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READING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM:  
UNDERSTANDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF READING STRATEGIES

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Submitted in partial fulfillment  
Of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Education  
Moravian College  
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania  
2008

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## ABSTRACT

This qualitative research study examined the effects of using reading strategies within the social studies classroom. The participants were 16 tenth grade students in a low-ability social studies class. The students were introduced to a variety of reading strategies to use while reading primary and secondary sources within the classroom.

This study proposes that instruction of reading strategies within social studies class will lead to greater motivation to read and increased academic achievement. Students' questioning, collaboration, and text response improved with reading strategy instruction. Increased self-assessment was shown through student's verbal responses and survey results. Student understanding of content through the interpretation of primary sources were improved while using content reading strategies. An examination of achievement within student-selected groups and motivation for further reading is discussed.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would first and foremost like to thank my students without whom this study would not have been possible. In agreeing to be part of this study they opened themselves up and revealed their honest feelings about reading which are found in the pages that follow. I would also like to thank the JoAnn Durante for empowering me to be a better teacher and for allowing me to complete this study within the school. Her seemingly endless reserve of energy and passion for school improvement has served as a model for my own search of improvement.

Within this study I must also thank my peers within the M. Ed. Program, from our first class almost three years to this culminating class they have become like a family, supportive and honest, always with an eye towards improving education. Some of the richest discussion I have had as a professional have come within the classes. Of course these classes would not have been possible without Dr. Shosh and the entire M. Ed. Faculty, the commitment they show and the expertise they bring has always challenged my pre-conceptions about education and leave me optimistic about the challenges we need to overcome as teachers. My relationship within Moravian College community remains strong because of the strong administration, the dedicated professors and lastly the ever-supportive alumni association whom I remain an active participant.

When I chose Moravian College as an undergrad it was because of a

feeling I got the first time I walked onto campus as a high school senior. I already felt like I belong in a family. As I became more involved within the larger college community I was fortunate enough to have many great mentors whose guidance remains with me to this day. Whether it was Dr. Mayer encouraging me to consistently reflect back and consider ways of improvement with regard to my teaching or Doug Pollard who first invited me to be part of the Moravian family, I came to know him not only as a coach but as a trusted confidant and most importantly as a friend whom I miss sincerely.

A note of thanks is deserving to the members of my committee who have graciously volunteered to assist in this chapter of my becoming a master of education. I also thank them for their time in reading this document and for the fruitful discussion I am sure will improve my understanding of being a teacher action researcher. The influence of Dr. Mayer within my quest to be the best teacher I could be is a testament to his passion and dedication to teaching. Kathy Bast who has always been a great springboard for discussion I often have with my students and helped influence my choice to study reading within the classroom. Lastly, Dr. Dilendik who I was fortunate enough to have in my introductory class as an undergrad and with whom I now complete my last class as an MEDU student.

On a more personal basis I must thank my parents and brother who have

always supported me in anything I ever tried to in life. Nothing in my life would have every happened had it not been for their love and guidance. I also thank my friends who have remained with me through the good and bad. My track and field athletes also deserve credit for their understanding on days when I have to leave practice for class or on those days when I am grouchy after pulling an all-nighter only to greet them for Saturday morning practice.

Along with my parents I would be remiss if I didn't thank David Piperato who gave me the first job I ever had as a teacher, his belief in me as a teacher has remained with me to this day and his question in my interview ultimately led to my study of reading. There have also been countless others in education who have made a difference in my career including: Mary Katona, Megan Elias, Mark Mench, Ira Hiberman, Stacy Fedorchak, Sandy Hoopes, Matt Quartuch and Dan Lang. I could probably write a page of how each of you have influenced my teaching but I think my readers would get very bored so just know I thank you.

Lastly, I want to dedicate this paper to my son, Benjamin who remains the light of my life. Words cannot describe the joy you bring to my life, you have helped me see a world of wonder and amazement. Some of my greatest joys include reading you your favorite stories or playing out in our yard. I cannot wait to see you grow up and experience all the things this beautiful life has to offer, just don't grow up too quick. All my love.

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## **RESEARCHER STANCE**

In the very first interview I ever had for a teaching position, the principal of the school asked, “How would you incorporate reading and writing strategies into your day-to-day instruction of social studies?” Since this was my first interview and I was already nervous as the eyes of the five-person interview committee bore down upon me, I gave an answer in which I talked about my naïve belief that my most pressing concern as a teacher was the thoughts and ideas of the students not their ability to read or write. After all, I was a newly certified social studies teacher, not a reading specialist. Over the next few weeks I found myself sitting by the phone, waiting, waiting and waiting some more. Then miraculously one day the phone rang, and I was invited back for a second interview. In the second interview the principal told me that it was his hope that by the end of the year he would convince me that helping students to read was just as important as the content. It didn’t take long into my first year of instruction to discover the importance of having a wide variety of resources to teach all students. I recognized all teachers must be teachers of reading because at the higher grades we read to learn. If I did not find the appropriate teaching devices to help students read then all the content in the world would be meaningless to the students.

Over the past six years I have worked within several different districts, from a high achieving, high socioeconomic school to a low socioeconomic, ‘at-risk’ school. At each school there were many great kids with bright futures but also those who lacked the basic skills required to succeed at the secondary level. As I began to contemplate how I could be a better teacher for all my students, I considered many options including looking at how students view current events, the effects of integrating computer resources and the effectiveness of team teaching. While all of these are important, I have decided to study the experiences of high school students who are taught to use reading strategies within the classroom.

In deciding to study this important topic I thought back to my own days as a struggling reader. As a toddler I didn’t speak until I was nearly three; perhaps it was that I was youngest of 7 children that my mother cared for within our home. My oral development became such a concern that I was taken to multiple pediatricians, some of these pediatricians believing that I had a form of autism. As I attended kindergarten I not only was developmentally behind my peers but also had the stigma of being removed from class a few days a week to get regular speech therapy. As I went to first grade I was placed in the Terrific Turtle group; this group was the one for weak readers. I still recall looking around and questioning why the other kids got to read the bigger books, but over the next few years the patience of my parents and my teachers helped me catch up and by the

end of third grade I was among the top readers in my class. While reading soon became second nature for me, it also opened my eyes to the fact that other kids struggled with their reading. As a teacher this connection hadn't yet hit home, as evidenced by my interview.

While I recognize that some students enjoy reading and over the summer will read multiple books from cover to cover, many students find reading to be an unnecessary chore that only distracts from their desire to talk to friends or to play the latest and greatest video game. In developing a curriculum that will both interest students and spark intellectual discussion, I found it necessary to utilize multiple types of text especially primary resources. As I reflect upon my early years of teaching, I realize that not only did some students struggle as they attempted to read the texts, but often they did not know specifically what they could do to become a more effective reader. Most of the school districts in which I have worked had a strong reading program for the elementary grade students, but there was little support for students once they reached the upper grades. Students who were ineffective readers were seen all too often as being stupid, lazy, or simply and perhaps incorrectly labeled as being ADHD.

In order to create a community of learners and not just a group of kids spending time in a room, I must recognize that all students can do better in school. As reading is among the most common tool for students to acquire information and is at the root of most historical understanding, I recognized the need to

incorporate effective reading strategies into the curriculum. Because there was no pre-existing system regarding classroom instruction of reading strategies, I knew it was imperative for me to find literature would help me to be a more effective content area reading teacher.

Another reason I planned a study on the effectiveness of incorporating reading strategies into the social studies curriculum was the belief I hold that reading is a lifelong practice and that the future demands an educated society of learners who value education. For those students who do plan on attending an institution of higher learning, reading will be crucial for their survival at that level of education. For those students who do not elect to go to higher education, reading will be important to maintain their awareness about the world around them.

The third reason I planned to investigate the effectiveness of reading strategies in a social studies classroom was to add another tool to my instructional repertoire. If through conducting this study I am able to find those reading strategies which are effective and discover methods that could be utilized in other classes, I can improve my own instructional practices and perhaps affect the teaching that occurs in other classrooms within the department, my building, the district and perhaps beyond. I hope that by the end of the study I will be able to fully appreciate the question from my first interview about teaching reading as a doorway to increased student content area knowledge. I want parents to

understand the value I place towards becoming a better teacher. I wish my supervisors to gain an appreciation for the value that teacher-research may have throughout the entire school in shaping the fundamental and systematic shift that must occur for improved instruction and learning. Perhaps the most important reason for studying reading strategies is the positive changes that will be evident from my students and the opportunities that they might gain through becoming stronger, more confident readers who value education.

As students become stronger, more confident readers, then perhaps they can accept the independence and the power that is gained, make better choices about the opportunities that await them, and one day promote the importance of reading to their own children and play a stronger role in shaping a world of their own making. My memories of being a young student who struggled with reading, the increased responsibilities that necessitate reading across the curriculum and lastly the personal values I place as a teacher, a parent, a citizen of these United States and as a graduate student of Moravian College have shaped a research question: *What will be the observed and reported experiences when students are taught to use reading strategies within a social studies classroom?* It is from this question that I will begin to look for understanding and perhaps find the elusive answer to the question from my first interview.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Introduction**

*“The new facts and ideas thus obtained become the ground for further experiences in which new problems are presented. The process is a continual spiral. The inescapable linkage of the present with the past is a principle whose application is not restricted to a study of history.”* –John Dewey, 1938

The National Center for Education Statistics reported in 2003 that nearly two-thirds of secondary students struggle with their reading. Given the emphasis placed on reading and writing throughout high schools and the struggles of many students to read, the US Department of Education has begun seeking new information and new studies to improve its base of understanding regarding the literacy of high school students (Biancarosa, 2005). Developing effective reading comprehension skills should be the goal of every teacher, since students will have greater comprehension of the content material and increase fundamental understanding of the subject material being taught (Alexander & Jetton, 2000). Success at the secondary level necessitates strong readers who are able to engage in critical thinking and study throughout all courses. Being a critical reader means using varying reading strategies such as critical evaluation and understanding of

text structures leading to greater comprehension of the newfound knowledge for students (Alfassi, 2004).

Reading in social studies is markedly different from the skills needed in other subject matters. In addition to reading, success in social studies brings in a combination of many fields such as that of history, economics and geography among other disciplines which lead to a larger set of skills for mastery. Students must be able to collect facts, organize patterns, and be able to distinguish between fact and opinion (Massey & Heafner, 2004). In organizing the knowledge that students will develop, one must be mindful of the interaction that students will have and the experiences that will be gained as a result of their reading. Reading comprehension is at the heart of social studies. It is through varied reading experience that students can be successful in their studies.

### **Content Literacy**

#### *Comprehension*

While being a social studies teacher once meant having students memorize names, dates and places, there has been an increased emphasis on reading proficiency and comprehension of the text. Allington (2006) reports of multiple studies conducted by among others Almasi and her colleagues (2005), Kamil (2004), Pressley (2002) who agree on several reading comprehension principles. Among the most important that Allington writes is that through effective teaching student reading can be significantly improved. Allington concludes that through

active thinking the comprehension strategies that students use can be improved. Comprehension is an instructional component that can be improved upon every year especially in classes where demand for comprehension is high (Biancarosa, 2005). In order to have a truly effective strategy Allington (2006) concludes that students need to be taught to use reading strategies over a long period of time.

One strategy that can be used to assist students is to provide opportunities for “think-alouds,” in which students discuss how answers were derived as part of their answer (Fordham et. al., 2002). Duffy, Roehler and Hermann (1988) encourage teachers to use modeling strategies such as “think-alouds” to demonstrate the thinking process. Duffy et al. recommend teachers reading a segment of text and putting it into their own words using everyday language. In time the researchers believe the goal of having students apply the similar strategy will be effective. Having the students “reason-aloud” can assist students in being more aware of what they are actually doing when they read.

Marnell (2000) conducted a study of students in an Atlanta suburban school, in which 9<sup>th</sup> grade students learned to use reading strategies. In the study students were exposed to reading strategies. Students were to use including: read aloud, think aloud, paired reading, paraphrasing and guided reading. As a result of the taught strategies being used student scores in assessment improved (Marnell, 2000). Another study revealed that students provided with training in processing



including think-aloud strategies increased their reading comprehension from pre-training to post-training (Hamman, Shell, Droesch, Husman, & Handwerk, 1997).

### *Modeling*

Students must be instructed to use a variety of strategies while reading a text. As the instructional leader within the class, the teacher must coach and support a reading strategy until students begin to use the processes independently. In order for students to improve their comprehension it is not enough for a teacher to simply instruct students on reading strategies. The teacher should model the behaviors expected of students and slowly release the students until they are able to use the skill independently (Biancarosa, 2005).

### *Critical Thinking*

While students must be able to develop comprehension, it is equally important that students begin the processes of thinking critically about the content being taught (Readance, Bean and Baldwin, 2000). Critical thinking is defined as the ability to accurately and efficiently gather information and form and evaluate conclusions (Perkins, 1987). Students need to be able to analyze the content and think critically about the content found within any source (Ediger, 2002). In social studies one of the more widely used critical thinking skills is to understand cause and effect structures; poor readers especially struggle in making connections between and among the ideas they read (Ciardiello, 2002). Complicating this matter further is that between varying sets of historians there are differences

between the relationships of the past and the present. Understanding how the past informs the present leads to disagreements over the fundamental nature of history and how information ought to be considered (Mayer, 2006).

While reading, students can be trained to be critical readers and have a dialogue with the text. As a teacher one may have students begin asking inquiry questions regarding the text. Based on Bloom's Taxonomy (1956), inquiry-based questions have the reader critically examine the text from each of the six domains within the taxonomy. A reader will be taught to apply knowledge, comprehend, apply, analyze, synthesize and evaluate. Again, modeling the behaviors that strong readers use will lead students to improve on their own practices and reading behaviors. As critical thinking is not a skill that simply can be taught and must instead be developed, one can take a gradual approach to readings in creating a critically thinking class of readers (Unrau, 2004).

Within the classroom, teachers must make real-world connections to the text when conversing with students (Keene & Zimmerman, 1997). Allington recommends that teachers improve their questioning techniques when conversing with students. Having students engage in discussion about the readings can lead to improved achievement (Applebee et. al., 2003). In the study, Applebee recommends that students in lower-achieving classes experience frequent and longer discussions, as their achievement will be greater.

### *Motivation*

Having students read for personal satisfaction can be a difficult task in itself; having students who will read for the purposes of class can be demanding. There are many factors that impact a student's motivation to learn which can be classified into student factors and teacher factors (Unrau, 2004). Among the primary factors affecting student motivation to learn is their personal identity. As students form their identity their motivations will also change. Newmann (1992) discussed how the socio-cultural orientation of students influences their membership and style of school involvement. Stated another way, those students who view their own success as limited will be less likely to invest the energy in strong performance at school. Conversely, those who view themselves as having multiple opportunities outside of school will likely make a stronger investment into their academic studies.

Developing self-directed reading assignments and incorporating student choice regarding reading can be a powerful way of enhancing motivation towards further reading that can be coupled with feedback to provide students with the confidence to become better readers (Biancarosa, 2005). Guthrie and Humenick, (2004) in their meta-analysis of over 20 studies, compiled a list of four factors they believed were the most closely related to student success in reading

achievement and motivation. Guthrie and Humenick cite having easy access to interesting texts and choice were the most influential factors.

### **Reading Strategies**

A reading strategy is a plan students use to comprehend the text they are reading (Massey & Heafner, 2004). Strategy has also been defined as “a systematic plan, consciously adapted and monitored to improve one’s performance in learning” (Harris & Hodges, 1995). All teachers have the opportunity to find places to integrate reading strategies throughout their curriculum. Arlene Barry of the University of Kansas studied the responses of 123 of her former students at the University’s School of Education: Barry found that social studies teachers, on average, used the greatest number of reading strategies within their curriculum by using 13 different strategies. Foreign language, science and gifted teachers self-reported having used 12 strategies. The range of the strategies used ranged from 22 strategies to as few as two strategies. Among the most prominently used strategies were visual aides, analogy, and graphic organizers, each of which was used by more than 75% of the respondents (Barry, 2002).

#### *Graphic Organizers*

Graphic organizers are devices used to assist students in the sorting of information. The use of this strategy allows students to identify and comprehend the most important concepts found within the text. These organizers sort main and

supporting details in an order that will help students understand the structure of the reading (Byer, 2002). Graphic organizers can be developed as students encounter key concepts, then identify how the concepts connect to the overall main point provides guidance for the reader (Massey & Heafner, 2004).

The KWL chart, works well for large class discussion of text and when the whole class is reading the same text. Ogle (1992) created the three-step strategy to encourage student involvement while reading. Students begin by activating prior knowledge, then a stage where students seek to answer predetermined questions and lastly a step where students explicate the information learned while reading. Some students within an upper grade class may feel that this strategy is elementary and that it should not be used while reading independently (Laverick, 2002). However among the most important functions of graphic organizers is to assist students in understanding the arrangement of texts. With the wider array of expected knowledge required of social studies readers and the demands for organization of material the use of a KWL can be significant for students who struggle to find meaning behind text structure (Massey & Heafner, 2004).

### *Reciprocal Teaching*

Reciprocal teaching is described by Glaser (1990) as an instructional technique in which reading comprehension is viewed as a problem solving activity in which thinking is promoted while reading. The reciprocal teaching model uses a prescribed series of interactions designed to engage a student's

cognitive processing. While reading students examine the text paragraph by paragraph and practice specified reading strategies such as summarizing, clarifying, generating questions and making predictions about the text (Palincsar & Brown, 1984). At the heart of reciprocal teaching is students acting as the teacher in small groups to better engage in comprehension of texts (Unrau, 227) Within the small groups students are essentially engaged in a problem solving activity in which students read excerpts from the text with their group members and together generate questions, summarize the text, clarifying any confusing parts of the text and make predictions about future readings (Alfassi, 2004).

At the beginning of developing a reciprocal teaching model the teacher takes the lead role. Over time students are able to lead discussions of text. In time novice learners are able to lead their peers to alternative views to their own (Brown & Palincsar, 1989). Reciprocal teaching has demonstrated in the past few years to meet of challenge of applicability to high school students who needed to internalize metacognitive strategies such as self-assessment and self-regulation (Unrau, 228).

#### *Pre-/Post-/During Checks*

In establishing effective practices that will engage students in content literacy, one can stimulate a student's interest prior to a reading by having students complete a writing assignment (Myers & Savage, 2005).

Pre-reading is the emphasis on establishing a purpose for reading and to assist students in making connections to their prior knowledge of the reading. Establishing a purpose for reading can allow the teacher to model those aspects of text that are primary concern. For students who struggle with figuring out what is important this guidance can provide a roadmap for student understanding (Massey & Heafner, 2004).

Byer (2002) recommends that as students are engaged in reading the teacher must monitor the comprehension of students through effective questioning; including the use of the “question-wait-call” technique. This example of student centered questioning can be powerful in helping a student understand the text. Among the many questions a teacher can employ is a strategy called Questioning the Author in which students think critically about the choices the author made while constructing the text (Beck & McKeown, 2002).

As students complete a content based reading activity, teachers must help them be able to summarize what they have read. Writing is identified as a reciprocal process to reading. Once reading has been completed teachers can have students write about the piece they have read to demonstrate their understanding of the reading and share it with their peers (Fordham et. al., 2002). Utilizing reading strategies in which students work cooperatively can lead to greater student motivation and achievement as students create meaningful connections regarding their reading and their choices about strategies to use.

## Reading Sources

Many researchers have begun suggesting that there is a looming crisis in the United States regarding the ability of our high school and middle school teachers when it comes to reading. As such, one of the responsibilities of a history teacher is to be able to provide texts that are appropriate to the students. Furthermore, by exposing students to texts that are varied and appropriate to their reading ability, the student is exposed to biases and influences of the media to be discussed and makes the student a more informed reader (Segall & Schmidt, 2006).

Reading within a social studies course requires that an informed reader have the opportunity to develop content literacy from a variety of different points of view. If done effectively, this will allow the reader to gain essential reading and thinking practices (Massey & Heafner, 2004). Among the practices that will lead to an improved historical understanding is to examine varying resources such as primary documents, films, non-print sources, and oral histories (Wilson & Memory, 2001).

### *The History Book*

In considering the various reading sources used within a social studies classroom, it is essential to begin by examining the history textbook. Mastropieri, Scruggs, and Graetz (2003) conducted a meta-analysis of multiple studies that indicate that most history teachers rely solely upon the social studies textbook. A



2001 study completed by the US Department of Education found that textbooks within a social studies class are used more frequently than in any other content disciplines (Wakefield, 2006). These textbooks are often not made to be reader friendly and instead have densely written paragraphs, often outside a reader's ability level or prior knowledge. Myers and Savage (2005) describe content literacy as the ability of the reader to understanding of the content based on the reading.

While many teachers do use the textbook as the primary reading text within the classroom, few will examine the organization of the book, to assist students in what is actually found within and beyond the text (Myers & Savage, 2005). Introducing the organizational pattern of the text to students will assist students in having a greater understanding of the text before they read and perhaps assist in recalling prior knowledge of the subjects to be studied (Myers & Savage, 2005). Within the structure of the textbook some of the common structural patterns and devices are: cause/effect, description, hierarchical understanding, time order, and comparison/contrast of events or topics (Ciardiello, 2002). Ogle (2004) in a paper presented to a reading conference, supports the idea that students be familiar with the external features and structures of the textbook. Myers and Savage (2005) believe that teachers engage in read-alouds with students to examine the structure of the book and to create a learning environment that engages students towards relevant purposes.

With the challenges faced in reading a textbook a teacher can support student readers by using advanced organizers. By creating a visual outline in a hierarchical structure students can have a greater direction about the reading (Fordham, Wellman, & Sandmann, 2002). Fordham describes this as a visual construct that places main ideas at the top of a diagram with supporting topics underneath. In addition to constructing advanced organizers, Byer (2002) recommends teaching specific skills for history textbooks such as understanding the cause and effect text structures found within the book. As students become more aware of the signal words of a sentence structure their comprehension will improve.

#### *Primary Sources*

Primary sources are defined by Dalton and Charnigo (2004) as documents and records that allow researchers to have “direct, unmediated information about the object of study.” Students should be exposed to sources that provide varying perspectives, as this leads to critical thinking as well as historical understanding skills, including evaluation, analysis, and synthesis of historical events (Massey & Heafner, 2004). Mayer (2006) provides a case study in which pre-service teachers use primary documents to enliven classes and promote student interaction with the text. Mayer also describes the need for students to learn what a primary document is and how to promote thinking within the historical context of the documents. Mayer (2006), in a case study of a student teacher, describes a lesson

in which the student teacher used primary documents relating to the 1932 Presidential election. In the lesson Mayer describes how students were able to read the pieces for content, but also understand biases and context of speeches of the opposing candidates. In an analysis of historical thinking, Mayer (1999) encourages history teachers to have students look at different interpretations of the same event and ask critical questions about the competing accounts to gain deeper understanding of fact. Furthermore Mayer writes that readers will become involved in studying history because as they see multiple perspectives as they become involved in the story.

In developing reading strategies for primary sources, teachers must be aware that such sources don't always lend themselves to outlines or graphic organizers. To guide students in the comprehension of such text structures teachers should break the source into manageable parts and model the strategies necessary for comprehension (Massey & Heafner, 2004).

## METHODOLOGY

### **Setting**

The setting of the study takes place at a large suburban high school in eastern Pennsylvania. The ethnically diverse school has a population of more than 2,500 students. The school is renowned for its academic, music and athletic programs; additionally it boasts a strong AP program and multiple electives. The student year is divided into two semesters. During each semester students take four courses of 83 minutes each. For my study, I conducted research with my tenth grade career prep United States History class. The course begins with the ratification of the Constitution and concludes with the Spanish-American War. The physical environment of the class changed during the semester. I began in a technology-laden science classroom that included computer work stations, a projector, interactive whiteboard and video devices. In early November the class moved to a new room which had two chalkboards and no computer with walls that could easily lull students into boredom. This change occurred as a result of our school earning a grant from the state which placed laptops and a projector in the classroom. The change allowed me to have a home base where I taught not only my study class but my other classes as well. Unfortunately the technology did not actually get delivered until after the study. It is not believed that the change of class setting had a significant effect on the outcomes of the study.

### **Participants**

The study was conducted with a class of 15 tenth grade students. The participants who made up the study were a diverse group of students which included 6 boys and 9 girls. The ability level of the students was as diverse as they were. One of the students who began the study dropped out of school after having failed two school years previously. The motivation of the students varied on most days, however the students each arrived with their own distinct personalities from the quiet, English Language Learning student to the ever combustible mile-a-minute talker who seemed to enjoy the dissonance created by her own voice. The course was required of all tenth grade students which resulted in many students harboring a negative opinion of the class. Additionally, according to 4Sight test data available on our school district's internal network many student were evaluated as being basic or below basic on the reading portion of the test.

### **Research Methods**

I began discussion about the study with both of the United States History classes I taught on the first day of school. I explained to them that within the next few days I might choose their class to participate in the study. I informed both classes that even if theirs was not picked that did not mean I would not be closely examining their work; I explained that reading, especially of primary sources, would be a key component of my instruction whether I was conducting a study or

not. Upon choosing a class I explained to the class that members of the sponsoring institution had reviewed the study as part of the HSIRB team (Appendix J). Additionally, I explained that the study had been approved by the principal (Appendix B). As I explained to students on the first day of school, I valued reading within the classroom and that my study would be looking at ways I could improve their comprehension of reading. I told them that as the study proceeded I would be modeling some strategies that they should use while reading, but at the same time, told them that what I was showing them was not a “one-size-fits-all” model. I told them that my goal was that they would learn some new ways to apply the strategies I taught them. I handed out consent forms, reviewed them with the students and asked if they had any questions regarding the letter (Appendix A). I then asked them to return the form by the end of the week, once they have reviewed it with parents and attained their signatures.

In the past I had simply given students a time limit to read the passages followed by a discussion of what they had read. It started to become a discussion that was limited to a few students and anguish on my part as to what I could do to better to assist students. As part of my study I first wanted to gain an understanding of what students were already doing. I gave students a reading from which I observed what strategies they were already using. I had students list those things they currently did while they were reading, this is also known as the baseline data. Once we established those things that students had already done, we

developed a plan for those tools that students could use in reading the primary sources.

Over the next few weeks in class students had reading strategies modeled and explained, which they would then use while reading pieces. Among the strategies that I used were Group Reading, Graphic Organizers, Talking to the Text, and Reciprocal Teaching. Additionally students used whole class, small group and individual reading tools. By using a variety of tools and methods students could choose the method that best appealed to their learning style. Students read primary sources approximately three times per week. While students also completed class-assigned readings outside the class, the main focus was on what strategies students used while in class. On tests students always had a primary source. They would answer questions to determine how well they were able to apply their skills. As the study moved into November and December, I began to take a closer look at how students use their reading strategies in a group setting as opposed to working individually.

Among the qualitative methods used to understand and document the efforts of students were surveys, interviews, journaling, observation and student work and test data. Surveys were collected at various times throughout the study. (Appendix C) From these surveys I made decisions about the types of reading strategies that were to be included in the study. Additionally, as I collected data from students, I was better able to tailor the instruction students were receiving

and focus on those reading strategies students found to be the most meaningful. These surveys helped me gain an understanding of outside readings students were using, assisted in developing discussions we had in class and for establishing those questions I asked during interviews.

As I stated, the surveys were key ingredients in shaping the questions that I used while conducting interviews with students. In my first set of interview questions I got background information on students to determine the types of books they read, the styles of reading and their feelings about reading. The second interview looked at how students were using the reading strategies that had been shown in class and their opinions about their use as well as general impressions of reading. This step allowed me to get a stronger understanding from the students about what was working and what was not. The format of the second interview differed from the scripted questions of the first round, as it was conducted in a more relaxed atmosphere and focused on student responses and attempted to get in depth about their thoughts. The third round of interviews was a group interview that centered around individual reading strategies versus group reading strategies. This process allowed all students to have the opportunity to discuss the reading strategies we used in class. I wanted to be sure to have such a group interview so that all students could have their voices heard. It also helped established a sense of closure and reflection for the students about the process of reading.



Journaling is a practice I had planned on using strongly while constructing the study. My intent was to have the students journal approximately every week, however after three weeks many of the student responses were weak or non-existent. The journaling also routinely came at the end of class when students rushed their answers or simply wrote the bare minimum. In discussing this with my teacher-inquiry support group I recognized that the responses I was getting from my interviews and surveys was sufficient for the study so I stopped the practice of journaling and relied more heavily on interviews and survey data.

Observation was a major part of the study. As students were being taught to use the reading strategies and were working both individually and in groups, I observed as much as possible what the students were doing. Among the activities that I observed students doing were their reactions and questions about reading strategies, what they did within their groups, and the responses they gave in class. I also carefully recorded the interaction that students had with me as well as the types of questions and responses that students were providing. These notes provided an accurate log of the experiences of students and were useful for the purposes of reflection and analysis.

Collecting student work was the third area that I used to collect data about my students. In this process I periodically collected work that students had completed in class to check how they were using the strategies as well as to check the accuracy of their responses. When using the Talking to the Text strategy I

found it especially helpful to examine the work students handed in because it would show the types of notation that students made on paper. I used this to look at the depth and quality of the reading strategy. Additionally I always included a primary source on the chapter tests. This was done to see how well students were applying their skills and if they used any notation while completing the questions, without prompting.

### **TRUSTWORTHINESS STATEMENT**

In order to carry out a study that demonstrates my ability to be a participant in the study while at the same time a collector of data it was important to maintain certain conditions. In developing the study I first investigated those practices that have previously been shown to be effective and made a plan to use those best practices of teaching strategies within the study. Faculty members of the Moravian College Education Department, the Human Subjects Internal Review Board and my principal approved the study. Holly, Arhar, and Kasten (2005) advise discussing the study with students, in terms they can understand, and answer questions or address concerns they may have. I met with students and assured them that participation in the study was not mandatory, and that they could withdraw at any time without penalty. I let them know that they would participate in the learning, regardless of their participation in the study. Once I was confident that students understood the study, I provided all students with a consent form that was signed by their parents.

Among the considerations that I made included a data collection plan that involved triangulation of the field log, student work and student responses in interviews and surveys. Holly, Arhar, and Kasten (2005) stated, "Building a classroom environment based on respect is the first ingredient of ensuring confidentiality" (p.177). Student anonymity was maintained as student responses were be shared with other students and pseudonyms were used to protect the

identity of the students. A key was developed with its location maintained apart from the field log in a place known only to me. Student work was included in the study with all actual names being removed and not accessible to other students or other members of the professional staff. I also assured students that during interviews they could be honest in their responses without the fear of consequences. This was supported by a level of trust that had already been established with students within the class. I also interviewed students away from the rest of class so they could have privacy with their answers.

As my study progressed, students were reminded of their ability to withdraw through a written note without the penalty of losing points. Additionally the building administrator was kept abreast of the study and was given updates regarding the information collected and the methods used to be sure it is consistent with the regular delivery of the curriculum. In addition, I shared the data with my teacher researcher group who gave clear and consistent feedback regarding my study. Additionally we examined my interpretation of the data being collected (MacLean & Mohr, 1999). We also discussed possible biases related to the study. Among my biases were: my strong belief that teaching reading strategies activities will motivate all students to read, and that teaching reading strategies would facilitate improved reading and develop greater content area knowledge.

Researcher trustworthiness is very important for retaining integrity

throughout the research study and data collection. The efforts I made towards being an ethical and trustworthy researcher are evident through the efforts taken to ensure the safety, anonymity, and highest regard for the students.

## **THE STORY OF MY STUDY**

### **Meeting the Class**

I begin this story with the first day of school, walking around the long hallways I was struck by a strange feeling. I knew some of the students who occupied the hallways. Up until this year, I had worked at a different school every year for the past five years. Now in my sixth year I saw students who had gotten taller, had changed hair styles and had new boyfriends. It was also noticeable that a group of students had moved on to college while another group was finding out for the first time what high school would really be like.

The new school year also meant that for the first time I would be teaching the same curriculum in back to back years. As a result I could improve those practices I was already using and try new approaches that I thought would work with students. When I met my students on this first day I was excited to explain to them the study that I would be conducting over the next three months in class. Upon meeting my class I noticed that my class was diverse. The first to greet me was Chaz, a proud young man who I would find out later had a strong interest in hip-hop music, basketball and telling jokes. He also was a great reader, however he admitted he was lazy with completing assignments and only read because he was forced to read. The first question he asked after introducing himself was if we would be getting books on the first day of class.

I began the first class by handing out the syllabus to students, explaining my expectations for the class and gave a broad outline of the assignments for the semester. I also mentioned that I would be doing a study of reading within the schools and saw Rod look up with a confused face. I asked if any of the students had any questions, but being the first day of school they were quiet.

About five days later, on the next Monday, as we were about to begin our study of the Federalist Era, I entered class and wrote the warm-up on the board; Define political party. Students eagerly worked on the task. Kole and Rose asked where they could find it in the book; when I told them that it wasn't in the glossary but instead in the text, they stared at me and replied, "That's wack, how are we suppose to know?" I asked if they had ever heard the term before, Kole replied "Yeah, but that doesn't mean I know what it is." I nodded by understanding and told her to simply try her best.

After five minutes students stopped and were asked to give their responses, Chaz responded that it was "a bunch of people who get together to do stuff."

Fred stated, "It's a party of political...people." A few more responses were given until finally I asked for their attention as our efforts towards creating a definition were not effective. I then explained that in class we would be examining a reading about the creation of the first political parties. Students were going to read the piece but not be shown a strategy to be used while reading. Stew

asked concernedly, “Yo, mister, this is four pages long...how will I ever read it all.”

“You will have the next 30 minutes to read it and make whatever notes you feel are necessary to conduct a mature discussion about the content.” Students read the paper but after two minutes were already starting to call out with questions regarding what certain words and phrases meant such as candid, stout, elusive, quadrennial, virtuoso...and it was only the first pages.

“How could you answer those questions on your own? For words that you do not understand?” Anthony said if he had a dictionary they could look up the word, but even then he might not know what it meant because dictionaries are just as confusing as the books they are reading. Students continued reading, Candace seemed to have fallen asleep and Mimi had taken to doodling sailboats in her notebook. Fanny finished the piece and began to re-read the earlier pages, highlighting a few passages as she reviewed the content.

As the end of the 30 minutes came to an end, a few students in the back of the room simply let out a grunt, “Thank god...so what was this all about,” asked Abby.

“You tell me.”

“It just talked on and on about Jefferson and Adams” she replied.

“OK, but what did it actually say about them?”

“I don’t know,” as she slunk back into her desk.



“Can anyone tell me what it means?” No hands went into the air. “Let’s turn to the first page and look at the physical descriptions given by Adams and Jefferson. ‘They were the odd couple of the American Revolution: Adams the short, stout, candid to a fault New Englander; Jefferson, the tall, slender, elegantly elusive Virginian. Adams the high combustible, ever combative, mile-a minute talker whose favorite form of conversation was an argument; Jefferson the forever cool and self-contained enigma who regarded an argument as the dissonant noise that disrupted the natural harmonies inside his own head.’ “Why would the author write out their differences like this?” I asked.

“So we can see how they are different?” responded Rebecca.

“But why not write: They were different.” I replied.

“You tell me.” asked Kyle.

I stopped to ask the class, “What about this reading made it difficult to understand?”

“It was boring and long.” Retorted Kole.

“They used too many big words,” stated Anthony. It was then that I began explaining to the students that I would be starting a study that would look at ways to improve student understanding of reading by incorporating reading strategies into the classroom.

“That’s cool,” said Rose. “Do we get extra points or something?”

I told them that goal of the study was to help me understand whether the instruction they were getting in class was good or not, and that hopefully the findings could be shared with other teachers to make sure that how we teach is actually working.

### **Why do we need reading?**

A few days later students walked into the room and began class with the usual routine, students walked into the class and began to work on the warm-up. It soon got to the time to begin working on our reading activity for the day, using Talking to the Text. Students were going to be reading the four verses of the Star Spangled Banner, as they read their goal was to determine what the author actually meant regarding the document. I began by introducing the Star Spangled Banner, telling students that it was written by a lawyer Francis Scott Key during the attack on Fort McHenry, in Baltimore, during the War of 1812.

As I handed the paper out, students expressed confusion. “Yo Mister, why is it so long?” asked Chaz.

“Do we have to read all of it?” Stew asked. I informed students that the entire Star-Spangled Banner was four verses long and was originally intended to be performed as poetry.

I passed out to all students a set of post-it notes. Immediately, Mimi and Rose began to ask if they could have purple. I consented, then explained to the purpose of the post-it notes. Using the elmo device, which is essentially a video

camera that projects document images, I placed my copy below and explained to students that I could use the notes to either mark a section I did not understand or to summarize key sections. If there was a particular section that I had a questions about, I would write the questions down and make sure to ask it later on. Rebecca informed me that she had already done this when she had been a middle school student but hadn't done it since. As I had students start working independently to read the poetry, I saw many diligently at work. The room was buzzing with the writing of notes and usual whisperings of high school students.

As students were reading, Stew was mouthing the words to himself as he read and at one point poked his finger in Fanny's back to ask if he was doing everything right. She nodded and said he should stop bothering her. Chaz who sits in front of Fanny kept turning around to talk but was rebuffed especially when he saw that I was looking in his direction. Mimi on the other hand, seemed confused with the entire exercise and just made a big question mark and placed it in the middle of the page and put her head down, only to pick it up to start a conversation with whoever would acknowledge her. Chaz turned around, his paper had not a single note on it. He turned around to Fanny and was making a silly face perhaps hoping to gain her approving laughter. Daniella, an intermediate English-Language Learner (ELL) student who migrated from Puerto Rico was concentrating and kept raising her hand to ask what the words meant on the page. I told her to put the note down, but she insisted she didn't get anything about the

reading, so I crouched down next to her as she read it aloud to me. It was while I was down next to her that I noticed Anthony and Sandy were trading their colors of post-it notes. I left Daniella for a moment to ask if they were using them to indicate the different types of notes they wanted to leave but I was told that they just wanted to trade colors, “She got all the yellow ones.”

Mimi raised her hand and said, “I don’t understand half of this stuff.”  
“Mister, at the rate I am going I am going to run out of post-it notes.”

As I began seeing students talking more, I gave a 30 second finish up call. I then asked the students what they understood. Candace, a senior who had previously failed the class answered, “That the last line every paragraph is the same....like what they do in music.”

Fred said “They were talking about a battle.” There were no more hands so I asked students to then look at what questions they had regarding the piece; Mimi, Stew, Sandy and Rebecca’s hands went into the air. Stew was first and asked, “Can you tell us what this is all about?” “What is a rampart?” “What do they mean by Star-Spangled Banner?”

Using the elmo I began marking our class copy of the printed poem; students were asked to try and determine the context of words simply by reading them. “Is a rampart like a bomb?” asked Rebecca.

I then directed students to look at how many times the author cuts back a word such as O’er and Heav’n. “Why does he do this?”

“Because he is bad at spelling?” suggested Rebecca.

Heather asked if it had “something to do with iambic pentameter.” The class turned towards her, “its something we talked about in class.” I let the class digest that thought and asked who else had heard of rhyming patterns. Almost all except for Daniella and Kole nodded their heads.

I asked another student to then describe in layman’s terms what the first paragraph was all about, “This guy was watching a fight going on, and the entire time the flag just kept on flying then they went to war again.” Anthony attempted. I told the class that we would finish our discussion at the outset of the next class.

### **Crash and Burn**

Among my core beliefs as a social studies teacher is that students become critical historians with regard to primary sources. Among the practices where I believed students could improve was with their ability to analyze and interpret primary sources. Following our study of the Federalist Era, students began their study of industrial growth. The chapter began by examining a primary document of two different people and their experiences working in the mills of New England.

I began by explaining to students that they would be working in reciprocal teaching groups. Students were placed into groups in which each member took turns being the team leader and would walk the members of the group through a series of prescribed questions that would assist students in gaining a greater

understanding of the material that they were reading. I began by showing the questions and the procedures that students would be using.

“Greg, can you explain to me what you will be doing in your groups?” I asked. “Ummm....we will read the paper, and at the end of every paragraph someone will ask us if we have any questions;” Greg stated. “Then the leader will pick someone to summarize everything we read. If the other people want to add to it they can. Then someone else will clarify that message or you ask the leader a question to clarify what the summary was. Then the last partner will predict what will happen next with the piece.”

I sent students to their self-chosen groups. In the first group that met by the window Stew read the first paragraph. Fanny, the petite cheerleader turned to Chaz and asked, “Are you getting this?” He did not respond, nor did the other group members. Fanny moved ahead and continued to read the passage.

Recognizing that this group was not following the prescribed steps I wondered if this was just a hiccup in the lesson or if the entire process of reciprocal teaching was crashing and burning around me. I thought to myself, ‘What should I do if a group just doesn’t get it?’; at this point in the study I did not have a plan for facilitating a group that did not do the desired reading strategy.

I walked away from this group to the second group that was sitting against the back wall near the set of microscopes that occupied the cabinet that reminded me that we met in science classroom. I immediately noticed that Greg was not

actively engaged in the discussion with other students. In the previous year Greg had also been a student of mine. I always thought him to be a bright student who was extremely talented working with his hands as demonstrated by his high marks at the vocational technical school. However his success and school experience seemed to be limited by poor hygiene and weak social skills that often deprived him of the social experiences many enjoyed in high school.

I asked Greg what was going on and he said that it [the reading strategy] was taking too long and that it was “dumb.” I encouraged him to be involved with his group members but they did not want his involvement and he did not want to join their discussion. I glanced at the copied primary document in front of the students and saw that Kole had written summaries of each paragraph in the margin and while I was standing next to their work table saw Rose give Kole a high-five upon reading and summarizing the paragraph. While watching this group in action it became apparent that Kole and Rose were doing all the work while Greg sat out frustrated and Mimi quietly copied anything that the two girls had written. Again thoughts about the effectiveness of this reading strategy crept into my head; ‘Was it something I had done or not done?’

The third group was huddled quietly by the desktop computer. Looking at their papers it was apparent that none had written notes on their pages. On a closer examination I saw that students were simply working together while attempting to

answer the questions that appeared at the bottom of the page. Anthony looked up and asked, “Mister, how are we supposed to understand any of this?”

“When your group read the document what did you understand?”

“Nothing, we each took turns reading and by the time we got to the questions no one understood anything.”

“Did you go through the steps of summarizing, clarifying and asking questions?”

“No, we just kept reading because it takes too long.”

I asked all the groups to stop and return to their seats, I recognized that I needed to de-brief the class to figure out why this wasn't working. I explained to the class what types of behaviors were going on at each group and returned to the original step by step directions I had originally put on the overhead.

Candace who had laid her head down, mumbled that this “was dumb, it is just a waste of time.” I recognized the hesitation of students to discuss the activity and instead passed out their class journals where I asked them to write about this questions which I wrote on the board, “Describe what you thought went well and what did not. What could you do better next time while working in the group.” I was excited to read their responses while at the same time was worried that we as a class were in a hole that we might not be able to crawl out of.

Upon reading the responses of the students I recognized that two patterns had emerged, the first being that students didn't have a strong sense of what was



involved in doing reciprocal teaching and secondly that they didn't know why they were reading what they were reading. I looked through a few sources I had gathered by my desk and recognized that I failed to do something that good readers do. I had failed to assist students in finding a purpose for the reading. Additionally I needed to model to students the type of group collaboration I expected.

It was mid-October, the leaves were turning various shades of red and yellow. In class we continued to examine the growth of the American nation. My plan was to have students read a letter written by Andrew Jackson's mother to the future President. I began the class by asking students to think about the reasons people write letters. The list on the board included: to share news, to invite someone to a party, to wish them good luck, to tell someone a secret, to break-up with them, to ask questions. I asked students to imagine they had lived in the United States before telephones, email and instant messaging. Students shuttered at this thought but said that letters would probably be the only way you could really communicate over long distances.

I informed students that we would read a letter written to Andrew Jackson when he was a teenager by his mother just before her death. As I handed out copies to all the students I told them to think about her purpose for writing the letter. I reviewed with students the steps for reciprocal teaching and asked for three student volunteers to help me demonstrate the process. With our desks

turned together I helped model with the volunteers the process that was going to use. A few in the class nodded in understanding. I asked the students to again form groups and read the piece together using the procedures.

As the groups went to their tables to begin their work, all the groups were able to go much further with their understanding of the text as based off of last week. The girls' group immediately went through with their reading, and as they summarized, Rose told her teammates, "Oh, now I get it."

Rebecca, who also was using the Talking to the Text strategy said, "I get it now, writing everything down helps me understand everything that is going on with the reading."

Kole asked, "What does this word mean?"

Mimi, the third member of the group stated that she didn't know but that they should highlight the word and get back to it later.

Fanny led her group in summarizing the letter from Jackson's mom. The group worked diligently and Fanny began peppering her group members with questions during the clarification process, "Why would she write this?"

Rod responded, "She probably believed in him and thought that it was advice that he needed regardless of whether he was President or not."

Within the reciprocal teaching method, students began to analyze the piece and give summaries about their understanding of the piece. When I brought the group back together, members of the class were excited as we discussed the piece.

Fred thought it was cool to read such a letter because they think the same advice would “probably be given most people living in that era.” I left that class feeling confident that students finally understood the process and that they would probably be able to use this method on their own over time.

### **A Tale of Two Students**

As the leaves of Autumn were finally falling from the trees the school was buzzing as Halloween was just around the corner and the big football game was just a day away. In class we were still addressing the growth of the United States, included in this growth was an examination of slavery and the Battle of the Alamo. It was also at this point of the year when the first round of report cards had been sent home and as a teacher I was getting a stronger sense everyday about the strengths and weaknesses of my students. Within this class there was a wide range of ability levels. The stories of Sandy and Daniella show a contrast in the type of reader abilities within my class and the challenges faced within the diverse class.

As I walked into class I immediately noticed the school colors being proudly displayed by students as they shuffled into their desks. Sandy was sitting in her front row chair closest to the door and immediately began answering the warm-up. The chair at the back of the row was empty, that chair belonged to Daniella, an English-Language Learner who because of construction at the school was relegated to taking her first period class at another school three block away.

As a result of the three block journey she needed to make everyday it would often be 20 minutes into class that she arrived. Once the warm-up was collected I listed the class objectives to the class and reviewed the homework from the prior evening. The back seat was still empty.

I distributed to all students in the class a copy of the Texas Declaration of Independence. As I was handing papers to those students seated closest to the window, Daniella, with her jacket still on quietly slipped into the room and proceeded to her chair. I returned to her row to pass back another paper. I instructed all students to read the document and use whatever reading strategy they felt could best assist them in understanding the meaning behind the document. Once students completed the reading I wanted them to compare the Texan document to the Declaration of Independence which we had previously examined.

Sandy immediately began to underline a few words and phrases with her red pen. In the back of the room Daniella was sorting through her backpack and finally raised her hand to show me she had completed her homework assignment. I marked it in my gradebook and asked if she had any questions, “Yeah, what are we supposed to do?”

“I want you read this primary source, compare it to our own Declaration of Independence and then answer the five questions on the bottom of the page....do you know what you are doing?” She nodded.

I walked around the class and saw that Sandy had raised her hand, I walked over to answer her questions of whether she could use the textbook to compare the worksheet to the Declaration of Independence. I could see that Sandy's paper was well marked throughout and that she had used her highlighter to mark the second sentence. Daniella was using her finger as she read the piece and was still only at the second line. I walked back and asked if she understood everything she had read. "Not really, I don't understand most of the words." I thought to myself about how using primary sources presents a challenge in differentiating content especially with ELL students. With secondary sources I can often find material sources that will be helpful to all ability-level students.

"I give up," sighed Daniella.

"Remember, when you don't understand something you can circle the statement and come back to it." She looked at me as though I had three heads.

As I was finishing my discussion with Daniella I heard some noise at my back and noticed that Sandy had turned around to help Anthony with his reading. She caught my eyes but finished her thought and turned back around. She raised her hand and when I went back over she had finished all but the third question and asked if she was to answer what she thought or what the document stated. Daniella still had not finished.

Sandy, who not only had almost finished the questions, but had already placed her third post-it note into her textbook and asked if I had a dictionary that

could help her better understand the words of the Declaration of Independence. Daniella by contrast had earlier not understood a word and instead asked me for what the words meant. Two students in the same class, one was like a shark aggressively seeking greater understanding, the other like a sponge either unwilling or unable to understand the reading and acquire greater understanding.

I left this class frustrated thinking that maybe if Daniella arrived on time everyday I could help her more, or if Daniella's struggles were because she didn't have a strong English understanding. I left class thinking that I needed to have the students working together to increase our literacy as a whole yet still help individuals.

### **Getting Along**

As students became more comfortable with reading strategies I continued to place them into groups to examine the strategies they used. It was the first week of November, the air was getting colder and in class we were studying the events leading up to the civil war.

The prior day in class students had been exploring the geographical challenges of the underground railroad and the heroism of Harriet Tubman. On this day students were going to be reading journal entries by two slaveholders and their treatment of slaves. I told students that they would be reading the documents individually and that they should use the Talking to the Text strategy we had previously reviewed in class of making notes on the page.

“Can we work with groups?” asked Stew. Having planned for students to be working individually for this assignment I was admittedly caught a bit off guard. I wanted to know more since for the most of the previous assignments students did get to work in groups. I believed that students would favor the opportunity to read on their own.

“Why do you want to work in groups?”

“It just helps me understand everything better, plus this is too boring to read on your own.” Kole continued, “I just think that I when I read it on my own I don’t understand as well as I could.”

“Mister, we always work in groups, everyone is always talking and they start fooling around, plus one person ends up doing all the work anyway.” Suzy, the sarcastic, often-troubled teen replied. I had always believed Suzy to be intelligent but often she displayed an unwillingness to follow what everyone else was doing. I wanted to know more and thought that this could be a wonderful opportunity to find out what the class was really thinking concerning the reading approach we were doing in class. Little did I know that the class mostly supported the idea of working in groups.

“Who wants to work in groups?” It was nearly unanimous with all but Suzy and Greg joining with the rest of the class. “For those who voted to work in groups, is it that you don’t like working by yourself, you think you don’t read as

well or are you simply worried that I will call on you and that you won't know anything?"

"I just think I understand it better when I can hear it read out loud." Stated Rose.

"When I don't understand something I feel like I can ask my partners because they probably do not understand it either." Rod nodded when he heard Anthony say this.

"But can't you ask your friends or me when you don't understand something?" I thought if it worked in small groups, why not as a whole?

"But in groups we usually get along a lot better and we are usually reading at the same pace." Anthony said while looking around to some of his usual partners.

Now almost 40 minutes into class I finally decided that the best course of action would be to let students choose for themselves if they wanted to work in groups or individually but that they were limited to only 20 minutes to complete the assignment.

Stew's group, which had pushed their desks together, began to read the document out loud taking turns in a clockwise fashion. Within a few minutes I could see that Fanny was helping Stew and Rod understand one of the paragraph's. The group finished reading the document first and then began discussing the conditions that slaves had endured.



“What do you think you would have been done differently if you would have gotten confused while reading this?” I asked.

“Mister, sometimes I am getting to where I am reading the same sentence three or four times and it still doesn’t make sense, it can be really frustrating. Having partners helps get through those times. It’s when I am by myself that I get confused and that’s when I just call it quits or I skip the entire selection.”

In Sandy’s group, while they were all sitting together, they all seemed to be individually reading the document. As I walked closer to the group a few heads started to look up as they finished the primary source.

Meanwhile across the room Rose had laid her head down. When I nudged her to get up she stated that the reading was giving her a headache and that she didn’t understand what it was saying anyway. Her group had really been separated with Rebecca and Fred reading it together while Mimi and Rose were laying their heads down.

When I brought the class together, and asked students for their impressions of the reading. I told students that together we would construct a concept web based on the notes that they took. Fanny began by stating that we should put up a bubble about the treatment of slaves and “how they treated them and the conditions they lived.”

Greg, who had worked on his own, listed the idea that property could be another bubble since the slaves were treated as property and that in the second paragraph they stated that they held the slaves as property.

I asked Fred if there was anything he thought should be entered in another bubble. He said he could not make sense of the third paragraph and shook his head. With time running down in class I asked the class to continue thinking about how the treatment of slaves might be tied to the Civil War and that for their homework assignment they should finish the concept web.

### **Growing Alone**

On the Tuesday following our reading about slave conditions, students were told that we would be examining some of the reforms that were made in the United States. There was a big difference today in our class however. The day before as I looked in my mailbox I was told to see our assistant principal and was informed that I was moving to a new classroom. While I was excited at the prospect of having my own room I was also caught off guard and would miss the technology that was available within the science classroom I had shared.

As students were still settling into their new chairs I informed them that they were going to be using a concept web to compare two different articles about schools. The first was the reading from their homework assignment describing the one room schoolhouse of the 1800s and the second was an article about Microsoft's School of the Future in Philadelphia. Students were told, that as a

class we would be constructing a Venn diagram but they would be reading the Microsoft piece individually. Some students groaned, while others were excited about the prospect of a quiet place to read.

As students were reading they were told to use their Talking to the Text strategy and underline those areas of comparison between the two schools. Students could also go back and re-read those sections of the homework reading to assist in making comparisons between the two schools.

Students had begun reading the piece and were working very well when Chaz walked in late and did not immediately start reading. Instead he choose to distract other readers. After about five minutes of reading I noticed that Mimi and Daniella had put their heads down. Most of the other students in the class had finished the reading by this point. I then asked members of the class to use their own knowledge of schools, the reading about the one-room schoolhouse and the reading about the Microsoft School of Future to form the Venn Diagram which we would be using in class to shape our discussion about school reform.

I admittedly was pleased when almost every student was able to make a contribution to making our Venn diagram.

“Math and writing was taught.”

“Today we have large schools and they had a single building.”

“They both had places to store your stuff, the one-room schoolhouse had a cloakroom, the Microsoft school has digital lockers.”

“They both have different grades, except in the old one (the one room schoolhouse) there were lots of grades in just one class.” I thought the students had constructed a great list and then informed the students they would be constructing an essay in which they would argue whether their school was more like the one room schoolhouse or the Microsoft school.

“In other words, if you had to describe your school to kids who will read about this school in a hundred years how would you do it.”

Fanny raised her hand, “So we basically are describing what school is like for us?”

“Correct.” While some students had scowls on their faces, many started by going back to the article to help decide what details they would include.

“However you should leave out names, tomorrow we will share our writing.”

As I helped the students summarize what we had done in class Suzy stated that she liked the activity because “I know this stuff.” Rebecca said the readings were good because, “It wasn’t written from one person’s point of view...it just told you what everything was...you didn’t have to think very hard.”

### **Courage Under Fire**

As we were getting comfortable within our new classroom, the first snow of the school year had passed and we entered December still examining the changes to the United States. I had come to the realization that the course and the

study was much like the story of the United States were we studying. Always progressing yet also having new obstacles.

Now into the Civil War we were going to be examining the life of a soldier during the conflict. I explained to the class, that in my opinion, there was no greater novel written about the lives of soldiers than *The Red Badge of Courage*. The book written by Stephen Crane is a fictional account of a soldier's view of the war and those things that occupy their mind during a time of conflict. For our purposes in class we would only be examining a small selection from the novel.

“What goes into a good story?”

“It has to be realistic.” Greg replied.

“It should be something that we [the reader] could understand.” Fanny stated.

“It shouldn't be boring.” Suzy said evoking laughter from her peers.

“Being realistic, understandable and not boring are important, but we will be reading a book about the lives of soldiers during the war. Among the major themes that you will find is that of death and the brotherhood that exists during a time of war.”

“Do we get to work with partners?” Kole asked.

“You will have the opportunity to work with partners but there are a few parameters I want you to follow....your partner must be someone whom you have never worked with.”

Rebecca in a strong tone asked, “How are we gonna get anything done with someone we don’t work with?”

“Mister, this is a bad idea, why don’t we just pick who to work with.”

Suzy said in agreement.

“I want you to work with someone else. Many of you have stated that reading with a partner or a small group helps you understand. If this is true then would it matter who you worked with?”

“Whatever, I will just read it on my own.” Kole was obviously upset but wasn’t able to rationalize a reason why.

I told the class to begin their reading and the room was quiet; many seemed content reading on their own. Fred layed his head on his arms, while Rebecca was intently reading the piece. As I was walking around the classroom I noticed that few of the students were writing anything down. Fanny had made a few illegible scribbles at the top of her page and Stew had underlined a few words in the first paragraph but by watching where his finger was in the reading he did not seem to be continuing with making notations in the text. I walked to the other side of the room, where Mimi’s paper had only a smiley face next to her name as

she was leaning back her chair to gaze at the ceiling. “Are you finished with the reading?” I asked.

“Mister, I just don’t get this,” she replied, “it’s so boring.”

“Is there anything that you could tell me about the reading?”

“It’s about some guys who are talking about a parade.”

“Can we please work with a partner? I just do not understand anything.”

“How would working with a partner help?”

“Because when I don’t understand they could tell me what it means.”

By this point a few students had looked up and were listening in on the conversation that I was having with Mimi. It was at that moment when I realized that perhaps only a few students were understanding the readings and they were simply telling the other students what was within the text.

“How many of you feel as though you know what is going on in the reading?” No hands were raised.

“How many of you used one of the strategies that we have previously discussed to help you understand?” No hands were raised despite a few students who had used the strategy. Perhaps they were embarrassed or didn’t recognize the strategy they were using.

“Do you remember the Talking to the Text strategy?” I had learned this strategy a year earlier in a meeting with the literacy coordinator for the district and believed strongly that students benefited from its use.

“Yeah, but I didn’t know when to use it.” Anthony responded. “It’s so much different having to read stuff and understand it when I am reading it on my own.”

“Do you always need to be told to use a reading strategy?”

“Its just the rest of the time with a partner we can each contribute a little more and we can focus on what we are reading about.”

“But didn’t I already explain that the piece examined the lives of Civil War era soldiers and their experiences?”

“Its just more complicated then that.”

I could not help but think that there was more that I needed to do to help students be better readers when they are reading on their own. Unfortunately I was starting to run out of time as our winter break was rapidly approaching.

### **Just Around the Corner**

As we moved to January it was my sense that, while students were capable of using reading strategies while reading, they were often hesitant to do so especially while working individually on a reading. In the days leading up to our final exams I wanted to continue helping students move towards being able to independently use reading strategies. Among the concerns that students had expressed to me over the past few weeks was about how to apply group reading strategies on an individual basis.



With four classes to go before final exams I wanted to continue guiding students in their use of reading strategies and hopefully prepare them not just for their final exam but for future academic classes. Wrapping up the year we were going to be completing a reading about the immigrant experience. My plan was to review some of the basic aspects of each reading strategy that students could use on their final exam.

As students walked into class they quietly began completing their warm-up that was written on the front board. Students were to react to the Emma Lazarus quote that is inscribed at the base of the Statue of Liberty that begins: ‘Give me your tired...’ and reflect on whether that quote could be relevant within the current immigration debate being waged within contemporary America. I had strongly wished that Daniella was in class on this day because of her own immigrant experience and the challenges that she faced as an immigrant to this nation.

Mimi began by asking a question, “Could you explain what some of the words mean within the quote?” Normally I would assign students to look up the meaning behind various words but I was running out of time in the semester and was concerned that students would become too tied up in the meaning of specific words and forget the meaning of the entire quote. I then revealed to the class that it was generally understood to mean that the United States would accept anyone who desired freedom regardless of social class or place of origin. Within about

five minutes students were able to respond to the quote and apply its meaning to our current immigrant debate within the nation,

“I think that now the United States only wants certain immigrants. It’s almost like there is a double-standard depending on where you come from.”

Stated Stew.

“I think that even though lots of people want to come here, we don’t always want them.” Replied Mimi. I was excited by the comments made by students and believed that the idea of immigration could be a good connection to what was going on within the United States and would provide the proper motivation for students while reading.

Students were given a variety of memoirs written from immigrants heading to Ellis Island at the turn of the century. These interviews were from the book, ‘Ellis Island Interviews’ by Peter Morton Coan. These memoirs and personal interviews were very different in their themes and their presentation. This would allow students to be able to use a wide variety of resources within the class. On the chalk board at the front of the room I asked students to list the different reading strategies we had used throughout the course and within the study.

“I forget what it is called but how about the one where you go in groups and each person has a different job and then we switch around who does what.”

Shouted Chaz.

“Right, reciprocal teaching. Lets review some of the steps in reciprocal teaching.” Students were quiet while I wrote the name of the strategy on the board. “What are the steps we use if we are using reciprocal teaching?”

I nodded as Chaz described summarizing, questioning, clarifying and predicting which I wrote on the board.

“The one with the notes on the page.” Sandy suggested.

Students also identified Talking to the Text, and graphic organizers including Venn diagrams and concept webs. I then instructed students that as they were reading the interviews and memoirs from the book that they should use one of the reading strategies. I did not restrict students on the reading strategy to use; rather I allowed them to choose for themselves.

As students were a few minutes into the reading activity I began to walk around the room. Among the first things I noticed was that three students, Greg, Mimi and Rebecca were by themselves. Greg had his head laying on his arm but appeared to be reading the selection although there was no reading strategy being employed so far as I could tell. Mimi and Rebecca were reading; they also had each taken to underlining a few sentences and made notes in the margins. As I went to the group of Fanny, Stew and Rod, I stood by as they took turns reading the passage but I did not discover that they were taking any time to discuss the reading or to ask questions about their understanding. Kole and Rose had paired off and seemed content to discuss their science assignment which they apparently

had been working on during the assigned reading time. Once the established 20 minute reading limit had been reached I asked to the class to re-engage to de-brief about the reading and to consider successes and failures of the different strategies.

“It just seems so elementary to go around asking questions, what if we all understand it anyway?” Suzy asked. In her group with Sandy and Anthony they seemed to have finished the reading and had underlined a few key sections but when prompted, admitted that, “We just sort of read everything, the things [reading strategies] are too boring, plus we would never get through the stuff.”

“I wish there were more things you had taught us to do when we are reading by ourselves.” Greg stated. This statement hit home for me as I began to think about the final that students would be completing in the next few days.

After class as Rebecca was leaving class she told me that she wished that we had read an example of someone migrating from Africa. This was something that left me thinking as I left class about how I might have done better to provide primary sources for the diverse reading audience that I had within my class. Perhaps their motivation to read would have been increased and we could have had richer discussions about the content of the course. I left the class thinking about the ability of students to use reading strategies while examining primary sources.

With the study over, the final exam would be the last tool I had at my disposal to assess how well the students could comprehend a primary source.

### **We Say Good-Bye**

Final exams can be bittersweet. In one sense it allows for one chapter to end and another to begin. However, it also can leave one with an empty feeling as the students you had worked hard for were moving on and that there was little you could do to affect the changes that they would experience as students.

As my students settled into their seats a cold breeze was rattling the windows and students were busily turning in their textbooks and sharpening their pencils. As they settled into their seats I reminded them that the final was a fifth of their grade for the course, that if they did not understand a question or needed an answer re-phrased to raise their hand so I could help them. I also made sure to mention that while they were reading they could write on the exam, I encouraged them to use the reading strategies of the class to do well on the exam.

Once all students had a copy of the exam I returned to my chair leaving only three times to re-phrase questions in the multiple-choice section of the exam. It was during the reading sections that I became anxious about the work that students were completing. As I walked around I could see that Sandy had gotten a highlighter from her bag and was marking some key phrases, Fred was leaning back in his chair his pencil tapping on his desk as he read.

Once the exam time had elapsed I collected the papers and asked the students how they felt they had done. Many were eager to simply leave the room.

Kole however said, “I did my best but not having a partner made it more challenging.”

When I graded the exam, many students did well, but a few had missed almost the entire section of a primary source question including one student who left all the questions blank. Filling in the scores on the computer I felt a bit more confident that students had made some improvement in reading but I was also aware that reading is a lifelong skill and would need constant refinement as academic rigor continued to increase.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

Analysis in the viewpoint of Arhar, Holly and Kasten (2001) is the process of “taking things apart”. Completing the data collection period was a tremendously relieving time for me. Looking back on my desk I realized that not only did I have a great amount of materials but I also had some great data. Among the qualitative research forms I have used include field log coding, binning, writing analytic, reflective and methodological memos and narrative forms.

### **Field Log**

The analysis of my data was a continuing process, one that began with the first entry in my field log. The process of coding could be said to be an unending process, the process began with the first piece of data that was placed within the field log. It is an on-going and consistent search for ideas and concepts that present themselves during the data collection stage. Once a coding entry was placed, it was not uncommon for me to go back into the data to re-code. This coding process led to the discovery of patterns that are prevalent throughout the field log. “Finding patterns in experience facilitates learning. Noticing patterns in experience, from the simplest to the most complex, enables us to draw our data together in new ways” (Holly, Arhar, & Kasten, 2001).

Once I had completed coding my field log I completed an index with key phrases that allowed for quick reference and location of key phrases as they emerged. Once I had made my list of codes I began to sort the codes into bins.

The bins contained codes that I believed fit together and were then titled to help organize the association of the words together. (Appendix D) From the bins I developed themes, these themes would help me to determine the finding of my study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

### **Reflective, Analytic and Methodological Memos**

While conducting the study I used a variety of methods to analyze the data. During the data collection I completed a figurative language analysis in which I looked at my field log to examine and analyze the implied and intended meaning behind the communication that took place between and among students. I also analyzed the data had collected through the lenses of four education theorists including Dewey (1997), Freire (1970), Vygotsky (1978), and Delpit (2002). It was from the study of these theorists that I went about constructing memos to connect the theories presented in each of their books to the study I had conducted.

While collecting data I completed a mid-study methodological memo. This memo was a chronological listing of all field observations I had made as well as any significant insights I might have gathered. The mid-study memo included a listing of student work that had been collected and relevance of the collected work to the study. The mid-study memo lastly included a listing of all interviews and surveys and the information included with such data. The mid-study



methodological memo also contained the research question and sub-questions that guided the study.

### **Surveys and Interviews**

As noted in the section about the methodological memo, I also collected student data from surveys (Appendix C) and interviews (Appendix E) conducted during the time of the study. From the surveys, I coded and binned the responses to assist in discovery of patterns between the data. The surveys were conducted with the whole class and were analyzed by creating a chart (Appendix F) to indicate the responses of students and were catalogued based on their individual responses to open-ended questions. The responses from the interviews were collected, coded and organized into bins. During the interview portion I was able to ask follow-up questions to any responses I was unsure of to ensure accuracy in my data collection. Additionally, at the beginning of the study, I collected a limited number of journal responses, these responses allowed for immediate reaction from the students regarding specific reading strategies. While journal reactions were not maintained throughout the entire study the responses collected provide a powerful snapshot of student opinions and were again catalogued and coded then sorted into bins and helped shape thematic statements.

### **Student Work**

Besides the data collection from my field log and survey, interviews and journals, I also collected student work. I collected copies of student reading sheets

in which I was looking for the notations that students used while using the Talking to the Text strategy (Appendix H). Additionally, on tests where there was a primary document analysis, I examined the responses students made to the short answer response question. (Appendix I) In studying student responses I coded the student work and placed those codes within bins then into theme statements.

### **Triangulation**

When examining the data collected throughout the entirety of the study it was just as important to be able to separate the information and triangulate the findings. By triangulating the data collected I was able to increase the validity of the study. The multiple areas of the data collected were each like small pieces of the puzzle that would contribute to the overall picture of the study. The final result of the findings has the opportunity to lead to increased study of reading strategies.

I triangulated by comparing the information collected through the three areas of research and data collection: interviews and surveys, student work and observation. Taken together, I looked for patterns that emerged to support any findings that I believed to exist. This triangulation was a regularly occurring behavior as I used the data collected in one area to support or seek new information in another area. In this study I would often observe behaviors then conduct formal and informal discussion with the class or interviews to gain their view, this would be backed with collection of student work.

## FINDINGS

**While working within groups students have the ability to critically question the reading sources using the strategies that were developed.**

Throughout the study students were encouraged to continually read and were expected to always do their best while reading. The curriculum of the class indicated that students were to read a variety of primary documents, so early in the semester it was explained to students that they were going to be completing many readings. Students were placed into groups during many of the reading exercises. Within these groups students were given a prescribed reading strategy to complete with their peers. It was within these reading strategies that students would ask critical questions of one another regarding the information found within the text.

As esteemed historian E. H. Carr wrote in his book, *What is History?*, “That whenever any Form of curriculum becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of historians to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new interpretation, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing it in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect its accuracy and reliability” (Carr, 1961). While reading primary sources in class, students were assigned to critically think about the source and characterize the evidence presented and make decisions about the accuracy of such a document.

In one instance students used reciprocal teaching while reading a copy of a letter written to Andrew Jackson from his mother while he was a child. Students demonstrated critical thinking in their groups by analyzing the impact that such a letter might have had on Jackson and how the advice given was reflective of the time period. Some students also considered that perhaps this was a letter that many mothers might have written to their children, but in Jackson's case the value of the letter changes because he later went to be President. Therefore within the class our interpretation and understanding of the letter gained new significance.

Students critically evaluated text while reading two articles about schools, the first article described the One-Room Schoolhouse and the second was a description of the Microsoft Schools of the Future. The students while reading the article used their own school experience to develop questions about how the two schools differed. Students asked questions about what a school day may have been like before the modern schools of today. Students were able to critically able to evaluate the pieces because they had their own prior knowledge they could use to construct questions.

**Student understanding of varying text sources improved when students were given the opportunity to self-select their cooperative groups.**

Throughout the duration of the study there were many instances during which students worked together in cooperative learning groups to examine

varying texts. The understanding and motivation students had regarding each of the primary sources varied depending on the arrangement of the groups. Early in the study I used a variety of flexible group designs to encourage students to work with peers whom they traditionally did not work with.

As the study progressed students were given the opportunity to individually choose their groups. Based on comments made in class and in surveys, students demonstrated a stronger affinity towards working in groups. In a class survey I conducted with students after the fourth week of the study a majority of students indicated a preference towards working in self-selected student groups and nearly three-fourths of students believed that they had a greater understanding of reading concepts when they were able to work within a group of their choosing.

Based on observational data there was a marked improvement of student comprehension and involvement in class discussion following a time period in which students were able to choose for themselves whom they would be working with. Additionally students often displayed a greater willingness to use reading strategies when they chose the groups such as the lesson in which students read the historical fiction story of the Red Badge of Courage during which a student questioned the idea of being chosen to work in teacher selected groups by asking, “How are we gonna get anything done with someone we don’t work with?”

Lastly, students within the self-selected groups developed a strong dynamic of communication and readily discussed reading selections. This dynamic allowed for a stronger sense of ownership of learning and of community within the classroom.

**Student achievement with reading is increased with consistent routines and practices that students are to use and when followed with a de-briefing of the content.**

Student achievement with reading is improved when coupled with consistency of practices and when students are able to discuss what they have read with the class. Among the practices which I exercise within my classroom is a clear set of routines that are used everyday within the learning environment, among these routines are a warm-up question, review of prior assignments, introduction of readings, collaborative learning activity and review of content.

Following the instruction of reading strategies those students who were able to describe the process they used were able to more clearly describe the meaning behind a reading passage. In an interview conducted with Fanny, she stated that, “Knowing I would have to describe what I had done really helped me work through the process.”

In class Rebecca told the rest of the class that the Talking to the Text strategy was important because it helped her understand “everything that was

going on with the reading.” Rebecca’s comments followed the instruction of reading strategies and time when we as a class described those reading strategies that helped us to understand what we were reading.

While examining student response on tests I found that those students who scored highest were those students who consistently followed the routines of the class and participated frequently in the de-briefing discussions that were held at the end of class.

**Student engagement allows students to self-assess the success or weakness of their ability to use the reading strategy.**

When using reading strategies among my goals are to have students be active participants in the discussion of reading. Additionally, I hoped to have students be vocal as to success or failures of their use of reading strategies. By engaging students in discussions about the reading strategies during the de-briefing process, by polling students and based on observed behaviors in the classroom I have been able to encourage students to engage in reflection about reading practices.

Frequently, while students were about to begin a particular reading strategy especially during the later part of the study I was able to gain considerable insight as to the impressions that students held about reading strategies. During a reading of Harriet Tubman I explained to students that we

would be using teacher-selected groups while examining the reading. Kole became vocal about her belief that being able to choose her student selected groups are better because “It just helps me understand everything better, plus this is too boring to read on your own. I just think that I when I read it on my own I don’t understand as well as I could.”

Greg who struggled academically and socially often displayed displeasure towards group processes. He describes that he preferred reading by himself since the other groups would not talk to him. His belief that other people bothered him led to isolation of his reading. His experience along with other students preferring to work in groups demonstrated their assessment of the effectiveness of reading as a social process.

During an earlier session of the study I had students complete a journal writing in which they discussed which of the reading strategies they believed was the most effective strategy for understanding. Many students self-reported that using Talking to the Text was effective because it caused them to interact with the text and think critically about their reading in ways they previously had not. One student wrote that using Talking to the Text helped them, “remember what they had read and form questions about the reading.” Other students described how the group reading process was important because it gave them supportive friends who would assist in the reading we would complete within the class.



In reviewing student work, students often demonstrated that they would use the Talking to the Text strategy. In reviewing student responses to a primary source on a test students used this strategy to assist their reading. While it is unknown if other strategies were also used I did find that almost half of the students did some sort of marking while examining these questions. It is also important to note that these two processes rely on a meta-cognitive process and greater accountability regarding the reading they are completing.

**Students have diverse experiences such as reading abilities, parental support, prior content knowledge, and ethnic backgrounds. To improve the reading performance within the class, learning tasks must be personalized and reading selected tailored to the needs of each student.**

The study was conducted at a large urban high school where there is a high amount of diversity within the school. My class was no different, as many of the students represented the level of diversity found throughout the entire school. Creating reading assignments that could be tailored for the individual needs of all students was among my goals and having practices in place for such reading was paramount towards the goal of improved reading instruction.

One of my students, Daniella, was an English-Language Learner (ELL) student who along with her parents had recently moved to the United States. Among other students in the class were African-American, Latino, and Caucasian

students; they also filled the range of academic achievement within the class including some who labeled as requiring Special Education services. Among the observations I made about students in the class was that students of a common background tended to arrange themselves with students who shared their common background. In the case of Daniella, during a group reading exercise the groups were almost totally based on demographics and academic achievement. This left Daniella to her own as students were hesitant in asking the “Spanish” girl to join their group.

In an interview with Rose in which we discussed the types and names of books she was independently reading she stated that she was currently reading and enjoying ‘The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants’ because she thought that she could relate to many of the characters in the book who were much like her. When pressed for an answer she supported it by saying that “The characters in the book are like me, everything is just a big confusion but all the friends still stick together.”

**Frustration, and confusion associated with reading tasks is the by-product of students who struggle with the text. Interpreting primary documents is challenging for students who lack a strong understanding of grade appropriate vocabulary.**

Within my teacher-researcher groups we frequently discussed the idea that until about sixth grade students are learning to read, from that point students read to learn. A question that continued to develop during the study was how to create a learning environment that also accommodated the various reading skills that could be found within the classroom environment.

It was during one of the first readings of the study that I first observed the effect of student frustration with reading. While students were reading a challenging text about the foundations of the Democratic Party I looked around the room and saw for the first time in the study students who lacked a comprehension of vocabulary found in the article. This vocabulary weakness led students to put their heads down or to engage in off-task behaviors. While debriefing students and discussing the text, one of the students talked about the challenges of having to discuss something that they did not understand.

In a survey conducted with students at the mid-way point of the study, nearly a quarter responded that they were confused while reading and in my follow-up that this confusion led to frustration and a lack of motivation to continue reading. In a small group interview Stew talked about, “Sometimes getting to where I am reading the same sentence three or four times and it still doesn’t make sense.... that’s when I just call it quits or I skip the entire section.”

While examining student work associated with the Texas Declaration of Independence I found that students while reading were not only contorting their

faces in pain but also had left question blanks or as I found on one page had simply made a questions mark for three of the six questions. I later asked Suzy why she didn't ask for help, and she responded that "I just didn't want to look dumb with everyone around, it was just way too confusing."

**Reciprocal teaching and Talking to the Text were the reading methods that were most successful for engaging students in discussion of reading strategies.**

My question for this study 'What are the observed and reported responses of students who are taught to use reading strategies within the social studies classroom?' has caused me to reflect on those strategies that were the most successful. Determining success can often be difficult, success to many can also be utter failure for others. However as I look back to the nearly 5 months of study I think of the last month and the amazing success that students had.

One could simply look at the surveys, journal logs (Appendix G) and interviews I conducted within the students and find patterns that indicate how students were successful with certain strategies. In all cases, including class discussion which are cited in this study, one finds that students were successful while using the reciprocal teaching and Talking to the Text. Within my comparison of Daniella and Sandy all students were given the choice of what

reading strategy they wanted to use Sandy as well as many other students within the class chose to use the Talking to the Text strategy.

These strategies were effective in part because they relied on similar processes, with the Talking to the Text strategies students are questioning the content found within the words and are required to think deeply about the reading beyond the meaning of the words. The reciprocal teaching model picks up on this idea and asks students to read the text but with their groups to question the text within a process. Both methods rely on questions to guide understanding of the content as a result student engagement is increased and critical questioning is improved.

## NOW WHAT

The study is now nearly three months past, I look back at the work my students completed and am left with so many questions. Can I change student reading behaviors? With the influx of new technology, how can I use this technology to help students read? If I were to teach the same groups of kids again, what would I do different? Should my class be reading based or history-based? Can the two co-exist within the same class? How will I use everything I learned in this study to be a better teacher?

Reading, as one might deduce, is very important to me as a teacher. In looking back at my time in the M. ED. Program I was struck by a quote given one day in class, “Until sixth grade we learn to read, from that point on we read to learn.” As I reflect that might have been the quote that started it all. Where I go as a teacher is still unknown. However, in the past months since I started this study, I have become more aware of the quality and types of reading that goes on within my classroom. I see students who struggle everyday trying to read from a textbook sitting next to those who finish the reading and then start to move ahead. What will I do as a teacher to continue challenging them as readers?

In an ever-growing global community the ability for students to be able to communicate effectively will continue to be a skill that will be necessary for their economic survival. I plan to continue promoting a curriculum that focuses on rigor and relevance to engage all students for the challenges of their lives. As a

teacher-researcher I have a renewed sense of responsibility towards promoting reading across the curriculum. Among the changes that I plan to make in my class and to promote to others within my field is to increase how various reading strategies are used by students to develop an understanding of history. With the advent of computer technology within the classrooms and the continued proliferation of available sources of information on the web the ability to create a constructivist classroom will continue to avail itself. Embracing the multitude of websites including diaries of Civil War soldiers, records from Ellis Island and eyewitness testimony of events such as Martin Luther's posting of the 95 Theses among others will create an individualized learning environment that fosters reading and critical evaluation of sources.

As a teacher-researcher I hope to continue to impress upon students the importance of reading within their lives and to motivate them to be skilled readers within the classroom who can critically evaluate text to develop historical meaning from the reading they complete. I also want to seek ways to assist students in reading for their own pleasure, to pick up a book on a warm summer day instead of the video game controller. This appreciation for reading will lead students to seek adventure, knowledge and new skills.

As a reflective practitioner I look back at the study and have considered ways that I could have improved my study. Among the ways I would have changed my study is that I would have focused on only one of the reading

strategies and completed a more intense instruction of the reading strategy with consistent instruction and feedback regarding how it is used. I also would have developed a more methodical process for the collection of student work, among the difficulties I did not anticipate prior to beginning the study would be how to collect student work for a process such as reading.

In considering how I plan on being a better teacher and leader of instruction within the district I will continue to assist in the development of teacher in-servicing. Lastly, I hope to encourage my peers within the classroom to continue their own work in becoming teacher-researchers. With the advent of high stakes testing within our classrooms it requires that classroom teachers continue to take a lead in developing professional learning communities and foster classroom environment that focus on individual student growth and success.



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## Appendix A: Student Permission Form



1742

MORAVIAN COLLEGE  
A SMALL NATIONAL TREASURE

Department of Education  
1200 Main Street  
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 18018-6650

TEL 610 861-1558  
FAX 610 861-1696  
WEB www.moravian.edu  
September 17, 2007

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Currently, I am enrolled as a Master's degree candidate in Curriculum and Instruction at Moravian College. The goal of the Master's program is to evaluate my current teaching practices and study the most effective ways of teaching, which in turn will improve the educational experience for of all students.

As one of the requirements for completion of the program, I am required to complete a study of one of my own teaching practices. The title and focus of my study that is taking place from September 10<sup>th</sup> until December 14<sup>th</sup> is *Reading for Understanding: Incorporating Reading Strategies in a 10<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies Classroom* and will examine the observed and reported experiences of students when instructed to use reading strategies in a social studies classroom. Students will learn a variety of reading strategies in both an individual and group setting, then students will report their findings. As a result of teaching reading strategies, student will have a greater comprehension of the text and increase their capacity to learn. So often students remark, "I just don't get it." It is my hope that providing students with more strategies to effectively read that they will be able to draw better conclusions about the material and, in turn, will have better grades and will be more motivated in their studies.

For the purposes of this study, I will be collecting data from students including: student work, observed behaviors, surveys and interviews. I am asking for your permission to use data collected for my study. Participation in the study is voluntary and will not affect grades in any way. However all students will participate in the instruction of reading strategies as part of the regular curriculum as there are no anticipated risks to the students. Students may also elect to withdraw from the study at any time, should your child elect to leave the study, no data will be used. Should you be concerned about perceived risks associated with this study please contact [redacted] Principal. She has reviewed the study and is available through the main office of the high school at ([redacted]). All student names and data pertaining to students will be kept in strictest confidence and names will not be used in the study. All material will be maintained in a secure location and at the conclusion of the research all data will be destroyed.

Should you have any questions pertaining to my research please contact me by note, phone ([redacted]) or through email ([redacted]). In addition, this study has been reviewed and approved by our school principal. You may also contact the Moravian College sponsor, Dr. Joseph Shosh at (610) 861-1482 or by email at [jshosh@moravian.edu](mailto:jshosh@moravian.edu). Please sign and return the consent form below. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely

Mr. Kevin R. Bush  
Social Studies Teacher

-----Please detach and return to Mr. Bush-----

I attest that I am the child's legal guardian and I have received a copy, read and understand this consent form. I am willing to have my child participate in this action research study. Please check one below.

yes  no Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B: Principal Permission Form



MORAVIAN COLLEGE  
CONTINUING AND GRADUATE STUDIES

August 28, 2007

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

Currently, I am enrolled as a Master's degree candidate in Curriculum and Instruction at Moravian College. The goal of the Master's program is to evaluate my current teaching practices and study the most effective ways of teaching, which in turn will improve the educational experience for all students.

As one of the requirements for completion of the program, I am required to complete a study of one of my own teaching practices. The title and focus of my study that is taking place from September 10<sup>th</sup> until December 14<sup>th</sup> is *Reading for Understanding: Incorporating Reading Strategies in a 10<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies Classroom* and will examine the observed and reported experiences of students when instructed to use reading strategies in a social studies classroom. Students will learn a variety of reading strategies in both an individual and group setting, then students will report their findings. As a result of teaching reading strategies, students will have a greater comprehension of the text and increase their capacity to learn. So often students remark, "I just don't get it." It is my hope that providing students with more strategies to effectively read that they will be able to draw better conclusions about the material and, in turn, will have better grades and will be more motivated in their studies.

For the purposes of this study, I will be collecting data from students including: student work, observed behaviors, surveys and interviews. I am asking for your permission to use data collected for my study. Participation in the study is voluntary and will not affect grades in any way. However all students will participate in the instruction of reading strategies as part of the regular curriculum as there are no anticipated risks to the students. Students may also elect to withdraw from the study at any time, if a student does elect to leave the study, no data will be used. All student names and data pertaining to students will be kept in strictest confidence and names will not be used in the study. All material will be maintained in a secure location and at the conclusion of the research all data will be destroyed.

Should you have any questions pertaining to my research please contact me, I can be reached by phone at (\_\_\_\_\_) or through email (\_\_\_\_\_\_). In addition, this study has been reviewed and approved by Moravian College's HSIRB committee. You may also contact the Moravian College sponsor, Dr. Joseph Shosh at (610) 861-1482 or by email at [jshosh@moravian.edu](mailto:jshosh@moravian.edu). A copy of the parental consent form has also been attached for your review. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely

Mr. Kevin R. Bush  
Social Studies Teacher

\_\_\_\_\_

-----Please detach and return to Mr. Bush-----

I attest that I have received a copy, read and understand the consent form. I approve of this study taking place as part of the regular instruction of the course. Please check one below.

\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no Principal Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix C: Blank Survey Forms

### Student Reading Survey 3

Directions: Evaluate each of the following statements in relation to your reading ability.

**Of the reading strategies we have used in class which do you find the most effective?**

Graphic Organizers	Talks to Text	KWL
SQ3R	Reciprocal Teaching	

**Of the reading strategies we have used in class which do you find the least effective?**

Graphic Organizers	Talks to Text	KWL
SQ3R	Reciprocal Teaching	

**Of the following options which groups set-up do you most prefer when using group reading strategies?**

Self-Selected	Teacher-Selected	Random Assignment
---------------	------------------	-------------------

**While working in a group of your choosing do you work better than normal, about the same as normal or less than normal?**

Better than normal	About the same	Less than normal
--------------------	----------------	------------------

Describe changes you have made as a reader in the past two weeks.

Describe what skills you need to continue improving on throughout the course.

## Student Reading Survey 2

Directions: Evaluate each of the following statements in relation to your reading ability.

**Do you use pre-reading strategies such as asking anticipatory questions, looking for subject headings or introductory material?**

Always      Frequently      Sometimes      Rarely      Never

**Do you write down questions you have about the reading and/or look up words when you are unsure of their meaning?**

Always      Frequently      Sometimes      Rarely      Never

**Do you relate what you are reading to what you already know about the subject?**

Always      Frequently      Sometimes      Rarely      Never

**Are you able to restate the main idea of the reading and recall details about the passage?**

Always      Frequently      Sometimes      Rarely      Never

**Do you re-read sections that are confusing and search for clues as to the sections' meaning?**

Always      Frequently      Sometimes      Rarely      Never

Describe changes you have made as a reader in the past two weeks.

Describe what skills you need to continue improving on throughout the course.

### The Reader Self-Perception Scale

Listed below are statements about reading. Please read each statement carefully. Then circle the letters that show how much you agree or disagree with the statement. Use the following:

SA = Strongly Agree  
A = Agree  
U = Undecided  
D = Disagree  
SD = Strongly Disagree

Example: **I think pizza with pepperoni is the best.** SA A U D SD

If you are *really positive* that pepperoni pizza is best, circle SA (Strongly Agree).

If you *think* that is good but maybe not great, circle A (Agree).

If you *can't decide* whether or not it is best, circle U (undecided).

If you *think* that pepperoni pizza is not all that good, circle D (Disagree).

If you are *really positive* that pepperoni pizza is not very good, circle SD (Strongly Disagree).

	1. I think I am a good reader.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[SF]	2. I can tell that my teacher likes to listen to me read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[SF]	3. My teacher thinks that my reading is fine.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[OC]	4. I read faster than other kids.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PS]	5. I like to read aloud.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[OC]	6. When I read, I can figure out words better than other kids.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[SF]	7. My classmates like to listen to me read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PS]	8. I feel good inside when I read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[SF]	9. My classmates think that I read pretty well.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PR]	10. When I read, I don't have to try as hard as I used to.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[OC]	11. I seem to know more words than other kids when I read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[SF]	12. People in my family think I am a good reader.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PR]	13. I am getting better at reading.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[OC]	14. I understand what I read as well as other kids do.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PR]	15. When I read, I need less help than I used to.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PS]	16. Reading makes me feel happy inside.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[SF]	17. My teacher thinks I am a good reader.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PR]	18. Reading is easier for me than it used to be.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PR]	19. I read faster than I could before.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[OC]	20. I read better than other kids in my class.	SA	A	U	D	SD

(continued)

### The Reader Self-Perception Scale

[PS]	21. I feel calm when I read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[OC]	22. I read more than other kids.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PR]	23. I understand what I read better than I could before.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PR]	24. I can figure out words better than I could before.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PS]	25. I feel comfortable when I read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PS]	26. I think reading is relaxing.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PR]	27. I read better now than I could before.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PR]	28. When I read, I recognize more words than I used to.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PS]	29. Reading makes me feel good.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[SF]	30. Other kids think I'm a good reader.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[SF]	31. People in my family think I read pretty well.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PS]	32. I enjoy reading.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[SF]	33. People in my family like to listen to me read.	SA	A	U	D	SD

## Appendix D: Coding Organizer

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Grouping</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Student Selected Groups</li> <li>2. Assigned Groups</li> <li>3. Off-Task Behavior</li> <li>4. Requests to Group</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Teacher Behaviors</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Activity Preview</li> <li>2. Directions</li> <li>3. Instruction of Reading Strategy</li> <li>4. De-brief</li> <li>5. Adaptation for Students</li> <li>6. Teacher Selected Groups</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Student Engagement</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Whole Group Discussion</li> <li>2. Individual Reading</li> <li>3. Student Questions</li> <li>4. Student Responses</li> <li>5. Student to Student Reading</li> </ol>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Knowing the Reader</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Student Background</li> <li>2. Reading Interests</li> <li>3. Survey Information</li> <li>4. Prior Knowledge</li> <li>5. Student Selected Groups</li> <li>6. Diversity within the Class</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>What are the observed and reported experiences of student who are taught to use reading strategies within a 10<sup>th</sup> grade social studies classroom?</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Reading Behaviors</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Confusion</li> <li>2. Distractions</li> <li>3. Frustration</li> <li>4. Positive Reading Experience</li> <li>5. Negative Reading Experience</li> </ol>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Troublespots</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Definitions</li> <li>2. Decoding</li> <li>3. Language Questions</li> <li>4. Primary Documents</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Tools for Learning</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Graphic Organizers</li> <li>2. Journaling</li> <li>3. Technology</li> <li>4. Textbook</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Reading Strategies</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. KWL chart</li> <li>2. One to One Reading</li> <li>3. Pre-Reading</li> <li>4. Reciprocal Teaching</li> <li>5. Talking to the Text</li> </ol>

1. While working within groups student have the ability to critically question the reading sources using the strategies that were developed.
2. Student understanding of varying text sources improved when students were given the opportunity to self-select their cooperative groups.
3. Student achievement with reading is increased with consistent routines of practices students are to use and of a de-briefing of each of the strategies.
4. Student engagement allows students to self-assess the success or weakness of their ability to use the reading strategy.
5. Students have diverse experiences such as reading abilities, parental support, prior content knowledge, and ethnic backgrounds. To improve the reading performance within the class learning tasks must be personalized and reading selected tailored to the needs of each student.
6. Frustration, and confusion associated with reading tasks is the by-product of students who struggle with the text.
7. Reciprocal teaching and Talking to the text were the reading methods that were most successful for engaging students in discussion of reading strategies.

## Appendix E-Interview Responses

## Student Interview with Kole

Q: Why do you read?

A: I don't read unless I have to.

Q: So does that mean you don't read at home?

A: Only if I have to.

Q: Why don't you enjoy reading?

A: Its boring, I have no time and it's a waste of my time.

Q: Did you always feel like this? Or can you think of something you used to enjoy reading?

A: I liked reading poetry when I was younger because I could read it fast.

Q: How did you learn to read?

A: They taught me at school.

Q: What have you learned from reading?

A: Nothing, it's just whatever.

Q: What kind of things do you enjoy reading about?

A: Fashion, I guess.

## Student Interview with Rose

Q: Why do you read?

A: Because I have to.

Q: How often do you read when not at school?

A: Not a whole lot, if I do its because I am bored.

Q: How do you feel about the reading you do at home and at school?

A: It's ok, I guess.

Q: What is the best thing you have ever read?

A: Not sure if it's the best but I like reading Seventeen (magazine). I also liked the Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants.

Q: Why did you like that book?

A: The characters in the book were like me, everything is just a big confusion but all the friends still stick together.

Q: Do you think I would like it?

A: Mister, be real.

Q: How did you learn to read?

A: Kindergarten.

Q: What else do you enjoy reading besides seventeen?

A: I guess I like horror books.

Q: What would you like to do better as a reader?

A: Read faster.

Student Interview with Mimi

Q: Why do you read?

A: Because I am forced to.

Q: How often do you read when you are not at school?

A: Never, its too boring, I'd rather sleep.

Q: What is the best thing you have ever read?

A: Maniac McGee because I liked the character.

Q: How did you learn to read?

A: From my kindergarten teachers and my parents.

Q: What do you enjoy reading about?

A: Action and adventure, whatever is interesting.

## Appendix F-Charts and Data from Surveys

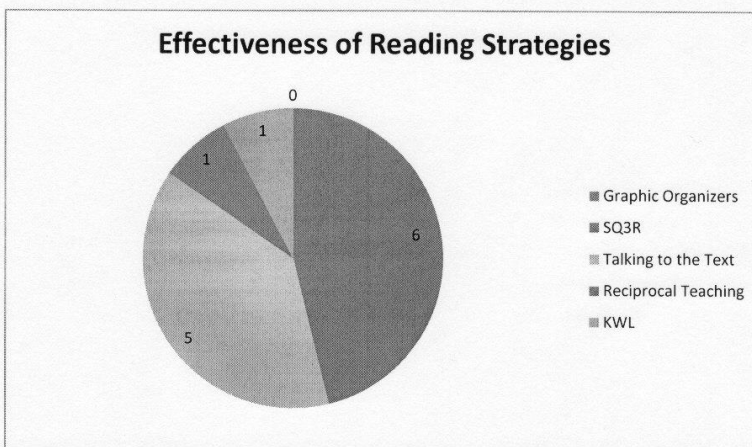
	SA	A	U	D	SD
I think I am a good reader.	0	8	3	3	1
I can tell that my teacher likes to listen to me read.	0	0	13	0	2
My teacher thinks that my reading is fine.	0	0	14	0	1
I read faster than other kids.	1	5	2	3	5
I like to read aloud.	1	3	0	6	5
When I read, I can figure out words better than other kids.	0	5	5	3	2
My classmates like to listen to me read.	0	1	8	4	2
I feel good inside when I read.	0	1	7	5	2
My classmates think that I read pretty well.	0	1	12	1	1
When I read, I don't have to try as hard as I used to.	3	5	2	4	1
I seem to know more words than other kids when I read.	0	5	6	2	2
People in my family think I am a good reader.	1	5	6	1	2
I am getting better at reading.	2	7	5	1	0
I understand what I read as well as other kids do.	1	7	6	0	1
When I read, I need less help than I used to.	2	7	2	2	2
Reading makes me feel happy inside.	0	2	5	3	6
My teacher thinks I am a good reader.	1	1	10	2	1
Reading is easier for me than it used to be.	1	8	3	3	0
I read faster than I could before.	2	10	2	0	1
I read better than other kids in my class.	0	2	7	4	2
I feel calm when I read.	0	2	5	4	4
I read more than other kids.	0	1	4	6	4
I understand what I read better than I could before.	2	7	3	2	1
I can figure out words better than I could before.	2	7	4	1	1
I feel comfortable when I read.	1	4	3	1	6
I think reading is relaxing.	0	3	2	6	5
I read better now than I could before.	2	7	3	1	1
When I read, I recognize more words than I used to.	2	9	2	2	0
Reading makes me feel good.	0	1	4	7	4
Other kids think I'm a good reader.	0	0	12	1	2
People in my family think I read pretty well.	0	6	4	3	2
I enjoy reading.	0	2	2	4	7
People in my family like to listen to me read.	0	0	9	5	1

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U=Undecided,  
D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree

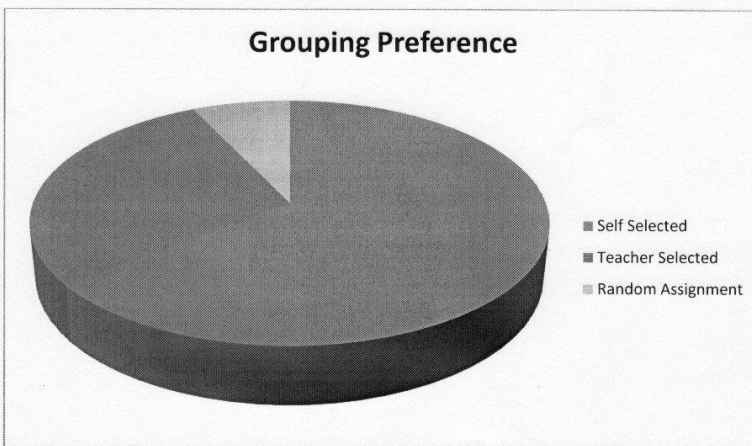


Results of Student Reading Survey 3

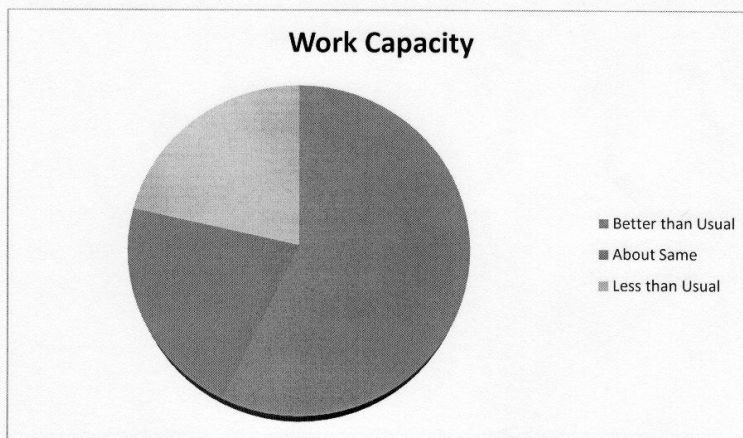
Of the reading strategies used in class which did you find to be most effective:



Of the following options (teacher selected, student selected or randomly selected) which group set-up do you most prefer when using group reading strategies:



While working in a group of your choosing do you believe you work better than normal, about the same as normal or less than normal:



## Appendix G-Selected Student Journal Responses

### **How did working in groups help you understand the reading? (09/24)**

Kole: You got multiple opinions on what you were reading. So it helped me understand better.

Rose: It didn't really help me. The only way is that I get most of the reading done. On my own I probably would have finished more.

Rebecca: Working in groups helps me because things that I didn't understand someone else did. It also helped me because I got to see the others peoples opinions on the passage.

Sandy: Working in groups helped me a little because I can hear other opinions and views on the subject.

Mimi: Cuz we talked about everything we didn't understand, we got different opinions from everyone.

Carly: Working in a group did not help me understand better because I like to work by myself. I think working in a group leads to more distractions.

Daniella: It helped me because when we read out loud I understand better because then we talk about what we read.

### **Describe the strategy you find to be most effective for understanding a reading. (09/24)**

Anthony: Talking to the Text because then I can go back, remember what I had read and form questions about the reading.

Stew: Group reading because then I can talk about what I read.

Gregory: Individual reading because then I don't get bothered by other people.

Suzy: Asking questions, when we are in the groups and we go around asking questions with what we read.

Freddy: Reading with a partner because they can help with difficult parts.

## Appendix H- Student Work

Sandy

**Texas Independence**

The opening of the Texas Declaration of Independence, which was adopted on March 2, 1836, is given below.

When a government has ceased to protect the lives, liberty, and property of the people from whom its legitimate powers are derived, and . . . becomes an instrument in the hands of evil rulers of their oppression; . . . the first law of nature, the right of self-preservation—the inherent and inalienable right of the people to appeal to first principles and take their political affairs into their own hands in extreme cases—enjoins it as a right toward themselves and a sacred obligation to their posterity to abolish such government and create another in its stead, calculated to rescue them from impending dangers, and to secure their future welfare and happiness.

Nations, as well as individuals, are amenable for their acts to the public opinion of mankind. A statement of a part of our grievances is, therefore, submitted to an impartial world, in justification of the hazardous but unavoidable step now taken of severing our political connection with the Mexican people, and assuming an independent attitude among the nations of the earth.

Daniella

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## Appendix I-Test Responses

## Document Based Question (1 question, 10 points)

One section of our country believes slavery is <sup>oo > R</sup> right and ought to be extended, while the other believes it is wrong and ought not to be extended. This is the only substantial dispute....

Physically speaking, we can not separate. We can not remove our respective sections from each other nor build an impassable wall between them. A husband and wife may be divorced and go out of the presence and beyond the reach of each other, but the different parts of our country can not do this...

In your hands, my fellow dissatisfied countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war.

The above is from Lincoln's first inaugural address: According to Lincoln, what was the only substantial disagreement between the North and the South?

Between one ~~and~~ country believing in slavery being right & ought to be extended & the other country believes it is wrong & ought <sup>not</sup> to be extended.

## Primary Document (1 question, worth 10 points)

In his annual message to Congress in 1835, President Andrew Jackson spoke the words below. Read the excerpt and answer the question further below.

"All proceeding experiments for the improvement of the Indians have failed. It seems now to be an established fact that they cannot live in contact with a civilized community and prosper.... A country west of Missouri and Arkansas has been assigned to them, into which the white settlements are not to be pushed." <sub>unsettled</sub>

What is the speaker's attitude toward Native Americans? What evidence do you use to support your opinion?

His attitude toward Native Americans were they were not worthy enough to live in a civilized community meaning wealthy decent area or neighborhood. He moved them in Missouri and Arkansas where they can be off to them self and those states probly wasn't the best places to live.

## Appendix J: HSIRB Approval



MORAVIAN COLLEGE

September 7, 2007

Kevin R. Bush

Dear Kevin R. Bush:

The Moravian College Human Subjects Internal Review Board has accepted your proposal: "Reading for Understanding: Incorporating Reading Strategies in a 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies Classroom." Given the materials submitted, your proposal received an expedited review. A copy of your proposal will remain with the HSIRB Chair.

Please note that if you intend on venturing into other topics than the ones indicated in your proposal, you must inform the HSIRB about what those topics will be.

Should any other aspect of your research change or extend past one year of the date of this letter, you must file those changes or extensions with the HSIRB before implementation.

This letter has been sent to you through U.S. Mail and e-mail. Please do not hesitate to contact me by telephone (610-861-1415) or through e-mail (medwh02@moravian.edu) should you have any questions about the committee's requests.

Debra Wetcher-Hendricks  
Chair, Human Subjects Internal Review Board  
Moravian College  
610-861-1415