations and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Conceptual framework development. The researchers in this study identified issues in reading with older adolescent students at their respective high schools, which formed the base of the conceptual framework. Reading stamina was identified as a problem in both schools through an organizational analysis and a comprehensive needs assessment and was cited by administrators and teachers as a skill needed for success on high stakes testing. Test scores at both high schools had been stagnant for several years (A. Fulmer, personal communication, October 31, 2016; L. Weycker, personal communication, November 11, 2017). In seeking to investigate solutions to this problem, the researchers formed a theoretical framework aligned with Kittle's (2013) methods.

The researchers noticed several common problems among students in the two

schools involved in the companion study. First, students were able to comprehend complex reading material as long as it was not lengthy and did not require much time to read. Teachers also noted anecdotally that students were unable to persist in reading lengthy passages even if the passages were not difficult. Individual word recognition and understanding were not problems identified; however, when put together in longer reading passages, comprehension of terms became somewhat overwhelming for students. At the same time, English teachers at both sites noticed student apathy toward whole class readings and text study of canonical literature. They also noted the number of students who declared their ability to work around reading and chose to read summaries of the novels studied on the internet, a practice Merga (2013) said was a symptom of "alliteracy" (p. 243) or being able to but choosing not to read.

At both schools in the study, curriculum choices of whole class literature were made based on college preparatory reading lists and guided by the College Board advanced placement (AP) test recommendations (McCammon, 2016). While the researchers did not argue against the recommended selections, they did notice it was difficult to motivate students to read whole class reading selections, and many students chose to read summaries of the novels from websites offering synopses and study points of key concepts. In analyzing this problem, teachers noted motivation and apathy as major issues in lack of reading, contributing factors to students reading less and less. The AP Program did have a recommended reading list; but it also recommended students read more, not less (McCammon, 2016). Kittle's (2013) method advocated for students to read more, no matter if what they read was on the recommended list or not; that through reading more, students increased vocabulary and critical thinking skills, as long as they increased text complexity as they continued reading (McCammon, 2016).

Standardized testing requirements at both Foothills and Stateline continued to increase in complexity. In South Carolina, some form of college-placement test was required to indicate college readiness as students could choose to take either the ACT or SAT. Career readiness was tested through career pathways assessments. (Until 2017, the test was WorkKeys; but in 2018, the test changed to WIN Career Readiness Test in South Carolina.) In addition, End-of-Course (EOC) tests were administered to indicate proficiency in certain core classes but not all. In North Carolina, the ACT and WorkKeys Career Readiness assessments were administered to indicate college and career readiness, and EOC tests were administered in all core classes. The EOC tests in North Carolina were aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Teachers at both schools also noted student scores in reading comprehension decreasing as they progressed through high school. Local data analysis indicated reading scores associated with the above described tests had decreased, correlating with the research indicating reading stamina decreased universally as students went through school (Conley, 2007a; Hiebert, 2014). Noting student deficiencies in reading ability despite academic and intellectual achievement triggered a desire for researchers to understand the local problem(s) in an effort to offer solutions to increase student achievement.

Reading stamina involves several different components, as stated earlier; and each of these components seemed to be nurtured in the early grades in ways they were not in the latter high school grades. While studies had illustrated the benefits of Silent Sustained Reading (SSR) in younger students and middle school students, no studies had determined benefits of SSR for high school students in college preparatory classes, as the existing studies of SSR in secondary school students had mixed results (Foorman, Francis, Davidson, Harm, and Griffin, 2004; Kuhn & Schwanenflugel, 2009). Most

elementary reading programs were designed for students of varying abilities, as teachers of younger students recognized the need to meet the needs of individual students. Individualization in English classes seemed to disappear as students aged and as teachers taught more whole class novels (Broz, 2011; Kittle, 2013). The researchers wanted to understand how bringing literacy differentiation into the English classroom would change student reading attitudes and behaviors as well as teacher perceptions. Kittle (2013) noted the need for differentiation in her book, saying she knew there were struggling readers who did not read outside of class.

> We can say this isn't our fault because they arrived so far behind from where they should be, but if we don't so something to help them gain the skills they need for the rich, challenging texts we love, we are part of the problem. (Kittle, 2013, p. 6)

Recognizing the different skills involved in reading stamina, researchers wanted to understand the impact of Kittle's methods on stamina, methods which required individualized instruction. While Lexile levels assisted teachers in choosing books to challenge reading skills at the two sites involved in the study, Lexile levels were typically not tested after the eighth or ninth grade, leaving teachers little guidance regarding student reading abilities in the upper grades. This method of testing assumed Lexile levels were not important after the middle school years, an assumption supported by current practice involving teaching the same novels to the whole class without regard for individual competencies. The conceptual framework for the study was borne out of teacher questions regarding current practice, more effective pedagogy, and methods considering student differing abilities, along with a desire to increase opportunities for students to develop the all-important skill of stamina (Hiebert, 2014).

Theoretical framework rationale. Grant and Osanloo (2014) asserted that the

importance of the theoretical framework in a study should be based on the construction of knowledge about the study's concept to provide the rationale by which the study was justified. They also explained that the theoretical framework provided the "lens from which to support thinking on the problem and analysis of data" (Grant & Osanloo, 2014, p. 15). The researchers began with a conceptual belief that reading stamina was an important construct to foster, one that seemed lost in the typical secondary curriculum; and then Kittle's (2013) work formed the basis for the theoretical framework.

As the researchers investigated solutions to the problem of low achievement versus high intellectual capacity, they came across many studies suggesting reading stamina in younger students was developed as students were given the opportunity to read silently in class. In the studies, most often students read books of their choice that matched individual Lexile levels, because stamina is an individually developed skill (Hiebert, 2015; Rasinski, 2000, 2004). The theoretical framework was guided by some very basic findings that limited research existed on reading stamina in older adolescents but that reading stamina was an important part of success in secondary school as a way to prepare for college, work, and citizenship. Researchers developed the theory that if elementary-type practices were applied in a secondary school setting, as Kittle (2013) suggested, student reading stamina would increase as it did in Kittle's students. The researchers also theorized that Kittle's reading framework would affect student attitudes about reading, help students increase the volume of texts and pages read, and affect the classroom environment by creating a culture embracing reading.

Because the researchers sought to understand the nature of how the study would effect change in the classroom, the study was conducted through a transformative lens (Plano Clark, 2005). In their work on various types of mixed-method designs, Creswell,

Plano Clark, Gutman, and Hanson (2003) described transformative studies as those where the theoretical framework indicated some type of change would occur in either the participants of the study or the institutions where the study took place. Because the study investigated cause and effect, the basis for the theoretical framework was considered both transformative and pragmatic, which led to the third leg of the study, action research.

Action research. Creswell (2014) also indicated that action research was driven by a pragmatic worldview. According to McCutcheon and Jung (1990), action research is

> a systematic inquiry that is collective, collaborative, self-reflective, critical, and undertaken by the participants in the inquiry. The goals of such research are the understanding of practice and the articulation of a rationale or philosophy of practice in order to improve practice. (p. 148)

Herr and Anderson (2015) also emphasized that action research was pragmatic in nature, took place to solve an existing problem, and was conducted "*by* or *with* insiders to an organization or community" (p. 3). The researchers in this study sought to solve the problem of low reading stamina in ninth- and tenth-grade classrooms. The researcher at Stateline was both a teacher and a researcher. The teacher at Foothills was not a teacher in the study but assisted the teacher participants in creating the framework of the study and the study protocol. She served as a teacher leader in the process. Harrison and Callan (2013) emphasized that in action research, both practitioners and researchers participated in the design and implementation of the study as well as the analysis of the results. Harrison and Callan also proposed the purpose of action research to be gathering data and information to improve practice for the practitioner, stressing that the researcher, if not a practitioner, should have a useful role in the research and not simply be an

observer.

There were three factors that qualified the study as an action research project. First, the researchers sought to examine what would happen in high school English classrooms where a new reading framework was adopted, and such investigation required ongoing research in the present tense. Second, researchers used a convenience sample as participants in the study volunteered to try the new reading framework and take part in the study. A third factor involved the pragmatism by which the conceptual framework was determined. The researchers sought to solve an existing problem by employing methods to effect change in pedagogy based on research. These three factors determined that the study was an action research study, allowing researchers to be observers of what happened in the classrooms and measuring the success of the method. The pragmatic nature of the study also implied a certain urgency, so measures might be taken in accordance with findings to either implement the method schoolwide, modify the method to suit its setting, or go back to the existing method of instruction with recommendations for further study. With action research as the underpinning of the method, findings justified actions precipitated by the study (Hammond, 2013; Herr & Anderson, 2015).

Companion research model. Robinson and Tagher (2017) described companion research as inquiry involving collaboration among researchers who had mutual interests. In their study, they found the result of companion research was deeper, richer research with data analysis that was more robust. In their research on issues with companion dissertations, McNamara, Lara-Alecio, Hoyle, and Irby (2006) proposed four different types of companion research study models: meta-analysis, multiple case study, evaluation, and single case study. The companion research in this study fit in the evaluation category as the two researchers assessed whether participation in the Kittle

(2013) method, the intervention in the research, affected reading stamina. In this companion evaluation model, the studies at both locations followed similar protocols. The researchers jointly developed the problem statement, the purpose of the study, the definition of terms, the research questions, and the mixed methods research methodology. They established the intervention, Kittle's protocol (Appendix A), as well as a plan of authorship (Appendix B) and worked to determine if Kittle's protocol would in fact increase stamina as she claimed.

The action research study provided educators with a framework to increase reading depth and stamina for high school students; therefore, the companion study model will add to the literature on methods to address stamina in secondary school students and contribute to research determining which methods are successful, whether for diverse or similar populations. A mixed-methods approach was guided by a pragmatic worldview to "provide the best understanding of the research problem" (Creswell, 2014, p. 11). The researchers explored the correlations and relationships to uncover themes related to the implementation of an independent variable, Kittle's (2013) reading framework. Through a transformative lens, the researchers developed their knowledge through observation and relied on that lens to explore and observe the issues related to reading depth and stamina in two different secondary settings, thus addressing a greater global problem.

Research Questions

The purpose of the study was to extend the research on methods teachers might use to assist secondary students in developing stronger reading stamina and to improve skills needed for high stakes testing (such as the ACT and the SAT), college readiness, career preparation, and citizenry responsibilities. The central idea guiding each research

question was based on the conceptual and theoretical frameworks: What happens in a secondary English classroom when a teacher creates and utilizes a balanced approach of appropriately leveled choice reading, text study, and novel study? The researchers named the approach the Book Love Initiative, as it was based on Kittle's (2013) method. To more directly answer the central question, the study sought to answer the following four questions.

1. In what ways are student attitudes about reading impacted because of participation in the Book Love Initiative?
2. When utilized in secondary English classrooms, how can the Book Love Initiative framework's impact on reading volume be described?
3. When utilized in secondary English classrooms, how can the Book Love Initiative framework's impact on reading stamina behaviors be described?
4. How has the Book Love Initiative affected the classroom environment?

Professional Significance of the Problem

Because the research on high school student reading stamina is minimal, researchers used an action research model to study implementation of the Book Love Initiative. The initiative addressed teacher concerns about providing individualized instruction as well as increased rigor. The researchers studied the program as it was implemented and collected data about increasing reading stamina and text complexity by offering students a choice of reading materials at appropriate Lexile levels (Krashen, 2002). Reading materials were not necessarily a part of the customary canonical texts traditionally studied while teaching using a whole class study approach, but these texts were not considered off limits to students.

The study was significant because one of its purposes was to provoke dialogue

regarding the decline of secondary school reading and high school students' general lack of interest in reading anything for an extended time period. By using a companion study model, the parallel studies created will help future researchers and educators explore the costs of either neglecting or nurturing independent reading behaviors in adolescent learners. When considered more broadly, the collected data, both qualitative and quantitative, will help secondary English teachers gain a deeper understanding of what is related to implementing a free-choice reading program when combined with whole class novel study while teaching writing using mentor texts (see Kittle protocol, Appendix A).

Overview of the Methodology

As noted previously, the study involved action research in high school English classrooms where researchers studied Kittle's (2013) methodology put into practice and its effects on student perceptions, reading volume and stamina, and classroom culture. Creswell (2014) contended that collection of qualitative and quantitative data, by nature of the data, would yield different types of research outcomes. He also advocated combining the types of data collected in order to yield richer results in order to make stronger conclusions. The study used a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative data collected from testing student reading volume, attitudes, and perceptions; and qualitative data collected from interviewing teachers, surveying students, and observing classroom practices. Along with triangulation of data and peer debriefing, cross-checking codes for "intercoder agreement" (Creswell, 2014, p. 203) ensured both quantitative and qualitative reliability through both transformative and pragmatic viewpoints.

Researchers, participants, and sample involved in the study. There were two researchers involved in the larger companion study, the researcher at Foothills and the

researcher at Stateline. The researcher at Foothills and the author of this study, while not a teacher participant, served as a teacher leader to create the protocol alongside the teacher participants and worked to monitor the process and how the study progressed in the classrooms involved. The researcher at Stateline, on the other hand, was the sole teacher in her study and conducted the study in her own classroom. Because the researcher at Foothills was not a teacher, the participants in her study were four classroom teachers who agreed to participate, while the Stateline participants were the teacher-researcher herself and her students. The action research component of the study dictated that the sample be a convenience sample, and the sample in this study was comprised of students in the ninth and tenth grade English classes of the study participants (Herr & Anderson, 2015). Their classes ranged in size from 18-33.

The protocol. The initiative was a new paradigm at both Foothills and Stateline, as Kittle's (2013) method was not common practice in either school; accepted reading practice had been whole class novel teaching. The initiative had support from the school administration, and the principals of both schools voiced support for students to be given structured class time to read silently. The teachers involved agreed to participate in the study because they were searching for new and better ways to meet the needs of all their students while still preparing them for the demands of college reading requirements and success on high stakes tests. Teachers used the method Kittle described in her book, which addressed their concerns about providing individualized instruction as well as increasing text complexity. The researchers studied the program as it was implemented in their respective schools and collected data regarding increased reading stamina and text complexity as a result of implementation.

The researchers established a classroom protocol to follow based on the methods

detailed in Kittle's (2013) writings. The protocol was identical for both schools and is found in Appendix A. As part of the protocol, teachers collected data on student reading rate and quantity (quantitative), silent reading behaviors, and student perceptions about reading abilities (both quantifiable). Teachers at Foothills surveyed students regarding their attitudes about reading and the classroom environment (qualitative), also part of Kittle's method, and reported those findings to the researcher. The researcher at Stateline surveyed students according to the protocol and used this data for her study. Finally, researchers interviewed participants to determine their perceptions of how the Book Love Initiative and the implemented protocol impacted their classroom, both from a pedagogical standpoint and from the standpoint of classroom culture (qualitative).

Assumptions related to methodology. The assumptions for the study were that teachers would follow the program methodology with fidelity in both schools and in all classrooms. Kittle's (2013) recommendations were general enough to be applied at each school even though English standards differed in North and South Carolina and even though different grade levels were studied. The methodology also assumed on a very basic level that teachers would follow Kittle's percentage rules. She recommended over the course of a quarter, that teachers spend 50% of class time on activities surrounding independent reading; 25% of class time reading, annotating, and imitating mentor texts; and 25% of class time on large group or whole class novel study. In addition to these general percentage recommendations, she also recommended that teachers follow a daily plan involving agenda items, SSR, conferencing, notebook work, book talks, and reflection time. While periods of high stakes testing, exams, and unforeseen events sometimes interrupted the established daily routine, teachers generally followed the plan with fidelity. The protocol is included in Appendix A and fully explained in Chapter 3.

Definition of Key Terms

Canon. Sometimes referred to as the literary canon, the group of texts taught as a traditional part of English classrooms and considered to be the highest quality literature and essential in preparation for college (Morgan & Pytash, 2014).

Choice. A method of allowing students to choose reading selections either from a list determined by a teacher or from their own list based on interest (Kittle, 2013).

Fluency. Automaticity of word recognition and appropriate oral inflection when reading, signaling comprehension of the text (Rasinski, 2014).

Individualization. A plan of reading for an individual student (Rasinski, 2000; Stauffer, 1969).

Lexile level. Assigned to a student, a research-based level denoted by a number which indicates a measure of a student's ability to understand a text based on rate and vocabulary. When assigned to a text, Lexile levels are measured by the number of words on a page and the complexity of vocabulary in a given passage. Lexile levels can range from 200L to 1600L. Most students reading on grade level fall within the same Lexile level range (Krashen, 2002).

Reading comprehension. The student's ability to understand what s/he is reading (Hiebert, 2014).

Reading rate. The time it takes a student to read a passage with understanding (Rasinski, 2000).

Reading stamina. The student's ability to sustain silent reading with fluency, understand and engage in the passage, and increase text complexity over time (Hiebert, 2014, 2015).

SSR. A time period designated by a teacher for students to read silently, usually

for at least 15 minutes (Morgan, 2013).

Setting of the Study

Foothills High School. This part of the companion research study was conducted at Foothills High School (pseudonym), a high school in the Upstate of South Carolina in a county where there are seven total districts. Foothills was the largest geographic district with the smallest population. The town of Foothills had a population of about 4,000 (United States Census Bureau, 2016). Students came from several other neighboring towns and communities to attend school there. It was a single attendance district with one primary, one elementary, one middle, and one high school. This system had the positive effect of creating close bonds among the students as all students attended the same schools. There were few transfer students, so most students knew each other. While it was a tight-knit community, the town lacked industry to employ and support its citizens, resulting in a small tax base. Most people living in Foothills drove to larger neighboring cities to work. The town had an average income of $39,322 annually (United States Census Bureau, 2016).

Foothills High School had 770 students in Grades 9-12. The gender breakdown was almost evenly divided: 49% female and 51% male. Over half of the students (52%) were on free or reduced lunch. The ethnic breakdown of the school was overwhelmingly White/Caucasian, with 73% of students identifying in this demographic. Black/African-American students made up 13% of the population, and 9% identified as Hispanic/Latino. Students identifying with more than one race composed 4% of the student body. Students identifying with other ethnic groups combined to make up less than 1% of the student population. The student body, therefore, was generally White, rural, and poor. Even though there were four colleges and one community college in the county, parents

in Foothills' attendance area were mostly blue-collar workers lacking college education.

Student declines in reading ability had troubled Foothills in the years previous to the study. The school's ACT and SAT scores, which used to lead the county, had become equivalent to the county's median scores. WorkKeys scores had also declined over the 4 years the test had been a state requirement. In addition, over a 10-year period, English I EOC scores had declined from being some of the highest in the county to some of the lowest. In a survey sponsored by the district's literacy committee, teachers noted reading stamina was low and that students were unable to persist in reading longer passages not only in English classes but also in the other content areas. In addition, English teachers noted student apathy and lack of participation in whole class reading assignments. Students were not reading outside of class and did not participate in discussions about reading selections. After teachers read Kittle's (2013) work, they were anxious to try her methods. They came to realize their current teaching practices, which they had believed to be rigorous, were actually detrimental to student reading competencies because students were required to read less rather than more.

Stateline High School. Parallel to the Foothills High School study, the same Book Love Initiative protocol and research methodology were conducted at Stateline High School and studied by a companion researcher. Both researchers, in determining there may be broader implications to their own local research, synthesized the data analysis for each school; therefore, it is important to understand the demographics at Stateline as well to understand the holistic approach to the research. There were approximately 1,551 students at Stateline, just over twice the enrollment at Foothills. Similar to Foothills, 81% of students were White, 8% were African-American, 5% were Hispanic, 2% were two or more races, and 1% were Asian. In contrast to Foothills, only

7% of the student body qualified for free or reduced lunch. The town of Stateline's population was over 12,000, with over 50% of the population holding at least a bachelor's degree (United States Census Bureau, 2016). There were four universities and two community colleges in the vicinity. The median income for Stateline was $92,445 (Onboard Informatics, 2018).

Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

Delimitations. The research focused on reading depth and stamina in high school students; therefore, studying English language arts classrooms was a purposeful decision. Furthermore, other factors that may have affected reading depth and stamina, such as living in a literacy rich environment and access to books, were not studied. The study was limited to the intervention of Kittle's (2013) work.

Limitations. Although specific steps were made to ensure the validity and reliability of the study, there were limitations with the qualitative aspects of the action research study. The researcher at Foothills carefully deliberated positionality, or conscious neutrality, during the study (Herr & Anderson, 2015). The researcher also had existing relationships with the teachers and many of the students in the sample population; therefore, it was impossible to remove all subjective bias from the research. Teachers at Foothills opted into the study, so the students assigned to them became part of the convenience sample, another limitation of the study. A third limitation was the time frame in which the research occurred, March 2018 through May 2018.

Companion study. The companion study was intended to represent a broader population; however, generalizations of data should be made with caution. The two sites were chosen because they represented opposite socioeconomic demographics; however, the data collection was limited geographically to the south. The sites were in neighboring

states; however, the socioeconomic differences in the two groups were clear. Generalizations of data regarding success or failure of the study considered the tested population, and recommendations included the intended rationale of future studies.

Organization of the Dissertation

Chapter 1 introduces the study, giving purpose, rationale, limitations, assumptions, the conceptual framework, and a list of terms and definitions. Chapter 2 restates the problem, describes the literature on reading stamina, and describes the process of narrowing that literature to determine the research questions. Chapter 3 describes the methodology to be employed in the implementation of the initiative, with a full explanation of the protocol followed by teachers participating in the study as well as an explanation and research on mixed methods, action research, and companion studies. Chapter 4 details the results of the study, explaining the methods employed in collecting the data and determining the results. Chapter 5 gives an analysis of the data from the Foothills study as well as the Stateline study and then offers recommendations for practice, policy, and research based on the combined findings from the companion sites.

Summary

In summary, this research study explored the effects of employing Kittle's (2013) methods in high school English classrooms. The methods were a move away from the traditional pedagogy of teaching the same novel to every student in a whole class setting. Kittle described a program providing practical strategies on increasing book volume, capacity, and complexity. It created a balanced literacy plan to help students deepen their thinking through reading and writing. She built a classroom culture focused on the love of reading and changed the culture of her school. Students were allocated more time to read novels of their choice in class and were held accountable for the reading through

conferencing with the teacher, being regularly tested for reading rate to determine reading homework, and journaling about their thinking regarding reading selections. Researchers sought to study the impact of this method on student reading stamina and student abilities to handle more complex texts at companion high schools of differing socioeconomic levels using the principles of a mixed methods action research methodology.

Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature

Chapter Overview

Experts in reading agree reading stamina is an important skill needed for success in all areas of life but one that is not commonly nurtured as students age (Hiebert, Samuels, & Rasinski, 2010). The review of related literature focuses first on defining the key areas of reading stamina, as it is essential to understand how different skills involved in reading stamina interconnect. Further review of the literature investigates student engagement and methods of addressing stamina, particularly the method of offering students choice in reading materials. Primarily, the methods of research in the literature review focus on what has been discovered regarding using choice in pedagogy with younger students, as there is a gap in the literature regarding this method and its effect on older students. The researcher will also review studies about the effect of SSR on older students and individualization of instruction to advocate for similar methods extended by Kittle's (2013) work. Research on mixed methods, action research, and companion dissertations, will be addressed in Chapter 3, which focuses on research methods.

The literature suggests that reading more increases stamina, an important skill required for success on high stakes tests, college reading demands, and workplace competency (Hiebert, 2014; Kittle, 2013; Smith, 1976). Sanden (2011) claimed that "reading more leads to better reading" (p. 10); and in her research, she found that highly effective elementary teachers used more independent reading in their classrooms than those teachers who were not as effective. In addition, the literature indicates that when they are younger, students are offered choice in reading materials; and this practice supports both engagement and increased skills in comprehension and vocabulary, while older students are typically offered a set menu of reading material related to canonical

texts (Miles, 2012; Morgan & Pytash, 2014; Sanden, 2011; Swanson, 2013). Finally, the literature alludes to the fact that as students age, more limited choices in reading contribute to a disinterest in reading and lack of full engagement in school, which negatively affects reading skills (Dickerson, 2015; Sanden, 2011).

Restatement of the problem

South Carolina's ESSA School Improvement Goals state that by 2030, 90% of students will graduate college, career, and citizenship ready (South Carolina Department of Education, 2017). The state requires high school students to pass United States history and United States government for citizenship preparation. College readiness indicators are measured by students who graduate and achieve any of the following:

> Composite score of 20 or higher on the ACT
>
> Composite score of 1020 or higher on the SAT
>
> Score of 3 or higher on an Advanced Placement (AP) exam in English, mathematics, science, social studies, or an AP capstone
>
> Completion of at least six credit hours in dual enrollment courses in an English, mathematics, or a grade of C or higher in a STEM course (South Carolina Department of Education, 2017, p. 61).

Student career readiness indicators are measured by students who graduate and achieve either

> Completion of career and technology education (CATE) with credential of a national industry determined by the business community
>
> Score of Silver, Gold, or Platinum for career readiness on a designated exam
>
> Scale score of 31 or higher on the ASVAB military exam
>
> Completion of an apprenticeship through ApprenticeshipSC (South Carolina

Department of Education, 2017, p. 62)

For students to become college, career, and citizenship ready, they must be literate; and becoming literate at a higher level takes practice. It is only through practicing the skill of reading that students become better readers, able to handle the demands of college reading requirements and the work force (Hiebert, 2015).

Current educational pedagogy at Foothills is designed to teach high school students literature and literary analysis through whole class novel reading. According to research, this practice is detrimental to skill development (Allington, 2001; Hiebert, 2014; Smith, 1976). Rather than address student literacy, teachers who ascribe to this practice actually limit the amount of reading students are required to do. Kittle's (2013) method suggested changing practice from mandatory whole class novel reading to allowing students to read choice material. Her method offers students more opportunities to read and therefore builds reading stamina. The companion researchers in this study measured the effects of the Book Love Initiative on student reading volume, teacher perceptions of classroom environment, and student attitudes about reading to determine how the method impacted students. Generally, research has established that offering choice reading materials positively impacts stamina in young children, but there is a gap in the research regarding the practice of offering choice to older students (Swanson, 2013). Because the study is a companion study, the researchers have provided insight as to the method's effectiveness in disparate settings, thus adding to research on nurturing stamina in older students.

Components of Reading Stamina

When investigating ways to increase reading stamina in students, it is important to understand exactly what the research says about the components of stamina and how they

relate to each other to support progression of skills in reading. Boushey and Moser (2017), in designing instructional materials to promote stamina in young readers, coined the term "CAFÉ" (para. 1) to describe the elements of reading pedagogy: comprehension, accuracy, fluency, and expanded vocabulary. These elements combined with silent reading make up the construct of stamina. Boushey and Moser's (2006) goal was to lead students to independence in literacy; and through their work, they provide strategies for teachers looking to increase literacy skills and independent reading in young students. While their work centered on elementary age students, the elements of reading stamina are the same regardless of student age. In essence, stamina, which is best cultivated by reading more, ultimately contributes to a student's ability to persist with texts on their own (Hiebert et al., 2010). Whereas educators seem to agree that developing stamina is best achieved in providing choice texts to readers so they will be likely to read more, eventually when students are literacy independent, the texts they must read (technical manuals, college texts) may be complex, unpleasant, and not their choice. Kittle (2013) asserted in her work that building volume is essential to building stamina and offering choice in reading is best practice in increasing reading volume (Swanson, 2013). It is this persistence with reading gained in formative years that is required for students to be successful, persistent readers in later life (Hiebert, 2015; Swanson, 2013).

Comprehension. While persistence with complex texts is an important factor of stamina, persistence cannot occur if students do not comprehend what they are reading. Klauda and Guthrie (2008) found that students who demonstrated the highest level of comprehension in reading comprehension tests also "displayed (a) fast recognition of isolated words; (b) adeptness in processing phrases and sentences as syntactic units while engaged in oral and silent reading; and (c) appropriate, consistent expression when

reading stories and information texts out loud" (p. 317). In other words, comprehension is affected by the other skills in the CAFÉ menu (Boushey & Moser, 2017); all skills work in concert to create effective and accurate readers.

Methods to increase reading comprehension. There are many studies suggesting methods of teaching comprehension, and most researchers agree that comprehension is the crux of successful reading. In her research on content-area reading comprehension, Ness (2009) asserted direct instruction of reading comprehension was an important means of assisting students with the best methods of attaining comprehension of a passage. Jenkins, Fuchs, Van den Broek, Espin, and Deno (2003) agreed and proposed several methods of teaching comprehension skills in concert with fluency for students to truly comprehend a passage. Sampley (2008) also asserted that direct instruction of reading comprehension strategies was the best way for students to learn reading comprehension skills, and in accordance with Ness, suggested this instruction occur across the content areas, not simply in English class. These researchers concurred comprehension of reading passages involved several interconnected skills: automaticity and accurate word recognition, fluency and inflection, and expanded vocabulary skills, all components of stamina (Jenkins et al., 2003; Ness, 2009; Rasinski, 2004; Sampley, 2008).

Accuracy and automaticity. Accuracy in word decoding and automaticity of word recognition are both important aspects of comprehension and fluency (Rasinski, 2006). Accuracy in word recognition is obviously tied to expanded vocabulary; however, accuracy involves a phonetic component and is also linked to being able to determine the meaning of words through context clues. According to Hiebert (2014), the "research leads to the conclusion that the vast majority of American students in an age cohort *can*

recognize words" (p. 7) and know the meaning of those words. Automaticity, Rasinski (2014) argued, "refers to the ability to recognize or decode words, not just accurately, but also automatically and effortlessly" (p. 4). Hiebert (2014) and Rasinski (2000) proposed that although accuracy and automaticity of vocabulary are important skills, most reading research found that older students have high vocabulary recall; but it was the combination of words in longer passages that posed more problems for students, thereby affecting reading comprehension and stamina. Hiebert (2014) reported, "even students at the 10th percentile display reasonable accuracy – 95%.... Their challenges lie not in their ability to recognize individual words, but in their ability to think about text" (p. 5). Key to this finding is that most reading comprehension strategies focus on vocabulary recognition and accuracy rather than focusing on the holistic meaning of a reading passage, which, according to Rasinski (2000) and Hiebert (2014), seems to be the skill that eludes students.

Fluency. Adams (1990) said, "the most salient characteristic of skillful reading is the speed with which text is reproduced into spoken language" (p. 409), thus acknowledging fluency as another key component of comprehension. Rasinski (2000) also found comprehension to be tied to rate and appropriate expression, skills which construct the concept of fluency. He contended that fluency is one of the most important factors contributing to comprehension, as appropriate reading fluency is an indicator that students understand exactly what they are reading and the context of the passage when tested reading aloud. Current educational pedagogy promotes testing fluency through fourth grade (Hudson, Lane, & Pullen, 2005). Experts define fluency as appropriate levels of the combined skills of vocabulary recognition, automaticity, rate, and expression (Paige, Rasinski, & Magpuri-Lavell, 2012; Rasinski et al., 2005). Although researchers

disagree about the exact physiological link between fluency and comprehension, they do know that students who read too slowly or too rapidly do not comprehend as much as students who read at the right pace and prosody (Hasbrouk, 2006). In his commentary on reading rate, Rasinski (2000) maintained that "excessively slow, disfluent reading is associated with poor comprehension" (p. 92). In later work, Rasinski (2004) claimed students who read with little attention to punctuation, phrasing, and voice inflection while still reading words correctly were more apt to have poor comprehension skills, despite the fact that they obviously knew how to pronounce words. His reasoning was that fluency and comprehension were inextricably tied together and that proper pronunciation of words, while only one small part of comprehension, was an important, necessary piece. In his work with Hiebert (Hiebert et al., 2010), Rasinski also contended that both fluency and comprehension were important skills necessary for increasing stamina.

Expanded vocabulary. As automaticity of word recognition is figured into an individual's reading fluency, it stands to reason that increased vocabulary is a strong component of fluency, comprehension, and stamina (Milton & Treffers-Daller, 2013). Krashen (1989) asserted an expanded vocabulary contributed to mastery of a language. In his research, he also found that children who had high vocabulary skills "reported more, free voluntary reading" (Krashen, 1989, p. 441) and that adults who read more had higher levels of vocabulary as well. According to Krashen (2002) and Milton and Treffers-Daller (2013), there is a sort of circular pattern with reading and increased vocabulary – that vocabulary expands with increased reading and that expanded vocabulary is necessary for increased complexity of reading. Fisher and Frey (2008) found the most effective vocabulary instruction came from teachers modeling skills to decipher meaning of vocabulary within reading passages rather than direct vocabulary

instruction. Although experts seem to disagree about whether vocabulary or reading comes first, it is evident from the research that reading has a profound effect on vocabulary development and that expanded vocabulary skills are necessary for increasing text complexity or advancing in levels of reading, therefore contributing to reading stamina.

Silent reading. The other important component of reading stamina is the ability to persist silently with a text, although many educators contend that reading aloud is an important classroom practice used to teach literature. While literacy experts promote the concept of reading aloud as a way to teach and deliver texts, the core of stamina centers on understanding while reading silently without adult supports or scaffolding (Hiebert, 2014; Miles, 2012). Miles (2012) researched the importance of student ability to become lost in the text they were reading in order for true enjoyment of reading to occur. She measured this ability to lose oneself on Csikszentmihalyi's "Flow Scale" (Miles, 2012, p. 5) and found that students who had the most enjoyment with reading were given the opportunity to read choice material silently for extended periods. Krashen (1989) also found that SSR resulted in better vocabulary in students than did direct instruction in vocabulary, thus making the case for more time allotted to silent reading in the classroom than on vocabulary instruction. A secondary benefit of these silent reading behaviors was increased stamina (Hiebert, 2015: Krashen, 2002; Miles, 2012). Hiebert (2014) also found that proficiency in reading depended upon the number of opportunities students were given to read silently.

Silent reading as preparation for assessments. In addressing her concerns about assessments in the new Common Core State Standards (which have not been adopted in South Carolina but have been adopted in North Carolina, the location of the companion

study), Hiebert (2014) stated,

> we need to acknowledge that the demands of the new [Common Core] assessments *will* pose a challenge for many students. The reasons for this challenge are not – as pundits or observers of education frequently suggest – that students *cannot* read. Indeed, most American students can read. What many cannot do is independently maintain reading focus over long periods of time. The proficiency they lack is stamina – the ability to sustain mental effort without the scaffolds or adult supports. (p. 2)

The problem, as Hiebert (2014) identified in her study, is that, generally, students have the individual skills required for reading – comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary; but they are unable to use these skills to increase their reading abilities, because they are not given opportunities for independent silent reading during school time. Teachers, in an effort to use instructional time to its maximum level, view silent reading time as noninstructional and therefore classroom time not used to its full potential; however, Boushey and Moser (2006) stressed silent reading as a best practice used to achieve the goal of literacy independence – reading without adult supports – which is necessary for competency in real-world skills and therefore important enough to be allocated time during school.

Scaffolding skills for college and career readiness. Springer, Wilson, and Dole (2014) found students could have basic literacy skills but were still not college ready without the scaffolding of skills provided in a high school curriculum that used instructional time to elongate reading behaviors and increase text complexity as time progressed. Reynolds and Goodwin (2016) echoed this assertion when they advocated for scaffolding in high school to allow for increasing amounts of time devoted to

independent reading. In order to develop stamina in the classroom, they asserted teachers must allot time for silent reading; however, they stressed that students must also be held accountable for the reading they do if silent reading was used as an instructional practice. Rodgers (2017) also promoted scaffolding as a practice to promote stamina, saying that "student-centered classrooms provide scaffolded opportunities for choice, active learning, and personally relevant tasks with the role of teacher as a facilitator" (p. 35). In her research on SSR, Merga (2013) proposed several different goals of silent reading: to increase reading stamina, to develop independent reading skills, to increase reading enjoyment, and to increase student achievement across the curriculum. She researched the practice of SSR in her classroom as a way to serve students of different abilities so that all students could be challenged with opportunities for reading rigor and increasing text complexity. Merga's findings did *not* support SSR as a strategy to improve literacy outcomes; however, her findings did endorse SSR as a way to increase student engagement and motivation to read. She determined that lack of accountability was the major factor in the failure of her students to increase reading ability through SSR; thus SSR, in order to be an effective way to nurture reading stamina, must have some component of accountability tied to it (Broz, 2011; Kittle, 2013; Merga, 2013).

Factors Affecting Stamina

Attention span. There are several factors affecting reading stamina and posing problems for educators who wish to help their students increase reading stamina. First, in her work with boys and reading, Wozniak (2010) found gender does matter when addressing reading behaviors in students. She found boys have a shorter attention span, beginning in the primary grades; and boys typically score one and a half years behind girls on reading assessments in Grades 4-12. In her work with 14 boys who scored lower

than average in reading assessments, she found there were different instructional strategies teachers could use to engage boys (Wozniak, 2010). It is important to note that her findings did show short attention span as a barrier to achieving high stamina in reading.

Gender differences. Marinak and Gambrell (2007) also found gender differences related to the value placed on reading. In addition, they proposed student self-concepts as confident readers affected reading ability in younger children. In their research, they identified gender differences in attitudes toward reading as early as third grade. They reported boys valued reading less than girls, even though they had similar self-concepts as to their abilities in reading. The research also indicated attention span for reading was lower in boys than in girls; but when boys read materials of their choice, attention span was not an issue in reading.

Ability levels. In addition to attention span and gender differences, reading ability, indicated by Lexile levels, is also an issue requiring focus when addressing instruction of reading stamina. In their study on Lexile measurement, Stenner, Burdick, Sanford, and Burdick (2006) said,

> Reading is the most tested construct in education. It is probable that reading ability is measured more frequently than temperature, height, or weight among students aged six to eighteen. Reading ability is widely recognized as the best predictor of success in higher education and on-the-job performance. (p. 310)

In the study, Stenner et al. found the Lexile measurement as a predictor of reading success to be flawed but still more accurate than other older measures of reading ability. Krashen (2002) also found the Lexile measure to limit student reading choices and argued teachers using Lexile to recommend reading to students failed to consider student

interest, which is the determining factor in student engagement. Foothills does not measure Lexile after the ninth grade, so teachers using Lexile as a determiner must sometimes use old Lexile scores to measure student reading ability. These findings and practices indicated that Lexile scores should be *one* measure of reading but not the *only* measure considered when recommending books to students (Krashen, 2002).

Diverse abilities in the same classroom. It should be noted that high school classrooms are full of students with varying abilities; therefore, ability is a factor that can affect stamina. Kittle (2013) used the fact she had so many students at different reading levels as her main argument for changing teaching methods to include more individualized instruction. In her work with students of differing abilities, Vasinko (2013) found using content area reading selections in science and social studies was a method to engage students in more reading and addresses students with lower reading abilities. Magnan (n.d.) used texting as a communication tool to discuss books with at-risk readers in her research and used student feedback to determine that choice was the best strategy to encourage struggling students to read. Glaus (2014) also struggled with students with varying abilities and used different instructional strategies to encourage reading. She found that using the same whole class novel study was the least successful method in helping students of lower ability levels to read more. Students in her study were more interested in texts relevant to their lives and situations than canonical texts with which they felt little connection. These findings confirmed that teachers must use varying methods to reach students of different ability levels and that choice is an overarching theme voiced by researchers in addressing these problems.

Motivation and Increasing Text Complexity

In order for stamina to increase, text complexity must increase as well; however,

increasing text complexity requires students to be willing to read more difficult material that may take effort to understand. In her research on reading motivation in young students, Gambrell (2011) determined the challenge to helping students increase complexity of reading materials is a delicate balance, stating,

> If the text is too difficult, the reader is likely to give up. On the other hand, if the text is too easy, the reader is more likely to become bored. The most motivating reading tasks and activities are moderately challenging, requiring the student to put forth some effort – but with effort comes some level of success. (p. 176)

Gambrell argued all students want to be perceived as good readers, which is why many struggling readers will choose texts that are clearly too difficult for them in an effort to mask their abilities. She noted that as students felt success in reading at increased levels of difficulty, they were willing to read more at increasingly higher rates of complexity. The dilemma for educators is motivating students to read at higher levels of complexity instead of choosing to remain complacent at their current levels of reading.

Increasing text complexity was the subject of the research of Ford-Connors, Dougherty, Robertson, and Paratore (2015). In their study, Ford-Connors et al. determined three important factors to help students, particularly struggling readers, advance in text complexity. They said, "in sum, motivation and engagement, intensity of instruction, and cognitive challenge each have a tremendous influence on how struggling readers advance toward more accomplished reading" (Ford-Connors et al., 2015, p. 551). While citing motivation, intensity, and challenge as important concepts, their research also found the most important aspect of getting students to read was student choice and interest in a particular topic, as students were more likely to become motivated to read when they were interested in what they were reading. Winfree (2013) emphasized the

importance of providing enjoyable literature to students as the best way to encourage reading. Kittle (2013) claimed that every student wants to read, they simply do not all want to read the same thing; and she proposed once students found books on the topic or in the genre they preferred, all students could grow to enjoy reading. Allowing students to choose their reading selections gives them a great deal of power in reading as well as the opportunity to advance personal interests; and this, Kittle said, was the driving force behind motivating her students to read.

Glaus (2014) proposed allowing high school students to read young adult literature as a way to offer increased text complexity in books more relevant to adolescent readers. She advocated young adult literature to increase engagement in struggling readers who are less likely to see canonical texts as personally relevant. She recommended using her "triangle of text complexity" (Glaus, 2014, p. 408) to assure reading was at an appropriate skill and content level as well as a match for student interests. The triangle concept she created was designed to draw in readers using texts centered around themes that were engaging to adolescent readers, writing styles that were more complex, and vocabulary that was multifaceted. She proposed using young adult literature as either an alternative to the canon or as a build up to whole class novel readings of canonical texts, which allowed teachers to use more contemporary reading selections without abandoning the canon altogether (Glaus, 2014).

Choice as the Main Motivator for Reading More

The literature suggests choice is the best strategy for motivating students to read deeper, more complicated texts and therefore increase their reading stamina. It stands to reason that if students enjoy what they read, they are more apt to read. Merga (2013) emphasized silent reading provided students the opportunity to hone their skills when

they were reading novels of their choice because they enjoyed what they were reading and were in turn willing to read more. Neff (2015), whose background was in middle school reading, found a correlation in his students' increased reading comprehension scores and allowing them to choose their reading material, yet he was an outlier teacher at his school. Kittle (2013) was also considered unorthodox in her method of allowing students to choose what they read.

In her work with vocational students in a Bronx high school, Gulla (2012) studied teachers who composed reading workshops for students. In the workshops, the students chose their own reading selections based on themes of personal preference. Although teachers provided guidance in selecting books whose complexity matched reader abilities, they were able to change student reading behaviors by providing them with choices in reading material. Gulla argued, like Kittle (2013), that choice gave the students a certain power over their own reading habits, which motivated them to read the selections. In addition to choice literature, students also read canonical novels (albeit diverse, more modern canonical selections) together as a class facilitated by the teacher. In this way, teachers were able to provide individualized reading opportunities as well as exposure to canonical texts from college or AP reading lists (Warne & Anderson, 2015).

Neff (2015) also determined students who enjoyed what they read were apt to read more and also scored higher on reading comprehension tests than students who did not report enjoyment in reading. He also found reading for enjoyment was a strong predictor of academic success not only in English but in other subject areas. In a previous study, Walters-Parker (2006) found SSR as a classroom practice increased reading enjoyment and, therefore, motivation. Winfree (2013) also determined through her research that motivation to read was a key to student achievement. Gambrell (1996)

advocated for teachers to gain an understanding of what motivated their students to read. She claimed it was this understanding of students that would ultimately unlock the strategy to student success. Rodgers (2017) also found self-selected reading for enjoyment (SSRE) was a key to increased reading skills and literacy development in young adults who were struggling with college demands. It is interesting to consider why schools and teachers are reluctant to use choice as a method to increase reading stamina even though research supports its use as an effective strategy and points to reading enjoyment as a predictor of success.

Factors affecting choice. The literature suggests there are several factors affecting the use of choice as an instructional strategy to increase reading stamina, many of which involve standardized testing and state English language arts standards. Routman (1998) purported that teachers, despite the fact they themselves enjoy varied reading selections, do not use this practice in their own classrooms due to fears they will not meet state standards and will fail to prepare students for high stakes tests. At Foothills, the main reason cited for not supporting choice as a means to promote more independent reading was the lack of canonical texts involved in the method. While South Carolina's English language arts standards call for various forms of text analysis, they also have range and complexity standards calling for students to engage in reading for sustained time periods in order to build stamina, to read and respond to grade-level texts, and to engage in discussions about texts with groups of their peers. In the state standards, there are no mandated reading materials other than the label "grade-level texts" (South Carolina Department of Education, 2014, p. 4). Since EOC tests are based on the state standards, there are no questions regarding specific literary texts on the EOC unless those texts are provided on the tests as reading comprehension passages. State standards,

therefore, should not pose a limitation to teachers who wish to use practices like Kittle's (2013) in their classrooms.

A second factor affecting choice as an instructional practice is the list of approved texts on college admissions and the College Board AP reading lists. In his investigations about what students were expected to read in order to be successful in college, Conley (2007a) found it was the amount of reading students were able to do when they arrived at college that truly defined their readiness rather than the list of titles they had read in high school. He said, colleges "expect students to make inferences, interpret results, analyze conflicting explanations of phenomena, support arguments with evidence" (Conley, 2007a, p. 6) and other key skills related to the skill of reading rather than knowledge of explicit texts. On the other hand, the College Board has a very specific list of titles it promotes as preparing students for the demands of AP courses (Bowen et al., 2011). Even though they provide reading lists for AP classes, however, the College Board recommends reading more in order to prepare for college, as there are no questions about specific titles on the AP test but rather global questions that could be answered through reading several different books of a given genre or time period.

Glaus (2014) argued meaningful engagement with text study marked readiness for college rather than study of canonical texts. Furthermore, in a study of skills needed for college success, Springer et al. (2014) found most important was the skill of tying multiple readings together as applicable to a single topic rather than analyzing a single piece of literature for value and relevancy. Moreover, they proposed the ability of reading complex texts independently as paramount to college success (Springer et al., 2014). Miles (2012) found students who achieved a "flow state" (p. 17) regularly while reading were more prepared for college than those who did not. These aforementioned

studies determined students who read more and challenged themselves with text complexity were honing the exact skills needed for success in college regardless of what they were reading. Studies indicated it was not the *reading material* which made students more successful and prepared for college, but rather success was determined by the *amount* of reading they could do, which supports Kittle's (2013) principle of building volume. Even students preparing for AP testing were more successful if they had read more than the limited list of texts taught by teachers in AP classes (Conley, 2007a; Broz, 2011).

Student Interest and Engagement in Reading

As much of the literature has suggested, student choice is a major factor in getting students to read more; however, the practice has been challenged in many traditional secondary reading programs. While the researcher has listed several factors involving testing and accountability as obstacles to using choice as an instructional tool, student interest as a reading motivator may be the best argument that supports choice. Krashen (2002), in his critique of the Lexile framework as the main determinant of student reading material, listed student interest as the most important factor in engaging student readers. In fact, he claimed that lack of access to books was the largest impediment to reading more, asserting that children who are exposed to interesting reading materials will almost always choose to read. Likewise, Merga (2013) advocated for more interesting reading to be offered as an antidote to "alliteracy" (p. 243), the state of having high reading ability but choosing not to read. She argued that many students were alliterate due to the fact they did not find reading interesting. Miles (2012) also argued the necessity of interesting reading material as a way to entice students to read. Glaus (2014) contended,

Our challenge is to prepare all students for college and career readiness in the 21st

> century through meaningful encounters with interesting and complex texts, but an English curriculum centered on canonical texts holds little promise, particularly for those who find reading challenging. (p. 407)

Broz (2011), in her research on student reluctance to read, asserted that students who were most successful were those who read great quantities, not those who had figured out how to avoid reading. She proposed this avoidance of reading to be the major problem on both high school and college campuses. One of Kittle's (2013) reasons for creating her method was that students were not reading what she had assigned, choosing instead to read summaries provided on the internet, which was also a finding from Broz's research. Kittle argued that relevancy and engagement were the two motivating factors for students' choice to read; therefore, student interest figured most prominently in increasing the volume students read.

Educational Foundations: A Rationale for Teachers to Use Kittle's (2013) Methods

The researcher has explained the components of reading stamina and how they work together to promote independent, competent readers. The researcher has also proposed many studies advocating the importance of developing reading stamina in high school students. Research studies suggested attention span, ability, motivation, and engagement are all factors affecting stamina and also supported choice as a viable, best option in addressing this pressing issue for teachers who struggle with a rationale to stray from current practice and embrace Kittle's (2013) methods. Her protocol aligns with the foundational theories of John Dewey and Lev Vygotsky. Later, Jerome Bruner added his discovery learning theories in the footsteps of both Dewey and Vygotsky, and Albert Bandura developed his theory of modeling, also using Dewey's foundational concepts. Kittle's work is consistent with all of these established philosophies. Dewey believed

classrooms should be democratic, centered around the social needs of children, and driven by societal change (Marsh & Willis, 2007). Kittle's work, in advocating student choice driven by formative conferencing, creates a student-centered approach to teaching. In addition, conferencing, which is formative in nature, uses Vygotsky's concept of scaffolding to push the student's zone of proximal development, or that space between what the student can read on his own and what presents complexities difficult to understand (Wood et al., 1976). Bruner (1960), building on Dewey and Vygotsky, determined that tailored learning experiences provided a springboard for discovery and increased motivation, because constructing their own learning engaged learners in the educational process. Finally, Bandura (1982), who believed that students learned best through modeling, either from adults or peers, also believed in the student-centered classroom as a democratic environment that promoted self-efficacy in tasks. Bandura further acknowledged that self-efficacy was a contributor to self-concept, which directly correlated to achievement (Craven, Marsh, & Debus, 1991).

Present Day Theorists Undergirding Kittle's (2013) Work

Dewey's theories are currently being echoed a century later by authors and education advocates Tony Wagner, Ted Dintersmith, Ken Robinson, and Lou Aronica. Wagner (2012) advocated classrooms where students were allowed to solve real-world problems were paramount to engagement and motivation. Wagner and Dintersmith (2015) proposed that English curricula were outdated and irrelevant to students and did not hone in on real-world reading skills to produce active citizenship. Robinson and Aronica (2016) studied creativity in schools and found the most successful schools were also the most creative, allowing students to lead in determining their own curricula based on interest. Dintersmith (2018) also echoed the call for creative schools when he

researched schools that promoted innovative methods outside the educational norm and found students at those schools scored higher on international tests when compared with the general population.

In their work with teachers in the United Kingdom, Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, and Wiliam (2003) advocated formative assessment to challenge students, engage them in learning, and improve their performance. They determined formative assessment, rather than graded work, was the best way to increase achievement. Conferencing to determine student reading behaviors, assist with reading strategies, and challenge reading levels is a formative way of helping students achieve a higher zone of proximal development, increasing volume of reading in order to increase reading skills. Guthrie and Knowles (2001) performed a 3-year study of K-12 classrooms and the practice of teaching reading and motivating students to read. They outlined seven principles to aid in reading motivation:

> use of conceptual themes to guide inquiry, real-world interactions as springboards for further inquiry, encouragement of self-direction, the existence of a variety of texts, support for the use of cognitive strategies, social collaboration, and opportunities for self-expression. (p. 170)

Kittle's (2013) method sought to encompass all of these principles in order to broaden student opportunities, not only to read but also to think about and discuss reading, principles included in the state standards for English language arts (South Carolina Department of Education, 2014). Fisher and Frey (2008) contended that modeling good reading practices and guiding students through mentor texts was best practice in increasing reading proficiency in middle school readers. Springer et al. (2014) advocated for expanding student reading by exposing them to many reading genres as a

way to encourage a classroom environment that embraces and celebrates reading. Hiebert (2014) recommended increasing student engagement by allowing students to read a variety of texts. Hiebert (2014) "generated seven actions that teachers can take to support increased stamina in silent reading" (p. 15):

> Give students the responsibility for the first read of texts.
>
> Be explicit about the degree of challenge.
>
> Have students make explicit goals for increased stamina and reading.
>
> Increase the amount that students are reading.
>
> Increase students' engagement in reading through connected homework reading and magazine articles.
>
> Increase students' responses to texts through writing and discussions.
>
> Have monthly "on your own" sessions, using available sample assessments. (Hiebert, 2014, p. 15)

Furthermore, Hiebert (2014) argued for the practice of "scaffolded silent reading (ScSR)" (p. 13) instead of simply providing time for SSR. She contended that students who read independently with periodic teacher monitoring and discussion about reading were more likely to increase reading proficiency and complexity than students who read without this type of scaffolding. In essence, Kittle's (2013) protocol took all of these recommendations into account by allocating time to specific types of text study and writing and discussion exercises (see Kittle protocol, Appendix A). Guthrie and Anderson (1999) asserted choice allowed more opportunities for engagement with the literature and therefore deep study of literature was the result of engagement, which they defined as the "joint functioning of motivation, conceptual knowledge, strategies, and social interactions during literacy activities" (p. 20). Even as early as 1984, Manning and

Manning (as cited in Merga, 2013) found that students participating in silent reading programs involving both peer discussion and teacher-student conferences performed significantly better on achievement tests than their peers who did not participate in such activities.

Professional Learning on Reading

Professional learning to promote literacy instruction. Maxwell, Schrodt, and Hasty (2015) advocated for changing traditional methods of teaching reading and proposed professional development in literacy was the first step to achieve needed change. They suggested traditional teaching methods wrongly assume that secondary students *can* read at the same levels; when instead, statistics show that most secondary students actually read below grade level. They contended the shift in teaching required focused professional development, a sort of unlearning of traditional practice in order to assist teachers in learning how to teach literacy rather than literature. Routman (1998) also made this claim, stating high school programs could no longer afford the luxury of assuming all students in their classrooms had similar reading skills, and he asserted educators who left behind students who were unable to read standard classroom reading material were committing educational malpractice.

Training secondary teachers about literacy. Irvin, Meltzer, and Dukes (2007) emphasized the importance of professional development to retrain secondary teachers in literacy instruction that involved reading comprehension strategies and skill development. They proposed involving students in genre study through independent reading that included writing and journaling as part of the program. This method was highly dependent on teacher training, as they recognized most secondary teachers focus on the study and analysis of literature rather than on literacy instruction, which are two entirely

different concepts. They also recognized the importance of content-area instruction of literacy as an overall, holistic concept to be embraced by schools in order to have the most impact on students, claiming "middle and high school leaders can reverse the downward spiral of failure many students experience by creating a literacy-rich environment throughout the school" (Irvin et al., 2007, p. 36).

Training to address college preparedness. Conley (2007b) also asserted preparing teachers with awareness of what college readiness entailed rather than simply their own memories of college as a way to shift the focus of teaching in college preparatory and AP level classes. He stated teachers were stuck in the past about what colleges require of their students. He wrote, "Research findings describe college courses that require students to read eight to ten books in the same time that a high school class requires only one or two" (Conley, 2007a, p. 6) and contended that students were also required to write multiple well-organized and reasoned papers in short amounts of time, unlike what was required in most college preparatory classes where students study one novel at a time and write few papers in a given quarter. Wagner (2012) and Friedman and Mandelbaum (2011) also claimed high school teachers were not versed in what colleges needed and wanted their students to be able to do and that major shifts in professional learning were paramount to educating teachers on how to prepare students for college today. DeFelice (2014) insisted these professional learning needs, while necessary, proposed major challenges for districts, as the change produced on this scale was financially prohibitive for many districts across the country.

Individualization

Neff (2015), Kittle (2013), and Gallagher (2009) all noted the need to differentiate instruction in reading to both accommodate varying ability levels as well as to increase

interest. Gallagher wrote,

> The focus has changed in our schools and not in a good way. High-interest reading is being squeezed out in favor of more test preparation practice. Interesting books are disappearing as funding is diverted to purchase "magic pill" reading programs. Sustained silent reading time is being abandoned because it is often seen as "soft" or "non-academic." For many students, academic reading, though incredibly important, has become their only reading. (How would you like it if the *only* reading you ever did in your life was Shakespeare and *Beowulf*)? (p. 4)

Gallagher's proposed cure for the decline of reading in schools is allowing students the "soft" skill of time for SSR with a focus on accountability for what students are reading. He argued the distractions faced by students (non-print rich, high-poverty environments, jobs to help parents with household expenses), over many of which they have no control, were the main reasons schools must focus on literacy and literacy discussions during the school day. He also advocated allocating school time to read underscored the importance of reading for students. He proposed differentiation was crucial to helping students become more motivated and engaged and that students were more likely to want to read if the reading selection was at an appropriate level and interest. His findings were confirmed by Cuevas, Irving, and Russell (2014) who pointed to independent silent reading at the reader's cognitive (not grade) level as a best practice to prepare for achievement on EOC tests.

McMaster et al. (2012) called for reading interventions and differentiation for secondary students and Walters-Parker (2007) agreed. They contended such interventions were key to providing secondary students with the skills they lacked due to

the failure of high schools to teach literacy. Holmgren (2009) advocated differentiated instruction as a way to help striving readers while still serving the needs of more able students in the classroom. McMaster et al. (2012) and Lee and Schallert (2016) studied the effects of differentiated instruction in group settings as a way to increase reading abilities. In addition, Lee and Schallert echoed Gallagher's (2009) promotion of methods to teach reading and writing together as a way to assist students in reading as well as thinking about the reading they were doing. Merga (2013) found in her research that students who were called on to discuss books in class inspired other students to read those books. Kittle (2013) employed all of these methods in her classroom to assist struggling readers, inspire non-readers, and challenge good readers to read more and with increasing text complexity. The researcher has used Kittle's protocol (Appendix A) as the guide for the teachers involved in the study at Foothills.

Preliminary Conclusions

The researcher has drawn three important conclusions from the review of the literature. First, stamina is important for reading skills in high stakes testing and college preparation. The review of literature revealed that experts recognize the importance of reading stamina as a skill made up of several intertwined components – comprehension, accuracy, fluency, expanded vocabulary, and silent reading – all of which are necessary for successful and progressive reading habits (Boushey & Moser, 2017; Hiebert, 2015; Rasinski, 2004). The research also revealed that students, although they have proficiency in the individual skill components involved in stamina, have difficulties intertwining those components when reading extended passages (Hiebert, 2014). Stamina is a proficiency that assists students in the ability to read complex texts required in college, in the workplace, and in citizenry education.

Second, methods used to promote reading in the early years can be applied in secondary schools. Although research is limited in the area of stamina in secondary education, the principles teachers apply in the early years seem to be applicable in secondary schools as well, according to the few studies in this area (Morgan, 2013; Neff, 2015; Swanson, 2013). The literature suggests students who are given the opportunity to choose what they read generally read more. Experts agree that reading more makes better readers at any age (Sanden, 2011). The literature also suggests stamina is not nurtured in secondary school, as the focus in English language arts instruction generally shifts from literacy development to test preparation, which is the case at Foothills (Gallagher, 2009).

Third, stamina can be improved for secondary students, particularly through methods described in Kittle's (2013) work. These methods are the focus of the researcher's work with teachers at Foothills who have used traditional methods of teaching literature rather than focusing on literacy. Experts propose traditional methods no longer serve to prepare students for high stakes tests and do not offer students the interest or motivation to read (Gallagher, 2009; Kittle, 2013). In addition, traditional methods limit the number of pages read by students, which is a detriment to college preparation in particular (Conley, 2007b). The research also suggests employing Kittle's methods is not counter to state standards or college admissions criteria.

Research questions. The review of literature led the researcher to determine the central guiding question for the study: What happens in a secondary English classroom when a teacher creates and utilizes a balanced approach of appropriate leveled choice reading, text study, and novel study? Due to the nature of the initiative at Foothills, the research was a mixed methods action research study and sought to answer the following

questions, restated from Chapter 1.

1. In what ways are student attitudes about reading impacted because of participation in the Book Love Initiative?
2. When utilized in secondary English classrooms, how can the Book Love Initiative framework's impact on reading volume be described?
3. When utilized in secondary English classrooms, how can the Book Love Initiative framework's impact on reading stamina behaviors be described?
4. How has the Book Love Initiative affected the classroom environment?

Chapter 3: Methods of Research

Restatement of the Problem

As high schools focus more on preparing students for high stakes testing and skills of literary analysis common in college preparatory programs, a focus on literacy decreases (Hiebert, 2014). Although test scores continue to decline, most high school reading programs have not changed; and English language arts teachers continue to require whole class study of the same novel along with vocabulary acquisition (mostly in isolation). Experts agree this traditional approach limits the amount of reading students do, contributing to a decline in reading stamina (Sanden, 2011). Scholastic's (2017) *Kids and Family Reading Report* reported a steady decline in reading volume beginning at age eight and an even starker decline of teachers encouraging high-interest, choice texts between ages 15-17. Kittle (2013) confirmed with her own students that most of them were working very hard at *not* reading teacher-assigned material, as most of her students reported they had never read a book from beginning to end while in high school, a concept Merga (2013) dubbed "alliteracy" (p. 243), or possessing the ability to read but choosing not to. Broz (2011) addressed this concept in her research; other authors and reading experts confirm most students do not enjoy reading in high school; they work hard to avoid it because they find it unengaging (Allington, 2011; Gallagher, 2009; Glaus, 2014). Research also suggests most students can read and recognize individual vocabulary words, but the holistic skill of reading, and therefore reading stamina, decreases in high school as students read less (Hiebert et al., 2010). As the amount of reading decreases, student reading skills decline, so many students may arrive in secondary school prepared for college preparatory English classes but graduate high school woefully unprepared for college, work, and citizenry (Conley, 2007b).

Rationale for the Study

In this study, the researcher investigated the effects of applying Kittle's (2013) method, the Book Love Initiative, to ninth and tenth grade English classes. The method involved student independent reading of choice literature, journaling about the books they read, conferencing with teachers about their reading, studying mentor texts to improve writing, and studying canonical texts in a whole class setting. A detailed outline of the protocol used in classes involved in the study is seen in Appendix A and fully explained later in this chapter. The intent of the study was to understand how this approach impacted student attitudes about reading and their reading volume and stamina. Additionally, the researchers sought to understand how the method impacted the classroom environment as perceived by teachers. As a result, the researchers worked to extend the research about methods teachers might use to assist secondary students in developing reading stamina in order to improve the skills needed for success on high stakes tests (such as the EOC, ACT, and SAT), college readiness, career preparation, and basic responsibilities of an educated citizenry (Hiebert, 2015). The study in this research occurred at a rural high-poverty school, but a concurrent study took place at a suburban low-poverty school; therefore, the researchers involved in both studies wanted the research to have more far-reaching implications than if conducted in only one setting. Due to the nature of the study, a mixed methods action research model was applied to the convenience samples in both locations in the study (Creswell, 2014; Herr & Anderson, 2015).

The researchers implemented the study because (a) reading stamina had been identified as an issue at both sites in the study; (b) teachers at both sites felt their methods of whole class novel teaching were not effective; and (3) teachers at both schools felt an

urgency to study what was happening in their classrooms so that the change in practice had solid, research-based rationales and outcomes. To be sure, the research on college and work preparedness clearly provided a rationale for change in practice, although there was little previous exploration on actual applications of methods such as Kittle's (2013) in the secondary classroom, another rationale for the study (Gallagher, 2009; Kittle, 2013).

Description of the General Methodology of the Study

Review of the research questions. The researchers sought to understand how the Book Love Initiative impacted student attitudes toward reading, student reading volume and stamina, and the classroom culture. The central guiding question, "What happens in a secondary English classroom when a teacher creates and utilizes a balanced approach of appropriate leveled choice reading, text study, and novel study," led to the questions framing the investigation.

1. In what ways are student attitudes about reading impacted because of participation in the Book Love Initiative?
2. When utilized in secondary English classrooms, how can the Book Love Initiative framework's impact on reading volume be described?
3. When utilized in secondary English classrooms, how can the Book Love Initiative framework's impact on reading stamina behaviors be described?
4. How has the Book Love Initiative affected the classroom environment and student learning?

Mixed methods design and rationale. Due to the nature of the study, the researchers used a mixed-methods design. Creswell (2014) contended that as researchers seek to get a truer picture on the impact of research, using a mixed-methods research

design helps to provide richer data, as quantitative measures are supplemented with qualitative narrative. Mixed-methods design entails collecting and analyzing "both qualitative (open-ended) and quantitative (closed-ended) data in response to research questions or hypotheses" (Creswell, 2014, p. 217). The researchers used Butin's (2010) method of operationalizing the study to help determine the types of data that could be collected to best answer the research questions. As a result of this process, the researchers used the data shown in Table 1 aligned with the research questions.

Table 1

Research Questions Aligned with Data Collection and Data Type

Research Question	Data Collected to Answer the Question	Data Type
In what ways are student attitudes about reading impacted because of participation in the Book Love Initiative?	Kittle's (2013) reading survey pre and postimplementation	Quan and Qual
	Sydney Attribution Scale pre and postimplementation	Quantitative
	Teacher conferences with students	Qualitative
When utilized in the secondary English classroom, how can the Book Love Initiative framework's impact on reading volume be described?	Weekly reading records	Quantitative
When utilized in secondary English classrooms, how can the Book Love Initiative framework's impact on reading stamina behaviors be described?	Observational Checklists	Qualitative
	Weekly reading records	Quantitative
How has the Book Love Initiative affected the classroom environment and student learning?	Researcher interviews with teachers	Qualitative

Closed-ended, or quantitative, data included data from Likert-style survey questions, weekly reading records, and data from the Sydney Attribution Scale (SAS;

Marsh, 1983) administered to students. Open-ended, or qualitative, data included data from open-ended survey questions, field notes from teacher-student conferences, behavior observation checklists, and field notes from researcher interviews with teachers. In using a mixed-methods approach to this study, the researchers established a more detailed picture of how implementation of the Book Love Initiative not only affected quantifiable data but attitudes and perceptions regarding reading and the initiative's protocol, which were qualitative in nature.

History of the mixed-methods design. The researchers used a theoretical, or transformative, lens, the theory being that participation in the Book Love Initiative would impact student attitudes about reading, reading volume, reading stamina, and the classroom culture (Creswell et al., 2003). The first accounting of mixed-methods design is fairly recent, around 1950, and was determined to be a valid method as researchers contended that both quantitative and qualitative viewpoints should be considered in research (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007). Although early mixed-methods research (also called mixed research) used triangulated data, more recently, mixed methods has come to mean simply a combination of quantitative and qualitative data to explain a given phenomenon. Mixed-method research was borne out of a need for pragmatic research and a recognition that research questions determine the approach to research rather than the approach determining the question (Johnson et al., 2007). It is, therefore, the pragmatic nature of this research, along with the research questions to be investigated, that determined the mixed-methods design of the study, a QUAN + QUAL study.

Action research rationale. Herr and Anderson (2015) defined action research as an "inquiry that is done by or with insiders to an organization or community" (p. 3). This

action research occurred at Foothills (and concurrently at Stateline) and was conducted by the researcher who was on the school faculty and therefore an insider to the site. Herr and Anderson also stated many other researchers "argue that action research should always be collaborative regardless of whether the researcher is an outsider or insider to the setting under study" (p. 3). Keeping in mind the nature of the study, the action research methodology was an ideal fit for this research, as the researcher, although an outsider to the English department, was an insider to the site. She had a working relationship with the faculty members implementing the project, although she was not implementing the project herself. As teachers implemented the Book Love Initiative, they followed the same protocol in their classrooms (and the same protocol in the companion site), the components of which were measured by the researcher in an objective way. In keeping with Creswell's (2014) description of mixed methodology as a pragmatic approach, so too was the action research design, as the research occurred in real time and had a practical purpose. Action research was most appropriate for this study because the participants tried to solve an existing site-specific problem. Swartzlander (2016) stated, "The process of action research is recursive in nature. The plan, act, observe, reflect, re-plan cycle of action research allows the researcher and research participants to link and re-link theory to practice" (p. 45).

Researcher's role in the study. In the spring of 2017, recognizing issues with reading stamina, problems with student apathy and motivation in English, and needs analysis data on declining test scores, the researcher, a French teacher at the site, encouraged English teachers to read Kittle's (2013) book. Teachers were receptive to Kittle's ideas and agreed to implement the method. As a group, the researcher and English teachers requested permission from the principal to experiment with the method,

which was implemented in the fall of 2017. The researcher served as a teacher leader to the participants in the study, assisting teachers in developing the protocol according to Kittle's guidelines and determining the perceptual survey to be used (discussed in the action research design), keeping the Foothills protocol in line with the Stateline protocol. As data collection began with implementation and as part of the protocol, these data were considered archival data. In order to monitor implementation of the protocol, the researcher had ongoing meetings with the participants in the study and periodically observed classes. In addition, the researcher collected the surveys administered at the beginning of the school year (archival data) and collected poststudy surveys at the end of the research.

Teacher participants in the study collected data throughout the initiative and used those data to reframe classroom pedagogy in a continuous manner. Survey data informed them about student reading behaviors and how students perceived their abilities, which allowed them to direct conferences about what students were reading and ways students might challenge themselves. Data on student literary interests helped teachers determine which books and genres they needed to add to their classroom libraries. Students who indicated poor reading abilities were then encouraged when they completed books they started. Because of the continuous nature of the data collection and adjustments in practice, the study was fluid and ever changing; therefore, analysis of data was somewhat affected by the adaptation of best practices throughout the study. Teaching pedagogy changed from the beginning to end of the study based on data collection, which affected how researchers reported the data and made recommendations.

Use of action research in the school setting. Schools are the perfect setting for an action research study, as ideally, schools are communities of learners seeking to learn

the best, most relevant practices to follow in order to yield the most impact for students. Sagor (2000) proposed seven steps for an action research study:

1. Selecting a focus.
2. Clarifying theories.
3. Identifying research questions.
4. Collecting data.
5. Analyzing data.
6. Reporting results.
7. Taking informed action (p. 3).

The researcher conducting this study, while not implementing the Book Love Initiative in her own classroom, followed Sagor's steps in designing the study alongside teachers who were involved in implementation. The focus of the project was to examine the effects of a method designed to build reading stamina. The theoretical base for the project, fully described in Chapter 1, was that participation in the Book Love Initiative would impact attitudes about reading, reading volume and stamina, perceptions about reading ability, and classroom culture. The researchers identified the research questions as well as the type of data to be collected and analyzed. They reported the results of the study and recommended actions based on success of the study. Sagor also proposed one of the purposes of action research in a school was "to make progress on schoolwide priorities" (p. 7). It was a priority of the English teachers involved in the study to positively impact their students by improving their ability to read in order to prepare them for the demands of college, work, and citizenry. They had seen student apathy toward reading, had identified stamina as an issue, and were concerned their current pedagogy was perhaps detrimental to students; therefore, they developed the Book Love Initiative and wished to

make informed decisions as to whether this project had a positive impact.

Companion methodology. Although the research could have taken place at one site and the conceptual and theoretical bases of the study were consistent whether conducted at one site or the other, both researchers had an interest in the subject of reading stamina and both recognized this as an issue at their individual sites. They also found very little research on increasing reading stamina in older students. There were several "how to" books available for that purpose, but there was little in the way of actual research studies to document success or failure of those methods in the classroom. Studies that were available on SSR in secondary school were either inconclusive or contradictory, and despite how Kittle or her fellow researcher, Gallagher (2009), extolled the success of this particular method in their own classrooms, the researchers saw the need to use data collection and analysis to confirm the potential impact of the method. Recognizing the need for more research in the area and being aware of the disparate nature of their specific sites, the researchers saw an opportunity to add to the existing volume of studies recognizing lack of reading stamina as a problem in secondary school and offering alternative pedagogy to solve the problem. Moreover, as the companion model was meant to be collaborative and as action research is collaborative in nature, the companion study model was a good fit for this particular study. A table outlining the companion methodology and authorship is included in Appendix B. Robinson and Tagher (2017) stated that companion studies yielded "consideration of differing perspectives, richer data, stronger data analysis, and robust research outcomes" (p. 564). The study took place in dissimilar locations, and it offered different perspectives on the effectiveness of Kittle's (2013) method; and as the data were analyzed at both sites, the outcomes were also applicable to heterogeneous settings, shown by comparison and

analysis of data collected from both schools. The companion research model helped to corroborate evidence collected from the study. The Stateline researcher was an English content expert and lent her voice to the study in terms of best practice for English. The Foothills researcher lent an objective voice to the study as someone who was outside the department.

Setting of the study

The school and district. As stated in the introduction, the setting of this part of the study was a rural high school in the upstate of South Carolina. The county had seven school districts. Foothills school district was the county's largest geographic district but had the smallest population. The average family income in Foothills was just below $40,000. Table 2 gives a numerical description of the student body of Foothills.

Table 2

Foothills High School Ethnic Group Breakdown

Ethnic Group	Number
American Indian/Alaska Native	1
Asian	5
Black/African-America	100
Hispanic/Latino	68
Identifies with more than one race/ethnic group	32
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	1
White/non-Hispanic	563
Total	770

Foothills High School had 770 students in Grades 9-12. The gender breakdown was 49% female and 51% male. The free or reduced lunch percentage was 52%. As seen in Table 2, the school's students were overwhelmingly Caucasian. Just over 73% of the student body identified in this demographic. African-Americans, Hispanics, and other ethnic groups made up the remaining 27% of the student body.

The school operated on a seven period per day schedule. The district was considered a single attendance district, with one primary school (Grades PK3-2), one elementary school (Grades 3-5), one middle school (Grades 6-8), and one high school (Grades 9-12). The district also partnered with two other neighboring districts to serve students in the career education pathway in a vocational and technology education center. There was a second partnership with all seven districts to serve the gifted population, providing a scholars' academy, which was housed at one of the five colleges in the area. In this program, students studied off-site at a local college, earned dual credit, were enrolled in AP classes, and graduated high school with the equivalent of an associate degree. A third partnership was the county's alternative school, which served students who needed a different, more disciplined setting to complete high school.

Study participants. Teacher participants involved in the study were teachers of ninth and tenth grade English students who were in all three levels of English – technical and career preparation, college preparation, and honors. There was a total of 271 students who were in classes taught by four teacher participants in the study. Three of the teacher participants were graduates of Foothills. The participants ranged in age from 27 to 47 and had differing levels of experience, from 7 years to 22 years. They had experience teaching every grade level of English and had taught varying ability levels as well. Table 3 illustrates the composition of the participant group.

Table 3

Study Participants, Years of Experience, Levels Taught, and Number of Students

Teacher	Years of Experience	Level of English	Number of Students
April	7	9 CP (and 11 CP)	76 (55)
Corrine	15	9 Honors (and 12 CP)	52 (20)
Hope	18	10 CP (and 11 CP)	88 (28)
Karrie	22	9 TP (and 12TP)	55 (60)

In this study, the teachers were identified by pseudonym. One teacher, April, had only 7 years of teaching experience but had the most experience using Kittle's (2013) method, as she began her career using this method. She did not attend Foothills but did attend a high school in a neighboring county with a similar demographic. She had been teaching at Foothills for 2 years. She taught three classes of ninth grade college preparatory English (77 students). A second teacher, Corinne, attended Foothills and grew up in the community. She had been teaching at Foothills for 15 years and served as the English department chair. She initiated the study and taught three classes of ninth grade honors English (60 students). A third teacher, Hope, had been teaching at Foothills for 18 years. She attended school at Foothills and grew up in the community. She taught at two other schools before returning to teach at Foothills. She taught four classes of tenth grade college preparatory English (96 students). The fourth teacher in the study, Karrie, grew up in the community and also attended Foothills as a student. She had 22 years of experience and taught three classes of ninth grade career and technical preparation English (54 students). The four teachers taught either an eleventh or twelfth grade section of English in addition to the classes involved in the study (combined total of 163 students). While those students were not part of the classes in the study, the teachers used Kittle's protocol in every class they taught.

Stateline High School. As noted in the introduction, the companion researcher was a teacher at another high school in North Carolina. Table 4 shows that setting's demographics.

Table 4

Stateline High School Ethnic Group Breakdown

Ethnic Group	Number
Asian	17
Black/African-America	130
Hispanic/Latino	81
Identifies with more than one race/ethnic group	35
White/non-Hispanic	1288
Total	1551

As seen in the table, the population of Stateline was more than twice that of Foothills. Its ethnic group breakdown was fairly similar, with a great majority of its students identifying as White/non-Hispanic. Although ethnic groups were somewhat similar, the poverty index of the school was the opposite of Foothills. Less than 7% of Stateline students qualified for free or reduced lunch compared to 52% of Foothills students who qualified. Further differences were shown in the community's average income where the average for Stateline's community was $92,445 (Onboard Informatics, 2018).

Action Research Design and Classroom Protocol

Because this was a companion study, in an effort to ensure validity and reliability of the study, the researchers implemented the program using the same protocol and research methods at both schools (Herr & Anderson, 2015). A protocol quick reference was provided to all teachers implementing the method, is seen in Appendix A, and is described in full detail with rationale below.

Classroom libraries. The protocol began with teachers working to establish and maintain classroom libraries for students. Worthy (1996) recognized the importance of classroom libraries in her work with elementary students; and most elementary teachers, reading teachers in particular, have extensive classroom libraries as a way to promote reading and maintain strong classroom management. Classroom libraries were not the rule at Foothills. In the summer of 2017 and into the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year, teacher participants worked very hard to build their libraries using donated books, books purchased with grant money, and books purchased with their own money. Routman (2016) suggested that independent reading worked well only when students had uncomplicated access to books and that classroom management was easily disrupted if students had to go to the library to search for books each time they finished one and needed to check out another. It should be noted that at Foothills, the library budget was frozen 10 years ago, so there was very little access to current young adult literature, which made classroom libraries paramount to the success of this project. Kittle (2013) claimed that a full library had approximately five to seven books per student. While Foothills teacher libraries were not considered full by this measure, the teachers amassed enough books to make the project viable, with three to five books per student. This reading material was supplemented by the school library when necessary as well as students' own books. Teachers worked to apply for grant money and purchase books to align with Kittle's recommendation throughout the study.

Letter to parents. When school began, teachers wrote letters to parents explaining the methods to be used in their classrooms and encouraged parents to allow students to bring novels to school to read. They also made the disclaimer, according to Kittle's (2013) recommendation, that they were not censoring reading material and that

some students may read material parents themselves did not find appropriate for their own children; however, if they heard others in the class were reading material that made their own student uncomfortable, teachers would discuss concerns with parents and work to find a solution to this problem. They also posted these letters to their websites (at Foothills, teachers used Schoology learning management system). A copy of the letter to parents is included in Appendix C. No parent complaints regarding reading materials were voiced during this project. In fact, anecdotal evidence suggested that parents were happy with their students' choices and with the fact that they were simply reading.

Survey of reading behaviors and attitudes. At the beginning of school, teachers administered a survey (Appendix D) obtained from Kittle's (2013) online teaching materials to each student to gauge their interests, attitudes about reading, and past reading behaviors. These data, along with Lexile scores (last tested for most students in eighth grade but some in ninth grade), were used to help students make appropriately leveled reading selections. Because teachers had information on reading behaviors from the reading surveys, they were able to identify which students considered themselves reluctant readers or nonreaders. Teachers made it clear that if students found the books they chose initially to be uninteresting or too hard, they could choose another book without finishing the one they started. This way, students could not use "uninteresting" as an excuse not to do assigned reading. Teachers administered the same survey again at the end of the study to determine if student reading behaviors and attitudes had changed as a result of participation in the Book Love Initiative.

Testing reading rate. At the beginning of each quarter and mid-quarter, students were tested for reading rate by having students read a book of their choice for 10 minutes and then recording the number of pages read within that 10-minute period. Figure 1 is an

illustration of Kittle's (2013) method of testing reading rate.

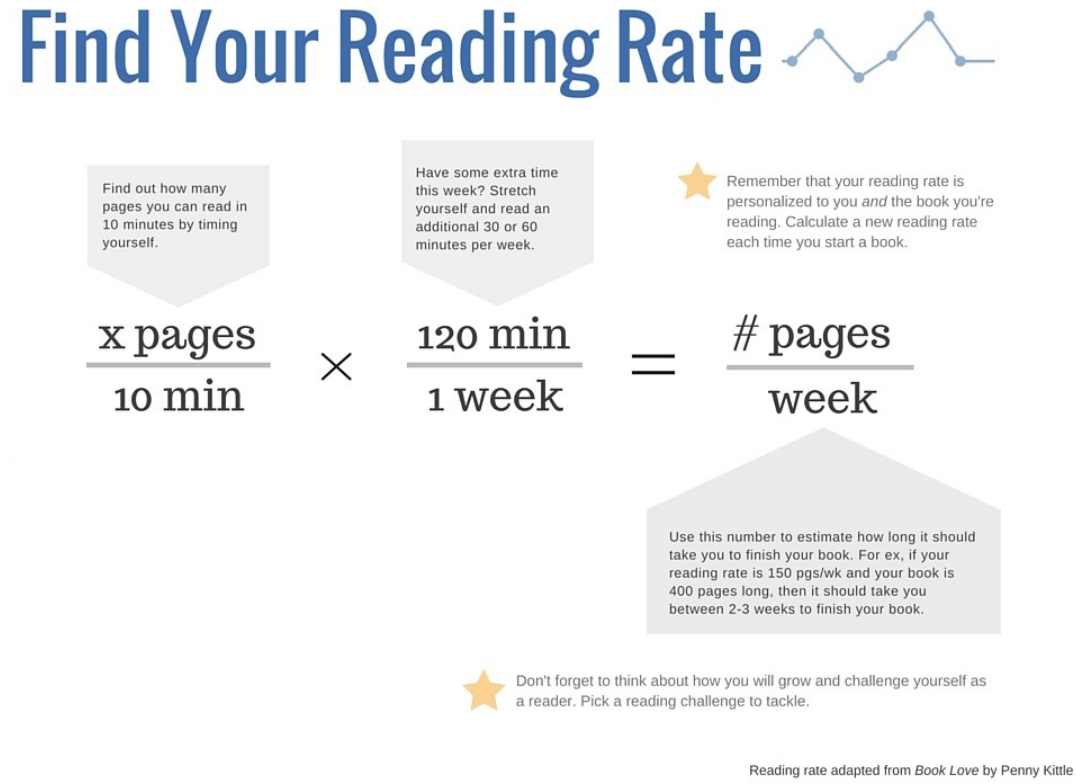

Figure 1. Kittle's (2013) Method of Testing Reading Rate.

Once rate was established, it was recorded and used to describe how students advanced in reading as well as the number of pages assigned for weekly homework. Because a linchpin of the Book Love Initiative was individualization, the number of pages expected in homework each week was meant to match the student's ability to read. All students were expected to read for 2 hours outside of class time per week. In order to hold students accountable for reading, teacher participants recorded pages read on a reading log each day (seen in Appendix E). At the end of each week, they totaled pages read, divided them by time allocated in class for reading and the 2 hours expected outside of class, and gave students a reading grade based on the percentage of the completed

reading assignment. Participants gave students who read anything at all a grade of 50, even if they did not reach 50% of their reading goal. Students who read 60% of their reading goal received a 60, and so on.

Student-teacher conferences. Each week, teachers conferenced with students about what they were reading. In these conferences, teachers questioned students about characterization, plot, and other key literary devices as well as literary analysis and simple details of books. Conferences, together with pages read, kept students accountable for reading. Using Kittle's (2013) guidelines, reading conferences fell into three categories: "monitoring the student's reading life, teaching strategic reading, and helping the student plan the complexity and challenge of reading" (p. 79). A list of sample questions teachers used to conference with students is found in Appendix F. The number of questions asked in a conference was dependent upon the category of the conference in addition to what the teacher discerned to be the student's current need for support. As further evidence of reading behaviors, teachers observed students using an observational checklist, seen in Appendix G.

Student journals. Students journaled about what they were reading to practice Kittle's (2013) principle of writing about reading. Teachers collected journals weekly and gave students a grade based on their response to journal prompts. Each journal prompt asked students questions about characterization, plot, or another literary term. Journals were also used so students could write about literary analysis. A list of sample journal prompts is seen in Appendix H.

Book talks. Teacher participants used book talks to "sell" books to students. Each week, they gave at least three of these talks. They also invited other teachers or students to give book talks about books they would recommend reading. Book talks

allowed students to be exposed to books they would not normally have planned to read. Kittle (2013) advocated book talks as critical for students to understand the vast array of literature available to them and was adamant that enthusiasm about a given book inspired her students to read, or at least try, a book. Wozniak (2010) also found book talks to be a key in encouraging boys in her study to read more. Turner (2005) promoted book talks as a means of encouraging students to read quality literature. Book talks helped students add titles to their "to read next lists" (Kittle, 2013, p. 59), which were kept in their notebooks for teachers to see student goals for books to read when they finished their current selections.

SAS. To gauge student perceptual data regarding their reading abilities, teacher participants administered the SAS, shown in Appendix I. The scale was created to measure student self-perceptions of academic abilities and was designed for adolescents to identify their self-perceptions of ability in both English and mathematics (Craven et al., 1991). Marsh (1983) determined there was a positive correlation between perceived innate ability and high self-concept and subsequently high self-concept to academic success. The findings were determined with internal consistency (reliability coefficient average of .80). The teacher participants only used questions related to English ability in the SAS. The companion researchers used the SAS to generalize or draw inferences about student attitudes regarding reading according to Creswell's (2014) recommendations regarding survey use. More specifically, the purpose of administering the SAS was to determine whether students perceived their success or failure in reading to be related to their natural ability, the amount of effort they put into the skill, or external factors beyond their control. The researchers categorized student perceptions of ability based on their responses to the SAS. The teacher participants administered the SAS at

the beginning of the Book Love Initiative and readministered the SAS again at the end of the study to determine how participation in the Book Love Initiative affected student self-perceptions. The full SAS survey is in Appendix I. Figure 2 shows a sample item for the SAS survey.

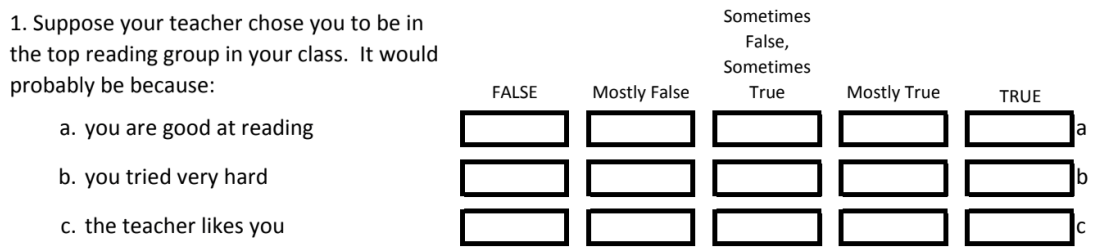

Figure 2. Sample Question from the SAS.

Going by the sample question in Figure 2, students who answered mostly true or true to choice A would indicate they had a positive perception of ability in reading. Answering mostly true or true to B would indicate they attributed success in reading to effort. Answering mostly true or true to C would indicate they attributed success in reading to external factors beyond their control. It was possible to answer mostly true or true to more than one choice. For example, a student may perceive their success due to a combination of ability and effort or a combination of effort and external factors.

Validity and reliability of the SAS. The SAS was a test developed by attribution researcher Herbert Marsh in 1983. Marsh (1983) sought to understand whether students attributed their academic abilities to internal or external factors. In measuring how students perceived their abilities, Marsh drew conclusions about self-concept relating to academic abilities. He found students who attributed their academic success to intrinsic abilities had better self-concepts as opposed to students who attributed success to outside

factors. Subsequently, those students with higher self-concepts had higher academic achievement when results of the SAS were correlated with achievement test scores. Likewise, students who attributed academic failure to lack of ability had lower self-concepts and low self-concepts correlated to low academic achievement. Marsh determined with high internal consistency (reliability coefficient average of .80) there was a positive correlation between perceived innate ability and high self-concept and subsequently academic success. As well, he found a positive correlation between perceived innate inability, low self-concept, and poor academic performance. His findings were consistent over time with different age groups (fifth grade through college) with a reliability coefficient of .70-.86 (Marsh, 1983).

Teacher interviews. At the end of the study, the researcher interviewed all four teacher participants involved in the initiative. The purpose of the interviews was to ascertain teacher perspectives on how the method impacted the classroom environment. These interviews provided qualitative perceptual data to the researcher to enrich the study and gave the teacher participants a platform for expressing how they felt about the initiative. Interview questions (Appendix J) were intended to measure perceptions in an open-ended format.

Instructional time allotment. Teachers spent 50% of class time in activities related to reading: silent reading, book talks, journaling about reading, and conferencing about reading. Twenty-five percent of class time was devoted to mentor text study, which involved reading and annotating a passage to help determine meaning. Then teachers facilitated discussions about why an author wrote the particular passage, what the passage was meant to say, and how the author used language to relate his or her ideas. Students then practiced writing using a parallel format to relate their own ideas. This

study of mentor texts gave students practice using real authors' formulae of writing. Whole class novel readings composed the remaining 25% of class time. Whole class novel readings exposed students to canonical texts, those texts believed to illustrate universal truths, in different genres and themes (Morgan & Pytash, 2014).

Caveat regarding instructional time allocation. It should be noted that teachers followed Kittle's (2013) recommendations with one caveat. Kittle advised that book talks and student journaling occur each day; however, her school operated on a modified block schedule, which meant she saw students for 80 minutes per day 3 days per week throughout the school year. Teachers at Foothills had 53-minute classes 5 days per week throughout the school year; therefore, the time for book talks and journaling was scheduled three times per week, the same amount of time on allotted activities as Kittle. Teachers at Stateline, on the other hand, were on a block schedule meeting 90 minutes per day 5 days per week for one semester, so book talks and journaling occurred each day.

Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

Several types of data collection related to the research questions served to support findings of the study. They are outlined in Table 5.

Table 5

Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

Research Question	Tools / Instruments	Data Collected	Method(s) of Analysis
1. In what ways are student attitudes about reading impacted because of participation in the Book Love Initiative?	Kittle's (2013) Reading Survey pre and postimplementation: Likert items 1, 2, 4, & 5; open-ended items 6 & 7.	Students preferences and attitudes about reading and reading practices	Wilcoxon signed-rank test to determine median difference of Likert items Creswell's (2014) approach to theme coding of open-ended items
	SAS pre and postimplementation (all items)	Student perceptual data regarding reading abilities	ANOVA to determine central tendency
	Teacher conferences with students	Qualitative themes to describe attitudes toward reading success and failures	Creswell's (2014) approach to theme coding
2. When utilized in secondary English classrooms, how can the Book Love Initiative framework's impact on reading volume be described?	Student reading logs	Quantitative Data regarding the number of pages and the number of books read in a given time period; Data regarding pages read outside of class	Mean and standard deviation Paired samples *t* test
	Kittle's (2013) Reading Survey pre and postimplementation: open-ended items 2 & 3.	Quantitative Data regarding the number of books read previously and the number of books read during Initiative	
3. When utilized in secondary English classrooms, how can the Book Love Initiative framework's impact on reading stamina behaviors be described?	Observational checklists used by the teacher	Qualitative Closed-Ended Data regarding student reading behaviors related to stamina	Creswell's (2014) approach to theme coding
4. How has the Book Love Initiative affected the classroom environment?	Researcher interviews with teachers	Qualitative themes in the narrative voice of the main participants	Creswell's (2014) approach to theme coding

As shown in Table 5, the researcher examined each question through collection

and analysis of different types of data. Likewise, there were several different methods employed to analyze the data. In order to determine how to analyze data, the researcher investigated possible approaches using Creswell's (2014) guide, the Laerd Statistics *Statistical Test Selector* (Lund Research, Ltd., 2013c), and Urdan's (2017) guidelines on statistics.

Methodology instrumentation aligned with constructs. The researcher used multiple instruments related to the constructs within each research question: attitude, (book) volume, and reading stamina as well as overall classroom environment and instruction. Table 6 shows how research constructs related to instrumentation.

Table 6

Research Constructs and Instrumentation Tools Alignment

Research Construct	Reading Survey (Pre & Post)	SAS (Pre & Post)	Student Reading Logs	Student-teacher Conferences Notes	Teachers' Observational Checklist	Teacher Interviews
Attitude	X	X		X		
Volume	X		X			
Stamina					X	
Classroom environment						X

As the table shows, the researcher measured the constructs of attitude toward reading, reading volume, reading stamina, and the overall classroom environment, with the following details offered about the studied constructs and rationale for methods.

Studying student attitudes about reading. In order to investigate student attitudes about reading, the researcher used a mixed-methods approach that involved collecting and analyzing data from four closed-ended (quantitative) and two open-ended (qualitative) items from Kittle's (2013) reading survey. The Kittle survey data served as

a tool for participants to identify behaviors to assist them in communicating and conferencing with students in their classrooms as well as a way for the researcher to determine changes in reading behaviors in her study. The researcher also used the SAS to measure student perceptions of ability (a quantitative measure), which Craven et al. (1991) determined were linked to attitudes and self-concept. Finally, the researcher used teacher-student conferencing data as qualitative data to support the findings from the other data instruments.

Reading survey. The Kittle (2013) survey helped the researcher determine reading behaviors at the beginning of the study and provided information on how those behaviors had changed at the end of the study. The researcher analyzed closed-ended questions on the reading surveys using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test to determine the median difference of Likert-style items (Lund Research Ltd., 2013c). The Wilcoxon test was appropriate for this analysis because it was designed to be used with a single sample of study participants who were tested at two points, beginning and end, to determine (a) if there were changes in the sample and (b) whether those changes were statistically significant.

Two items on Kittle's (2013) survey asked students to respond in an open-ended fashion. Open-ended Item 6 asked students to complete the thought "I am a reader who…." Open-ended Item 7 asked students, "How have you grown as a reader?" The researcher analyzed responses to these items separately and then coded the responses according to common themes she identified through the analysis process. She based her theme coding on Creswell's (2014) approach, which recommended using general topics to describe themes represented in qualitative data collection and coding survey items with those theme labels. According to Creswell, themes may be determined by the verbiage in

the item itself or may surface organically in responses. The researcher found both of these types of themes to be the case in theme coding. The researcher then used narrative to explain both the item constructs and their related theme labels and displayed themes in a tabular format. This process applied meaning to the research data and allowed the researcher to construct findings based on coded themes (Creswell, 2014).

SAS. Participants also administered the SAS pre and poststudy. Data from the SAS, although descriptive in nature, was analyzed using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) by assigning each description a number and then testing each category separately. The researcher analyzed the SAS to determine central tendency for each of the six categories – reading success *and* failure as attributed to ability, effort, or external factors (Craven et al., 1991; Lund Research Ltd., 2013a). The collected data and analyzed data were displayed in tables listing percentages of student responses, the *Z* score, and the statistical significance (two-tailed). The researcher used a one-way ANOVA test for both constructs, reading success and reading failure, to determine if noted changes were statistically significant (Lund Research Ltd., 2013a).

Conference data. Creswell (2014), in his descriptions of mixed-methods research, advised using qualitative data to validate quantitative data in answering a question, as this process provides richer and more complete data with which to make determinations. While the researcher equated the importance of quantitative and qualitative data in this study (a QUAN + QUAL study) as a whole, to study the concept of attitudes, the researcher relied on conference data as supporting information to corroborate student attitudinal changes. The researcher used compelling comments gleaned from teacher-student conferences to illustrate student perceptions of how their attitudes toward reading had changed.

Studying reading volume. To study student reading volume, the researcher used Kittle's (2013) reading survey open-ended Item 3 and the weekly reading record, which served to provide three different types of data. The open-ended item asked students to record the number of books they had read in the 2016-2017 school year, which the researcher compared to the number of books read in 2017-2018, gathered from the weekly reading record. She compared the number to understand changes in reading volume from the previous to the current year. In addition, the researcher used the weekly reading record to compare pages read. She used the number of pages read the first full week of school and the first week of May and compared those two numbers to understand growth in capacity. Finally, the researcher used those same weeks from the weekly reading record and compared the percentage of goals reached at the beginning of the study and at the end to understand how student behaviors in relation to reading volume had changed.

Kittle (2013) reading survey Item 3. Open-ended Item 3 on the reading survey actually provided quantitative data for the researcher, as they asked students to record the number of books they had read in the 2016-2017 school year. The researcher used these data and compared them with the number of books students read in the 2017-2018 school year, recorded on the weekly reading record. The researcher compared the number of books read in 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 using a paired samples *t* test to determine if the mean difference was significantly significant from zero (Lund Research, Ltd, 2013b), with the number of books considered as a continuous variable with the same participants at two time points in the study.

Weekly reading record. The weekly reading record (Appendix E) gave a count of pages read each week, was the tool students used to record the number of pages they

read, and also allowed teachers to gather data for homework grades based on the amount of reading toward reading goals. The researcher analyzed weekly reading records using measures of central tendency (the mean) and measures of spread (standard deviation) with a paired samples *t* test (Lund Research Ltd., 2013b). The paired samples *t* test was used to determine whether the mean difference between paired observations was statistically significant from zero (Lund Research, Ltd., 2013b). The reading records were considered a continuous variable, and the participants tested were the same individuals tested at two different time points in the study; therefore, the sample was paired, and the continuous variable was tested for statistical significance. The researcher used this same process to compare all data related to volume.

Studying reading stamina by studying behaviors. Reading researchers defined reading stamina as silent reading combined with the skills of comprehension, accuracy and automaticity, fluency, and expanded vocabulary to increase complexity over time (Boushey & Moser, 2017; Hiebert, 2014; Rasinski, 2000). There was no instrument to measure stamina, and most instruments to measure the components of stamina were designed for elementary age students; however, increased stamina could be exhibited by behaviors, which teacher participants measured with behavioral observation checklists (Appendix G).

Observational checklist data. Although it was a checklist of closed-ended data points because reading behavior data from teacher observational checklists were descriptive, the researcher analyzed them in a manner consistent with qualitative analysis. The researcher used Creswell's (2014) approach to theme coding to categorize the data and then generalized conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the program by using descriptors on the checklist to describe whether student reading behaviors indicated their

reading stamina had improved. Certain logged behaviors included fidgeting, frequently leaving seats, holding the book too close or too far, sleeping, and yawning; all of which indicated low stamina. Other behaviors included tracking words with pencil or finger and mouthing words, which indicated high stamina. By categorizing low stamina themes and high stamina themes and comparing these two types of behaviors pre and poststudy, the researcher was able to measure how behaviors had changed from the beginning to the end of the study.

Studying the classroom environment. To understand changes in the classroom environment produced by the initiative, the researcher relied on interviews with participants where she asked questions regarding their perceptions of student stamina and the classroom environment created as a result of utilizing the method. Kittle's (2013) book was entitled *Book Love: Developing Depth, Stamina, and Passion in Adolescent Readers*; and as depth, stamina, and passion are multifaceted, qualitative terms, the interview questions entailed building a qualitative narrative and database for the method and how it affected both teaching pedagogy as well as classroom environment.

Researcher interviews with participants. As Creswell (2014) advised, using a mixed methodology allowed the researcher to see the study from different points of view, and knowing how the teachers felt about the Book Love Initiative was important in drawing conclusions about whether the initiative was successful. The pragmatic nature of the study indicated that if teachers did not feel the Book Love Initiative was a positive, worthwhile change in pedagogy, they would not continue it, even if it did play a role in increased depth, stamina, and passion in reading behaviors.

The researcher interviewed participants in an effort to discover how the Book Love Initiative impacted participant classroom environments. The researcher used

interview questions (Appendix J) to gain a picture of how participants were able to implement the program; their perceptions of student participation; and in general, whether or not they considered the initiative to be a positive or negative change in pedagogy. Like other qualitative data, the researcher analyzed these data, identified common themes, and displayed themes in tabular format. Themes assisted the researcher in drawing conclusions about the data according to Creswell's (2014) recommendations and in making recommendations for practice, policy, and research.

Synthesis of All Data for Analysis

Analysis at Foothills. The researcher gathered quantitative and qualitative data concurrently as both types of data were significant to determine success of the method. Concurrent collection of data was indicative of a transformative mixed method QUAN + QUAL study, which was originally established by Plano Clark (2005). The researcher used the following statistical tests to measure quantitative data: the Wilcoxon signed-rank test to measure Likert-style data, the ANOVA to measure perceptual data, and paired samples *t* tests to measure numerical data. When collecting qualitative data, she coded it to establish themes and then used those themes to indicate success of the initiative and to assist in making generalizable recommendations based on the findings. Further, based on the school's demographic information, results of the study indicated the method's appropriate use in schools with similar settings.

Analysis of companion findings. The companion nature of the study required both researchers to collect and analyze data at their individual sites and then bring those data together to determine if there were more global recommendations to be made as a result of the findings of both studies. The method of analysis, comparison, and interpretation is seen in Figure 3. Figure 3 illustrates how the data analysis and

interpretation occurred for both sites together.

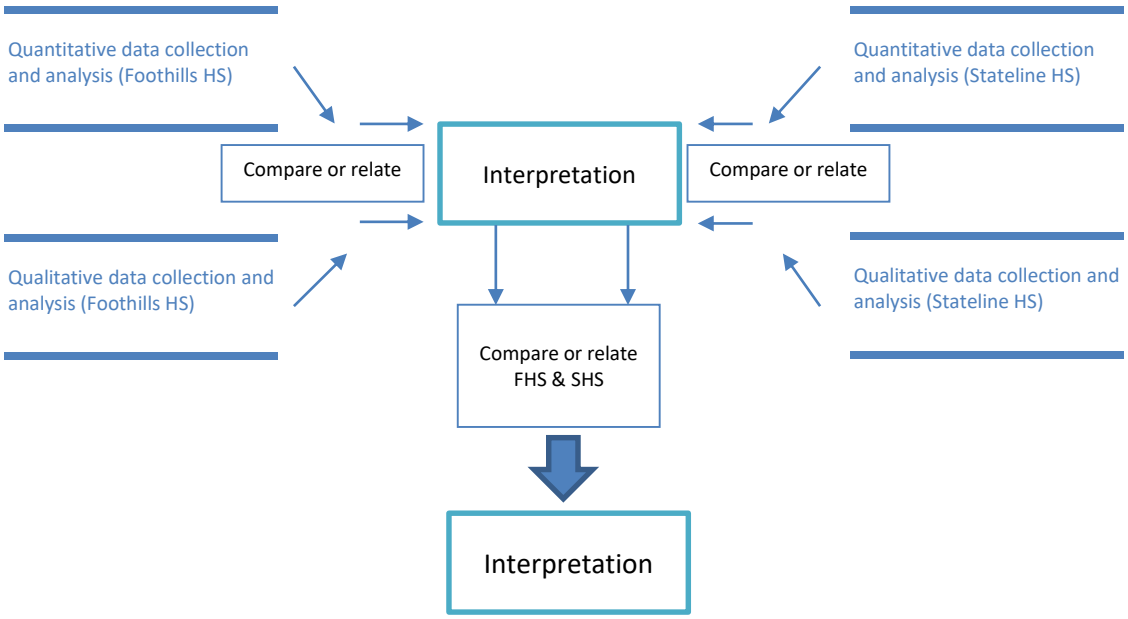

Figure 3. Methods of Data Analysis for Both Companion Sites.

Figure 3 illustrates how the researchers collected their own respective data, analyzed them separately to reach conclusions about the success of the initiative at their respective sites, and then compared individual quantitative data and qualitative themes uncovered at both sites to interpret combined results. These results are displayed graphically in Chapter 5. Findings at both sites were used to make more generalized recommendations about using the initiative as well as recommendations about further study.

Ethical Considerations

All students involved in the study were treated identically in the protocol. Teacher participants administered prestudy surveys and the SAS to every student in the study at the onset and at the end of the initiative. They also recorded observational data, reading rate, pages read, and student conferencing data as part of the initiative. It should

be noted that the number of students changed in the course of the study due to student withdrawals and transfers; but because the instrumentation was designed to compare means, all data from students who responded to the instruments prestudy, during the study, and poststudy were included. All data were provided to the researcher anonymously so that no student names were used as part of the research. Teacher participants were identified by first name pseudonyms in order to remain anonymous. As noted in the introduction to the study, the researcher had stated limitations and delimitations to the study that also considered ethical considerations (Creswell, 2014). The researcher had existing relationships with the teachers involved in the study. Because it was an action research project, a convenience sample of the classes of the teachers who agreed to participate in the study comprised the study sample. The researcher, as an interested party in the success of the project, made every effort to remain objective and not insert her own bias in the study (Herr & Anderson, 2015).

Role of the Researcher

A timeline to illustrate the role of the researcher in the study is seen in Figure 4.

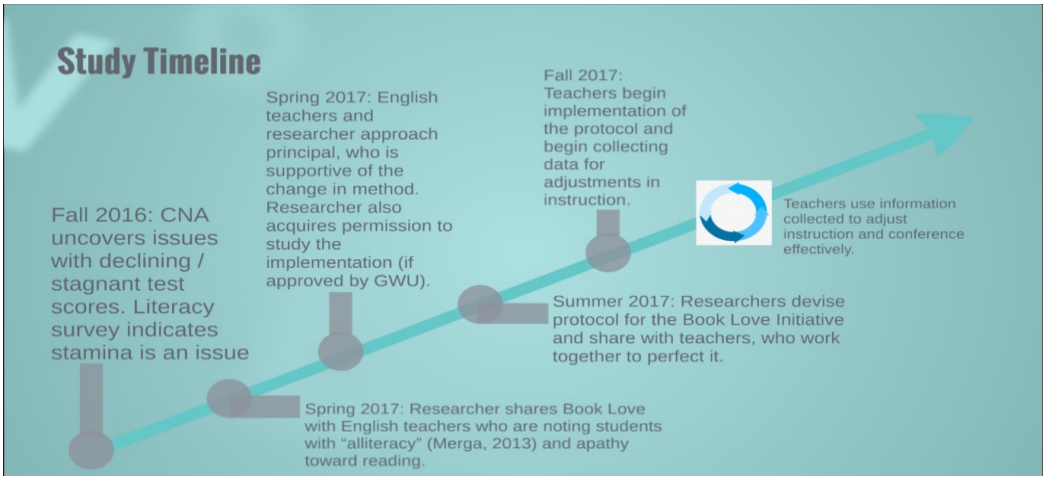

Figure 4. Timeline of the Study: Ideation to Implementation.

To be clear, the researcher was an objective observer of the study but participated in creating the study and its parameters. While she was involved in planning the protocol and assisting teachers with setting up the study, she participated in the study only by observing classes, sorting and analyzing the data provided to her by teacher participants, and interviewing teachers regarding perceptual data. She provided observational checklists and the SAS, which were not part of Kittle's (2013) published protocol, to teachers. She transcribed interviews with teachers, made field notes relevant to the research, and coded all data gathered to determine trends and themes in order to make generalizable recommendations as a result of the study. As part of the companion study, both researchers synthesized data from their respective sites to make additional generalizable recommendations.

Summary

In summary, the study employed a mixed methodology of data collection and research in an action research format corroborated by a companion study at another disparate site. The research occurred at Foothills high school, an upstate South Carolina school with high poverty. The researcher was not a participant in the study but served as a teacher leader with a working relationship with participants. The four teacher participants in the study had 271 total students observed and surveyed regarding reading volume, reading stamina behaviors, and reading attitudes. The researcher interviewed teachers regarding the effects of the Book Love Initiative on their classroom environment. Teachers followed a specific protocol and collected data based on the established protocol. The researcher analyzed data and served as a resource regarding the methodology and protocol. Data collection and analysis took place in the spring of 2018.

Chapter 4: Results

Restatement of the Problem

Widely accepted practice in secondary school English classes focuses all students on reading the same classic literature from the established literary canon. Based on pedagogy developed mainly in Prussian schools in the mid to late 19th century, the expense of books necessitated standardization of reading material (Wagner & Dintersmith, 2015). As the availability of books has increased and the price of books has decreased, more literature is readily available than ever before. While some argue over the value of this accessible reading, the fact is that literature is very widely published in many different formats, which increases the need for critical examination of sources and authors (Wagner& Dintersmith, 2015). Kittle (2013) argued that allowing students to read what they wanted would lead students to build capacity; specifically, the capacity needed to read more complex, and some would argue *better*, books – those that have lasting impact and teach universal truths. Wagner and Dintersmith (2015) advocated for 21st century skills emphasizing teaching students to read a variety of texts and to judge the value and validity of these texts, critical skills which are not necessarily included in the traditional teaching model. To state the problem succinctly, Wagner and Dintersmith (2015) wrote, "Today, when kids have ready access to an enormous range of written material, we should encourage them to become great readers by devouring everything they can that's aligned with their passion – whether it's nature, sports, or Harry Potter" (p. 117).

Kittle, Gallagher (2009), Hiebert (2014), and Rasinski (2014) argued that this practice of allowing students to read what they liked would lead to better readers who could read what was necessary and eventually material that is considered "great." This

idea is particularly true in secondary school, as the amount of assigned reading decreases, and this assigned reading is typically literature considered to be difficult for some students and irrelevant to others (Broz, 2011; Busteed, 2013). Current practice also tends to decrease student interest in reading, leading to less reading and subsequently to poor readers who are disengaged from school (Hiebert, 2014; Wagner & Dintersmith, 2015).

In an effort to resolve problems regarding reading identified by teachers at Foothills High School, a researcher led a group of participants (teachers) in an action research study. Entitled the Book Love Initiative, the study was derived from the work of Kittle (2013). Situated in a rural, high poverty high school, teacher participants followed a protocol (Appendix A) that allowed students to choose their own reading material, a departure from the traditional pedagogy. Teacher participants granted their students the freedom of choice, as Kittle advocated in her work, and the researcher studied student perceptions and attitudes regarding reading as well as their reading behaviors in an effort to determine the success of the program. The researcher analyzed the collected quantitative and qualitative data in a mixed methods action research study to measure the effectiveness of the initiative on student attitudes and reading volume and stamina. In addition, the researcher interviewed teacher participants regarding the perceived impact of the program on student reading behaviors and classroom environment.

To gauge further implications of the initiative, a second researcher studied a parallel program in her high school, Stateline High School, a suburban low poverty high school with a similar ethnic demography. The researchers at both schools compiled and analyzed their own data and then made conclusions and recommendations for practice, policy, and further research based on their combined findings. Appendix B is an outline of the companion research study model, and Chapter 3 fully described the tools both

researchers used for gathering data. The combined findings and recommendations are explored in Chapter 5.

Overview of the Chapter

Chapter 4 summarizes the results of the study at Foothills and provides a restatement of the problem, presents both quantitative and qualitative data, and synopsizes the general results from the Foothills study. The presentation of results provides details of each instrument used in data collection as well as a summary of findings and is organized by research question. The companion nature of the study is further described in Chapter 5 where a summary of data collected in both the Foothills and Stateline studies is presented. A synthesis of findings from both studies and recommendations for practice, policy, and research are included.

Review of the Research Questions

In studying the problem, the researcher sought to answer the guiding question, "What happens in a secondary English classroom when a teacher creates and utilizes a balanced approach of appropriately leveled choice reading, text study, and novel study?" In order to guide data collection to answer the question, the researcher sought to answer the following questions.

1. In what ways are student attitudes about reading impacted because of participation in the Book Love Initiative?
2. When utilized in secondary English classrooms, how can the Book Love Initiative framework's impact on reading volume be described?
3. When utilized in secondary English classrooms, how can the Book Love Initiative framework's impact on reading stamina behaviors be described?
4. How has the Book Love Initiative affected the classroom environment?

The researcher used a mixed methods (QUAN + QUAL) action research approach to study the problem.

Impact on Student Reading Attitudes

The Book Love Initiative's impact on reading attitudes was examined in the first research question: In what ways are student attitudes about reading impacted because of participation in the Book Love Initiative*?* The researcher used both closed-ended items (1, 2, 4, and 5) and open-ended items (6 and 7) from Kittle's reading survey (Appendix D), the SAS (Appendix I), and student-teacher conference data to answer this question.

Kittle (2013) reading survey closed-ended items. It should be noted that teacher participants used Kittle's survey in an effort to determine student reading attitudes and habits in order to plan student conferences, to create journaling assignments, and to determine types of books to collect for their libraries. Because this survey was part of the established protocol, rather than devise a new survey, the researchers chose to utilize the items on the survey that informed them about student prior reading behaviors, their reading behaviors while in school, and their self-perceptions of reading ability. The instrument was a Likert-style survey using a scale of 1 (*never*) to 10 (*always*) to rate behaviors indicating attitudes. Surveys also included open-ended questions, which were both quantitative (number of books read) and qualitative (explained in the section on qualitative data).

Likert-style items. The researcher used descriptive statistics to report the mean and mode of scores, the minimum and maximum scores, and the frequency distribution of scores. She then used the Wilcoxon signed-rank test to measure the Likert-style items (Lund Research, 2013c). The researcher used only Items 1, 2, 4, and 5 from Kittle's (2013) survey to measure student attitudes toward reading before and after application of

the protocol. Item 3, "I finish the books I start," was dropped from the analysis because Item 3 did not measure attitudes specifically. The survey items used by the researcher were

1. I read in my free time.
2. I enjoy reading.
4. I "fake read" in school.
5. Reading is hard for me.

On the Likert scale, 1 corresponded to *never*, 6 corresponded to *often*, and 10 corresponded to *always*. There were 271 total students in participating teacher classes at the beginning of the study. There were 253 respondents to the survey at the beginning of the study (18 were absent the day the SAS and reading survey were administered) and 228 respondents at the end of the study, as some of the original respondents had either transferred to other teachers within the building, transferred to other schools, were suspended, or were simply absent from school on the day participants administered the poststudy survey. Because the researcher was comparing group means and not individual student changes or growth, the researcher included all available data in collection and analysis; therefore, there were students who responded to instruments presurvey but did not respond to those instruments postsurvey and whose data were included in collection and analysis. To account for these discrepancies, participation was reported by percentages rather than by numbers.

Description of the data pre and poststudy. Table 7 describes the statistics of the data collected in both the pre and poststudy surveys.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics for Reading Survey Items Pre and Poststudy

Item	Prestudy Mean	Poststudy Mean	Prestudy Mode	Poststudy Mode
1. I read in my spare time	3.05	4.56	1	5
2. I enjoy reading	5.0	6.43	6	6
3. I fake read at school	3.28	2.93	1	1
4. Reading is difficult for me	2.92	2.37	1	1

On all the items, pre and poststudy, the minimum score was 1 and the maximum score was 10. The mean for Item 1 (I read in my spare time) was 3.05 prestudy and 4.56 poststudy. For Item 2 (I enjoy reading), the prestudy mean was 5.0 and the poststudy mean increased to 6.43. For Item 4 (I fake read in school), the prestudy mean was 3.28 and the poststudy mean decreased to 2.93. For Item 5 (Reading is difficult for me), the prestudy mean was 2.92, and this mean decreased to 2.37 poststudy. The researcher also determined the frequency distribution for survey items, seen in Table 8 and grouped by response. Because the sample numbers varied from prestudy to poststudy, the researcher reported the frequencies by percentages to gain a more accurate picture of the program's impact on reading attitudes and behaviors.

Table 8

Frequency Distribution for Pre and Poststudy Likert Items

Item	I read in my free time		I enjoy reading		I fake read in school		Reading is difficult for me	
Response	Pre1	Post1	Pre2	Post2	Pre4	Post4	Pre5	Post5
Rarely (Responded with 1-3)	61.3%	31.1%	30.3%	12.6%	57.6%	59.8%	66.8%	68.7%
Sometimes (Responded with 4-6)	27.7%	37.0%	40.6%	35.1%	27.3%	19.9%	19.5%	11.9%
Frequently (Responded with 7-10)	5.9%	16.9%	23.8%	37.2%	9.5%	5.1%	8.5%	4.1%

To fully understand the frequency distributions, the researcher grouped responses 1-3, 4-6, and 7-10 together to describe student answers to the survey items and how they had changed from prestudy to poststudy. Grouped in this way, Items 1-3 signified *rarely,* Items 4-6 signified *sometimes,* and Items 7-10 signified *frequently*. For Item 1, 61.3% of students said they rarely read in their free time; 27.7% said they sometimes read; and only 5.9% of students indicated they frequently read in their free time. Poststudy, 20.9% of students said they rarely read in their free time, 37% said they sometimes read, and 16.9% indicated frequently reading in their free time. For Item 2, student responses indicated that 30.3% of students rarely enjoyed reading; 40.6% said they sometimes enjoyed it; and 24% reported frequently enjoying reading. Poststudy, 12.6% of students indicated they rarely enjoyed reading; 35.1% reported sometimes enjoying it; and 37.2% reported frequently enjoying reading. In reporting fake reading behaviors in Item 4, prestudy, 51.6% of students reported they rarely fake read; 27.3% said they sometimes

fake read; and 9.5% indicated frequent fake reading. Poststudy, 59.8% of students reported rarely fake reading; 19.9% said they sometimes fake read; and 5.1% indicated they frequently fake read. Finally, prestudy responses to Item 5 indicated that 66.8% of students felt reading was rarely difficult for them; 19.5% reported feeling reading was sometimes difficult; and 8.55% said reading was frequently difficult. Poststudy, 68.7% of students reported that reading was rarely difficult for them; 11.9% said reading was sometimes difficult; and 4.1% said it was frequently difficult.

The researcher used the Wilcoxon signed-rank test to analyze the differences pre and poststudy because the test was recommended for performing a within-group comparison on a sample with ordinal data (1, 2, 3) representing nonnumeric values (*never, often, always*) before and after a treatment (the Kittle [2013] protocol). The test ranked the comparisons and tested "the null hypothesis that the median of the differences between the posttest and the pretest equals zero" (Grande, 2017, 3:27). This test was developed to identify differences between groups within the same sample. The results of the Wilcoxon signed-rank test are seen in Table 9.

Table 9

Wilcoxon Signed Rank for Kittle's (2013) Reading Survey (pre/post)

Item	I read in my free time Post1 – Pre1	I enjoy reading Post2 – Pre2	I fake read in school Post4 – Pre4	Reading is difficult for me Post5 – Pre5
Z	-8.726	-8.371	-1.910	-3.568
Asymp. Sig* (2-tailed)	.000*	.000*	.056	.000*

Table 9 shows the ranked results of the analysis, which include the deviation from the mean of each survey item (*z* score) pre and poststudy and the statistical significance

of the deviation. As shown in the table, from prestudy to poststudy, the survey responses to Item 1 had a negative deviation from the mean of 8.726, which was a statistically significant change (.000) at a .05 level of significance. Survey responses to Item 2 had a negative deviation from the mean of 8.371, which was also a statistically significant change (.000), also at a .05 level of significance. Survey responses to Item 4 had a negative deviation of only 1.910, which was not a statistically significant change (.056) at a .05 level of significance. Survey responses to Item 5 had a negative deviation from the mean of 3.568, a statistically significant change (.000) at a level of .05 significance.

SAS. To further investigate the question about attitudinal changes, the researcher used the SAS to measure student perceptions of abilities, which are tied to self-concept and subsequently attitudes (Craven et al., 1991). The scale (Appendix I), developed by Marsh (1983), was designed to measure student perceptions of their reading abilities based on supporting data and the premise that when students perceived themselves to have high abilities, this perception translated into high self-concept, which research found to be positively correlated with high achievement (Craven et al., 1991). Marsh found that students who perceived their reading success was related to high ability and, even to some degree, increased effort, while *at the same time* perceiving their failure was *not* due to low ability, had higher achievement than those students who perceived their success in reading as due to external factors or who perceived their failure was due to low ability (not low effort). Therefore, the researcher analyzed not only student perceptions of why they succeeded but also student perceptions of why they failed.

Teacher participants administered the survey to their students at the beginning of the study and again at the end of the study. On the survey, students answered questions regarding their perceived reasons for success and failure in reading tasks. Students

answered items with responses that ranged from false, mostly false, sometimes false, sometimes true, mostly true, and true. In choosing answers to items, it was possible for students to express more than one preference. For example, faced with a given situation, students could possibly answer true to more than one choice. The key to the survey, shown in Figure 5, illustrates how answers as a group informed the researcher about student perceptions. Figure 5 shows the key to categorizing SAS responses.

SAS Key

Reading Success **Ability**
(The student believes his success in reading is due to his ability)
- 1a. You are good at reading
- 5b. You always do well at reading
- 7b. You are a good reader
- 8c. Your reading is good
- 10a. You are good at reading
- 11c. You always do well on reading tests.

Reading Success **Effort**
(The student believes his success in reading is due to his effort)
- 1b. You work hard at reading
- 5a. You really work hard at reading
- 7c. You have been working hard at your reading all year
- 8a. You earned it by working hard
- 10c. You made a special effort to read it
- 11b. You tried very hard

Reading Success **External**
(The student is not confident of ability/perceives factors external to control are determinant of success/does not know source of success.)
- 1c. The teacher made a mistake
- 5c. They are only being nice
- 7a. No one else wanted to do it
- 8b. You were lucky
- 10b. The story was an easy one
- 11a. You were lucky

Reading Failure **Ability**
(The student believes his lack of success in reading is due to his lack of ability)
- 2b. You are a poor reader
- 3a. You are bad at reading aloud
- 4c. Your reading is poor
- 6c. You always do badly at reading
- 9a. Your reading is not good enough
- 12b. You are a poor reader

Reading Failure **Effort**
(The student believes his lack of success in reading is due to his lack of effort)
- 2c. You should have read it more carefully
- 3c. You were careless about reading the story
- 4b. You were day dreaming
- 6a. You are lazy in reading
- 9b. You decided to do other things instead of getting the poem ready
- 12a. You need to try harder at reading

Reading Failure **External**
(The student is not aware of lack of ability/perceives factors external to control are reason for failure/does not know source of failure.)
- 2a. The story was too hard for everyone
- 3b. You had to read the hardest part of the story
- 4a. The teacher picks hard stories
- 6b. The teacher doesn't like you
- 9c. The teacher forgot to ask you
- 12c. The story is boring

Figure 5. SAS Key.

Based on the SAS key, the researcher used student responses to place them in perceptual categories of both success and failure. For the purpose of data analysis, the researcher assigned responses that placed students in two or more categories in the *external* category, because responding with more than one preference indicated students were not aware of the source of their success or failure. There were other students who answered in the *sometimes* range for every answer; those students were also placed in the *external* category. Survey results regarding reading success are represented in Table 10.

Table 10

Student Perceived Reasons for Reading Success

Reason	Prestudy	Poststudy
Presence of Ability	23.9% (*n*=65)	43.4% (*n*=99)
Presence of Effort	57.6% (*n*=156)	38.6% (*n*=88)
External Factors / Do not know	18.5% (*n*=50)	18% (*n*=41)
Total	100% (*n*=271)	100% (*n*=228)

Based on the results shown in Table 10, 23.9% of students perceived their success in reading was related to ability at the beginning of the study, and 43.4% of students perceived their success was due to ability at the end of the study. When examining the sample, 57.6% of students perceived their ability was due to effort at the beginning of the study, with 38.6% having that perception at the end of the study. At the beginning of the study, 18.5% of students perceived their reading success as due to external factors (which included not understanding the origin of reading success), and 17.98% perceived their reading success due to external factors at the end of the study. The difference in the number of respondents from beginning to end was due to schedule changes; students transferring to other schools, dropping out, being absent from class on the day the poststudy survey was administered; or an incomplete or blank survey. The researcher found that 81.5% of students owed their success to reading ability or effort at the beginning of the study, and 82.0% of students believed their success was due to reading ability or effort at the end of the study. Marsh (1983) also concluded student perceptions of failure were just as important as success when tied to self-concept.

Just as the SAS provided data on perceptions of reading success, it also helped measure perceptions of reading failure. Table 11 shows the number of students pre and poststudy who indicated perceptions of reading failure.

Table 11

Student Perceived Reasons for Reading Failure

Reason	Prestudy	Poststudy
Lack of Ability	21.1% (*n*=57)	6.6% (*n*=15)
Lack of Effort	53.1% (*n*=144)	69.3% (*n*=158)
External Factors / Do not know	25.8% (*n*=70)	24.1% (*n*=55)
Total	100% (*n*=271)	100% (*n*=228)

As shown in Table 11, 21.1% of students perceived the reason for their failure in reading was due to lack of ability; 53.1% perceived their failure was due to lack of effort; and 25.8% perceived their failure was due to external factors or they did not understand the reason for failure. By contrast, at the end of the study, 6.5% of students perceived their failure was due to lack of ability; 69.2% perceived failure was due to lack of effort; and 24.1% perceived failure was due to external factors or they did not understand the reason for their failure.

The researcher used the ANOVA test to analyze the SAS data and to determine whether the changes in groups were significant. The ANOVA was an appropriate test to use in this case because even though the comparison was a between-groups comparison of two points over time, the test involved three variables, precluding the use of a paired samples *t* test. The researcher used a second ANOVA when testing for perceptions of failure. Table 12 shows the results of the ANOVA test on the SAS.

Table 12

ANOVA for SAS Success and Failure Results

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Success					
Between Groups	9.095	2	4.548	8.773	.000*
Within Groups	116.637	225	.518		
Total	125.732	227			
Failure					
Between Groups	8.591	2	4.295	15.188	.000*
Within Groups	63.633	225	.283		
Total	72.224	227			

The results of the ANOVA indicated a statistically significant change (.000) in perceptions of success and perceptions of failure based on the independent variable of the protocol at a 95% confidence level with the mean difference based on a statistical significance below .05. Results revealed the protocol had a positive impact on both student perceptions of success and failure. While there was an increase in the number of students who perceived their abilities were the reason for their success, most notably there was a significant *decrease* in the percentage of students who perceived their failure was due to *lack* of ability (Marsh, 1983).

Qualitative data analysis. In addition to the quantitative data used to answer Research Question 1 regarding student attitudes about reading, the researcher used qualitative data from Kittle's (2013) reading survey to further investigate the concept of attitude toward reading and supporting teacher-student conference data to substantiate results. Survey data were organized into themes and conference data were used in a supportive manner to verify themes and support general findings.

Kittle (2013) reading survey open-ended items. There were two open-ended items that produced qualitative data for the researcher to use to determine whether the

protocol impacted reading behaviors. These two items called for students to complete the thought, "I am a reader who…" and then to answer, "How have you grown as a reader over the last year?" In answering the item about reading growth, many students saw the question as a yes/no question, which affected the number of valid answers to this item.

I am a reader who…. There were 264 students who answered the open-ended question, "I am a reader who…" on Kittle's (2013) prestudy reading survey. There were 207 students who responded to the same survey poststudy. When analyzing the responses to the surveys, the researcher was able to identify recurring themes and motifs.

In answering the item, "I am a reader who…," the researcher found compelling thoughts from students (listed by pseudonym) to suggest that the program had been impactful. When responding to the survey item, Bryan, a low-level reader, said he was not a reader at the beginning of the study; but at the end, he said, "I am a reader who challenges myself." Caroline, an honors-level student, expressed similar ideas when she said she was a reader who did not read often at the beginning of the study; but at the end of the study, she said, "I am a reader who likes to challenge myself." Mandy, a student from Bryan's class, said, "I am a reader who is off and on when it comes to reading" at the beginning of the study but said, "I am a reader who likes to get deep and connect emotionally with books" at the end. Javier, who was a freshman in the college prep level, said at the beginning of the study, "I am a reader who likes to read sometimes, but not always"; but at the end he said, "I am a reader who is a good reader." Morgan, from the same class, said on the presurvey, "I am a reader who doesn't like to read; reading isn't my favorite"; but at the end of the study, she said, "I am a reader who enjoys love stories and anything with romance." Lettie said she had difficulty getting into books at the beginning of the study, but by the end of the year described herself as a reader who

"enjoys feeling like they are inside of the book." Rebecca indicated she went from being a reader who only liked to read fiction to becoming a reader who "likes a bit of a challenge" in her reading. Brent said he was a reader who did not read often; but at the end of the study, he said he was a reader who "likes the suspense in a story and is always looking for the next revelation. Also, I really like mysteries and tracking the clues to find out who the bad guy is." Jacinta said she was a reader who was easily distracted while reading, but at the end of the study she described herself as a reader who "likes interesting stories and when the main character is the narrator." Finally, Ben said he was a reader who liked to learn about people at the beginning of the study; but at the end, he expanded his thoughts to say, "I love to learn through reading."

In completing the idea, "I am a reader who…," the emerging themes consisted of student descriptions of reading behaviors that surfaced most prominently for the researcher. The researcher used Creswell's (2014) recommendations, which were further clarified by Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen, and Snelgrove (2016), who found four stages evident in the theme-coding process: "initialization, construction, rectification, and finalization" (p. 103). In the initialization phase, the researcher read and analyzed the responses to the item, looking for responses that were reiterative. In the construction phase, the researcher used the initial list of themes and merged those that seemed similar in nature. In the rectification phase, the researcher established that the constructed list represented the holistic picture of the responses given by students. In the finalization phase, the researcher used the themes to create a narrative of responses as they applied to the question of how the initiative had impacted attitudes toward reading. While some student responses fell into several categories in the initialization phase, the researcher used those multi-categorical responses to merge the list in the construction phase. Where

this was not possible, some student responses are represented in two categories. Themes emerging from the research included does not enjoy reading, struggles with a lack of interest/finishing books, chooses not to read (alliteracy), is a picky reader (genre or conditions have to be right), struggles with reading, is a slow reader, will read for a grade, enjoys reading, gets lost in a book, and likes to challenge myself. Table 13 shows the themes and the percentage of respondents who listed that theme in their response, pre and poststudy.

Table 13

Themes Identified in Coding Responses to "I am a reader who…"

Theme	Prestudy survey	Poststudy survey
Does not enjoy reading	8%	4.3%
Struggles with lack of interest / finishing books	10.2%	3.3%
Chooses not to read (alliterate)	9%	2.4%
Is a picky reader (genre and conditions have to be right)	26%	23.1%
Struggles with reading	4.1%	2.8%
Is a slow reader	5.6%	3.3%
Will read for a grade	7.5%	20%
Enjoys reading	18.2%	34.7%
Gets lost in a book (Flow state [Miles, 2012])	10.6%	12%
Likes to challenge myself	0	3.8%
Total responses to the item	264	207

Of particular note, 8% of students began the program stating they did not enjoy reading; 10.2% of students said they struggled with lack of interest or finishing a book, and 26% of students defined themselves as picky readers, completing the item with, "I will only read (if)….." Only 18.2% of students reported they enjoyed reading, although 10.6% said that when they read, they lost themselves in a book, meaning they achieved a flow state, which indicates enjoyment (Miles, 2012). In contrast, only 4.3% of students indicated they did not enjoy reading and only 3.3% indicated they struggled with lack of

interest at the end of the study. No students said they liked to challenge themselves in reading at the beginning of the study, but 3.8% of students indicated enjoying a challenge when reading at the end of the study; 34.7% of students reported enjoying reading at the end of the study; and an additional 12% of students reported they achieved a flow state at the end of the study, meaning 46.7% of students indicated enjoying reading at the end of the study.

How have you grown as a reader over the last year? In responding to this item, both pre and poststudy, students seemed to misunderstand the question and treated it as a yes/no question; so many of the responses were yes or no, with some students responding with not really. One hundred seventy-five students answered the prestudy survey item with responses that were applicable to the question, and 184 students answered the poststudy survey with applicable responses.

The researcher used the same four-step process of theme coding to establish themes and create a narrative pertaining to the study (Creswell, 2014; Vaismoradi et al., 2016). Compelling answers to the item illustrated just how the students felt they had grown and helped the researcher determine themes. By the end of the study, Daisy said, "I am a much stronger reader now. There are many words I know." Kyla said she still struggled at the beginning of the study but said at the end of the study, "I read faster and my vocabulary has gotten bigger." Ben revealed, "I've started reading different types of books instead of sticking to one category." Orlando said, "I started to get a lot better and also starting to read more books more often." Many students shared that they read more challenging books, and many others said, "I enjoy reading now." Amber said she had not grown as a reader since fifth grade; but over the year, she had grown "a good bit" and that she had begun the year not liking to read at all. Similarly, Ashley said, "I have

grown because I hated reading with a passion. Now I am trying to read every chance [I have] at school and even more at home." Braden expressed he had not enjoyed reading prior to this year, but now he carries a book with him everywhere. Layla said, "I gained new insight and new ideas on how to perceive the world around me." Hector, who said he had not grown last year, revealed, "now complex reads are child's play!"

From those responses, the researcher established the following qualitative themes: non-reader/no growth/struggling reader, stronger reader, read more genres, faster reader, vocabulary growth, reading more/finishing books, and read more challenging books. In addition, the researcher identified the inapplicable responses – no, yes, kind of/I don't know – as themes, because she felt they offered insights into how the students felt about their growth even though the responses themselves did not answer the question in an appropriate way. The theme-coded responses are seen in Table 14.

Table 14

Themes Identified in Coding Responses to Growth as a Reader

Theme	Prestudy survey	Poststudy survey
I do not read / have not grown / am a struggling reader	17.7%	5.4%
I am a stronger reader	11.4%	5.4%
I read more genres	5.7%	14.1%
I am a faster reader	8.5%	9.2%
My vocabulary has grown	14.2%	6.5%
I read more / finish the books I start	22.2%	42.3%
I read more challenging books	20%	16.8%
Total applicable responses	175	184
Answered "no"	33%	17%
Answered "yes"	46%	76%
Answered "kind of / I don't know"	21%	7%
Total inapplicable responses	57	41

In capturing the themes related to this question, the researcher found that 17.7%

of students indicated they were not readers, had not grown in the last year, or were struggling readers. By the end of the study, 5.4% of students responded in this manner. This phenomenon could be explained by the students who chose not to answer the question or who misunderstood the question and answered with no, so it is possible that more students did not feel they had grown as a reader. At the beginning of the study, 22.2% of students responded they read more or finished the books they started. This percentage increased to 42.3% by the end of the study. To generalize the results of the table even further, 82% responded in ways that indicated growth prestudy and 94% responded in ways that indicated growth poststudy. There were 57 students who responded with no, yes, or kind of/I don't know at the beginning of the study and 41 who responded with those inapplicable responses at the end of the study. Of those students, 33% responded with no at the beginning of the study, while 17% responded in like manner at the end of the study. Forty-six percent responded with yes at the beginning of the study, and 76% responded with yes at the end. Finally, 21% responded with kind of/I don't know at the beginning of the study, and 7% responded in like manner at the end.

Conference notes. Teacher participants conferenced with students to keep them accountable for reading, to understand their reading behaviors, and to challenge students to read more complex texts as their reading skills increased. The researcher used these notes to support data gathered to determine whether student attitudes changed as a result of participating in the initiative. Using the same formula to determine themes in other qualitative data analysis, upon reviewing conference notes, the researcher established three overarching themes to illustrate how overall student attitudes had changed, although some students reported no change in attitudes at all (Creswell, 2014). These themes included becoming a reader, embracing challenge, and achieving flow.

Becoming a reader. The main challenge for most teacher participants was helping their students to see themselves as readers. At the beginning of the initiative in Kittle's (2013) open-ended survey questions, many students indicated they were not readers or did not like to read. Most students saw reading as something to do in school for assignments and not something they did for pleasure. One student in Corinne's class indicated in a conference that she had really liked reading in fifth grade but that "something happened" between then and entering high school and she no longer saw herself as a reader. One of Hope's students echoed this sentiment when she said she had been a reader in elementary school; but in middle school, she really "got out of reading." April had a student who discussed her displeasure that she was being "forced" to read in class at the beginning of the study. While this student did not change to love reading, she at least did not exhibit avoidance behaviors on the behavioral checklist (discussed in the section on Research Question 3) at the end of the study. Karrie, who taught the lowest level students, really struggled with most of her students calling reading "boring"; and they claimed they lost interest when reading. By the end of the project, conference notes indicated that most of Karrie's students considered themselves readers. Many students who said they hated to read at the beginning had developed allegiance to a genre. Likewise, Corinne had several students develop allegiance to an author. Each teacher posted lists in their rooms for students to write the titles of books not available in the classroom library and that they would like to read. At the beginning of the year, few students listed books; but by the end of the year, the lists had grown to several pages. In her interview with the researcher, Corinne said, "I know I did not reach all students and I know there are students who still don't like to read, but I did change a lot of kids' minds about reading." The conference notes analyzed by the researcher supported these claims.

Embracing challenge. Again, the linchpin of the initiative was individualization, so it was incumbent on teachers to help students grow in their reading levels. Teachers had a list of interview questions for students that addressed increased complexity and challenge. Many students at the beginning of the project were unwilling to move from their preferred genres. Christine, a student in Corinne's class said she liked romance books about people her own age and that was all she wanted to read. By the end of the initiative, she noted that she had read three nonfiction books and had enjoyed them. She had also developed an author allegiance to Mitch Albom, not only for his young adult fiction books but for his nonfiction books as well. Landon, a student in April's class noted in his last conference that he was glad April had challenged him to read more than just "war books," because he had learned a lot by reading other genres. He also said it had helped him "learn a lot of new vocabulary" and thought expanding his vocabulary had helped him on his EOC. April, in her interview, mentioned that she thought students had learned why increasing text complexity was important and that students had shown an increased confidence in discussing more complex books.

Achieving flow. Although the goal of the initiative was not centered on the concept of flow, many students reported getting lost in a book (a flow state) when reading. Miles (2012) reported that students who often achieved a flow state while reading succeeded not only in high school but in college as well. This condition of "being lost in the book," "being unaware of surroundings," or "getting so into the book" surfaced repeatedly in conference notes. One student said she liked to get so "into a book that it hurts to put it down." Many students said they liked to read because reading took them places. Twelve students said they achieved flow at the beginning of the study in conferences; but by the end of the initiative, there were 42 students who indicated in

conference notes they had achieved a flow state when reading.

Impact on Reading Volume

The second research question addressed the initiative's impact on student reading volume. Specifically, Research Question 2 asked, "When utilized in secondary English classrooms, how can the Book Love Initiative framework's impact on reading volume be described?"

To study changes in volume, the researcher addressed both the number of pages read and the number of books read by students pre and poststudy. The researcher used the weekly reading record to determine how many total pages students read in the course of the study. She used Kittle's (2013) survey open-ended Item 3, which asked students how many books they had read in 2016-2017. To determine the number of books read in 2017-2018, the researcher used the weekly reading record.

Weekly reading record. Participants used reading records to assign homework grades prescribed by individual reading goals and established by reading rate. Students in the initiative read a combined total of 771,276 pages, an average of 2,846 pages per student, over the course of the 2017-2018 school year, almost three times what they normally would have read in assigned whole class novel selections. (Pages read did not include the whole class novels students read and studied as part of whole class novel readings through the year.) The researcher used data from reading records to compare the number of pages students read per week at the beginning of the initiative and then again at the end of the initiative to determine if capacity had increased.

The researcher used a paired samples *t* test to compare the mean and standard deviation of pages read pre and poststudy. The comparison of two groups before and after the application of the independent variable (the initiative) precipitated use of this

statistical test. The results of the paired samples *t* test along with the descriptive statistics of pages read are shown in Table 15.

Table 15

Statistical Comparison of Pages Read Pre and Poststudy

Description	Pair 1: Pages Read Pre	Pair 2: Pages Read Post
Number of Students Reporting	269	258
Mean	59.31	124.19
Median	46	92
Mode	0[1]	60[1]
Minimum	0	10
Maximum	310	661
Sum	15724	32040
Stand. Dev	49.097	103.178
Stand. Err	3.057	6.424
95% Confidence Lower		-75.856
95% Confidence Upper		-52.888
t distribution		-10.660
df		257
Significance (2-tailed)		.000*

[1]There were multiple modes; the lowest mode is reported.

The increase in pages read from prestudy to poststudy is illustrated in Table 15. Prestudy, there were data for 269 students; poststudy data were gathered for 258 students. The prestudy mean of pages read was 59.31, with the poststudy mean more than double: 124.19. The median of pages read prestudy was 46; the poststudy median was 92. Prestudy, the minimum number of pages read was zero, which was also the lowest mode; and the maximum number of pages read was 310. Poststudy, the minimum number of pages read was 10, and the maximum was 661. The lowest poststudy mode was 60. The sum of pages read was 15,724 prestudy, with a poststudy number of pages read more than twice that number, 32,040. The standard deviation from the mean was 49.097 with a standard error of 3.057 prestudy. Poststudy, the standard deviation from the mean was 103.178 with a standard error of 6.424. Tested at a 95% confidence interval, the change

in pages read prestudy to poststudy was statistically significant, or .000, at a .05 level of significance.

Because a hallmark of the initiative was individualized goals for pages read based on an individual student's reading rate, in addition to comparing the pre and poststudy number of pages read per week, the researcher compared student reading grades pre and poststudy, which reflected the percentage of the number of pages read toward their goal. The researcher made this choice because page number goals may not have increased through the year for some students as their levels of text complexity increased. For example, a student who was reading a lower level book at the beginning of the program may have increased their text complexity along with reading proficiency and still result in having the same number of goal pages at the end of the program. Reaching the second goal would have been more challenging. Teachers and students together set goals for pages read per week based on reading rate tests. Because teachers gave grades based on the goal number of pages read per week, the researcher felt it was important to compare percentages of goals met (student grades) in addition to pages read in order to understand if students were meeting their target reading goals based on rate and complexity.

Table 16

Statistical Comparison of Grades Received Prestudy and Poststudy

Description	Pair 1: Grades Pre	Pair 2: Grades Post
Number of Grades	269	258
Mean	69.44	87.31
Median	70	100
Mode	50	100
Minimum	0	50
Maximum	100	100
Stand. Dev	23.612	19.296
95% Confidence Lower		-21.155
95% Confidence Upper		-14.597
t distribution		-10.736
df		257
Significance (2-tailed)		.001*

Table 16 reveals that the mean grade was 69.44 prestudy and 87.31 poststudy. The median grade prestudy was 70, and the median was 100 poststudy. The prestudy mode was 50, and the poststudy mode was 100. (Students who read any amount toward their goal received a grade of 50, which means that with a mode of 50, many students probably did not reach even 50% of their reading goals.) The minimum grade received prestudy was 0 and poststudy was 50, which indicates that every student read some pages during the week. Prestudy, the standard deviation from the mean was 23.612, and the poststudy standard deviation was 19.296. When evaluated at a 95% confidence interval, the changes in reading grades prestudy to poststudy were statistically significant (.001) when analyzed with a paired samples *t* test at a .05 significance level.

Kittle (2013) survey open-ended items. A second type of quantitative data collected from Kittle's survey came from open-ended Item 3, which asked students to indicate the number of books they had read over the summer and in the previous school year. Throughout the school year, students kept a list of titles they had read in their

reading notebooks (confirmed by information on reading logs). Participants collected these data and provided them to the researcher, who used the prestudy surveys to compare the number of books read in the 2016-2017 school year with the number read in the 2017-2018 school year. The researcher used a paired samples *t* test to compare the mean number of books read before and after the protocol. The paired samples *t* test was appropriate for this type of data analysis because the researcher used it to compare the "means between two related groups on the same continuous, dependent variable" (Lund Research, 2013b, para. 1) Results of data analysis are seen in Table 17.

Table 17

Statistical Comparison of Books Read 16-17 and 17-18

Description	Pair 1: Books 16-17	Pair 2: Books 17-18
Number of students reporting	245	250
Mean	5.81	8.82
Mode	0	6
Minimum	0	1
Maximum	20	35
Stand. Dev	5.632	5.404
Stand. Err	.366	.351
95% Confidence Lower		-3.709
95% Confidence Upper		-2.308
t distribution		-8.458
df		236
Significance (2-tailed)		.000*

The number of students who reported reading a specific number of books in the survey for 2016-2017 was 245; 250 students reported a number for 2017-2018. This difference in number is because of the 258 students who responded to the prestudy survey, 13 did not list a number to answer the item. Some students said, "not many" in response to the question; some responded, "what we read in class"; and some did not respond to the item. Because the weekly reading logs and book lists collected by

participants were used to report the postsurvey data, this number (250) varies from the prestudy survey report. In 2016-2017, students reported reading an average of 5.81 books. Data gathered showed students read an average of 8.82 books in 2017-2018. Students reported the minimum number of books they read in 2016-2017 was zero, and the mode for that period was also zero. The maximum number of books students reported reading in 2016-2017 was 20. In 2017-2018, students reported reading a minimum of one book and a maximum of 35 books. The mode of books read for that period was six. There was a standard deviation from the mean of 5.632 in the 2016-2017 pair and a standard deviation from the mean of 5.404 in the 2017-2018 pair. The paired samples *t* test indicated a statistically significant (.000) increase in the number of books read from 2016-2017 to 2017-2018 at a 95% confidence level of .05 significance. These data were corroborated by students in conferences with teacher participants, who reported they read more, they enjoyed reading more, they were better readers, and specifically, they finished more books.

Impact on Reading Stamina Behaviors

Research Question 3 addressed the initiative's impact on reading stamina. Specifically, Research Question 3 asked, "When utilized in secondary English classrooms, how can the Book Love Initiative framework's impact on reading stamina behaviors be described?" Because there is no instrument to test stamina, the researcher looked to student behaviors to illustrate reading stamina and used the reading behaviors observation checklist (Appendix G) to answer this question. Participants used the checklist as a guide to observe reading behaviors in students and provided these checklists to the researcher so she could determine if behaviors had changed. Observed behaviors were indicators of the presence or absence of reading stamina and included,

fidgeting, getting up, and holding the book too close. The researcher then tallied the responses to the checklists and presented these qualitative data in tabular format.

Teacher observation checklists. The participants used the silent reading behaviors observation checklist to gauge how reading behaviors changed from the beginning to the end of the initiative. The checklist was divided into a continuum of visual, body/posture, auditory, and avoidance behaviors, all of which were observable behavioral descriptors to tell whether students were actually engaged in reading or were avoiding reading. Individual participants provided a beginning and an ending checklist to the researcher; and the researcher tallied those checklists into two master lists, one from the beginning of the initiative and one from the end of the initiative. It should be noted that participants allotted 20 minutes of reading time for the students; and behaviors were observed half way, or 10 minutes, into the reading time. Table 18 reveals how teacher participants observed how participants exhibited specific reading behaviors both at the beginning and end of the study.

Table 18

Reading Behaviors Checklist Summary

	Beginning of the study	End of the study
Behaviors indicating *unengaged* reading		
Visual	207	23
Body/Posture	230	17
Auditory	241	0
Avoidance	214	37
Behaviors indicating *engaged* reading		
Visual	64	235
Body/Posture	41	241
Auditory	30	220

The behavioral checklist comparison reveals that teacher participants observed

their students were more engaged in reading at the end of the project than at the beginning. This idea was confirmed in participant interviews, as each noted that at the beginning of the initiative, students struggled to sit still and focus on their reading and would often get up and "shop" for books before the reading time was up. Many students watched the clock or fell asleep. In her interview, Hope stated that at the end of the study, there were audible groans from students when she said reading time was up; and Corinne noted that students were begging for more time to read. The checklist provided the opportunity for teachers to track behaviors, and there were both positive and negative behaviors within each category. Every student did not display every behavior listed on the checklist, and some students displayed more than one behavior; so the numbers recorded on the tallied checklists were just that, tallies marked by participants in tracking the behaviors, not numbers to represent individual students. Observed behaviors were also substantiated by student comments on surveys, which indicated they were able to stick with books longer, they experienced a flow state when reading, and they were able to read faster.

Impact on the Classroom Environment

The researcher used qualitative interviews with participants to investigate Research Question 4; specifically, how has the Book Love Initiative affected the classroom environment? The researcher interviewed the participants in the study by emailing the interview questions (Appendix J) to them ahead of time and then meeting with them to discuss and record their responses. Upon analyzing the transcripts, the researcher used the four-step theme coding process (Vaismoradi et al., 2016) and identified several recurrent motifs that surfaced in participant responses. These themes were a combination of topics determined by the interview questions as well as topics that

materialized organically (Creswell, 2014). The following themes regarding classroom environment emerged from the teacher interview questions: balance in curriculum, difficulty of conferencing, frustration in building a classroom library, concern regarding impact on test scores, and creation of a community of learners.

Balance in curriculum. Participants expressed that balance in curriculum was difficult to obtain, as the components of the protocol were all new and it was problematic to do all parts of it well. Most teachers struggled with providing opportunities to study mentor texts; and for most teachers, this aspect of the protocol fell by the wayside. Kittle (2013) recommended the study of mentor texts as a way to assist students in analyzing literature and also as a way to learn how authors used language to express themselves. Mentor text study involves walking a reader through annotating a text and then practicing writing by using a parallel format to use literary elements in one's own writing (Kittle, 2013). As the teacher participants felt individualized reading was the most important part of the protocol and central to the study, they concentrated their efforts on reading, choosing to address mentor texts as they were able. Karrie said, "I did not focus on mentor texts this year, but I plan to incorporate them more next year." In discussing mentor text study, Hope said,

> I will say we did less mentor text study than Kittle (2013) recommended. I had trouble grasping the best way to do it and about mid-way through the year I let it go and tried to concentrate on the new procedures I was successful with and perfecting those. It was really hard to do everything she recommended well in the first year and mentor texts are my project for next year. I feel like I am able to deal with that aspect of the protocol better now because everything is not so new.

Corinne also said,

> Balancing was always a struggle. I did cut out some whole [class] book analysis, but I don't regret the sacrifice. I truly feel they [the students] got more from their reading independently than they would have from me pulling them kicking and screaming through *Julius Caesar*.

Karrie said she also struggled with balance, stating, "I did have trouble balancing the independent reading with the test preparation in the few weeks leading up to testing." April seemed to be able to balance her class, allotting specific fractions of the class period to specific tasks. "I break the class into three parts normally (bell ringer, independent reading/writing, and mentor text assignments). This way, almost every day there is a focus on their independent reading." It should be noted, however, that when students devoted time to writing about independent texts, they were not reading, so students in her class were allotted less time to read but as much time surrounding choice material as other teacher participants.

Difficulty of conferencing. Participants also struggled with time for conferencing with students, although they all recognized conferencing as the most important aspect of the protocol. Corinne said,

> The book conferencing was probably the most difficult just because of time constraints. I see how it was the most important aspect, but it was hard to do every day. I could see during conferences who was really invested in their reading and who maybe wasn't so much. It also allowed me to get to know my students better…. I would just get through two to three students a day…That is one aspect I want to improve next year.

Karrie mentioned that she resorted to conferencing on paper, having the students fill out a questionnaire that she could read and find out about student reading behaviors. April

(who was the only teacher who had used the method before) stated, “With larger classes this year, I have found it harder to conference with my students as often as I have in the past.” Hope also concurred, saying, “Finding time to conference was a challenge.”

Frustration in building a classroom library. Because April had used Kittle’s (2013) protocol before, she had amassed a more substantial classroom library in comparison to the other participants, but her library still does not meet Kittle’s recommendation of five to six books per student. The other teachers had to build their libraries from scratch. Routman (2016) emphasized the importance of having a classroom library in her work, and Kittle’s recommendations indicated the essential nature of the classroom library to the success of the project. Karrie described how she had been allotted money from two different grants ($2,000) and used that money to “scour the internet for used books” as well as going to used book sales sponsored by the public libraries in the area. She also polled her students to discover their interests and purchased books for her students using her own money. In her interview with the researcher, she recounted a story about one of her students:

> There was this one kid, Aaron, who has never read a book in high school. When he read his first book, he told me he really liked the author. I got on Amazon and ordered two more [books] from the same author. He read both of them. He came to school early to be sure to get the books before anyone else did. I know I made an impact on his reading life.

Corinne, in discussing her classroom library, noted how time consuming it was; in fact, she said it was the most laborious part of the protocol:

> The hardest [part of the protocol] was simply acquiring a classroom library: you know, getting money from the school and shopping as cost-effectively as I could

> to get the most books for the least amount of money. I've gone to book sales, begged online [on Facebook for donations], shopped at Goodwill, etc…. I am a little frustrated that our administration approved the project and then seemed unwilling to support it with money and that no one really has helped us with grants.

Concern regarding impact on test scores. Two of the teachers, Karrie and April, taught classes with an EOC test. They did mention their concerns about the impact of the program on test scores but with very different responses. Karrie felt she had to balance conferencing with covering material required for state testing. She said,

> It was really hard because I felt like I was responsible for helping them with better reading habits, but also, they had an EOC, so I was responsible for the standards, too. My kids are the lowest level, so I didn't want test scores affected [negatively] because of my lack of covering standards.

She went on to relate that her EOC scores were lower than they have been in the past; but she pointed out that her students, as a group, had tested lower in every grade leading up to ninth, so she was unsure whether the reading program had helped them or hindered them. April, on the other hand, said her test scores had been higher than previously, and she was confident the mentor text study combined with writing about independent reading selections had positively impacted her students' scores. She said the writing "helped prepare them for the EOC, which focused on writing and providing evidence in writing from texts."

Creation of a community of learners. When Corinne talked about the change in her classroom environment, she said her class had "turned into a group of readers and learners who were trying to help and encourage each other to find our next favorite

book." She discussed how there was a new phenomenon of dialogue about books that had never been present in her classroom before. Karrie said that her class was "more energetic and engaging" than it had ever been. She also noted that her students "had a sense of pride and accomplishment" when they finished a book and that this had helped her "connect" with her students. She said her students knew the method was new, and they appreciated the work she put into finding the books they wanted to read and that she was trying something new. She said, "It was a journey we took together." April mentioned that her students routinely asked each other for "to read next" suggestions. She also discussed that students asked to give book talks and that students had gained "an appreciation for storytelling." In discussing the impact on her classroom environment, Hope added that the Book Love Initiative had "changed the way my students view reading." Also, she talked about how she felt the program had impacted student long-term reading behaviors, as many of them regularly read for pleasure. She said, "I know I had more kids reading than before." Regarding her classroom culture, she added,

> We have become a community of learners. We all discuss the books we've read and how they connect to our lessons in class. We suggest books to each other and talk about the ones we dislike. Students have also become more productive. When they finish their assignments or tests early, they pull out their independent novels and read without any prompting from me. This tells me they are more likely to choose to read in the future.

General Results Summary

In studying the issue of reading stamina in high school, the researcher used both quantitative and qualitative data to determine the effectiveness of a reading program, the Book Love Initiative, based on the work of Kittle (2013). Participants (four teachers in

the school) initiated a protocol established by Kittle, and the researcher used a mixed-methods action research study to determine whether the protocol had a positive impact on student attitudes about reading, reading volume and stamina, and teacher classroom environment.

The researcher used descriptive statistics, statistical analysis, and qualitative theme coding to analyze the data and measure effectiveness of the program (Creswell, 2014; Urdan, 2017). A pre and poststudy survey determined the initiative positively impacted student perceptions of reading ability. A pre and poststudy survey of reading behaviors indicated the initiative had a positive impact on student reading enjoyment, reading behaviors, and perceptions of reading difficulty; however, the initiative did not significantly impact the practice of fake reading. An analysis of pages read, books read previously, and reading goals indicated the initiative positively affected student reading volume. Participants provided reading conference notes, whose identified themes illustrated student growth in reading. Open-ended survey items showed students grew as readers and for the most part enjoyed reading by the end of the study. Behavioral checklists pre and poststudy indicated student increased abilities to concentrate and actively engage in reading, evidence of increased stamina. Researcher interviews with participants also suggested the initiative positively influenced the classroom environment.

Chapter 5 is a presentation of the conclusions reached as a result of analyzing the data. In addition, a summary of the findings from the companion locations will be shared. As a result of the combined findings, researchers will provide recommendations for practice, policy, and further research. Chapter 5 will also revisit limitations and delimitations established in the introduction to the study as well as other limitations that emerged during the study.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

Restatement of the Problem

In Wagner's (2012) critique of today's schools, he lamented the lack of innovation to attract student interest in learning. He admonished schools for continuing to do things the same way since the early 20th century, even though so many advances had been made, not just in technology but in knowledge and in research about how the brain works. Put quite simply, his argument was that most schools do not innovate at the same rate as the rest of the industrialized world. Wagner and Dintersmith (2105) argued for curricular changes, particularly in the core academic areas of math and English. Their position was based on data suggesting that as students get into the upper grades, their interest and engagement in school decreases and they view school as detached and irrelevant to society in general (Busteed, 2013). Their claims were supported by Conley (2007b), who found students were less prepared for college than ever before and were unable to read the volume of texts needed for success, typically 300 to 600 pages in a week. Wagner's (2012) frustrations were echoed by Gallagher and Kittle (2018) when they asserted that students who were not reading at school would certainly not read at home. The importance of adding just 10 minutes of reading time for every student was also confirmed by Beers and Probst (2017), who found that this addition of reading time produced marked increases in word exposure and words read per year, which impacted the lowest level readers the most but had a positive effect on every level of reader.

In the arena of English classes, teachers have traditionally taught using a whole class approach to novel study, moving away from best practice in elementary pedagogy, which calls for daily allotted time to read independently. As students age, the amount of reading they do in school typically decreases, which results in *less* required reading. This

phenomenon occurs at a time when the adolescent brain is actually becoming more curious and is ready for independent thought and choice (Gallagher & Kittle, 2018). This method was certainly the accepted practice at Foothills High School, a small rural school in upstate South Carolina, whose teachers noticed student apathy toward reading and a decline in scores on standardized tests where a large amount of reading was required, indicating low reading stamina. Content area teachers had also reported a lack of reading stamina in their students as they were unable to read assigned texts for an extended time. English teachers also knew that students were not reading the novels assigned in class, novels that were part of the orthodox literary canon. Students were choosing instead to read summaries on the internet, and tests on those novels became a way to penalize bad behaviors rather than look for ways to expand student thoughts on their reading. Students seemed to be working harder at avoiding reading than completing reading tasks, a practice Merga (2013) dubbed *alliteracy*. This created a circular pattern of negative expectations on the part of teachers with low motivation on the part of students (Morgan & Fuchs, 2007).

Kittle (2013) noted, "We have to quit pretending that nonreading is somehow not our responsibility" (p. 16). Teachers at Foothills believed their main focus should be creating lifelong readers, an emphasis not only advocated by Kittle but also by Gallagher (2009) as well as other reading advocates (Beers & Probst, 2017; Broz, 2011). Kittle also emphasized that as students read more, they would become better readers and yearn to read more complex texts, saying, "When skills and pleasure align, students begin to choose more difficult texts to read independently" (p. 14). Choosing to act on the problem, a researcher led participants in a mixed methods action research study to determine whether the approach advocated by Kittle, a protocol prioritizing student

choice in reading material, would indeed positively impact student attitudes about reading, student reading volume and stamina behaviors, and the teacher participant classroom environments.

Overview of the Chapter

Chapter 5 begins with a restatement of the problem and an argument for study of the issue. The researcher will then discuss the findings from the study, which sought to answer the central question, "What happens in a secondary English classroom when a teacher creates and utilizes a balanced approach of appropriate leveled choice reading, text study, and novel study?" Chapter 5 is organized by the research constructs investigated in the four research questions and offers a summary of the results.

1. In what ways are student attitudes about reading impacted because of participation in the Book Love Initiative?
2. When utilized in secondary English classrooms, how can the Book Love Initiative framework's impact on reading volume be described?
3. When utilized in secondary English classrooms, how can the Book Love Initiative framework's impact on reading stamina behaviors be described?
4. How has the Book Love Initiative affected the classroom environment?

Next, the companion nature of the study will be addressed with a summary of results from both companion sites. The researcher will again address limitations and delimitations of the study as they relate to the findings and end the chapter with recommendations for practice, policy, and research, according to the agreed upon companion study structure (Appendix B). A final summary will conclude the chapter.

Discussion of Findings

Student attitudes about reading. The researcher used a mixed-methods

approach to address the initiative's impact on student reading attitudes in an effort to answer Research Question 1. First, the researcher used Items 1, 2, 4, and 5 (Likert-style items) from Kittle's (2013) survey of reading behaviors (Appendix D), which teacher participants administered to their students both pre and poststudy. Using a Wilcoxon signed-rank test, the researcher analyzed the change in responses from prestudy to poststudy. Analysis of the data confirmed that the protocol positively impacted enjoyment of reading, student choices to read during their free time, and student perceptions of difficulty with reading. The protocol did not have a statistically significant difference on the practice of fake reading.

To further investigate the question about reading attitudes, the researcher also used the SAS to measure student perceptions of ability, as perception of high ability is correlated to high achievement (Craven et al., 1991). In his development of the scale, Marsh (1983) found that students who believed they were able to read well, and to some degree students who believed they put forth effort in reading, had higher achievement as long as they did not perceive failure at reading tasks was due to low ability. Shown in Table 12, an ANOVA test to analyze student perceptions revealed that the protocol had a statistically significant (.000) positive impact on student perceptions of both ability and failure at a significance level of .05, with more students perceiving their success in reading due to ability, but also effort, while fewer students felt their failure in reading was due to lack of ability at the end of the study.

A third type of data used to measure attitudes was the open-ended questions on Kittle's (2013) survey, which asked students how they would describe themselves as readers and how they had grown as readers. The researcher used Creswell's (2014) approach to theme coding, which was further explained in work by Vaismoradi et al.

(2016) and outlined in a four-step process of initialization, construction, rectification, and finalization. Student descriptions of themselves as readers were categorized into the following themes: does not enjoy reading, struggles with lack of interest/finishing books, chooses not to read (alliterate), is a picky reader, struggles with reading, is a slow reader, will read for a grade, enjoys reading, gets lost in a book, and likes to be challenged. By the end of the study, more students were categorized describing positive attitudes toward reading than those who described negative attitudes. In addition, students described their growth as readers according to the following themes: have not grown/do not like to read, stronger reader, read more genres, faster reader, vocabulary has grown, read more/finish books, and read more challenging books. From prestudy to poststudy, of the students who responded to the question, more reported positive ways of growing as a reader than reported negative ways of growing.

A fourth type of data used to answer the first research question was the conference notes from teacher participants and their students. The researcher used the conference notes as supporting data to validate responses to both quantitative and qualitative questions. Upon analysis of the conference notes, the researcher identified themes according to Creswell's (2014) guidelines. Conference notes indicated that on the whole, more students came to see themselves as readers, began to challenge themselves in reading, and enjoyed achieving a flow state in reading. Findings from all data indicated overall student attitudes about reading improved, along with perceptions of ability and reading behaviors.

Impact on reading volume. To study the initiative's impact on reading volume, the researcher used two types of quantitative data: the weekly reading record (Appendix E) and open-ended Item 3 on Kittle's (2013) reading survey (Appendix D) regarding the

number of books read in the previous school year. In addition, weekly reading records from the beginning of the survey were compared with those at the end of the survey to determine if students read more pages at the end of the project. The researcher also analyzed the reading records to determine if reading grades, which were based on percentage of goals met, had been impacted by the initiative. All data were analyzed using a paired samples *t* test. When analyzing the pages read prestudy compared with poststudy, the researcher found a statistically significant difference (.000) in the mean scores of the two groups at a significance level of .05. There was a statistically significant (.001) difference in student reading grades prestudy to poststudy as well. In addition, the researcher found a statistically significant difference (.000) in the means of the number of books read in 2016-2017 compared to 2017-2018 at a .05 level. These findings verified that the protocol did positively impact student reading volume and were further corroborated by student comments on surveys indicating they read more books and were more often able to finish the books they started.

Impact on reading stamina behaviors. The researcher found that stamina was a difficult concept to measure, as stamina is composed of a combination of sustained silent reading, comprehension, accuracy and automaticity, fluency, and expanded vocabulary (Boushey & Moser, 2017; Hiebert, 2014). Because there were no instruments to measure stamina, per se, and because most instruments that measure fluency and automaticity are limited to the primary grade age groups, the researcher used an observation checklist (Appendix G) to document the impact of the protocol on stamina by observing and recording behaviors that were suggestive of high and low reading stamina.

The researcher used the silent reading behaviors checklist and participant tallies of those checklists to determine if changes in silent reading behaviors suggested

increased stamina. The checklist data, supported by participant interviews used to answer Research Question 4, suggested that student behaviors indicated engagement with reading increased. In summary, students were less fidgety, less likely to leave their seats, and less likely to fake read, while they were more likely to read without movement or distracting others. Students also reported on reading surveys and in conferences that they were able to read for longer periods of time. The analyzed data supported the protocol's positive impact on reading stamina. The effect of the initiative on stamina was best described by one of the teacher participants who noted students had begun the year watching the clock waiting for reading time to be finished; but at the end of the program, they were begging for more time to read.

Impact on classroom environment. In order to study the program's impact on the classroom environment, the researcher used qualitative data gathered from participant interviews. Upon reading the responses, the researcher used Creswell's (2014) approach to theme coding to categorize and analyze the data, again in the four-step process. The verbiage of interview questions helped determine some themes, and other themes surfaced as a result of the participant responses. The researcher found that the Book Love Initiative was a multi-step protocol and that each individual teacher had difficulties in some aspect of balancing its implementation. Participants struggled to find time to conference with students effectively and study mentor texts as recommended by Kittle (2013); but overall, the most time-consuming and frustrating aspect of the protocol seemed to be the establishment of classroom libraries. Teacher participants worked very hard, went to many used book sales and flea markets, and used much of their own money to purchase books to make their classroom libraries current. Even with the frustration of implementing certain aspects of the initiative, every teacher described their classroom

environment positively. Theme coding of teacher interviews pointed to classrooms becoming places where teachers worked to *balance the curriculum* while having difficulty with amassing the recommended number of current books in their *classroom libraries* and having *concerns regarding impact on test scores*. Whatever concerns and frustrations teachers seemed to have, they all described their classrooms as a community of learners. Themes determined when coding student responses to open-ended items about reading behaviors and growth supported the conclusion that most students had very favorable attitudes regarding the changes in classroom protocol. These data support the conclusion that the program positively impacted the classroom environments of participants.

Summary. The data overwhelmingly supported the Book Love Initiative as having a positive impact on attitudes, volume, stamina behaviors, and classroom environment. The data collected to answer each research question indicated that statistically significant changes occurred in most aspects of student reading behaviors. In addition, the researcher found that student reading volume increased significantly. The findings also indicated that reading stamina, which is composed of several different skills, increased from the beginning of the study to the end of the study. Finally interviews with teachers and quantitative data supported the findings that student attitudes toward reading improved. These changes, in turn, had a very positive effect on the classroom environment. Each teacher participant defined their classroom as a community of learners at the end of the study.

When examining the study holistically, the data support continuing the Book Love Initiative at Foothills High School. The initiative was successful in improving student attitudes toward reading. Analysis of data confirmed student reading volume and

stamina behaviors were positively impacted. Participants reported marked improvements in their classroom environments. Just as early theorists such as Dewey promoted the creation of classroom communities to motivate and engage students, Kittle's (2013) protocol created supportive communities of students who grew into readers and eventually chose to challenge themselves in reading more, as well as more complex, books.

Limitations

Limitations discussed in Chapter 1 were the qualitative aspect of the research questions, the researcher's familiarity with the teacher participants, and the convenience sample involved in the study. While the results of the study were promising, there were further limitations that emerged during the study. The brevity of the study length, as it was only implemented during one school year posed limitations as, realistically, such a limited time frame was not sufficient for *sustainable* change to take place in student self-perceptions, lifelong reading practice, or the overall school culture as it applies to independent reading. In addition, it is possible that a longer study may have yielded a statistically significant decrease in fake reading behaviors. However, as study participants continue to use and sustain the initiative, its impact may become greater as the impact of the initiative on test scores could be a subject of further study. One question to consider is if the time frame had been longer, would the results be similar? This limitation exposed new areas for future research.

The difficulty in amassing a classroom library was a second limitation emerging as the initiative progressed and also emphasized in participant interview responses. Teachers struggled to collect current young adult literature as well as nonfiction material that would be relevant to students. This lack of variety at the beginning of the study may

have impacted the data gathered the first weeks of the initiative. As the year went on, participants were able to find additions to their libraries, but classroom libraries (two to three books per student) are not full by Kittle's (2013) standards (five to six books per student). In addition, as new titles are published that students want to read, more books will be needed to make the libraries culturally responsive to students.

A final limitation of the study was that it took place only in a few English classrooms. There is a question if these isolated classroom experiences were enough to change the school culture overall, or at least in the English departments at each school. Certainly, student interviews and survey responses supported positive changes in individual behaviors, but the question still remains if these behaviors will be sustained when students are not supported and engaged in other classrooms. In fact, this concern was raised by a participant in the study when she said,

> I feel like we were really successful this year in impacting our students, but it's not a one-year thing; it really needs to be engrained in the culture of the school and I'm not sure how that will happen when only half the [English] department is implementing the program. I was hoping our enthusiasm about the project would rub off on our colleagues, but I'm not sure it has.

Delimitations

Delimitations discussed in Chapter 1 were the intentional decision to study the problem in high school English classes and the convenience sample afforded by the option of participants to be included in the study. Another delimitation that surfaced in the study was the researcher's decision not to study gender differences in reading, although these differences were specifically noted by participants in observing behaviors related to stamina and in the number of books read by students. According to

participants, girls exhibited more behaviors that were indicative of high stamina, and girls overall read the most books. These anecdotal data may offer a springboard for further study regarding gender differences and use of choice literature, which was supported by Wozniak (2010) in younger students. A further delimitation was the choice of the researcher not to include data from outside the participant group to offer some sort of comparison or contrast for the study. Having a control group may have confirmed the results, but quite simply, other teachers chose not to participate in the study; therefore, the researcher was unable to gather data on groups outside the study, which impacted recommendations for further research.

Summary of Results from Companion Study

In addition to the study in South Carolina, a researcher in North Carolina replicated the protocol in her classroom in a school with a similar ethnic demography but dissimilar economic situation. While the researcher in South Carolina conducted her study in a rural, high-poverty school, the researcher in North Carolina was in a suburban, low-poverty school with many more resources. The two researchers, in identifying the same problem at both of their schools, conducted similar protocols to understand whether the method may have broader (or narrower) applications.

The researcher in North Carolina found the initiative produced similar results to the Foothills High School study, which suggests that Kittle's (2013) protocol is applicable to a wide variety of settings. In allowing students to choose their reading selections, the Stateline researcher found student attitudes about reading were positively impacted, student reading volume and stamina increased, and the classroom environment also transformed into a community of readers and learners.

Discussion of Findings from Both Companion Sites

An analysis of the data indicated that at Foothills, the initiative had no impact on student fake reading behaviors. At Stateline, the initiative did not change student perceptions of failure in reading or their perceptions of the difficulty of reading. In the larger, holistic picture of the study, the initiative was a positive change in the English classroom at both sites and produced students who saw themselves as readers whose skills and attitudes changed for the better as a result of participation in the initiative. The initiative also had a positive impact on reading volume and stamina behaviors at both schools. Table 19 offers a snapshot of the research questions and what the data said regarding success of the study at both sites.

Table 19

Research Questions Aligned with Supporting Data and Findings at Both Companion Sites

Research Question	Data collected	Result at Foothills	Result at Stateline
In what ways are student attitudes about reading impacted as a result of the Book Love Initiative?	Kittle (2013) Reading Survey Likert-style questions about reading behaviors analyzed by Wilcoxon signed-rank comparison of rank	Significant change in reading enjoyment, free-time reading, and perception of reading difficulty No significant change in fake reading behaviors	Significant change in reading enjoyment, free-time reading, and fake reading behaviors. No significant change in perception of reading difficulty
	SAS analyzed by ANOVA to compare means	Significant change in perception of reading success due to ability and to a lesser extent, effort. Significant change in perception of reading success due to lack of ability	Significant change in perception of reading success due to ability and to a lesser extent, effort. No significant change in perception of reading success due to lack of ability
	Kittle (2013) Reading Survey Open-ended questions to describe themselves as readers and their growth as readers and Teacher Conferences with students	Themes developed with positive changes in how students described themselves as readers as well as their growth in reading enjoyment. Themes common to both sites were *achieving a flow state while reading, reading more genres, and increasing complexity / challenge.*	
When utilized in secondary English classrooms, how can the Book Love Initiative framework's impact on reading volume be described?	Student Weekly Reading Record analyzed by paired samples *t* test to compare means	Number of pages read per week at the beginning of the program was statistically significant when compared to number of pages read per week at the end of the study	
	Kittle's (2013) Reading Survey Open-ended questions to determine number of books read in 1617 and number read in 1718 analyzed by paired samples *t* test to compare means	Statistically significant change in the number of books read in 2016-2017 when compared to 2017-2018	
When utilized in secondary English classrooms, how can the Book Love Initiative framework's impact on reading stamina behaviors be described?	Observational checklists used by the teachers	Teacher observational data supported changes in behavior related to engagement and stamina in reading	

(continued)

How has the Book Love Initiative impacted the classroom environment and student learning?	Foothills – Researcher interviews with participants (teachers) Stateline –Researcher interviews with students	Interviews produced themes relating to the classroom environment. Themes common to both schools included *flow behaviors, community of learners, students challenging themselves, and the work involved in creating sustainable classroom libraries*

The comparison of methods and results aligned to research questions shown in Table 19 provides a synopsis of the study and its successes. While the Stateline study did not change student perceptions of their abilities in reading, overall the study did impact student reading behaviors in a positive way and generated a positive change in the classroom environment perceived by the students. Likewise, as the Foothills study did not impact fake reading behaviors, it did positively impact student attitudes about reading and their perceptions of ability and created a positive classroom environment in the eyes of the teacher participants. These findings suggest the method is applicable to a variety of settings; and while it may not change every negative reading behavior or student perception, overall the protocol created an engaging classroom environment honoring student interests, generating positive reading behaviors, and, if continued, may create lifelong reading habits.

In addition, findings from both sites suggested a very powerful and compelling argument to implement choice reading in high school, as all teacher participants in both studies described their classrooms as evolving into communities of learners. That every teacher used those terms to describe the impact of the initiative on their classrooms was striking and informed the researchers of the significance of the initiative and its importance as a catalyst for positive change.

Recommendations

The data presented in this action research study show an overall positive impact on adolescent attitudes towards reading, on their reading volume and stamina behaviors, and on teacher perceptions of the classroom environment after student exposure to the Book Love Initiative; however, the data presented in this study only covered a time frame between the months of August 2017 to May 2018. Also, the project was conducted in a limited environment with a convenience sample. The qualitative data collected from students and teachers also confirmed the individualized nature of the curriculum to have had the most impact on the students. Many students corroborated that being allowed to choose their books was the reason they now enjoy reading. The following recommendations for practice, policy, and research are suggested as a result of the findings and common statements from qualitative data

Recommendations for practice. "Some of the fiercest debates in education are about what should be taught and who should decide" (Robinson & Aronica, 2016, p. 132). Research on individualized formative assessment confirms that students who are offered a curriculum tailored to their individual needs are more likely to be successful (Black et al., 2003). The researchers in this companion study, supported by Kittle (2013), argue that students should decide what is relevant to them and that teachers as facilitators of learning should support these decisions with opportunities for reflection and challenge for more complex thinking. Recommendations for practice echo these assertions.

Professional learning on conferencing with students with differing abilities. While a significant number of students changed their perceptions of what attributed to their reading successes, a significant number did not change their perceptions of the origin of their reading failure in the Stateline study. In addition, all teacher participants

in the Foothills study cited difficulties in finding effective ways to conference with students. As Black et al. (2003) recommended in their work on formative assessment, conferencing feedback is a powerful, formative tool for students as it engages students in facilitating their own improvement and helps students target their weaknesses on their own; therefore, professional learning on conferencing would go far in assisting teachers in their abilities to impact student attitudes in a positive way in order to create learners who were more invested in their own learning. Specific, targeted professional learning on the practical aspects of conferencing would assist teachers in developing the skills they need to conference efficiently.

Knowing the issues with formative assessment in this project, further study may be recommended to include specific learning ability demographics of the students, which could determine how the Book Love Initiative supports various types of preexisting learning abilities and disabilities related to intellect and language development. Specifically, further professional learning might give teachers tools to support independent reading initiatives and learn how to support individual and differentiated reading abilities in mixed-grouping classes.

Promote use of an action research method to gather data on an ongoing basis. The data produced by this study provided a powerful picture of its effectiveness and powerful rationale to continue the initiative in the future. The researchers in this study also recognized the leverage created by data to give teachers a clear rationale for making a lasting change in pedagogy. Even though there were identified weaknesses in the Foothills study (conferencing, mentor text study) and the Stateline study (changing negative student perceptions), the data confirmed teachers were going in the right direction with this new approach and the impact on the classroom environment was a

marked improvement from previous years. Successful continuation of the initiative requires ongoing data gathering and analysis practices to support ongoing success (Graham & Ferriter, 2010; Herr & Anderson, 2015).

Depka (2010) advocated for an approach of gathering multiple types of data to lead to instructional decisions. The data in this study provided teachers with a picture of where particular weaknesses existed in their own instructional foci, which gave direction on what to work on in the coming year, rather than discontinuing the entire project simply because there were difficult pieces with which to contend. In addition, at Foothills, each teacher noted struggles with conferencing, but each teacher also had a strength that was integral to the success of the initiative in her own classroom but different from other teachers. Examining the data for isolated teachers may have produced different recommendations for continuation of Kittle's (2013) methods; but when looking at all teachers as a whole, the program was a success. This holistic approach was different for the Stateline researcher because she was the lone teacher in the study; but by pooling her results together with the Foothills study, gathered and analyzed data produced a generalizable result, confirming collaboration as a hallmark of action research (Bailey & Jakicic, 2012). Themes common to both studies included improved student attitudes toward reading, increased complexity and challenge while reading, and creating a classroom community of learners. Such an approach to research allows for more opportunities for generalization to any study of change in pedagogy, whether in English, math, or beyond.

Ensure classroom libraries represent culturally responsive books. Further study is recommended to evaluate the types of books represented in classroom libraries to determine whether or not culturally responsive book deficiencies are possible

contributing factors to the decline in adolescent reading behaviors. Study on exactly the types of books found in classroom libraries is also recommended. If the types of books found in classroom libraries are limited to a singular culture or are vastly differently from the community of readers in the classroom, it would be an important variable to consider in future studies. This lack of relevant literature was a limitation presented in the study as it went on.

Recommendations for policy. Due to the nature of the companion study, the researchers' findings produced generalizable recommendations for policy in schools with regard to literacy. The research illustrated deficits in reading ability in increasing levels due to lack of engagement in schools (Busteed, 2013; Wagner & Dintersmith, 2015). These deficits could translate into real issues with college preparedness as well as hindrances to innovation in the 21st century (Conley, 2007b; Wagner, 2012). The policy recommendations emerging from this study are based on solving real-world issues relating to reading and preparedness for real-world tasks.

The Book Love Initiative protocol is appropriate in diverse settings. As the data from this companion study reveals, the Book Love Initiative protocol may be recommended for implementation in varying sociodemographic settings. The two schools in this study represented disparate populations; however, both studies resulted in positive findings. In addition, the literature supports this change in pedagogy to solve problems with stamina, volume, and attitudes regarding reading. Robinson and Aronica (2016) claimed that disengagement from school led not just to lower graduation rates but also to students who "have little interest in what they're doing and largely wait for the day to be over and for the time to come when they can graduate and get on with their lives" (p. 23). The researchers would ask if this type of school is where any teacher

wants to teach or any student wants to go. More importantly, the data suggest these types of disengaged students largely have problems getting on with their lives, as they have failed to learn any useful information or skills that translate into preparation for work or college. The research calls for change in the way we go about doing school, and the Book Love Initiative is one way to solve the problem of disengagement, which leads to lower stamina and therefore lack of preparedness for skills requiring reading (Bowen et al., 2011; Friedman & Mandelbaum, 2011).

Financially support classroom libraries. The results of this study indicated students want to read books that are culturally and socially relevant to them as individuals. All teacher participants in both companion studies asked for money from administrators with different levels of financial support. This study confirmed previous research suggesting classroom libraries produce a positive environment and contribute to a community of learning and reading; therefore, the study provides a rationale for schools to invest in classroom libraries (Gallagher & Kittle, 2018; Routman, 2016).

Recommendations for research. While the results of the study seemed to confirm the success of the project and provided generalizable recommendations across socioeconomic groups, the researchers found the study produced additional questions, which provided opportunities for further research.

Study the Book Love Initiative over a longer time period. Additionally, the brevity of this study limited the study of the lasting impacts of the Book Love Initiative. Further longitudinal study is recommended to evaluate whether the impact of this type of initiative is sustained as students progress through high school. Since a goal of the Book Love Initiative is to cultivate lifelong reading habits in all adolescents, future results could reveal the lasting influence of this action research study. In addition, a longer

study may have resulted in decreases in fake reading behavior at Foothills and a larger impact on student perceptions of reading failures at Stateline. Such research might include a quantitative analysis of the correlation between reading success/failure perceptions and comprehension assessments.

Study gender differences. While all students in this study received the same supports through the Book Love Initiative protocol, anecdotal evidence did reveal gender differences in observed reading behaviors and reading volume. Teachers noted that girls were more likely to read more and to exhibit behaviors indicative of high reading stamina and girls typically read more than boys. Knowing this, further study is recommended to include gender demographics of the students who participated in the Book Love Initiative to determine whether or not gender demographics are contributing factors to adolescent reading behaviors. Wozniak (2010) found there were gender specific reading behaviors in young boys; and, as she similarly noted, there is limited research on teen boy (or girl) reading practices.

Research the method using controls. Controls not in place in this study were uniformity of testing reading rate, stamina, or testing against a control group. Because the program was meant to be individualized, participants in the study did test for reading rate to set goals for future reading, but they found that testing for reading rate, in order to be most effective, should most likely have occurred each time students changed books. Based on the class sizes in the study, testing for rate in this way was not possible. While behavioral data and pages read reinforced the initiative's effectiveness on increasing reading stamina, in order to *prove* the impact on stamina, it may be more effective to test student rate using uniform texts. Finally, results may be further validated if the initiative were tested against a control group not utilizing the protocol. Researchers in this study

found the scope of such an inquiry too large within the confines of the study's time frame and the willingness of other teachers to participate.

Summary

When analyzing the impact of the Book Love Initiative, results from both companion sites suggested that when given time to read choice texts, adolescent attitudes towards reading, stamina, and reading volume increased significantly. Subsequently, the classroom environment was enhanced because of the Book Love Initiative. While Kittle (2013) urged secondary English language arts teachers to support their students through an individual reading journey using her own personal anecdotes, the results of this study support her theories through the examination of reading attitudes, volume, stamina behaviors, and classroom environment. As demonstrated in this study, Kittle's methods have the potential to change adolescent reading pedagogy; but more importantly, the methods have the potential to change personal reading journeys through filling a void long neglected by traditional practices.

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Appendix A

Book Love Protocol

Book Love Protocol

In *Book love: Developing depth, stamina, and passion in adolescent readers* (2013), Penny Kittle explores the various reason adolescent students do not read and shows the effects of decreased reading quantities. Kittle (2013) argues, through providing appropriate texts, along with structured class time, teachers can create a culture that leads to more complex reading. She provides strategies to increase the quantity, capacity, and complexity over time, to create a balance of independent reading, text study, and novel study, to help students deepen their thinking through writing about reading, and to build a school culture focused on the love of reading (2013).

Though some educators, specifically English teachers, may argue students need to be reading "the classics," Kittle's (2013) approach argues for a blend of independent reading for enjoyment and full-class novels. *Book Love* (2013) focuses on "managing, sustaining, and building an independent reading life in middle and high school" (p. 24). *Book Love* (2013) advocates for independent reading; the ultimate goal is to clearly establish a culture where students long to read all types of literature, thus use literature as an avenue of growth and reflection.

Kittle's (2013) approach can be utilized in any classroom with the following protocol.

Before school starts:

1. Build and maintain a classroom library

- Write letter to parents and post on webpage (p. 54)
- Visit used-book stores, friends, and former students (consider using existing clubs to host book drive at school/community)
- Write and apply for grants to building library

2. Give reading survey and SAS: use information to help plan instruction and conferencing

3. Students find a book they would like to read.
   - Use book talks to "open the doors" (p. 60-61)
   - Students lead book talks (or former/guest students)

First week of school (complete these steps once a quarter)

3. Students read silently for 10 minutes.
   - Read for understanding. If re-reading is necessary, that's okay!

4. Record # of pages read in 10 minutes.
   - *# of pages read in 10 minutes established reading rate for homework* (# of pages read in 10 minutes X 6 establishes pages per hour X 2 to establish total pages to read each week). The homework goal is to read at a comfortable pace for 2 hours or more outside of class each week. Keeping a log will help both the reader and teacher gauge how reading pace changes in a quarter and with increased complexity. Students can see their own growth and self-assess. Students record rates in their own notebooks; teacher collects the notebook and records grades.
   - All students get a weekly grade from Reading Homework (if they fall short, partial credit).

5. Students record title of book and the page they are on every day in class. Add totals at the end of the week (p. 29 for chart).

6. Confer with EVERY student once every week (several student per day during reading time, p. 77-95).

7. Calculate a goal for semester/year (p. 30)
   - Share goal with parents!
   - Students continuously self-assess progress (p. 31).

8. Every student creates a "To Read Next" List in notebook.

9. Confer about what students are reading continuously.

10. Students create reading reflections each quarter and update goals (p. 124).

11. Follow guidelines to increase complexity (p. 124-132).

Know Kittle's Daily Reading/Writing Workshop framework (p. 57)

How To Quick Reference:

Book Talk (p. 59)
Mentor Text Study (p. 65)
Annotate (p. 106)
Set up Classroom (p. 74)
Conference (p. 78-87)
Write about Reading (p. 99-104)
Imitate Author's Craft (p. 111-113)
Modeling Thinking/Think Alouds (p. 113-115)

Kittle, P. (2013). *Book love: Developing depth, stamina, and passion in adolescent readers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Appendix B

Structure of the Companion Dissertation and Planned Authorship Table

Structure of the Companion Dissertation and Planned Authorship

Chapter Name and Purpose	Possible Sections	Planned Authorship
1. *Introduction.* Chapter 1 introduces the problem to be studied, explains its theoretical context or conceptual base, tells for whom and why the study is important, and defines its terms and limitations.	a. Introduction to the study b. Problem and purpose of the study c. Conceptual base d. Research questions or hypothesis e. Professional significance of the problem f. Overview of the methodology g. Definition of key terms h. Setting of the study i. Delimitations of the study j. Organization of the dissertation	a. Co-authored b. Co-authored c. Co-authored d. Co-authored e. Co-authored f. Co-authored g. Co-authored h.Individually-authored i. Individually-authored j. Individually-authored
2. *Review of related literature*. Chapter 2 presents and synthesizes literature upon which the study builds, including history and research supportive and unsupportive of the writer's stance. The last cited study most closely resembles the proposed one.	a. Restatement of the problem b. Overview of how chapter is organized c. Review of the theoretical and empirical literature, organized by problem areas d. Synthesis and critique of the literature and how it informs the study	a. Co-authored b. Individually-authored c. Individually-authored d. Individually-authored
3. *Methodology.* Chapter 3 explains how data are collected and analyzed, aligns problem with technique, identifies exactly who or what will be investigated, and outlines research design and statistical tests, if appropriate.	a. Restatement of the problem b. A description of the general methodology c. The research context or site d. The sample/subjects or participants e. The instruments and materials used f. The procedures followed g. The data analyses made h. A summary statement of the methodology	a. Co-authored b. Co-authored c. Individually-authored d. Individually-authored e. Co-authored f. Co-authored g. Co-authored h. Co-authored
4. *Results.* Chapter 4 presents the findings of the data analyses, and graphically displays them if appropriate. It is typically the briefest chapter in the dissertation.	a. Restatement of the problem b. An overview of the chapter c. A presentation of results, organized by research questions or hypothesis d. A summary in general terms of the results	a. Co-authored b. Individually-authored c. Individually-authored d. Individually-authored
5. *Conclusions.* Chapter 5 summarizes the findings pursuant to the problem and its methodological treatment. The writer shares his professional perspective in making practical and theoretic recommendations.	a. A summary of results, organized by how the problem statement was posed b. A discussion of the findings c. Recommendations for practice, policy, and research	a. Co-authored b. Co-authored c. Co-authored

Columns I and II detailing Chapter Name and Purpose and Possible Sections were from C. Steven Bingham (2012) adapted from Glatthorn & Joyner (2005), *Writing the Winning Thesis or Dissertation*. p. 158. Column III detailing Planned Authorship were developed together by Dr. Sydney Brown, Lindsey Weycker (the companion researcher for the study), and Meredith Lynch (the researcher for the study).

Appendix C

Parent Letter

Hello parents of English students,

A central goal of English is to establish a **reading habit** in the busy lives of high school students. I am hoping we can work together to recapture the pleasure and passion of readers. This letter is long, but the assumptions it rests upon are too important to be treated in a superficial manner. Please take the time to read this and know what you're signing before you do.

The best books challenge our beliefs by helping us see through different eyes —to live a different life. For example, *Hate List* by Jennifer Brown was wildly popular, but it is about a school shooting and I think we'd all rather believe that couldn't happen here and don't want to live the details. Yet reading allows us to confront our worst fears and live through them. Students love this book.

I will not know the details of every book students read and refer to this year, and I will not *remember* the details of all the books I recommend to students. What I seek for all of my students is a compulsion to read—for pleasure— for knowledge— for a passion for story or information that will keep them into the pages of a book past our assigned time for reading—past our goal of eight books read each semester. This has tremendous benefits. Here are a few:

- **Reading relieves stress**. High school is stressful. Reading takes you out of the present and into another place and time; it is a perfect escape.

- **Reading builds stamina** to prepare students for college. Reading for an hour or two in one sitting is a basic expectation in college. In this class we will exercise muscles soon to be strained in the coming years. Reading for fluency and stamina has been proven to improve the reading rate for students. Fast reading develops confidence and an appetite for books as well as teaching vocabulary in context, which improves writing, but it only happens when students find books they *want* to read. But the truth is, some of those books might make you uncomfortable.

- There is a lot of talk in the media that 'students today won't read,' but I believe students substitute all of those other distractions (the internet, TV, etc.) if they feel no passion for the book assigned to them. In my experience, students who haven't been readers since elementary school will suddenly become quite passionate about reading with **the right book** in their hands. But those books might challenge your values. Is that okay with you? Can your child choose to read *Crank* by Ellen Hopkins, which delves into a teenager's drug addiction?

I believe we have to trust these young adults more. We have to trust that books won't corrupt them anymore than the movies *The Dark Knight* or *Jackass* might.

It is more important that they are reading! So you may pick up a book left behind on a nightstand and open to a passage with the details of a group of child soldiers in Sudan mercilessly slaughtering an entire village (*A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* by Ishmael Beah) and wonder why reading it is a homework assignment, and I will answer, "Your son or daughter chose it." I might have recommended it because I read it and loved it, or the book may be unfamiliar to me because your child borrowed it from another student. The bottom line: I will not place a tight filter on what is read in this class and I am asking for your support in this. I hope you will talk to your child about what he/she is reading this semester.

I suggest you get a copy of a book and read it if you are concerned about the content. If you want to know more about a book your child is reading, please try the School Library Journal web site, the American Library Association web site, or even Amazon.com. Or call me—I will tell you what I know.

Because I respect your role as parents and the traditions you hold sacred, if you want me to more closely monitor your child's choices this semester, by all means, call me and we will work out a plan that we can both contribute to.

If you sign this, it means you understand books will not be banned in my classroom and your child will be allowed to choose what he/she reads.

Thanks for your support,

Teacher signature

P.S. Our classroom benefits every year from cast offs. **Please send books** you no longer need to our library, especially ones you have loved, if you can bear to part with them. Better yet… come to class and share a book with us! Share your passion for reading. I would love to have you join us some morning. Thank you.

I have read and agree to the contents of this letter.

_____

student's name

_____

parent's name

Appendix D

Kittle's (2013) Survey of Student Reading Behaviors

Name _____

Kittle's (2013) Reading Survey

	1 Never	2	3	4	5	6 Often	7	8	9	10 Always
1. I read in my free time.										
2. I enjoy reading.										
3. I finish the books I start.										
4. I "fake read" in school.										
5. Reading is hard for me.										
6. When I read I sometimes forget where I am.										
7. I read regularly.										
8. I will choose to read a challenging book.										

1. Are you currently reading a book? _____ If so, title: _____.
2. How many books did you read this summer? (List titles that you remember) _____.
3. How many books did you read last year? (estimate) _____.
4. Who are your favorite authors? _____.
5. How many books are in your house or apartment? (estimate) _____.
6. How would you describe yourself as a reader?
   I am a reader who …
7. How have you grown as a reader over the year?

http://pennykittle.net/uploads/images/PDFs/Workshop_Handouts/Reading.Survey.pdf

Appendix E

Weekly Reading Record

Date:_____

Weekly Reading Record

Student Name	Book Title	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Total Pages

Appendix F

Student-Teacher Reading Conference Questions

Reading Conference Questions:

Conferences that monitor a reading life:

1. What are you reading? How did you choose it? How do you find good books?
2. What's on your to-read-next list? Which authors are your favorites?
3. How much did you read last year?
4. Do you consider yourself a reader? Where do you read at home?

Conferences that teach a reading strategy:

1. How is the reading going for you?
2. Is this an easy or a hard read for you? How do you know?
3. Tell me about a time when this book has confused you and what you've done to get yourself back on track in your understanding.
4. Tell me about these characters—who are they, what do you think of them?
5. What questions are at the heart of this book? What questions might the author be trying to answer through the struggles of these characters?
6. I see you're almost finished with the book. When you think back over the way a character has changed in this story, can you point to specific moments when something was revealed about this character? Could you make a claim about this character and support it with evidence from the text?
7. How is this book different from the last book you read?

Conferences that increase complexity and challenge:

1. What else have you read by this author? What other books have you read that are as difficult as this one?
2. Which books on your next list are challenging? Have you considered how to push yourself as a reader?
3. Which genres have you read this year? Tell me about a genre you don't usually read and let's think about books that might ease the transition from what you love to what will challenge you to think differently.
4. Tell me about a book you've dropped this year. Why did you drop it?
5. How are the books you've been reading this year similar?

Appendix G

Reading Behaviors Observational Checklist

Silent Reading Behaviors Observation Checklist

Date: _____

	Visual Behaviors					Auditory Behaviors			Avoidance Behaviors		
Student Name	Tracking with pencil / finger	Rubbing eyes	Not looking at book	Holds book too close	Holds book too far	Mouths words	Whispers words	Reads aloud	Flips through pages too quickly	Out of seat	Changes book too soon
	Body/Posture Behaviors				Notes						
Student Name	Head down while reading	Fidgets	Standing while reading	Position other than sitting at desk							

Appendix H

Sample Journal Prompts

Sample Journal Prompts

Please respond thoughtfully and thoroughly:

1. Refer to your entire reading log. Add up the total pages read and divide by the seven weeks we have been in our reading initiative to determine your average pages read each week. Compare this to your reading rate. Discuss if you are challenging yourself to read more and increase your stamina in order to prepare yourself for complex reading in college or the workplace, or if you are just reading in class, but not making a difference in your reading life.

2. Set goals for the next 10 weeks (the rest of the semester). These goals should be specific.

3. How has the book you are reading right now make you feel? Does it make any connection to your life or society?

4. Think about the last book you read. When you finished it, did you feel sad? Did it make you want to read more books by that author? Was there a character with whom you particularly identified? Why or why not?

5. Discuss a dynamic character in a book you have read. What makes this character able to adapt and change? Compare this character to a static character in the book.

Appendix I

Sydney Attribution Scale

Sydney Attribution Scale: Version 4

Name: _____ Circle one: M F

Teacher: _____ Grade: _____

This is not a test. There are no right or wrong answers. There are a number of situations described that could happen in school or at home. You are asked to show how true or false each reason would be for this situation happening to you. You should place a check mark in one of the boxes that corresponds to each reason. (In other words, for each situation, you will check three boxes.) Look below at the first two examples to help you understand the way to answer questions on this survey.

1. Suppose you won a race at a sports competition. It would probably be because:

	FALSE	Mostly False	Sometimes False, Sometimes True	Mostly True	TRUE	
a. you were lucky	✓					a
b. you are a good runner					✓	b
c. you tried hard to run fast				✓		c

2. Suppose you painted a picture at school and everyone said it was awful. It would probably be because:

	FALSE	Mostly False	Sometimes False, Sometimes True	Mostly True	TRUE	
a. you are a bad painter			✓			a
b. you only tried a little				✓		b
c. they did not like you		✓				c

Now you try these examples:

	FALSE	Mostly False	Sometimes False, Sometimes True	Mostly True	TRUE	
3. Suppose you made a model and it fell to pieces as soon as you finished it. It would probably be because:						
a. you are not good at making models	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	a
b. you did not work carefully on it	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	b
c. the glue was bad	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	c

	FALSE	Mostly False	Sometimes False, Sometimes True	Mostly True	TRUE	
4. Suppose you wrote a story that the teacher said was very good. It would probably be because:						
a. you write good stories	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	a
b. you tried very hard	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	b
c. the teacher likes you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	c

Do you have any questions about how to answer the survey?

Please do not talk to anyone about your answers or look at anyone else's paper while you are taking this survey.

	FALSE	Mostly False	Sometimes False, Sometimes True	Mostly True	TRUE	
1. Suppose your teacher chose you to be in the top reading group in your class. It would probably be because:						
a. you are good at reading	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	a
b. you tried very hard	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	b
c. the teacher likes you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	c

	FALSE	Mostly False	Sometimes False, Sometimes True	Mostly True	TRUE	
2. Suppose you had trouble trying to answer the teacher's question about a story in a reading lesson. It is probably because:						
a. the story was too hard for everyone	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	a
b. you are a poor reader	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	b
c. you should have read it more carefully	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	c

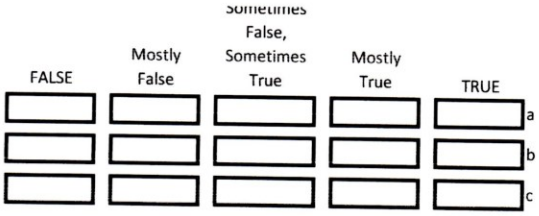
	FALSE	Mostly False	Sometimes False, Sometimes True	Mostly True	TRUE	
3. Supose the teacher asked you to read aloud part of a story for the class and you had trouble doing this. It is probably because:						
a. you are bad at reading aloud						a
b. you read the hardest part of the story						b
c. you were careless in reading the story						c
4. Suppose you start a new story in reading and you find it hard to understand right away. It is probably because:						
a. the teacher picks hard stories						a
b. you were day dreaming						b
c. your reading ability is poor						c
5. Suppose your parents tell you that your reading is good. It would probably be because:						
a. you work really hard at reading						a
b. you always do well at reading						b
c. they are only being nice						c
6. Suppose your teacher says you are doing badly in reading work. It would probably be because:						
a. you are lazy in reading						a
b. the teacher doesn't like you						b
c. you always do badly in reading						c
7. Suppose you are chosen to read a story (out loud) to parents at a special assembly. It would probably be because:						
a. no one else wanted to do it						a
b. you are a good reader						b
c. you have worked hard at reading all year						c

8. Suppose the teacher awarded a gold star for today's reading work and you got it. It would probably be because:

a. you earned it by working hard

b. you were lucky

c. you are a good reader

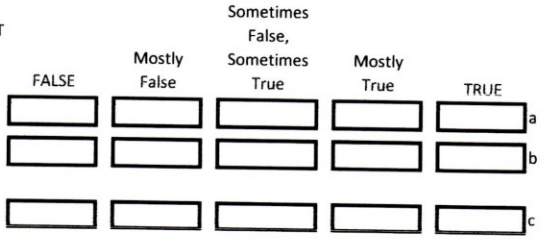


9. Suppose the teacher asked people in your class to try out to read a poem on a TV show but did NOT ask you. It would probably be because:

a. your reading is not good enough

b. you decided to do other things instead of getting the poem ready

c. the teacher forgot to ask you

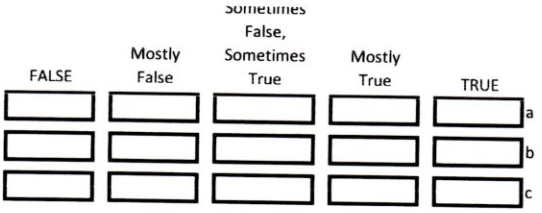


10. Suppose you read a story well in front of your class. It would probably be because:

a. you are good at reading

b. the story is an easy one

c. you made a special effort to read it

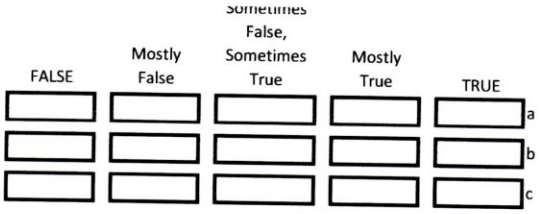


11. Suppose you really did well on a reading test. It is probably because:

a. you were lucky

b. you tried very hard

c. you always do well on reading tests

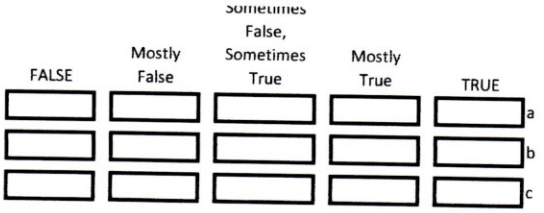


12. Suppose you find it hard to understand a story you are reading. It is probably because:

a. you need to try harder at reading

b. you are a poor reader

c. the story is boring



SAS Key

Reading Success **Ability**
(The student believes his success in reading is due to his ability)

1a. You are good at reading

5b. You always do well at reading

7b. You are a good reader

8c. Your reading is good

10a. You always do well on reading tests

Reading Success **Effort**
(The student believes his success in reading is due to his effort)

1b. You work hard at reading

5a. You really work hard at reading

7c. You have been working hard at your reading all year

8a. You earned it by working hard

10c. You made a special effort to read it

11b. You tried very hard

Reading Success **External**
(The student is not confident of his abilities or perceives that factors outside of his control are more determinant of his success.)

1c. The teacher made a mistake

5c. They are only being nice

7a. No one else wanted to do it

8b. You were lucky

10b. The story was an easy one

11a. You were lucky

Reading Failure **Ability**
(The student believes his lack of success in reading is due to his lack of ability)

2b. You are a poor reader

3a. You are bad at reading aloud

4c. Your reading is poor

6c. You always do badly at reading

9a. Your reading is not good enough

12b. You are a poor reader

Reading Failure **Effort**
(The student believes his lack of success in reading is due to his lack of effort)

2c. You should have read it more carefully

3c. You were careless about reading the story

4b. You were day dreaming

6a. You are lazy in reading

9b. You decided to do other things instead of getting the poem ready

12a. You need to try harder at reading

Reading Failure **External**
(The student is not aware of his lack of ability or perceives that factors outside of his control are the reason for his failure.)

2a. The story was too hard for everyone

3b. You had to read the hardest part of the story

4a. The teacher picks hard stories

6b. The teacher doesn't like you

9c. The teacher forgot to ask you

12c. The story is boring

Appendix J

Participant Interview Questions

Teacher Interview Questions

1. Discuss the implementation of *The Book Love Initiative* in your classroom. What about the protocol worked and what did not work?
2. Describe the ways you have worked to implement *The Book Love Initiative* in your classroom.
3. Describe the ways students' attitudes about reading were impacted because of participation in *The Book Love Initiative*.
4. Describe the impact of *The Book Love Initiative* framework on reading volume.
5. How would you describe the impact of *The Book Love Initiative* framework on reading stamina?
6. How would you describe the impact of *The Book Love Initiative* framework on reading ability in your students?
7. How would you describe the impact of *The Book Love Initiative* framework on reading behaviors?
8. Discuss how you were or were not able to balance your classroom curriculum between choice reading, mentor text study, and whole class reading.
9. How has *The Book Love Initiative* affected your classroom environment and student learning?