ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF POPULAR CULTURE TEXTS

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THE IMPACT OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF POPULAR CULTURE TEXTS

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated in memory of my brilliant and loving parents, Marion and Neil Dow, from whom I learned the art of patience, the ability to see both sides of any situation, tolerance, and persistence.

ABSTRACT

Butler, Melinda S.*, Elementary teachers' perceptions of popular culture texts,* Doctor of Education (Literacy), May, 2018, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas.

Popular culture texts are widely desired by many elementary students, and yet some teachers do not value the use of popular culture texts in the classroom (Lambirth, 2003; Marsh 2006). The purpose of this research was to explore two, Title I elementary teachers' perceptions of the use of popular culture texts during independent reading. Data collection consisted of initial and post interviews, classroom teacher observations over a nine-week time period, and photographs of the teachers' classroom libraries taken during classroom visits. .

Data were triangulated with multiple analytic techniques including In Vivo and Process coding (Saldaña, 2013), thematic analysis, Keywords-in-context analysis, and visual analysis. Themes that emerged during analysis were choice of texts during independent reading, standardized test pressure, accountability and expectations, classification of students, and differentiation of instruction. Findings revealed that although teachers may permit popular culture texts to be read during independent reading, that the choice is conditional and fraught with stipulations imposed by the teacher versus truly allowing free choice. Additionally, national, state, district, and campus academic expectations may factor into teachers' perceptions of the value of the use of popular culture texts. Implications from the research include recommendations for increased popular culture professional development and teacher advocacy for choice, balanced literacy, and daily independent reading. Future research might investigate teacher and student perceptions of popular culture texts through a mixed methods study.

KEY WORDS: Popular culture, Choice, Free Voluntary Reading, Independent reading,

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

"May I hide the graphic novels in the classroom library?" a teacher queried? "All the kids want to read are the graphic novels. I want them to read something more worthwhile!" I was bewildered by her request. A few weeks later, another teacher informed me, "I hide *The Adventures of Captain Underpants* in the second half of the year; kids are allowed to read them during the first half of the year, but those books are off limits in the spring semester." It appeared that teachers on my campus were self-censoring popular culture texts in their classroom libraries. I began to wonder why teachers were hiding texts such *Captain Underpants* (Pilkey, 1997) and *Amulet* (Kibuishi, 2008) from students?

Allowing students to have choice of the texts they want to read is of primary importance in order to create lifelong readers (Allington, 2001; Allington & Gabriel, 2012; Krashen, 2005). As I reflected on these requests, some soul-searching occurred: I was guilty of acting similarly. Although I believe students should have choice in self-selecting texts, I have removed books from elementary classroom libraries when I thought that the books might be too mature for fourth and fifth grade readers. Indeed, I sheepishly realized that I engaged in self-censorship from time to time. For example, *Smile* (Telgemeier, 2010) was a hit with fifth graders, and one student requested the author's latest graphic novel, *Drama* (Telgemeier, 2012). I purchased my own copy, as I often do when students request a book, and loaned the book to the student without reading the text. When funds were available, I ordered multiple copies of *Drama* (Telgemeier, 2012) to place in fifth grade classroom libraries. Several weeks later, a

student approached me in the hallway. "Hey, Mrs. Butler! You shouldn't be letting the kids read *Drama*. It's a bad book." Curious, I borrowed the book back from the student, read it, and realized that one of the characters was homosexual, and the sexual orientation issue had prompted the warning from the fifth grader. At that time, I decided not to return the book to the student, and when the shipment containing *Drama* (Telgemeier, 2012) arrived, I placed the books in my cabinet, and sent them on to a middle school librarian. More recently, when I had to reduce a book order by $3,000.00, I chose not to order *Captain Underpants and the Sensational Saga of Sir Stinks-a-Lot* (Pilkey, 2015), because there is a homosexual character in the book, and I am not completely comfortable ordering copies for the classroom libraries. There it was – my own self-censorship. I am not proud of my own self-censoring, and yet I did not feel comfortable placing the books in the fifth grade classroom libraries. Even so, perhaps a golden opportunity was missed that could have begun a student's lifelong journey as a reader. Perhaps that hidden book could be the one, the catalyst that will inspire a future reader. I wondered how many teachers secretly or openly self-censor texts. And what are the consequences of our actions? My mind raced to a revealing conversation with my brother, who is an attorney. He told me that our father, who was also an attorney, never told my brother the one vitally important concept that a future attorney should know before considering the career: An attorney has to carefully consider, scrutinize, and analyze every minute action, and meticulously examine all the possible consequences of that transaction (Dow, personal communication). Perhaps a teacher's need for prescience is just as vital of that of an attorney: What happens when a teacher makes a decision about a student's choice of reading material? Should a teacher peer into the future and see the reader or non-reader

that the student might become before making such a decision? Indeed, my fellow teachers and I made gatekeeping decisions about popular culture texts without considering the consequences, and gatekeeping of popular culture texts may seriously contribute to the future of a lifelong reader or non-lifelong reader. These experiences led me to my study; I explored teachers' perceptions of popular culture texts. Specifically, why do teachers allow or disallow the use of popular culture texts during independent reading?

Popular Culture

Alvermann and Xu (2003) posited that, "Trying to define popular culture is like nailing gelatin to a wall," (p. 146). Many researchers have defined popular culture as what is currently popular: the current popular music, dance, television, movies, comic books, graphic novels, and the Internet (Beach & O'Brien, 2008; Maderazo & Martens, 2008). Hagood, Alvermann, and Heron-Hruby (2010) differentiated popular culture texts from mass culture and folk culture, asserting that popular culture meaning is a construction of meaning between the artist and the reader. In fact, the researchers defined "production-in-use" (p. 14) as producer and consumer having control over the text. Indeed, popular culture definitions are abundant; there are almost as many popular culture definitions as there are popular culture scholars. Fiske (1989) defined popular culture texts as almost anything consumed or experienced in our daily lives (e.g., a beach, a billboard, or even a shopping mall). Storey (2001) proffered six definitions of popular culture:

- Popular culture as simply that which is desired. For example, more than 6 million adolescents viewed the Disney Channel movie *Descendants*, and the companion

book, *Isle of the Lost* (de la Cruz, 2015) made it to the New York Times Best

Seller List (Kissell, 2015);

- Popular culture as what is left over after the upper class culture has been

    determined. On the other hand, it is important to note that the idea of low and high

    culture is relative, recursive, and reciprocal. What used to be considered

    inappropriate hundreds of years ago is now regarded as high culture. When

    Shakespeare was alive, his plays were perceived as trashy and "beneath" the elite,

    and now Shakespeare is included in almost every high school reading curriculum

    (Applebee, 2004);

- Popular culture as "mass culture" (p. 8), manufactured or produced for the masses

    and revered by the masses; mass culture gives no thought to value or quality;

- Popular culture as grassroots culture, culture that is created by people and enjoyed

    by people, such as folk art or folksongs;

- Popular culture is one of hegemony (e.g., the people in power control the popular

    culture for subordinated groups);

- Popular culture as a transcendent of class; there is no perceived "high" and "low"

    culture. As Shakespeare noted in Hamlet: "…for there is nothing either good or

    bad, but thinking makes it so" (p.99).

Of equal importance, Harrington and Bielby (2002) delineated the scholarly study

of popular culture into three separate epistemological divisions. The divisions for cultural

studies can be found in Table 1:

Table 1

Types of Cultural Studies

Types of Cultural Studies	Definition
Cultural Studies	Generic across disciplines and focused on consumption of popular culture
Production of Popular Culture	Hegemonic and Focused on Production
Popular Culture Studies	Inclusive of Cultural Studies and Production of Popular Culture factions

Note: Adapted from "Constructing the popular: Cultural production and consumption." In C. L. Harrington & D. D. Bielby (Eds.), Popular culture: Production and Consumption (pp. 1-15). Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

For the purposes of this study, it was important to consider the multiple definitions of popular culture (Storey, 2001). Because this study consisted of exploring teachers' conceptions of the popular culture texts that the students consume in their classroom, the results of the study encompassed more than one definition. Indeed, as teachers' perceptions were situated within high and low culture boundaries, objectivity and open-mindedness concerning the various popular culture definitions were of utmost importance. To define the popular culture parameters of this study, Table 2 lists examples of popular culture texts for the purpose of this study. However, the reciprocity of popular culture's popularity evolves over time; in five years, this list of popular culture texts will undoubtedly become outdated. It is important to note that two of the series, Captain Underpants and Harry Potter, are listed in the Top Ten List of Banned Books on the American Library Association (ALA, 2016a) website:

Table 2

Examples of Popular Culture Texts

Texts Based on Movies and Television	Texts Based on Videogames	Texts that are Funny or Scary	Other Popular Texts
Isle of the Lost, Disney Descendants (Disney)	*Minecraft* (Mojang)	*Goosebumps* Series (Stine)	*Amulet* (Kibuishi)
Adventure Time (North)	*Pokémon* (Nintendo)	*Diary of a Wimpy Kid* Series (Kinney)	*Babysitter's Club* (Telgemeier)
Batman (DC Comics)	*Lego* (Dorsey Kindersley)	*Captain Underpants* Series (Pilkey)	*Harry Potter* Series (Rowling)
Star Wars (Dorsey Kindersley)	*Lego/Ninjago* (Little, Brown)	*Skeleton Creek* Series (Carman)	*Pete the Cat* Series (Dean)
World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) Wrestler Biographies (Dorsey Kindersley)		*Big Nate* (Peirce)	*Sisters, Smile, Drama* (Telgemeier)

Background of the Study

As a literacy coach, I serve teachers on a Title I elementary campus. Title I is part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA); this federal program provides financial assistance to schools that serve students who live in poverty (Yell, 2014). As a result, our campus receives federal funds in order to provide educational resources for students. Ultimately, it is my responsibility to serve and support classroom teachers. Literacy coaches, or reading coaches, fill various roles in schools across the United States. Alarmingly, there is very little consistency in job descriptions of literacy coaches across districts, regions, and the country (Frost & Bean, 2006). The International Literacy

Association (2004) recommended that literacy coaches possess at least five skills and characteristics: a) a literacy coach mentors teachers in the teaching of reading; b) a literacy coach should have expert knowledge in reading processes (e.g., through teaching experience and a Masters in Reading; c) a literacy coach should have demonstrated expertise in helping teachers improve their teaching of reading; d) a literacy coach should have expertise in presenting information to the teachers they serve; and e) a literacy coach should have knowledge in classroom observations and modeling in classrooms (Frost & Bean, 2006). On my campus, instructional reading coaches support teachers as they implement a balanced literacy framework in the classroom (Bingham & Hall-Kenyon, 2013; Pressley, Roehrig, Bogner, Raphael, & Dolezal, 2002; Tower, 1855 [as cited in Banton Smith, 1965]). Although an observer of balanced literacy instruction may view dissimilar teaching methods from classroom to classroom, balanced literacy instruction typically involves the teaching of reading and writing through the gradual release model and a combination of explicit instruction and reading and writing with and through authentic texts (Pressley et al., 2002). The phrase "gradual release of responsibility" (p. 35) was mentioned by Pearson and Gallagher (1983) in a meta-analysis of reading research. Teachers who use the gradual release of responsibility model employ a combination of explicit teaching, teacher modeling, guided student application, and independent application. Ultimately, in classrooms where the gradual release model is implemented with fidelity (e.g., carried out as suggested), students engage in more meaningful learning (Clark, 2014; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). It is of importance to remember that the gradual release model is not always a stair-step, 1-2-3-4 process; indeed, independent practice is not always the final component of a lesson

(Clark, 2014). In our district, balanced literacy instruction of reading in third through fifth grade consists of: a) interactive read-aloud, wherein teachers interject questions and hold student discussions during a read-aloud of a text; b) shared reading (e.g., teachers and students read projected text together); c) independent reading (e.g., students read self-selected texts for a period of time; d) guided reading (e.g., students read in a small, teacher-led reading lesson); e) word work, wherein students study vocabulary, word patterns, etc.); and f) written responses to reading (e.g., students write responses to the literature they are reading. Although all are important, one of the most crucial components of the balanced literacy framework is independent reading.

However, when the National Reading Panel (NRP) (2000) provided its contested report on the state of reading in the United States (U.S.), the panel included only quantitative research and meta analyses in their report, and therefore excluded many qualitative research studies from the report, eliminating many findings about the positive benefits of independent reading, which have often been the findings of qualitative researchers (Allington, 2002; Allington & Gabriel,2012; Krashen, 2001, 2004, 2005, 2011). Despite the earlier controversy, my district continues to embrace independent reading as a component of balanced literacy. Therefore, I provide ongoing professional development and coaching for teachers in the implementation of independent reading. The professional development that I plan and deliver is multitudinous: I meet with third, fourth, and fifth grade teachers at least twice per month; typical subjects discussed are: student achievement in reading, reading test scores, reading and writing lesson plans, and balanced literacy instruction. In addition to participating in guided reading groups (e.g., students meet regularly with the teacher, the teacher teaches or reinforces a specific skill

or reading process, and students practice that skill or reading process), students spend 30 to 45 minutes per day reading self-selected texts from the school library, from materials brought from home, from online text websites (e.g., getepic.com), or from classroom libraries. Although teachers strive to keep the independent reading time free from other instruction and distractions, students are occasionally pulled out of the classroom for Response to Intervention (RtI) interventions and monthly computer-based reading assessments. RtI is a component of a federal program that provides additional reading interventions to students who are reading below grade level (Balu et al., 2015). Additionally, as the state reading test approaches, standardized test preparation sometimes interferes and clashes with the balanced literacy framework. However, factoring in all the typical interferences that occur in classrooms every day, independent reading is implemented with fidelity on our campus.

Because our campus serves many students who receive free and reduced lunch, the campus is designated as Title I. Once the funds become available, I create orders for books and other materials for the classroom, and submit the orders to the administrator, prioritizing the orders. As updating classroom libraries is an immense priority, the orders are usually processed without question. As an illustration, a recent order was submitted to a popular book company for $6,000.00; and the administrator did not question the purchases, which included popular culture texts.

Students on my campus read children's literature, tween texts, and young adult (YA) texts. It is important at this juncture to relate the history of children's literature; children's literature did not come into existence until the seventeenth century because, as Tunnel & Jacobs (2013) joked, "…children had not been invented yet" (p. 80). That is,

children were expected to conduct themselves as tiny adults, and books were not written

for children. One of the very first publishing houses was opened in the eighteenth century

by John Newbery, of Newbery Book Award fame, and his first title was *A Pretty Little*

Pocket Book (1744) (Tunnel & Jacobs, 2013). During the early part of the twentieth

century, as fewer children worked in sweatshops and factories, more authors began

writing books for children (Jenkins, 1995). Importantly, in the midst of World War II,

authors began to write books for teenage audiences (e.g., aged 12-18), and these books

were labeled as young adult (YA) books (Strickland, 2015). YA books have become

more popular with each decade, and YA is considered to be a big business, although,

according to some, the age delineation (e.g., 12-18 years of age) has blurred with the

passing years (Cart, 2004). In fact, the lines have been blurred so much with YA that Cart

(2004) suggested that YA age guidelines have morphed to an age range of 10 years of age

to adult. Tween texts are an additional category within the broader YA classification.

References to tween literature are found spelled in two different ways. Lesesne (2006)

spelled tween without an apostrophe. However, Kaplan and Chisik (2005) refer to 'tween

literature. References in most dictionaries spell tween without the apostrophe. Tween

books are generally targeted for children aged eight years old to 12 years old (Sekeres,

2009). Lesesne (2006) defined tweens as readers who may be too mature to read

children's books, and too immature to read (YA) texts.

Because I am responsible for ordering texts to update classroom libraries (e.g., the

libraries that are checked out by me to each classroom teacher each school year), I solicit

input from students and teachers. For students, a note is distributed, asking for

suggestions of texts to add to their classroom libraries, and for teachers, an email is sent

out, asking for suggestions for texts. Unfortunately, teachers respond with very few text suggestions, but students respond with zeal, requesting such titles as *Night of the Living Dummy* (Stine, 2007), *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* (Kinney, 2007), and *Amulet: The Stonekeeper's Curse* (Kibuishi, 2008). From this anecdote, it appears that students in my school love new YA, tween, and children's literature. For example, a few years ago, multiple copies of a graphic novel series called *Adventure Time* (North, 2012) were purchased and set aside until there was a moment to add them to the fifth grade classroom libraries. My office is located at the back of the campus, and is not an area that most students frequent. Somehow however, Matthew, a fifth grader, spotted the copies of *Adventure Time* (North, 2012). "Mrs. Butler," he begged, "Please let me borrow *Adventure Time*! I just have to borrow that book! You just don't know!" Matthew borrowed the book, and the books were hurriedly added to the classroom libraries before more book requests were received. Because of student requests, many popular culture texts for classroom libraries have been ordered over the past several years, in addition to purchasing other new tween titles, both fiction and nonfiction texts, for teachers' classroom libraries. However, as more popular culture texts were added to the classroom libraries, I noticed a little pushback from some of the teachers. They were not all celebrating and embracing the popular culture additions. As a result, I began to wonder what conceptions teachers held about some of these titles. Perhaps teachers wondered at the literary value or quality of the texts. Perhaps teachers were concerned that parents might complain about the selections in the classroom library. I became curious about how teachers felt about the popular culture texts that were in our classroom libraries. I knew

the value of providing books that students wanted to read, but did the teachers understand the importance? I wanted to more deeply investigate this question and topic.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' concepts and values concerning student choice of popular culture texts in the classroom, specifically during independent reading. My sample included the cases of two third grade elementary teachers on one campus who participated in the study. The teachers completed questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, as well as agreed to allow me to observe their teaching during independent reading in participants' classrooms. Additionally I took pictures of participants' classroom libraries during those classroom observations. Finally, I distributed an electronic survey about the use of popular culture to all the teachers on the campus. The location was a Title I campus where classroom libraries were not purchased for teachers; teachers provided their own libraries. Furthermore, I was not the literacy coach on this campus, which allowed me to solicit less biased answers from the classroom teachers.

Research Questions

The research questions that I explored were:

(1) How do teachers perceive the use of popular culture texts during independent reading?;

(2) How do teachers make decisions about student choices of popular culture texts during independent reading?

Significance of the Study

In balanced literacy programs across the country, independent reading time in classrooms is threatened as standardized test preparations, RtI interventions, and computer-based reading assessment intrude into classroom spaces (Dynarski, 2007). Now, more than ever, independent reading time must remain pure, classroom libraries must be updated and maintained, and students must be supported by offering many choices of texts, including print and digital popular culture texts (Allington, 2013; Lesesne, 2006).

Some research has been conducted on teacher perceptions and values of popular culture. In a 2006 study, Marsh explored English pre-service teachers' perceptions concerning the use of popular culture in the curriculum. Marsh (2006) reported that many of the pre-service teachers were hesitant to use popular culture texts in the curriculum due to lack of self-confidence and lack of personal experience with popular culture texts as students. Lastly, most pre-service teachers felt that they did not have the knowledge to teach with popular culture texts. However, Marsh (2006) did not delve into the pre-service teachers' perceptions of the value of popular culture texts.

Lambirth (2003) interviewed teachers concerning their use or non-use of popular culture texts in the classroom. Lambirth (2003) observed that most teachers indicated that popular culture texts had no place in the classroom. Further, Lambirth (2003) speculated that teachers felt that popular culture texts had no quality, and teachers were under too much pressure to teach to the standards to bother with popular culture texts.

Gerber and Price (2013) conducted a grounded theory analysis of in-service teachers' perceptions about videogames in the curriculum. Many of the teachers

expressed an interest incorporating videogames into the curriculum, but indicated they were worried about surveillance of their peers and negative backlash from colleagues if they brought videogames in the classroom. Additionally, the participants in the study were concerned about the perceived lack of administrative support for videogames in the classroom.

More recently, Peacock et al. (2016) surveyed college professors at one university, and determined that higher education educators also value popular culture and integrate popular culture texts into college curriculum. Not surprisingly, more humanities and social studies professors reported using popular culture materials in their classrooms than did math and science educators. However, some of the college professors considered that the occasional use of an online video clip during class time constituted integration of popular culture texts (Peacock et al., (2016), which, in fact, might or might not constitute the aforementioned definition of popular culture depending on the content of the video clip.

Therefore, it is particularly salient that students need to find their "home run" books, and teachers should not prevent students from doing so (Allington, 2013; Lesesne, 2006; Trelease, 1982; Von Sprecken, Kim, & Krashen, 2000). A 'home run" book is a text that may transform a non-reader into a reader (Von Sprecken, Kim, & Krashen, 2000). Exploring ways that teachers unintentionally keep students from becoming lifelong readers is very pertinent to today's educational climate (Allington, 2013).

Conceptual Framework

Free Voluntary Reading (FVR) (Krashen, 2004) is a framework of independent reading wherein students have choice of texts and extended periods of time to read.

Indeed, in 2004, Krashen posited that Free Voluntary Reading was a program or a time each day wherein students read whatever they want to, had no assignments tied to the reading, and were permitted to abandon the texts at will. Additionally, Krashen (2004) noted that Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) differed from FVR, as written responses or book reports were often assigned to students after reading a text. However, in a later text, Krashen (2011) clarified:

> The set of generalizations begins with research on free voluntary reading done in school, knows as Sustained Silent Reading (SSR). In SSR, time is set aside for recreational reading. Students read whatever they like (within reason) and are not tested on what they read (p. 1).

According to Krashen (2004), during SSR the teacher models reading as the students engage in reading; other variations of SSR may include teacher-student book conferences and written responses to literature. Independent reading is implemented in reading classrooms across the country, and is advocated by many well-respected experts (e.g., researchers, teachers, and consultants) (Allington, 2001, 2013; Atwell, 1998; Kittle, 2013; Krashen, 2004, 2011; Miller & Moss, 2013; Miller, 2009: Miller & Kelley, 2014). In fact, experts were advocating for independent reading in the first part of the 20th century. LaBrant (1937) suggested that high school students read widely in school: poetry, drama, fiction, and essays. Importantly, in 1941, LaBrant argued that English teachers should encourage and teach students to read modern literature widely in order to have hope and to realize that they were not alone in the world. Additionally, LaBrant suggested that teachers implement a free reading program, individually designed via teacher-student collaboration (LaBrant, 1941). LaBrant (1941) advised:

Frequently I have been told that a free-reading program is one in which there is no guidance and in which no progress is made. I use the term here as always to mean a program in which pupil and teacher are free to select whatever meets the needs of that student (p. 209).

During World War II, many politicians and the media publically criticized public schools for the poor teaching of reading, based on the fact that many recruits did not know how to read (Fine, 1942). Betts et al. (1942) responded to this sharp criticism by making the following arguments and recommendations:

1) during the time that these men were in public school, education was vastly different than it was in 1942 (e.g., all students were taught to read in the same manner from the same texts);

2) poverty was the root cause of the failure of students to learn to read; and

3) in order to learn to love reading as a child and an adult, students need to be matched to texts that they are interested in, including comics (Betts et al., 1942).

Indeed, FVR was a component of the recommended solution to American students' allegedly abysmal reading progress (Betts et al., 1942). Veatch (1973) admonished teachers for using commercialized reading programs and advocated for an individualized reading program wherein students will self-select trade books and teachers confer with students about the books they are reading. Surprisingly, Veatch (1973) compared some commercial reading programs to operant conditioning and Nazism.

Some 30 years later, the U.S. government called on the National Reading Panel (NRP, 2000) to study how children learn to read successfully. While engaged in the

writing of this report, the researchers determined that there were not enough scientifically-based research studies to establish a connection between independent reading and learning to read. Krashen (2001) disputed the findings of the National Reading Panel (NRP); specifically, Krashen took issue with the NRP's decision to exclude qualitative research studies on the value of SSR. Krashen (2001) pointed out that not only were qualitative studies excluded, many quantitative studies were considered ineligible for inclusion. Krashen (2001, 2005, 2011) was not alone in his allegations: other researchers took the NRP to task for the inconsistencies in the report (Allington, 2002; Allington & Gabriel, 2012; Garan & DeVoogd, 2008; Yatvin, 2002). Moreover, Krashen (2001) posited that there were no differences in reading growth between students who engaged in FVR and those who were taught through direct instruction. Furthermore, both Allington (2002) and Krashen (2004) alleged that the NRP manipulated the findings for political and monetary gain (Allington, 2002; Krashen, 2001). Yatvin (2002), a member of the panel, criticized the NRP's process, arguing that there were many inconsistencies and omissions in the final report, so many, in fact, that Yatvin felt compelled to file a Minority Report. In this brief response, Shanahan (2006) defended his position and his now infamous quote "...sustained silent reading is probably not such a good idea" (p. 16), by explaining his views on the possible ineffectiveness of SSR.

Both quantitative and qualitative studies exist in which independent reading has been determined to have positive effects on students. Employing mixed methods, Turner (1995) determined that students who completed closed tasks (e.g., worksheets, activities with only one right answer) were not as motivated to learn as those students who engaged in open activities (e.g., self-selecting books to read, engaging in discussions with peers).

Turner's (1995) research findings supported Krashen's concept of FVR. Students who were allowed to self-select their own reading materials were much more intrinsically motivated to read during independent reading (Krashen, 2004). Ivey & Broaddus (2001) were interested in determining how middle school students were motivated to read. In a qualitative study of 1,765 middle school students in 23 schools, participants answered survey questions, completed checklists, and responded to open-ended questions. Surprisingly, the students reported that most of books they chose for independent reading were obtained from home, from the school or public library, but not from the classroom library. Students reported that the books they read at home were more informative books and popular culture texts; books read at school were typically fictional chapter books. Ivey and Broaddus (2001) revealed that most students liked reading in middle school, but did not see reading as a way to become a better reader. In other words, they did not perceive independent reading as connecting with their reading instruction (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001). Kelley and Clausen-Grace (2006) devised and implemented a type of SSR which they dubbed R5: "…read, relax, reflect, respond, and rap…" (p. 151). Observing that too many of their third grade students were off-task during SSR, the researchers instituted teacher follow-through, so that students were aware of teachers' reading expectations during R5. As a result, students' reading levels and reading volume increased.

      Choice and time. Common themes have emerged in the studies of FVR, independent reading, and SSR. Two major themes are student choice of texts and time to read; students have the right to choose their own texts and then need daily blocks of time to read those texts (Allington, 1994, 2013; Allington, & Gabriel, 2012; Dickerson, 2015;

Gallagher, 2009; Garan & DeVoogd, 2008; Hunt, 1970; Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2006; Kittle, 2013; Krashen, 2004, 2005; Lesesne, 2006; Strommen & Mates, 2004; Trudel, 2007-08; Wolk, 2010; Worthy, 1996, Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999).

Delimitations

A delimitation (e.g., aspects of this research study that I can control) of this study was: a) I interviewed and observed intermediate grade reading teachers at one Title I elementary campus. I deem this a delimitation because I could have increased my research study by adding another location and additional participants. A second delimitation was, in choosing a Title I school where I do not work, the teachers who were interviewed on the campus possessed classroom library and school library titles which I was not familiar with, as other literacy coaches, teachers, librarians, and school administrators purchased the texts in classroom libraries. Because I order classroom library texts for my campus, I have a better knowledge of the texts, and if I had conducted the research on my own campus, I would have been more familiar with the texts the students were reading.

Limitations

The limitations (e.g., aspects of this study which the researcher has no control of) of this study were: a) because the participating teachers knew that I was a literacy coach at a neighboring school, they may have felt the need to respond to the questions differently because they may have inferred my personal beliefs on popular culture texts, which could have created a Hawthorne effect (e.g., participants report information based on what they think the interviewer would like to hear) (Landsberger, 1958), and b) my bias in this study may have been a limitation (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007), because

although I have engaged in some self-censorship, I believe in students' right to self-select texts during independent reading; and c) the small participant sample size, as I set out to have six participants, but after several weeks, I decided to use the two participants who were interested in participating in the study. Indeed, two participants versus the original six participants was a limitation.

Assumptions

Although I have discussed that the participating teachers may have answered interview questions differently because I was the interviewer and the participants may have known my personal beliefs about popular culture texts, I have to assume that the participating teachers in this study responded truthfully to the interview questions. In a like manner, I have to assume that my presence in the classroom did not change participant behavior during teacher observations.

Methodological Framework

The study was qualitative inquiry with a multiple case study approach. Methods employed to analyze and synthesize the data consisted of a) thematic analysis, b) Keywords-in-context, and c) visual analysis techniques stemming from visual ethnography. Leech and Onwuegbuzie's (2010) 13-step methodological framework for qualitative research was employed: a) Step 1: decide what my objective is for my research; b) Step 2: develop the objective for my research study; c) Step 3: develop the justification for my research study; d) Step 4: make a decision as to the ultimate objective for my research study; e) Step 5: develop my research questions, based on the work that I have done in Steps 1-4; f) Step 6: determine the classification of sampling that I will use; g) Step 7: determine the type of qualitative inquiry I will use; h) Step 8: conduct the

interviews and classroom observations and transcribe the data; i) Step 9: evaluate my transcripts and reflexive journal; j) Step 10: justify my analysis of the transcripts; k) Step 11: synthesize the data; l) Step 12: write my chapters; and m) Step 13: reevaluate my research questions. I interviewed (e.g., audiotaped, videotaped) two (2) third grade elementary school teachers at one elementary school (e.g., one Title I elementary school where classroom libraries were provided by teachers) using open-ended interview questions to explore teachers' perceptions of student choice of popular culture texts during independent reading. Additionally, I observed in the participants' classrooms during independent reading, to determine if teacher behavior in the classroom matched the reported beliefs from the interviews. Lastly, pictures of teachers' classroom libraries were taken during each classroom observation and analyzed using visual analysis techniques used in visual ethnography. Because it was important to self-reflect during this research, researcher reflections were recorded after each teacher observation. Interviews were coded and themed, employing In Vivo and process coding (Saldaña, 2013).

Research Paradigm or Research Philosophy

As the research questions centered on determining why and how teachers may use self-censoring to prevent students from reading popular culture texts during independent reading, a social constructivist paradigm was the most harmonious lens from which to seek understanding. Vygotsky (1972) posited that learners build meaning by their interactions with others, and I believe that the conversations I held with participants and fellow researchers created new knowledge. Patton (2002) wrote:

We can conclude by emphasizing the basic contributions of social construction and constructivist perspectives to qualitative inquiry, namely, the emphasis on capturing and honoring multiple perspectives; attending to the ways in which language as a social and cultural construction shapes, distorts, and structures understandings; how methods determine findings; and the importance of thinking about the relationship between the investigator and the investigated, especially the effects of inequitable power dynamics – and how that relationship affects what is found (pp. 102-103).

Additionally, Denzin and Lincoln (2000) noted, "The constructivist paradigm assumes a relativist ontology, (there are multiple realities), a subjectivist epistemology (knower and respondent co-create understandings), and a naturalistic (in the natural world) set of methodological procedures" (p. 24). Together, the researcher and the participant bring new perspectives to light that may open up new worlds of understanding of how teacher perceptions of popular culture texts might have an impact on a student's future reading life (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The social constructivist research paradigm matches the socially constructed work (Vygotsky, 1980) that occurs during independent reading in the classroom: Students choose their own texts, spend time reading on their own or with others, write and share their responses, and discuss their reading with the teacher and other students.

Organization of the Study

This study will is organized into six chapters (a) Introduction, (b) Review of the Literature, (c) Methodology, (d), Methodology in Context, (e) Findings, and (f) Discussion. Steps 1-5 of the 13-step methodological framework have been addressed in

Chapter I; in Chapter II, I reviewed and critiqued the literature on censorship,

independent reading, and popular culture, and in Chapter III, I discussed Steps 6 and 7

(Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2010). In Chapter IV, I discussed the methodology in context. In

Chapter V, I used Step 8, and I employed Steps 9 10, 11, and 13 in Chapter VI (Leech &

Onwuegbuzie, 2010).

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

Comprehensive Literature Review Process

In creating and presenting the review of the literature, Onwuegbuzie and Frels' (2016) methodology (e.g., the comprehensive literature review) (CLR) was employed. There are seven steps to this methodology; however, the steps are not always linear. The seven steps are delineated here: Step 1: "Exploring Beliefs and Topics;" Step 2: "Initiating the Search;" Step 3: "Storing and Organizing Information;" Step 4: "Selecting/deselecting Information;" Step 5: "Expanding the Search (MODES, media, observations, documents, experts, and secondary data);" Step 6: "Analyzing/synthesizing Information;" and Step 7: "Presenting the CLR report" (p. 58).

Initiating the Search

Table 3 lists the major searches for peer-reviewed articles, non peer-reviewed articles, and books that were employed in this study, using Step Two: "Initiating the Search" (p. 58) (Onwuegbuzie & Frels, 2016). Specifically, Table 3 demonstrates that abstracts from the searches were statistically sampled using Power analysis (i.e., statistical power), which provides the minimum effect size needed for generalization of the literature according to sample theory (Cohen, 1988) and Wikipedia (powerhttps://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Statistical_power). From the sample of 270 articles in my sample size, 152 articles and dissertations were selected and 118 articles and dissertations were deselected using the following selection and deselection criteria: a) I selected articles and dissertations concerning popular culture in general, and popular culture texts; and b) I selected articles and dissertations that concerned popular culture in

schools and popular culture in the classroom.; and b) I deselected articles that did not

refer to choice, independent reading, censorship, selection, or popular culture texts. As a

result, I was left with 152 articles and dissertations from the databases which became a

part of my comprehensive literature review. Figure 1 displays an Example of

Transparency Chart (Onwuegbuzie & Frels, 2016).

Search 1
Search string in subject *censorship of books* (n=18)

Search 2
Search string in subject *censorship of books/public schools* [n_2=2]

Search 3
Search string in subject *popular culture texts* [n_2=38]

Search 4
Search string in subject *popular culture texts/independent reading* [n_4=2]

Search 5
Search string in subject *independent reading* [n_5=307]

Search 6
Reference lists/other sources to expand search [n_7 = 65]

Selected by title and abstract if focused on censorship of books (n=18)

Selected by title and abstract if focused on censorship of books/public schools [n_2=2]

Selected by title and abstract if focused on popular culture texts [n_2=38]

Selected by title and abstract if focused on popular culture texts and independent reading [n_4=2]

Selected by title and abstract if focused on independent reading [n_5=170]

Selected by two guiding criteria: a) censorship in general, and b) censorship of texts [n_1=18][n_2=2]

Selected by two guiding criteria: a) illuminates understanding of popular culture in schools; b) addresses the role of popular culture in the classroom. [n_3 = 10] [$_4$=2] [$_5$=26

$n_1 + n_2 + n_{3+4} + n_5 = n_6(58)$

Use of validation framework

Literature considered for Chapter II
$n_6 + n_7 = 123$

Figure 1. An Example of Transparency

Table 3

Literature Search Results

Key Words	Search Mode	Number of Hits	Search Source	Limiters	Sampling of Abstracts
censorship of books	Boolean/Phrase	18	ERIC	2007-2013	18
censorship of book/public schools	Boolean/Phrase AND	2	ERIC	2007-2013	2
popular culture texts	Boolean/Phrase	38	ERIC	2006-2016	38
popular culture texts/independent reading	Boolean/Phrase AND	2	ERIC	2006-2016	2
independent reading	Boolean/Phrase	307	ERIC	2008-2016	170

Additionally, approximately 65 peer-reviewed journal articles and books have been mined from the aforementioned references, and/or supplied to me by others. The articles retrieved, as well as those mined from the literature included quantitative studies, qualitative studies, mixed methods, and practitioner articles. Furthermore, with the CLR method, the researcher is encouraged to find resources that are not within the traditional publishing venues (MODES, media, observations, documents, experts, and secondary data); therefore, to have as comprehensive of a literature review as possible, I have referenced numerous blogs and social media sites of experts, for example, young adult authors, like Ellen Hopkins (M=media), as well as used anecdotal observations of censorship in schools and classrooms (O=observations), as well as news stories as reported during the key time periods of key topics in my literature review (D=documents). A breakdown of the number of resources used in the literature review by

year can be found in Figure 2, and a pie graph of the type of resources used can be found

in Figure 3.
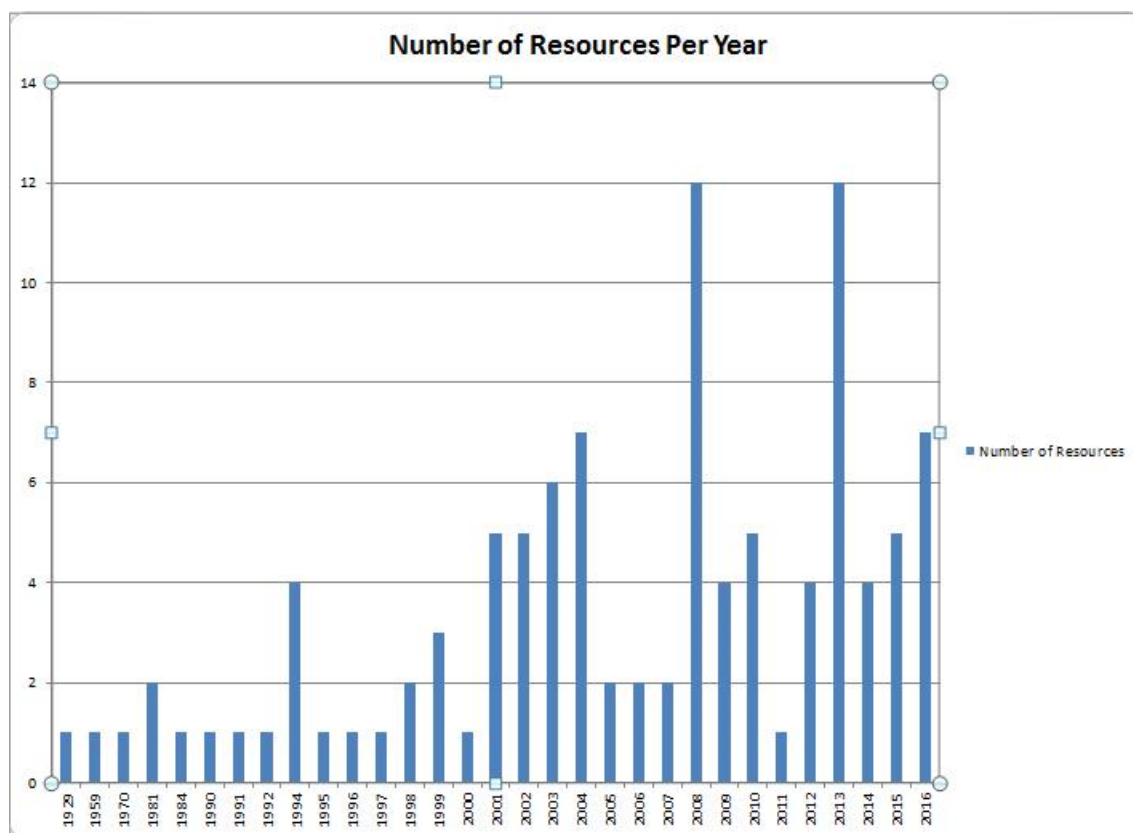
Figure 2. Number of Resources Used in Literature Review Per Year
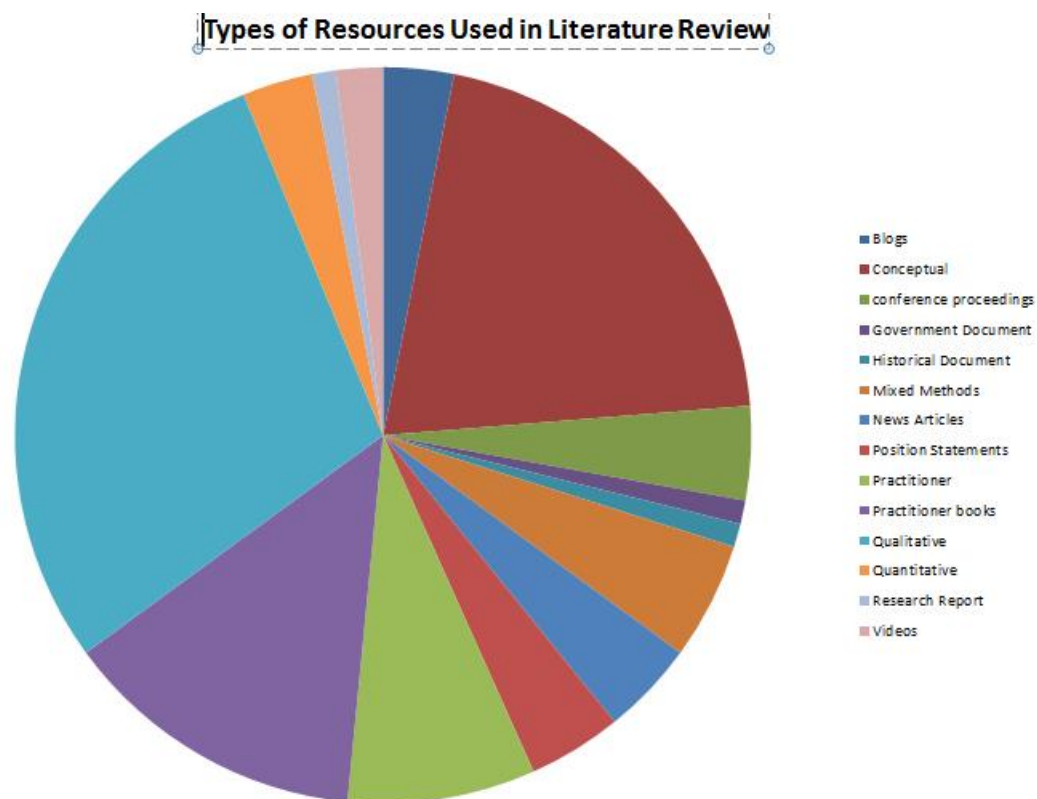
Figure 3. Types of Resources Used in Literature Review

Table 4 lists the percentage of the types of resources used in the literature review
and Table 5 lists the acceptance rate for a selection of peer-reviewed journals which have
been incorporated into Chapters I, II, and III:

Table 4

Percentages of Types of Resources Used in the Literature Review

Type of Resources	Percentages
Blogs	1%
Conceptual	26%
Conference Proceedings	1%
Government Documents	1%
Historical Documents	2%
Mixed Methods	5%
News	7%
Position Statements	3%
Practitioner Articles	13%
Practitioner Books	8%
Qualitative	25%
Quantitative	5%
Research Reports	3%
Videos	1%

Table 5

Acceptance Rate of Selected Peer-Reviewed Journals

Peer-Reviewed Journals	Percent Acceptance Rate
Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy	18
Journal of Educational Psychology	14
Journal of Educational Research	18
Language Arts	10
Reading Research Quarterly	16
The Reading Teacher	15-20

Note. Cabell's International (2016)

Organization of the Literature Review

The literature review is structured in the following manner: a) student choice; b) libraries, c) popular culture texts; and d) censorship. The censorship section is segmented thusly: a) censorship in general; b) intellectual freedom; c) censorship of the media; d) in schools and libraries; e) censorship of popular culture texts; and f) self-censorship. These themes were generated by coding the articles using a form of thematic analysis and then generating relevant themes from the codes.

Student Choice

Much has been written on the necessity and importance of student choice in literacy (Allington, 1994, 2013; Allington, & Gabriel, 2012; Dickerson, 2015; Gallagher, 2009; Garan & DeVoogd, 2008; Hunt, 1970; Kittle, 2013; Krashen, 2004, 2005; Lesesne, 2006; Strommen & Mates, 2004; Trudel, 2007-08; Wolk, 2010; Worthy, 1996, Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999). Importantly, Gutiérrez (2010) noted "The bottom line is, if we don't let kids read what they want, they will do *other things* they want to do – and reading will get left behind" (p. 228).

In a 1998 study, Schraw, Flowerday, and Reisetter posed the following question: Does giving choice in a reading assignment positively affect cognitive growth? Schraw et al. (1998) employed an experimental design, testing college students in a literacy experiment. In the first segment of the study, the researchers used a treatment group of students who received a choice of three articles, a treatment group of students who were told that they were reading the article that the others did not want to read, and a control group. Students read the article, completed a multiple-choice test, wrote an essay, and completed a Likert survey (Schraw et al., 1998). In the second component of the study,

two groups, one with choice of articles and one without choice, completed the same assignments (Schraw et al., 1998). The researchers discovered that the students' choice of text affected the engagement level of the reading. Moreover, the students who received choice of texts to read did not score higher on the academic tasks than the students who did not have choice of texts. Schraw et al. (1998) argued that choice of texts did not correlate with improved reading skills. However, Schraw provided the students with extremely limited choices: a) three non-fiction texts; b) multiple-choice questions; and c) a writing task. Had the researchers provided students with a wider assortment of texts, different results may have been realized. Exploring the idea of choice further, Flowerday and Schraw (2000) employed a phenomenological study; 36 Kindergarten-twelfth grade teachers were interviewed as to how, why, what, and when to give students choices. Flowerday and Schraw (2000) reported that teachers gave choices because they believed that students would achieve deeper learning, and students would acquire better decision-making skills. Further, some teachers believed in giving choices as a reward for good behavior. Flowerday and Schraw (2000) theorized that teachers with more experience provided students with greater choices. However, the researchers were perplexed by the fact that some teachers gave choice as a reward for other behaviors. In other words, the teachers used intrinsic rewards extrinsically. As a result, Flowerday and Schraw (2000) suggested that more research was needed to discover how choice and deeper learning were connected.

Employing grounded theory to ascertain how children make book choices during independent reading, and the manner in which teachers teach students to choose books, Ryan (2013), determined that teachers used three types of teaching when instructing

students about book choice: a) concrete (e.g., explicit teaching about choosing books); b) discreet (e.g., gradual release); and c) retreat teaching (e.g., scaffolds are removed, and students make their own choices). Additionally, Ryan (2013) speculated that students need to have vast choices of books to read and should possess at least two locations from which to choose texts (e.g., classroom library and school library). When given the freedom to choose the texts they read during independent reading, students become more engaged, critical readers (Dickerson, 2015; Ryan, 2013; Stripling, 2015). Indeed, others acknowledge that reading only popular culture texts will not provide intellectual enlightenment to readers, but enticing readers to read popular culture texts with the intent of scaffolding students towards other genres is smart teaching (Gallagher, 2009, Kittle, 2013; Lesesne, 2006).

Choices of Students in Low SES Environments

In a 1999 study, Worthy et al. suggested that students from low-SES environments, who could not afford to buy books, borrowed books from their friends or checked them out from public libraries. Disturbingly, books that low-SES students wanted to read were usually not available (Worthy et al., 1999). In 2008, Williams conducted grounded theory research on book choices of Black elementary students from low-SES environments. Williams (2008) explained that very few studies existed in determining how low-SES Black students chose books. As part of a longitudinal summer book study, Williams (2008) researched the book choices students made as they chose 15 books from a book fair. Employing a purposeful sample of 15 students from ten schools, Williams (2008) interviewed the students, even instructing some students to hold a microphone and record what they were thinking as they chose their books. Williams

(2008) found that Black students chose popular culture books, books about animals, and series books. Black males tended to choose the Captain Underpants series, drawing books, sports books, and nature books, and Black females preferred popular singer biographies [e.g., Lil Romeo and Destiny's Child] (Williams, 2008). Williams (2008) recommended that future research could be conducted over more than one summer, interviewing the students to see if they actually read the books they chose, and if students' reading comprehension improved as a result of the summer reading.

Libraries

Providing student access to books has a positive effect on students' reading lives (Krashen, 2004). As a result, public libraries are of vital importance. In fact, Neuman and Celano (2016) ruminated: "Although often overlooked as an educational resource, public libraries are in a unique situation to help young children and their families" (p. 74). Troublingly, many students of poverty do not have access to public libraries (Krashen, 2004; Neuman & Celano, 2016). Moreover, public libraries in areas of poverty possess fewer materials than public libraries in more affluent areas (Neuman & Celano, 2001). In a three-year, mixed methods, ecological study of four Philadelphia neighborhoods (e.g., two high-poverty neighborhoods and two middle-class neighborhoods), Neuman and Celano (2001) determined that there were statistically significant differences between the book selection (e.g., quantity and quality) found in public libraries, school libraries, and classroom libraries in the high poverty and middle-class neighborhoods studied. Consequently, Neuman and Celano (2001) posited that the larger literary environment that students inhabit has a vast influence on their literacy. In other words, students who have more access to a literate environment both inside and outside school have an

advantage over those who do not. Interestingly, Neuman and Celano (2001) did not compare the literacy skills of the students in each of the neighborhoods to the amount of print found in those neighborhoods. However, in an earlier mixed methods study, Neuman (1999) investigated the effect of book floods (e.g., "flooding" classrooms with books) on pre-kindergarten students' literacy skills. The book floods, paired with providing unskilled childcare workers with professional development in reading and discussing picture books with children, yielded statistically significant differences between pre-and post-tests for four out of six areas of participants' early literacy skills, including alphabetic knowledge and understanding story structure. Thus, creating classroom libraries and strengthening weak classroom library collections have an impact on students' literacy learning (Neuman, 1999). Because access to books is of primary importance, school libraries and classroom libraries must have adequate quantities available for borrowing. In fact, at a minimum, school libraries should house at least 20 books for every student in the school, and classroom libraries should house at least seven books for every student in the classroom; moreover, new titles must be added and older, worn titles must be culled annually (International Literacy Association, 1999).

Popular Culture

Popular culture texts: Connecting literate lives. Bucher and Manning (2004) suggested, "Because young adults should be encouraged to read what interests them, graphic novels belong in every school library" (p. 67). A plethora of research exists to support the idea that popular culture texts should be an essential part of school libraries and classroom libraries (Wolk, 2010; Worthy, 1996; Worthy et al., 1999). School and classroom libraries should be filled with texts that students want to read; graphic novels,

comic books, magazines, eBooks, and newspapers (Allington, 2001; Gallagher, 2009; Kittle, 2013; Lesesne, 2006; Miller, 2008). Many students are reading these texts outside the school walls, and these texts need to be available inside the school walls (Allington & Gabriel, 2012; Allington, 2013; Bucher & Manning, 2004; Gutiérrez, 2011; Krashen, 2004; Lesesne, 2006; Lucci, Abrams, & Gerber, 2016; Skerrett & Bomer, 2011; Wilhelm & Smith, 2014; Wolk, 2010).

Alvermann et al. (2007) investigated adolescents' reading habits outside of school. Participants were two groups of middle and high school students who were considered struggling readers by their teachers. One group of students participated in an after school club (e.g., media club), while the control group did not participate in the after school club. Both groups of students kept a record of all the materials they read out-of-school, and the students were compensated for completing their journals. The group that participated in the after school club read more materials out-of-school than the control group, and most of the materials consumed were popular culture texts, such as videogames, lyrics to popular songs, and online content. Alvermann et al. (2007) examined their findings through the lens of students' sense of identity. Surprisingly, the students who struggled with reading at school did not consider themselves struggling readers outside of school; the researchers posited that the students in the after-school group had an advantage over the students in the control group, because the after-school group had access to the public library and computers. Alvermann et al. (2007) demonstrated that students who were considered struggling readers read for pleasure outside of school, and the materials they read were most often popular culture texts. Teachers who provide the opportunity for students to read popular culture texts in schools

may contribute to the literate identity growth of the student. Conversely, censoring these texts may be deleterious to the student, assisting the student into the slide of abandoning pleasure reading. Alvermann et al. (2007) acknowledged that because the students were compensated for completing the journals, the data may not have been completely accurate. Interestingly, teachers were not interviewed about their perceptions of the texts the students read outside of school.

A similar study explored struggling readers' acquisition of self-efficacy about their popular culture out-of-school literacies. Mahar (2003, 2005) was amazed that students in her middle school possessed so much popular culture knowledge. In order to determine how out-of-school popular culture literacies merged with students' school literacy, Mahar (2005) undertook a qualitative research study. In this study, six students were observed and interviewed in school and out-of-school over the course of two years' time. Within this study, Mahar (2003) organized an informal lunch group for students to gather to discuss their out-of-school literacies. Mahar (2003) implored the students to teach her about animé. The teacher became the student, and the students became the teacher. Students from various grade levels and social groups spent their lunchtime in Mahar's classroom, sharing their popular culture, among them animé, videogames, Pokémon, and Yu-gi-oh! Students shared and discussed fanfiction writing and popular culture trading cards. Mahar (2003) found that the students quite naturally used educator practices to instruct her in their popular culture passions. By allowing students to bring their passions and interests into school, Mahar (2003, 2005) acquired a valuable knowledge of students' literate lives outside of school.

In a cross-case analytical study, Heron-Hruby, Hagood, and Alvermann (2008) examined critical literacy interactions and the student use of popular culture texts in and out-of-school (e.g., interactions between teachers, librarians, and secondary students considered to be struggling readers). Viewing the interactions through lenses of transactional and resistance theories, the researchers analyzed the affordances and constraints of the student-teacher relationships and popular culture texts (Heron-Hruby et al., 2008). The researchers posited that the teachers and the librarian could have used these conflicts and conversations to greater effect (e.g., if the teachers and librarian had reflected more deeply on their values and practices). However, the students in this study engaged more deeply in critical literacy as a result of the transactions and conflicts that emanated from the conversations with the teachers and the librarian (Heron-Hruby et al., 2008). Suggestions for future research included investigating what individual schools might do at the local level to consider the thoughtful integration of popular culture texts in the classroom, despite the national standards and the politically motivated expectations of students in the twenty-first century.

Employing a case study at an Australian high school for boys, Yeung & Curwood (2015) interviewed students to determine if the students felt that the integration of popular culture texts into the curriculum was a motivating factor for them. Concomitantly, teachers were interviewed about their perceptions and beliefs of the use of popular culture texts in the curriculum. Both the students and the teachers indicated that using popular culture texts in class was important; students felt more motivated to learn when teachers used popular culture texts, and teachers believed that their male students were more engaged when popular culture texts were integrated. Surprisingly,

however, as the standardized test date approached, both students and teachers felt that preparing for the test was more important, and indicated that popular culture text integration should not take precedence.

Popular culture as part of the curriculum. Educators differ on the use of popular culture texts as part of the English Language Arts curriculum (Gainer, 2007; Gutiérrez, 2011; Marsh, 2006; Morrell, 2002). However, many researchers have determined that integrating popular culture texts into the curriculum could be successfully implemented (Gainer, 2007; Gerber & Price, 2013; Vera, 2011). Specifically, in surveys of middle school students' choices of materials in school libraries and classroom libraries, Worthy (1996) conducted interviews with school librarians on student choice, conducted library inventories to determine the integration of popular culture texts, and observed middle school students during Free Voluntary Reading (FVR). Worthy (1996) posited that students would choose to read popular culture materials if the materials were more readily available. Hence, when students were given no choice in selecting their texts, Worthy (1996) commented that some students refused to read.

In another study by Worthy et al. (1999), middle school students' reading preferences were investigated across economic boundaries. Worthy et al. (1999) concluded that most students preferred popular culture literature and magazines. However, many students purchased these materials outside of school; students could not check materials out from school libraries and classroom libraries because of the sparse selection of popular culture texts. Worthy et al. (1999) speculated that even when the books were part of the school library, the quantities of each title were so miniscule that

the books were always out of circulation. Further, the researchers recommended that teachers capitalize on the motivation of readers of popular culture, create readers by allowing students to read these materials, and then guide them towards other books.

Researchers and teachers who intentionally and thoughtfully plan for instruction, consider students' background knowledge of popular culture, including popular culture texts, observe that students' literacy skills are strengthened (Allen et al., 2002; Alvermann & Hong Xu, 2003; Bitz, 2004, Dyson, 2001, 2003; Stevens, 2001). For example, Morrell (2002), developed lesson plans incorporating popular culture texts (e.g., hip-hop music, movies) for a high school class. Students compared and contrasted popular culture texts to more classical texts, and engaged in critical discussions about those texts. Based on his experiences, Morrell (2002) explained that there is a need for students to critically analyze and evaluate popular culture texts in order to understand society, traditional literature, and themselves more deeply. Skerrett and Bomer (2016) reported that Molly (pseudonym), a ninth grade English teacher, successfully negotiated connections between the out-of-school literacies of low-income students and in school literacies. Molly became the student and the students became the teachers, instructing Molly on the intricacies of out-of-school literacies such as tattoos and tagging (the process of notating one's name in graffiti art). Surprisingly, Molly had to convince the students that the practices they were involved in outside-of-school *were* literacy. By learning, confirming, and respecting students' knowledge and experiences, Molly and the students constructed curriculum that connected out-of-school and in school literacies (Skerrett & Bomer, 2016), Similarly, Gorlewski and Garland (2012), successfully created "literacy events" (p. 104) to teach high school students how to critically analyze popular

culture films. Simply put, the researchers explicitly introduced film vocabulary, and modeled viewing movie stills and clips through the lens of a critical thinker. Ultimately, teachers integrated popular culture films into the English classroom, thus engaging students and enticing them to read the corresponding print texts.

Hunt and Hunt (2004) suggested that by connecting popular culture to required classical texts, students will be more engaged, and will see the connections to and the importance of reading the classics. Employing a *South Park* episode to help students understand satire in a classic text, the researchers asserted that student engagement increased by incorporating student interest and popular culture texts into the classroom. Further, students were asked to make connections to their classical reading while they were listening to music and watching television. Although the researchers posited that evaluating relevant popular culture connections could be time-consuming, the benefits of increased engagement, critical thinking, and critical discussions were valuable and worth the time invested.

Savage (2008) immersed himself in out-of-school popular culture texts as a youth, and was ostracized by his teachers as a result. Because his early experiences shaped him as an educator and researcher, he became concerned that popular culture is also corporate culture, and recommended that teachers need to not only educate themselves in current popular culture, they must also teach students to critically analyze popular culture texts. Employing a mixed method approach to determine if and how popular culture texts are used in instruction in high school, the researcher interviewed Australian high school students to investigate how they perceived their own use of popular culture texts (e.g., the latest fashions, hair color and styles, music), and was alarmed by the students'

perceptions of whiteness, thinness, and expensive brands of clothing as being status symbols of coolness. Curious, he interviewed the students and asked them if their teachers used popular culture texts in the English classroom; he discovered that very few teachers engaged in examining and analyzing popular culture texts. Students reported that their teachers taught traditional texts and even though students acknowledged that teachers should teach popular culture texts in the classroom, the students also admitted that teachers would have to be very up-to-date in popular culture texts, the teaching would have to be very exciting and interesting, and students did not believe that many teachers would be that committed to teaching. Savage (2008) advised that while the classics are important to teach, educators must keep up with popular culture texts and teach students to critically analyze them; however, the researcher expressed serious doubts as to whether teachers will embrace and use popular culture texts in the curriculum.

On a more positive note, Gainer, Valdez-Gainer, and Kinard (2009) brought magazine advertisements into a fourth-grade classroom and asked students to analyze the deeper meanings and messages contained in the advertisements. Students worked collaboratively, discussing meanings and creating speech bubbles to talk back to the texts. Popular culture texts were successfully integrated into the curriculum, and students were engaged in critical inquiry.

Popular culture (re)contextualization. Bitz (2004), in partnership with Teachers College, Columbia University, began an after-school comic-book writing program for inner-city youth in New York City. Bitz (2004) and his colleagues collaborated with a comic book publisher, Dark Horse Comics, who first helped teach the after-school

instructors how to write, draw, and color comics. During the after-school program, students were instructed in manuscript writing, drawing comics, and adding color to their pages. The researchers' suggested that most students integrated popular culture into their writing, both from day-to-day, outside-of-the-school issues (drugs, gangs, etc.) and through their knowledge of super heroes (Bitz, 2004).

In yet another example, Dyson (2001) conducted an ethnographic study of first graders in an ethnically diverse elementary school in San Francisco, California. In particular, she followed Noah, a Black first grader who was exposed to a variety of popular culture outside of school (e.g., Donkey Kong, Space Jam). Noah wove words and ideas from his popular culture knowledge into his writing during writing workshop. In so doing, Noah changed his educational experience. Dyson (2001) advised that teachers transform their teaching by allowing recontextualization (e.g., supporting students as they use their schema to produce new texts). As Dyson established:

> This recontextualization allows children a sense of competence and agency-indeed, this allows them sense. In a dialectic fashion, children also recontextualize aspects of their familiar world within the frameworks of school activities, and this poses interrelated symbolic, social, and ideological challenges (p. 419).

Moving forward in education, students must feel comfortable and accepted when they bring their popular culture experiences to school, and teachers must be knowledgeable in order to skillfully and adeptly scaffold the students to recontextualize their knowledge. Supported by savvy teachers, Noah was able to recontextualize and synthesize his popular culture schema.

McGinnis (2004) taught and observed in a summer program for middle school students in a Migrant Education Program. The middle school students were immigrants from Vietnam, China, and South America. Students collaborated in small-group self-selected inquiry projects. In this project, students chose the history of rap music and the origins of Dragonball Z. McGinnis (2004) argued that this type of inquiry project allowed students to bring their knowledge of and affinity for popular culture in the classroom, and scaffolded students in their acquisition of literacy and their second language.

Popular culture: Violence. Educators may self-censor because they are concerned with the violent images that some popular culture texts contain. On the other hand, Carr-Chellman (2010), Engerman, (2016); Newkirk (2002), and Smith and Wilhelm (2002) argued that boys' passion for gore and violence are "ways in" for educators to engage boys in school. Knowledgeable teachers tap into the culture of the students they serve and provide popular culture texts to match students' interests. However, teachers are hesitant to embrace these teachable moments, and many boys do not fit into classroom environments where they are forced to sit quietly, say little, and read assigned texts (Engerman, 2016; Engerman, Mun, Yan, & Carr-Chellman, 2015). Engerman (2016) posited that boys might have a predisposition to enjoy violence as fantasy. That is, boys enjoy playing videogames that contain violence, for the simple fact that the violence is pretend; boys know that the violence is not real. Additionally, Engerman (2016) connected the benefits of videogame play to national educational standards, and offered suggestions for educators to integrate videogames and popular culture texts into the curriculum. In a similar study, Engerman et al. (2015) demonstrated that there were strong connections between boys' literacy use during videogame play and

national literacy and history standards. However, the researchers did not investigate the standardized test scores of the participants, which are directly tied to the national standards. When students are given the opportunity to consume popular culture texts in the classroom, they are engaging in literacy practices. Nonetheless, the frequency of media coverage of the alleged relationship between popular culture consumption and boys' violence may convince teachers to self-censor popular culture texts in the classroom.

Popular culture: Humorous texts. Students are drawn to humorous texts, although teachers may not embrace such texts in the classroom. Zbaracki (2003) surveyed teachers, students, and children's authors concerning the reading of humorous children's books. Additionally, students participated in literature circles where they self-selected humorous children's books, and responded that they enjoyed the humor in the selected texts (Zbaracki, 2003). Concomitantly, student participants reported that they enjoyed anticipating the humorous climactic moments in the texts. Zbaracki (2003) addressed an occurrence that happened during an interview with one teacher. In this research, the teacher in question reported that she was hesitant to use humorous texts, because although she acknowledged that students were engaged while reading humorous texts, she believed that the students read such texts only at surface level. Zbaracki (2003) recommended that future researchers delve further into the area of teacher perceptions of the quality of humorous texts. As with teacher perceptions about the quality of popular culture texts, self-censorship may result from teachers' sense of text worthiness.

Censorship

Every time a text is censored, access to ideas and discourse is diminished; intellectual freedom is stifled (ALA & AAP, 2004; Schliesman, 2008). Boyd and Bailey (2009) created a metaphor of censorship as barbed wire: People prevented from reading a censored text have to peer through the barbed wire and are excluded from reading and interpreting the ideas in the text. Boyd and Bailey (2009) deduced that standing outside the metaphoric barbed wire fence prevents students from critical discourse and deep reflection on controversial topics. Censorship silences students; when texts are removed from classrooms, discourse and critical reflection are often absent (Noll, 1994). Martinson (2008) concluded that administrators in public schools must be mindful and reflective about not silencing students; administrators and teachers must encourage thoughtful conversations from students, because the purpose of schools is to develop critical thinking and reflection with the goal of future participation in the political process. Unfortunately, many students lose the opportunity for critical discourse and debate on important ideas, as a result of teachers, administrators, or parents restricting their rights to critical literacy pedagogy (Boyd & Bailey, 2009; Martinson, 2008; Noll, 1994; Person, 1998).

Censorship: History of text censorship. As long as the written word has been in existence, censorship of the written word has been a constant companion. One of the first censorship incidents dates back to 387 B. C., when Plato censored Homer's Odyssey (American Society of Journalists and Authors, 1987). Other infamous and heinous acts followed; in 12 B. C., Augustus Octavianus began burning the political pamphlets of countrymen who wanted revolution (Cramer, 1947). Alarmingly, heinous censorship acts

continued into the twentieth century; in the Nazi years of Germany, books were burned by the thousands (American Society of Journalists and Authors, 1987). When our constitution was written, the first amendment of the Bill of Rights guaranteed the right to our intellectual freedom (Bill of Rights Institute, 2016). All throughout the world's history, freedom of the press and freedom of speech have been threatened (Simon, 2015), in the world, our country, in the media, and more pertinent to this literature review, in public education.

Censorship: Position statements. On June 25, 1953, the American Library Association (ALA) and the Association of American Publishers (AAP) issued the Freedom to Read position statement (see Appendix A), bravely defending the rights of libraries and booksellers to provide texts, controversial or not, to readers, and to protect the rights of readers to read what they choose. Further, the position statement, written and issued during McCarthyism (e.g., a time in our country when many people were accused of being communists, and many authors and other artists were prevented from working), is just as relevant today, in a climate where political polarization is dividing our country: "We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society" (ALA & AAP, 2004). Additionally, other organizations have issued position statements regarding intellectual freedom and people's right to read. NCTE (2013) created a position statement entitled "Students' Right to Read" that speaks to parents, the community-at-large, and to teachers. This position statement can be found in Appendix B.

Censorship: School district policies. Teachers, librarians, administrators, and school board members have a responsibility to make their selection processes and

censorship policies public and accessible (Jenkins, 1995; Kahmi, 1981; Lent, 2008; Pipkin & Lent, 2002; Schliesman, 2008). Additionally, book selection policies should be reviewed annually, and those policies should specify what happens to a challenged text while the text is in the process of being challenged (Pipkin & Lent, 2002). Moreover, teachers must do their utmost to keep the lines of parental communication open; the more information provided to parents concerning selected texts, the less likely that a complaint will arise about a text (Kamhi, 1981). It is of extreme importance to note that teachers' text selection criteria may vary depending on whether the text in question is used to teach the whole class, small groups of students, or as a text in teachers' classroom libraries (National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), 2013). According to NCTE's (2013) Position Statement: "And the criteria for suggesting books to individuals or for recommending something worth reading for a student who casually stops by after class are different from selection material for a class or group" (NCTE, 2013). Nonetheless, classroom libraries have been known to come under attack: During a very public censorship battle in Florida in the 1980's, the classroom library books which were purchased by teachers were confiscated and held temporarily in a district media center (Pipkin & Lent, 2002).

Censorship: Censorship of the media. Censorship of the media, both in the United States and in other countries, is a growing concern, especially as technologies expand. Simon (2015), an international journalist and the director of the Committee to Protect Journalists, warned of the dangers of expanding political censorship in many countries in the world. Countries such as China and Vietnam overtly control what is reported in the news; other countries are more covert in their approaches to media

censorship (Simon, 2015). Surprisingly, China hires Microsoft and other U.S. companies to censor the many blogs that have sprung up amongst China's educated, working-class population (MacKinnon, 2007). MacKinnon (2007) argued that even though the blogs are censored (e.g., taken down or removed all together), the Chinese bloggers, for the most part, see the current blogging censorship of cyberspace as a boon, and not an evil. In fact, MacKinnon (2007) posited that the increasing use of blogs in China may be a way to increase democratic ideas, albeit in tiny steps.

In some countries, censorship of the Internet is catastrophic. Iran's censorship of the Internet is one of the most controlling in the world. Alarmingly, Iran even alters the connection throttling (e.g., the time it takes for the Internet connection to connect) during political elections (Aryan, Aryan, & Halderman, 2013). Additionally, China's government almost completely censors the Internet within China, using "The Great Firewall of China," a firewall with such smart technology that many researchers are seeking to discover the secret to its information blocking (Clayton, Murdoch, & Watson, 2006).

The United States is not blameless in censorship issues (Simon, 2015). The National Security Agency's (NSA) surveillance program targets journalists, among others. Simon (2015) suggested that surveillance is a form of censorship. A recent survey of 520 writers by the Pen American Center (2013) was conducted to determine the effects of NSA surveillance on self-censorship: 16 percent of the writers surveyed revealed that they self-censored their written or verbal communication as a result of the increased surveillance (Pen American Center, 2013).

Censorship of journalists during wartime is and has been the military's standard operating procedure. Walter Cronkite, when interviewed by Ferrari and Tobin (2003) explained that he believed censorship in wartime is absolutely essential, as troops need to be protected; however, he firmly believed that civilians needed to be a component of the censorship team, along with military personnel. Disturbingly however, Cronkite lamented that the press was not allowed to film the Gulf War; consequently, history was not preserved (Ferrari & Tobin, 2003). In 1965, during the Vietnam War, Morley Safer accompanied troops and witnessed them destroying a village called Cam Ne with lighters and matches, and forcing the inhabitants of the homes to flee; Safer reported the story and CBS News made the decision to air the story (Ferrari & Tobin, 2003). Reportedly, Lyndon Baines Johnson called Frank Stanton, head of CBS, and told him, "You just shat on the American flag" (Ferrari & Tobin, 2003).

Finally, some newspapers and television news companies engage in censoring by omitting news that does not corroborate with the viewers', owners', or shareholders' views (DeMoro, 2016). For example, DeMoro (2016) alleged that political and financial interests led to the media choosing to air more of Hilary Clinton's campaign and less of Bernie Sander's campaign, and alleged that it subsequently helped Hillary Clinton to win the Democratic nomination.

Censorship: Textbook censorship. Textbook publishing in the U.S. is big business, and the desire for profit drives the content of textbooks. Consequently, powerful liberal and conservative voices have had considerable influence when it comes to censoring and revising textbook content. Therefore, textbooks do not always contain factual information, and many important events and ideas in science, history, and religion

have been and continue to be excluded (Delfattore, 1992). Moreover, some suggested

textbook revisions are shrouded in secrecy, and many textbook publishers will not reveal

the original text that prompted such revisions. Alarmingly, in Texas, many revisions are

actually hand-written on the pages of the publishers' textbook drafts, and never seen by

anyone except the writer and the publishers (Delfattore, 1992).

Although the textbook adoption processes in California and Texas vary slightly,

the decisions made about textbooks in both states have a major impact on the textbooks

used in other parts of the country (Delfattore, 1992). In a very real sense, history is

rewritten as major events and ideas are sculpted to reflect the opinions of various groups.

Two of the most prominent and influential voices have been Norma and Mel Gabler, who

founded Education Research Analysts (ERA) group. Over the years, the Gabler's have

effected many fundamentalist revisions in America's textbooks (Delfattore, 1992;

Demarit, 1981). For example, the Gabler's and ERA were successful in convincing the

Texas State Board of Education (SBOE) to order textbook publishers to remove

Roosevelt's New Deal from a timeline of historical events, because the Gabler's argued

that the program was socialist in nature (Delfattore, 1992). Textbook censorship

examples continue into the twenty-first century: Members of the Texas SBOE have

engaged in textbook censorship in relation to the teaching of evolution, creationism, and

slavery (Schaub, 2015; Thurman, 2013).

Censorship: Colleges. Although colleges have long been thought of as centers

for critical discourse and debate, censorship is very prevalent in universities across the

United States (Lukianoff, 2014). Free speech has been curtailed through the use of

campus speech codes (e.g., rules about what can and cannot be stated on campus), and

many students have to limit their advocacy endeavors to tiny spaces on the campus, which are labeled Free Speech Zones (Lukianoff, 2014). College campuses have long been the training grounds for critical discourse and debate, but according to Lukianoff (2014), colleges are now setting a dangerous precedent of silence on important issues. Although smaller in number than in middle and high schools, text censorship does indeed occur on college campuses. In 2008, a student (who was also an employee) at a prestigious midwestern university was reading a book about the Ku Klux Klan on his break. The individual was warned that he could not read the book in public, because of its offensive nature. After much publicity about the incident, the university officials changed their opinion about the book in question (Rabinowitz, 2008). Another incident involved politicians who were dissatisfied with the reading list (e.g., Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender [LGBT] texts) for college freshman at two southern colleges (Lazenby, 2014). In the state House of Representatives, elected officials voted to reduce the amount of money that was sent to both university reading programs (Lazenby, 2014), clearly using funding to send a censorship message.

Censorship: Censorship in secondary schools. There have been and continue to be countless examples of teachers' censorship controversies in high schools. Troublingly, most of the censorship complaints have sprung from persons with fundamentalist beliefs (Delfattore, 1992; Pipkin & Lent, 2002). One such example of fundamentalist protest was in a Florida school district where a teacher (Lent) was the sponsor of an award-winning school newspaper. When a new principal took the reins, Lent was removed as the sponsor, and the civil liberties of the student newspaper were seriously curtailed. After

consulting attorneys and associates, the teacher filed a lawsuit against the school district, which was settled several months later (Pipkin & Lent, 2002).

The travails of Lent are just the tip of the iceberg. Lacks (1997), an acclaimed high school English teacher in Missouri, was suspended from teaching over a censorship issue. For several years, when teaching drama, Lacks had students compose scripts using their own vernacular, and the performance was videotaped. Although Lacks (1997) guaranteed the students privacy, the videotapes were made public, and Lacks was eventually terminated. Ultimately, Lacks sued the school district and was reinstated, winning monetary damages. Unfortunately, teachers who stand up to censorship oppression are often ostracized by fellow teachers and treated unfairly by administrators, leading these advocates of free speech to leave the profession or to transfer to other schools (Pipkin & Lent, 2002).

Book banning incidents are most always destructive, and may have devastating effects on students and curricula. Urrieta and Machado-Casas (2013) summarized events that transpired when a Mexican-American studies program was eliminated in the Tucson Unified School District (UFD). Urrieta and Machado-Casas alleged that white supremacy and "whitestream schooling" (p. 3) set the climate for politicians who wished to shut down the program and ban books used to teach the program, including *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paolo Freire. Urrieta and Machado-Casas (2013) argued that including programs like Mexican-American and Ethnic Studies in the curriculum is advantageous in many ways, including allowing children of color to experience various ways of knowing (e.g., different knowledge that is typically excluded from a typical U.S. public school education). Since the publication of this article, the banned books are no longer

forbidden; however, the Mexican-American Studies program is still prohibited (Planos, 2014). Troublingly, Arizona is not the only state affected by curriculum censorship. In 2013, Texas eliminated the CSCOPE curriculum after rumors about socialism, Marxism, and mind control began to circulate about the program (Klein, 2013; Stanford, 2013). Although the rumors were discredited, the Senate Education Committee decided to discontinue use of the curriculum (Klein, 2013). In 2016, a Virginia mother's complaint about her son's reading assignment of *Beloved* (Morrison, 1987), led to Virginia House Bill 516, which would require kindergarten through twelfth-grade teachers to alert parents of any sexually-explicit materials contained in classroom books. House Bill 516 passed both the Virginia House and Senate, but was vetoed at the last minute by Virginia Governor McAuliffe (Portnoy, 2016; Virginia's Legislative Information System, 2016). In many of these censorship cases, politicians and state government have been involved, and students are again on the losing end of intellectual freedom.

Censorship in middle schools. At a middle school in Florida in the 1980's, Pipkin and Lent (2002) encountered challenges to their reading program, and despite a written text selection policy, excellent communication with parents, and winning awards for their reading program, one parental censorship complaint spiraled out of control. Based on their beliefs of free speech and the necessity for critical discourse, Pipkin, fellow teachers, and parents sued the school district. Eventually, amid concerns about similar lawsuits that ruled in favor of school board policies and against teachers, Pipkin and fellow plaintiffs accepted a court settlement.

One middle school censorship challenge ended more positively; Tigner-Räsäsen (2001) described a censorship incident that took place in her middle school, involving a

parental challenge to the books *The Chocolate War* (Cormier, 1981) and *Scorpion* (Myers, 1990). Although the books remained in the classroom after the challenge, the teachers and administrator involved learned valuable lessons concerning the importance of honest communication during the process, and the salience of keeping abreast of district policies on book challenges (Tigner-Räsäsen, 2001).

Censorship in elementary schools. Recently, Phil Bildner, author of children's books for elementary students, was told that his contract to visit the elementary schools in the Round Rock School District in Texas was cancelled. Bildner (2016) took umbrage with the cancellation, alleging that his author visits were canceled because Bildner book talked (e.g., gave a short commercial about a book) *George* (Gino, 2015), a book about a transgender fourth grader. The Round Rock School District released a public statement explaining that during his author visits, Bildner had told students not to listen to their parents; therefore they canceled his contract. Bildner has publically denied the allegations (Bildner, 2016; Vane, 2016).

Books are frequently challenged in elementary schools and the book *And Tango Makes Three* (Richardson & Parnell, 2005) is no exception. In fact, the text was the fourth most banned book between the 2000 and2009 (ALA, 2016). Young (2010) conducted interviews to analyze the motivations behind the creation of the book, and additionally used both multicultural and Queer Literature checklists to ascertain the quality of the picture book. The researcher recommended that the book had a place in elementary classrooms and libraries, and that teachers should read-aloud the book and discuss the book with children. However, the book has been challenged and banned many times (Young, 2010). In one school district, after much deliberation, and even with

support from the administration, the book was placed in a special location in the school library and was made available only to parents and teachers (Chandler, 2008).

Censorship: Teachers and librarians as censors. Surprisingly, teachers and librarians are most often the individuals making censorship complaints (Fiske, 1959; Kahmi, 1981). As an example, (YA) author Hopkins (2010) was invited to a literary book festival in a school district located outside Houston, Texas. After a middle school librarian contacted the superintendent to complain that Hopkins' books were inappropriate, Hopkins was asked not to participate in the festival. Hopkins (2010) reported the incident on her blog, imploring other YA authors to blacklist the festival. As a result, several authors withdrew, and the literary event was canceled for the year (Hopkins, 2010; Kolderup, 2010). In a similar manner, a middle school visit by Hopkins was canceled when a parent took issue with one of Hopkins' books; the parent requested that Hopkins not visit the school, and that one of Hopkins' books, (*Glass*, 2013) be removed from the school library. Fortunately, the middle school librarian was able to schedule Hopkins' visit at another location, and the book was kept on the school shelves (Perry, 2012). Kahmi (1981) surveyed 1,891 administrators and librarians, inquiring about text selection, text challenges, and self-censorship. Interestingly, teacher challenges to controversial books comprised almost 33 percent of the challenges of texts to school librarians. Kahmi (1981) documented: "One rather startling finding was that nearly a third of the local challenges cited by librarians (as compared with under ten percent cited by administrators) were initiated by teachers" (p. 212). However, teachers may lodge censorship complaints because they are concerned about their employment: There are many publicized censorship incidents that have led to teachers losing their jobs or

seriously jeopardizing their careers advocating for intellectual freedom (Lacks, 1997; Noll, 1994; Pipkin & Lent, 2002). Therefore, teachers have tough decisions to make before taking a stand on a controversial text.

Censorship: Censorship of popular culture. Popular culture texts have been under the censorship microscope for many years. In her history of youth librarians, Jenkins (1995) pointed out the inconsistencies in early youth librarians' perceptions of what was "high" and "low" culture. There was a perception of what was considered well-written and what was considered garbage: poorly written, written for the masses, and liable to shape a child's brain to be less than he or she could be (Jenkins, 1995). Hunt (1929) was a proponent of quality books and admonished parents to be wary of popular culture texts:

> …we find in many prosperous American nurseries little ones who are never read to or whose only reading is the inane bedtime story of the daily newspaper. The comic supplement is the picture book of these children, and, as they grow older they are presented with sets of the cheap series stuff… (p. 65).

Indeed, Hunt (1929) warned parents that popular culture texts would stifle imaginations and provide no benefit whatsoever. More recent examples abound: From 2001-2003, Harry Potter texts were on the ALA's Top Ten Banned Books list (ALA, 2016). At least one hotly contested incident had a happy ending. After a school board voted to keep Harry Potter books off the library bookshelves and allow checkout with parental permission, author Judy Blume and concerned parents sued the school district to cease their censorship of Rowling's books; the plaintiffs won and the books were returned to the library (Associated Press, 2003). In another example of popular culture

censorship, Dav Pilkey's (1997-2014) Captain Underpants series climbed to the top of the 2013 American Library Association's (ALA) list of banned books (ALA, 2016a). This wildly popular series relates the tale of fourth graders George and Harold, and has been challenged for "offensive language, unsuitable for age group, violence" (ALA, 2016). In fact, Italie (2013) stated that Pilkey's books are the ones most banned by parents and by educators. When Italie (2013) interviewed Pilkey about the controversy over his books, he replied that while he is pleased to be in "the club" with authors such as Mark Twain and Maya Angelou, oft banned authors, he worries that some kids will not get to read his books because of the buzz about the inappropriateness. Not surprisingly, the most recent book in the series titled *Captain Underpants and the Sensational Saga of Sir Stinks-a-Lot* (Pilkey, 2015), generated controversy at a book fair in Michigan, as Pilkey (2015) introduced a homosexual character in the book. Consequently, the parent-teacher organization made the decision to keep the book off the shelves of the book fair, but decided that the book could be ordered online if parents wished (Woolfolk, 2015). Rowling and Pilkey have advocates. One such advocate, Gallagher (2009) alleged, "Giving kids 'stupid' books and other high-interest reading material is the first line of defense against students' falling into the reader's death spiral," (p. 85). Scieszka, a popular children's author, as cited by Strauss (2008) considered students' non-interest in books the "death spiral." Strauss (2008) quoted Scieszka: "I've been a big champion of stuff like 'Captain Underpants' and 'Junie B. Jones…It horrifies some parents and teachers because it is not grammatical and there are misspellings, but that is fun reading."

Censorship: Children's censorship in libraries. Early libraries in the United States typically did not allow child patrons and housed few or no children's materials.

However, as concern for children's welfare became more important in the early 19th century, public schools and children's sections of public libraries were created (Jenkins, 1995). In her expansive history of libraries and the American Library Association, Jenkins (1995) traced the history and the evolving responsibilities of youth librarians; these early youth librarians typically began their careers protecting youth from dangerous, immoral books. Indeed, the very first youth librarians were vigilant and determined that children read what were deemed decent and wholesome books (Jenkins, 1995). Interestingly, Jenkins (1995) pointed out that the unworthy works considered inappropriate for young people included popular culture texts:"…children's librarians took an early lead in identifying and promoting what they considered to be books of the highest literary quality and likewise discouraging the sue of what they considered to be literature inappropriate for children…" (p. 54). However, as time went on, youth librarians emerged as those who respected a child's right to read texts of their choice (Jenkins, 1995).

Censorship: Adult text censorship in libraries. Conversely, censorship in public libraries for adults presents a completely different set of problems. Librarians are responsible for making purchasing decisions about many different types of texts for adults (e.g., pornography, texts that detail how to make bombs, controversially political books). Additionally, librarians have to make decisions about whether to filter Internet connections (Oppenheim & Smith, 2004). In fact, in the aftermath of the issuance of the Patriot Act, librarians' roles have changed dramatically. Library records, once confidential, can now be seized by the government: "Section 215 of the USA PATRIOT Act allows the government to secretly request and obtain library records for large

numbers of individuals without any reason to believe they are involved in illegal activity"

(ALA, 2016b) and, in fact, the government issues a gag order to librarians who are

therefore then not allowed to talk about any of the seizing of records to any press,

patrons, or others.

Selection vs. Censorship

Selection of texts for public, school, or classroom libraries should be based on

teachers' and librarians' knowledge of books, subject matter, and potential for teaching

(NCTE, 2013). According to some (Asheim, 1953; Kidd, 2009), text selection emanates

from optimism and censorship springs from a pessimistic stance. Further, Asheim (1953)

alleged that a selector typically views the text as a whole, and a censor parses the text to

find objectionable words or sections. Even more salient, Asheim (1953) declared that one

difference between selection and censorship is open-mindedness versus close-

mindedness: "Selection, then, begins with a presumption in favor of liberty of thought;

censorship, with a presumption in favor of thought control" (p. 67). However, Asheim

(1953) acknowledged that the line between selection and censorship can be extremely

blurry.

Playing devil's advocate, Kidd (2009) argued that selection actually glorifies

censored texts through the use of "prizing" (p. 197). When a censored text is awarded and

given a respectable award, said text becomes more of a celebrity. In fact, Kidd (2009)

asserted, "The struggle against censorship transforms selection into canon making, and

earnestly so, as opposed to the more ironic mode of canon making typical of prizing" (p.

208). Kidd (2000) even ventured so far as to suggest that the celebration of banned or

challenged books can indeed be big business for banned book organizations and for the

censored authors: "to censor a book is not to suppress it but rather to rescue it from oblivion, to give it a place in public life and cultural memory"(p. 214).

Therefore, when employed in text selection, librarians and teachers are examining texts through a positive lens Asheim (1953); on the other hand, when a librarian or teacher chooses not to select a particular text because of subject matter or potential controversy, the process is no longer selection: The teacher or librarian is then engaging in self-censorship (Hill, 2010; Sloan, 2012) As Jenkins (1995) posited:

> If, however, the item meets these standards but the librarian decides not to acquire it due to perceived or actual objections to the item, then the librarian is practicing censorship. Thus, censorship is a negative act. Censorship when performed by the librarian is often referred to as "self-censorship" or "precensorship" to distinguish it from censorship by those other than the librarian (p. 6).

All too often, fearing future censorship forays, many teachers and librarians engage in the process of self-censorship instead of the process of selection (Cordell, 2008; Lent, 2008; Schliesman, 2008). Teachers who self-censor popular culture texts from independent readers may not self-censor because they are fearful of a censorship controversy; popular culture censorship may stem from teachers' perceived value of the book. Surprisingly, teachers and librarians are most often the individuals making censorship complaints (Fiske, 1959; Kahmi, 1981). As an example, YA author Hopkins (2010) was invited to a literary book festival in a school district located outside Houston, Texas. After a middle school librarian contacted the superintendent to complain that Hopkins' books were inappropriate, Hopkins was asked not to participate in the festival. Hopkins (2010) reported the incident on her blog, imploring other YA authors to blacklist

the festival. As a result, several authors withdrew, and the literary event was canceled for the year (Hopkins, 2010; Kolderup, 2010). In a similar manner, a middle school visit by Hopkins was canceled when a parent took issue with one of Hopkins' books; the parent requested that Hopkins not visit the school, and that one of Hopkins' books, (Glass, 2013) be removed from the school library. Fortunately, the middle school librarian was able to schedule Hopkins' visit at another location, and the book was kept on the school shelves (Perry, 2012). Kahmi (1981) surveyed 1,891 administrators and librarians, inquiring about text selection, text challenges, and self-censorship. Interestingly, teacher challenges to controversial books comprised almost 33 percent of the challenges of texts to school librarians. Kahmi (1981) documented: "One rather startling finding was that nearly a third of the local challenges cited by librarians (as compared with fewer than 10 percent cited by administrators) were initiated by teachers" (p. 212). However, teachers may lodge censorship complaints because they are concerned about their employment: There are many publicized censorship incidents that have led to teachers losing their jobs or seriously jeopardizing their careers advocating for intellectual freedom (Lacks, 1997; Noll, 1994; Pipkin & Lent, 2002). Therefore, teachers have tough decisions to make before taking a stand on a controversial text.

Teacher Self-Censorship

Many times, texts are never made available to students because teachers decide not to use controversial or other questionable texts in the classroom. Person (1998) referred to this form of censorship as "silent censorship" (p. 119), and affirmed: "It is easier to deal with censorship that is out loud and in the open; it is more difficult to deal with censorship from those charged with protecting young readers from its influence and

effects and who deny its existence" (p. 121). Moreover, teachers sometimes revise pictures and words to make them more acceptable for students (Hydrick, 1994). Cerra (1990,1991,1994) was curious about how and why elementary teachers made decisions about the books that they read and placed in classroom libraries, and what type of professional development that teachers received in intellectual freedom issues. Cerra (1990, 1991, 1994) surveyed 375 elementary teachers, inquiring about intellectual freedom, self-censorship, and controversial books. Cerra (1990, 1991) revealed that although most of the teachers indicated their belief in intellectual freedom and First Amendment rights for elementary school children, a majority of the teachers who were surveyed admitted that they engaged in self-censorship when concerned about the ideological, sexual, or religious aspects of the texts. Of equal importance, 60 percent of the teachers surveyed disclosed that their schools or school districts had no written text selection policies in place, and four percent indicated that they did not know if such a policy was in place. Therefore, Cerra (1991) advised that elementary teachers must be well-trained in intellectual freedom and knowledgeable about district or school book selection policies: "As a safeguard to intellectual freedom, information about challenges in books, as well as information about professional standards for dealing with challenges, must be given to teachers" (p. 16).

Freedman and Johnson (2001) became concerned when they noticed a trend in teachers who indicated they would avoid or reject books containing social justice issues, Freedman and Johnson (2001) led a book study consisting of a group of fifth through seventh grade teachers. The teachers read and discussed *I Hadn't Meant to Tell You This* (Woodson, 1994), which contained racial and sexual themes. Ultimately, the teachers in

the study, although appreciative and aware of the critical discussions that the book might inspire, indicated that they would probably reject the book in order to avoid potential controversies or censorship issues. Freedman and Johnson speculated: "When teachers abandon their right and responsibility to select literature, they sacrifice their students to protect themselves" (p. 357).

Noll (1994) interviewed secondary teachers who experienced censorship on their campuses. Many of the teachers that were interviewed expressed that they had experienced several different forms of censorship: (a) as new teachers, some had been warned by department heads and colleagues about controversial books to exclude from the curriculum, (b) parental complaints resulted in the banning of particular books, and (c) teachers and administrators ultimately lacked the support of the school board after censorship cases went to trial (Noll, 1994). Noll (1994) observed that some teachers self-censored the controversial books out of fear of losing their employment; however, several teachers made the decision to use controversial books, involving the students in discussions about censorship. Noll (1994) offered an insiders' perspective on a difficult issue for most teachers. Troublingly, there are abundant instances of teachers censoring texts because of fear of repercussions from parents, administrators, and the larger community (Cerra, 1994; Noll, 1994).

Summary

In this chapter, I discussed student choice of texts; and presented information about the importance of impoverished students receiving the benefit of choice of texts. Additionally, I provided literature about popular culture texts, and incorporating popular culture texts into the curriculum. Next, I presented an extensive literature review on

censorship, including the history of text censorship, censorship of the media, censorship in public education, and censorship of popular culture texts. Finally, the differences between text censorship versus selection and the dangers of teacher self-censorship were discussed. In Chapter III, the methodology is described.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Overview of the Methodology and Approach

The purpose of this study was to examine teacher perceptions of the use of popular culture texts during independent reading, and to determine how and why some teachers make decisions about the use of popular culture texts during independent reading. My research questions were: (1) How do teachers perceive the use of popular culture texts during independent reading?; and 2) How do teachers make decisions about student choices of popular culture texts during independent reading?

Methodological Framework and Research Design

The study followed Leech and Onwuegbuzie's (2010) 13-step methodological framework for qualitative research. Specifically, I used Steps 6-11: Step 6: I determined the classification of sampling; Step 7: I determined the type of qualitative inquiry to use in the research design; Step 8: I determined the data collection process; Step 9: I evaluated my transcripts and reflexive journal; Step 10: I justified my analysis of the data corpus; and Step 11: I synthesized and analyzed the data corpus. Qualitative research is most closely aligned with the purpose of my study, and with the intent of triangulation, I employed thematic analysis, Keywords-in-context, and visual analysis techniques used in visual ethnography. Patton (2002) wrote: "Qualitative findings grow out of three kinds of data collection: (a) in-depth, open-ended interviews; (b) direct observation; and (c) written documents" (p. 4).

Step 6: Sampling design. The method of sampling design most conducive to my research was purposive sampling, wherein participants' qualifications are determined,

and the researcher asks individuals who have those qualifications to participate in the study (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Specifically, I employed typical case sampling (Patton, 2002); potential participants completed a questionnaire, answering questions about the implementation of independent reading and questions about classroom library contents.My sampling design criteria consisted of: (a) teachers who scheduled and implemented independent reading in their classrooms; (b) teachers who taught third, fourth, or fifth grade; and (c) teachers who were employed in one Title I elementary school. Therefore, I provided and distributed a questionnaire for all third through fifth grade teachers at the selected elementary school, and subsequently made a request for participants based on the results of the questionnaire.

Step 7: Determine the research design. The research plan employed a multiple case study design (Yin, 2014). Johnson and Christensen (2014) referred to a case study as a "bounded system" (p. 434); that is, each case has specific components that form a whole case. Cohen et al. (2012) highlighted: "A case study provides a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply by presenting them with abstract theories or principles" (p. 289). Additionally, Dyson and Genishi (2005) commented, "Everyday teaching and learning are complex social happenings, and understanding them as such is the grand purpose of qualitative case studies" (p. 9). A multiple, or collective case study is a collection of one or more cases; the researcher examines each case individually and then scrutinizes all of the cases in a study as a whole. Certain affordances and constraints exist when employing a multiple case study; Johnson and Christensen (2014) speculated that one affordance of a multiple case study may be that the researcher benefits by examining more than one case.

Conversely, when a researcher embarks on a multiple case study, less time may be spent on each individual case study. One method of data analysis used in a multiple case study is cross-case analysis. In a cross-case analysis the researcher compares and contrasts the cases, searching not only for likenesses and differences, but for themes, as well (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Specifically, the methods of data analysis for the cross-case analysis were thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) wherein the researcher infers meaning using codes and themes (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007), keywords-in-context analysis (Bernard & Ryan, 2010), and visual ethnography (Pink, 2007). The methods of analysis are discussed further in Steps 9-11.

Step 8: Data collection. My data collection plan consisted of the following documentation: four semi-structured teacher interviews, teacher observation protocols, pictures of the classroom library taken during each classroom observation, and analytic memos and reflexive journals. I conducted two interviews with each participant for a total of four interviews, took field notes during one teacher observation per week for an expected total of nine observations per teacher, or 18 observations expected total, and took pictures of classroom libraries during each classroom observation, with the anticipation of taking three photographs of the classroom library during each observations. Using multiple types of data supported my research by providing triangulation and creating (Yin, 2014) "converging lines of inquiry" (p. 120). My semi-structured interviews consisted of 12 open-ended questions designed to explore teachers' conceptions of popular culture texts; the interviews were video and audio recorded. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) noted: "The qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subjects' points of view, to unfold the meaning of their

experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations" (p. 3). Writing

abundant notes during teacher observations provided my research with thick description

(Ryles 1949, as cited in Geertz, 1973). Geertz depicted thick description as writing from

the culture and point-of-view of the researcher in order to paint a picture for the reader

(Geertz, 1973). Moreover, I took pictures of participants' classroom libraries during each

classroom observation. Therefore, conducting interview transcriptions, conducting

classroom observations of teachers, and taking photos of classroom libraries supported

the triangulation of my data. Triangulation, defined, is the amalgamation of the

researcher and the data collected, giving support to the research design and process

(Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) provided a metaphor

for triangulation, deepening the meaning: "…the central imagery is the crystal, which

includes symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances,

transmutations, multidimensionalities and angles of approach" (p. 963). Indeed,

crystallization of data seems a more appropriate word than triangulation of the data.

Additionally and importantly, I used a reflexive journal to record my thoughts during the

research study. My reflexive journal was an asset to me as I recorded my thoughts during

the research process, and it provided a metacognitive space for my thinking (Glesne,

2000; Kleinsasser, 2000).

     Steps 9-10: Analyze data and interpret data. To establish triangulation, I

employed three separate methods of analysis: (a) thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke,

2006); (b) keywords-in-context analysis (Bernard & Ryan, 2010); and visual analysis

methods stemming from visual ethnography (Pink, 2007). Leech and Onwuegbuzie

(2007) recommended these types of analysis for qualitative studies that incorporate data,

such as interview transcripts, observations, and artifacts. As I planned to infer themes in interview transcripts, teacher observations, and classroom library photos, the previously mentioned analyses were advantageous matches for my study.

My data analysis consisted of coded and themed transcripts from teacher interviews and teacher observations. Saldaña (2009) speculated: "…the act of coding requires that you wear your researcher's analytic lens. But how you perceive and interpret what is happening in the data depends on what type of filter covers that lens" (p. 6). To code my transcripts, I implemented a first cycle coding (Hedland-de Witt, 2013; Saldaña, 2013). First cycle coding refers to the initial attempts by the researcher to collect noticings, ideas, and themes (Saldaña, (2013). During the first cycle of coding, I used In Vivo and process coding. In Vivo coding refers to extracting important words and phrases from a transcript or other document. I selected In Vivo coding first, because I extracted the exact words from the interviewee's transcript and from my teacher observation notes, and I believe that beginning with the exact words and phrases supported me in reducing researcher bias. The researcher then uses those words and phrases to search for themes and ideas (Hedland-de Witt, 2013; Saldaña, 2012). Process coding can be defined as inferring the process verbs or actions that are occurring (e.g., complaining, teaching, inferring) (Hedland-de Witt, 2013; Saldaña, 2012). Considering the actions or feelings that the participant is expressing provided me with another lens from which to infer codes. As I used In Vivo and process coding, I drew out themes from the coding. As I inferred themes, I constructed analytic memos (e.g., I jotted down notes about my thinking) and I created a codebook. A codebook is a notebook or a computer file wherein the researcher lists the codes that are becoming visible (Saldaña, 2012).

Subsequently, during the second cycle, I attempted to narrow my themes and categories. During each cycle I employed in my research, I repeated the search for codes many times to infer themes and ideas (de Witt, 2013). I continued to write my thoughts in my reflexive journal and I re-read for themes and potential biases (Kleinsasser, 2000). After completing thematic analysis, I employed keywords-in-context analysis (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). This method can be defined as creating a simple concordance, which is a word count of every word and a frequency count of each word in a document. After the concordance was created, I analyzed the concordance for salient words. Upon extracting words from the concordance, I then constructed lists of sentences or fragments that the words were contained in. Consequently, I scrutinized the sentences and fragments, searching for meaning, and jotting down notes in analytic memos. For the particular purpose of triangulation, I employed visual analysis methods from visual ethnography to analyze the photographs (Pink, 2007). In so doing, I analyzed the pictures, reflecting upon the context in which the pictures were taken. Context here is defined as the classroom during independent reading and guided reading. Simply put, as I studied the photographs, I connected them to pertinent quotes from the interviews and important notes from the teacher observation protocols. Finally, I employed member checking by soliciting input from the participants (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Specifically, I asked the participants to read the transcripts and subsequent themes to determine if the participants affirmed that I captured their responses correctly. For confidentiality purposes, participants were asked to only read their own transcripts. Tables 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 provide codes derived from first cycle coding.

Table 6

Deborah: Initial Interview: In Vivo and Process Codes

In Vivo	Process
Small Groups	Reading
Choice or lack of choice	Providing choices
Popular Culture References	Discussing
Stratification of students	Allowing or limiting
Comprehension Skills	Liking or loving
	Teaching
	Planning

Table 7

Joanna: Initial Interview: In Vivo and Process Codes

In Vivo	Process
Choice	Explaining
Technology	Providing Choices
Reading Response	Differentiating
Challenge	Observing
Reading on or below level	Reflecting
Motivation or lack of motivation	
Popular Culture texts	
Independent Reading	

Table 8

Deborah's Teacher Observation Protocol: In Vivo and Process

In Vivo	Process
Popular Culture	Supervising
Classroom Management	Teaching
Choice	Assessing
Lack of Choice	Assigning
Questioning for teaching	

Table 9

Joanna's Teacher Observation Protocol: In Vivo and Process

In Vivo	Process
Classroom Supervision	Redirecting
Vigilance	Questioning
Multi-tasking	Teaching
Differentiation	Warning
Choice	Supervising
Beliefs	Explaining
	Differentiating

Table 10

Deborah's Post Interview: In Vivo and Process

In Vivo	Process
Building reading skills and stamina	Explaining
Preparation for standardized tests	Observing
Lack of parental and library support	Striving
Revolving door	Preparing
Application of reading skills	Reading

Table 11

Joanna's Post Interview: In Vivo and Process

In Vivo	Process
Flexibility; depends on students' needs	Differentiating
Choices of texts, responses, products	Allowing or limiting choice
Fluid use of independent reading time	Reflecting
Differentiation of students based on need	Observing
	Assessing
	Adapting
	Endeavoring

Lens of the Researcher

The lens which best matched my research perspective was social constructivism. Dewey (1982) asserted that learners acquire knowledge through discovery and discourse in as natural a setting as possible. Further, Dewey (1982), posited, "…the only true education comes through the stimulation of the child's powers by the demands of the social situations in which he finds himself" (p. 540). This sentiment matches the view with which I perceive the world. Patton (2002) noted "We can conclude by emphasizing the basic contributions of social construction and constructivist perspectives to qualitative inquiry, namely, the emphasis on capturing and honoring multiple perspectives" (p. 102).

Location

The location for the proposed study was Robert B. Dow, Sr. Elementary in Norway Independent School District (pseudonyms). Robert B. Dow, Sr. Elementary School is a Title I campus located near a major city in Texas, and serves students from Pre-Kindergarten to fifth grade. For the school year 2015-2016, 74 percent of the students were economically disadvantaged (e.g., receiving free and/or reduced lunch); 32 percent of the students were classified as Limited English Proficient (LEP), 21.5 percent of the students were Black, 59 percent of the students were Hispanic, 12 percent of the students were White, four percent of the students were Pacific Islander, and one percent of the students were Asian (Texas Education Agency Division of Performance Reporting, 2016). Additionally, the teaching staff was five percent Black, 55 percent Hispanic, 38 percent White and two percent two or more races. Finally, five percent of the teachers were male and 95 percent of the teachers were female (Texas Education Agency Division of Performance Reporting, 2016).

Role of the Researcher

My role in this qualitative multiple case study was a researcher. However, I wrote reflexively about my experiences before and/or after each interview and before and/or after each teacher observation, which allowed me to examine my own biases concerning the use of and/or censorship of popular culture texts during independent reading. As Kleinsasser (2000) noted, "Researcher reflexivity creates physical evidence of personal and theoretical tracks through a created event, evidencing the researcher's deep learning and unlearning" (p. 156).

Entry into the field. After district permission was gained, I obtained permission from the principal at Robert B. Dow, Sr. Elementary School to research in her school. Next, in order to locate participants with more than five years of experience and who teach reading, I distributed a questionnaire (see Appendix C), to determine the number of teachers who met the criteria. Additionally, I included an addressed, stamped envelope and requested that the participants complete the questionnaire and mail it to me at my post office box (to preserve anonymity). Once I receive the completed questionnaires from the teachers, I asked the participants who met the criteria (e.g., taught reading and had over five years of teaching experience) to participate in my study. After determining the participants, I met with the teachers individually, explained the process, and presented them with an approved informed consent form.

Data collection. Once the participants signed the informed consent, I scheduled initial interviews, meeting both teachers after school at their convenience. Once I arrived at the school, I interviewed Deborah and Joanna, audio and video recording the interviews. The questions for the initial interview are located in Appendix D. At the time

of the interviews, I discussed the most convenient times for me to visit them for their

teacher observation protocols. Consequently, I visited the participants in their classrooms,

using a protocol form for my field notes (See Appendix E). Although I was scheduled for

nine observation periods for each participant, due to teacher illness, one of the protocol

dates was cancelled. After conducting eight teacher observations for each participant, I

scheduled a post interview (See Appendix F) with Deborah and Joanna, meeting them

after school, again at their convenience.

Additionally, I sent out an electronic anonymous survey to all the teachers at

Robert B. Dow, Sr. Elementary School (see Appendix G). The popular culture survey

was adapted and used with permission from the authors, Dr. John Dickie and Dr. Mary

Jane Shuker. The anonymous survey presented a list of censored or challenged popular

culture texts, and teachers were asked to place a checkmark adjacent to the popular

culture titles that were present in their classroom libraries. Teachers were also presented

with an identical list of censored or challenged popular culture texts and were asked to

place a checkmark next to the texts that they teachers would wish to include in their

classroom libraries. The remainder of the survey consisted of questions about the use of

popular culture in the curriculum. Unfortunately, only two teachers responded to the

survey.

Step 11: Issues of trustworthiness, credibility and transferability. In order to

establish trustworthiness, I considered the biases and threats to internal and external

credibility. Inasmuch, I used the Qualitative Legitimation Model (Onwuegbuzie & Leech,

2007); I employed the model to assist me in determining my biases during the stages of

(a) planning of the research; (b) data accumulation; and (c) analyzing the data. According

to Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007), unlike the stages in quantitative research, these three

stages are not always linear, as the researcher may repeat any of the stages in any order

when conducting qualitative research. Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) advised: "Indeed,

in interpretive research, these three stages are iterative," (p. 234). Legitimation can be

defined as examining all biases pertaining to the research, both in terms of internal and

external credibility. According to Kvale (1995), "…validity is ascertained by examining

the sources of invalidity, and the stronger attempts the falsification of validity a

proposition has survived, the more valid and more trustworthy the knowledge" (p. 26).

Similarly, Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) referred to validity as "truth value" (p. 234).

Internal credibility has been described as the validity of the research process, whereas

external validity demonstrates whether or not the research findings are generalizable, or

transferrable to, another population (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). Therefore, I will

discuss the internal credibility and external credibility threats from the Qualitative

Legitimation Model that threatened my study.

Threats to internal credibility.

- Ironic Legitimation: This threat to internal credibility may be interpreted as
  discovering multiple "truth values" in my findings (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, p.
  234). As an example, as I analyzed my data, I made multiple inferences, all of
  them containing some truths (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007).

- Face Validity: According to Lather (1986), face validity refers to devoting
  sufficient time for interviews and other forms of data, and involving participants
  in member checking. For instance, I attempted to minimize the threat of face
  validity by interviewing the participants twice, and involving the participants in

member checks by requesting that they read the transcripts and make corrections as necessary.

- Descriptive Validity: This threat refers to the researcher's recounting of the process in a factual manner. That is, descriptive validity is the descriptive accuracy of the researcher. For example, if I failed to present an accurate description of my data, my research could be threatened because of descriptive validity (Johnson & Christensen, 2014; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007).

- Observational Bias: When a researcher fails to collect a satisfactory amount of data, and/or fails to invest the time needed in the research locations, the findings may be threatened by observational bias. For instance, if an interviewee cancels, or a classroom observation is unobtainable due to changes in schedules, it will behoove me to ensure that I do my utmost to make-up the missed opportunities (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007).

- Researcher Bias: This threat to internal credibility may occur when the researcher knows a participant very well, or intentionally or unintentionally behaves or speaks in a way that influences the research situation. As an illustration, if I am conducting a semi-structured interview, and a participant's response does not match my beliefs about popular culture texts, I may show my displeasure by the expression of my face or by the inadvertent use of another type of body language (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007).

- Reactivity: With this type of internal credibility threat, the participants may act or react differently, simply because the research is occurring (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). Specifically, the reactivity may be considered the Hawthorne effect

(Landsberger, 1958), wherein a participant reacts or responds in a particular manner, based on what she perceives the interviewer wants to hear. To illustrate, a participant may be aware of my bias toward including popular culture texts in classroom libraries, and may respond in a way that she thinks I will approve of.

- Confirmation Bias: This threat may occur when a researcher's prior beliefs or convictions impede any of the stages of data collection (Greenwald, Pratkanis, Leippe, & Baumgardner, 1986). For example, my prior knowledge of popular culture texts or my biases about student choice may have threatened the integrity of the research process.

- Structural Corroboration: Typically, a researcher designs a data collection plan that employs two or more types of data in that plan. That is, structural corroboration of data collection may increase internal credibility when it is employed (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007; Phillips, 1987).

Threats to external credibility.

- Action Validity: Action validity is the likelihood that other researchers may read and use the research for further study (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). As an example, another researcher may read my dissertation, and as a result may replicate or begin another study similar to mine.

- Investigation Validity: This threat to external validity is defined as the ethics of the researcher and the inscrutable manner in which the research is carried out (Kvale, 1995; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). To illustrate, taking shortcuts in the implementation of the research process could be a threat to the external validity of the research.

Conceptual Framework

As noted in Chapter I, the conceptual framework that I employed in this study was Free Voluntary Reading (Krashen, 2004, 2005). Free Voluntary Reading (FVR) can be described as a period of time in school that is set aside for students to read self-selected texts independently. There are many iterations of FVR in schools across the country (e.g., independent reading, silent sustained reading). Teachers who implement independent reading in their classrooms have students who achieve at higher levels than students who do not read independently during classroom time (Krashen, 2004, 2011).

Summary

In Chapter III, I have discussed the methodology that I implemented in my study of teacher perceptions of popular culture texts during independent reading. Specifically, I have described my methodology using Steps 6-11 in Leech and Onwuegbuzie's (2010) 13-step methodological framework: (a) Step 6: determine the classification of sampling that I will use; (b) Step 7: determine the type of qualitative inquiry I will use; (c) Step 8: conduct the interviews and classroom observations and transcribe the data; (d) Step 9: evaluate my transcripts and reflexive journal; (e) Step 10: justify my analysis of the transcripts; and (f) Step 11: synthesize and analyze the data. In addition, I have determined and explicated the philosophical lens that I will be using in my future study. I have briefly described the conceptual framework, which can be found in-depth in Chapter I. Finally, I have delineated the threats to internal and external credibility of the future research plan. In Chapter IV, I will provide information about the roadblocks and opportunities that I encountered as I navigated entry into the field.

CHAPTER IV

Methodological Procedures in Context

In Chapter III, I described the qualitative methodology used in my research. In this chapter, I describe the accomplishments, detours, and roadblocks that I encountered as I navigated the path to arrive at the data collection stage of my research. Additionally, I provide detailed descriptions of both Deborah and Joanna (pseudonyms).

I will first provide a description of Deborah, which is comprised of information gleaned from her initial questionnaire, her two interviews, pictures of her classroom library, and field notes from the eight observations I conducted (see Table 12) of her independent reading program, using an observation protocol (see Appendix E).

Table 12

Deborah's Data Collection Timeline

Dates of Interviews	Dates of Observations	Time Spent in Observations
January 5, 2017	January 11, 2017	20 Minutes
March 9, 2017	January 17, 2017	20 Minutes
	January 26, 2017	20 Minutes
	January 31, 2017	20 Minutes
	February 8, 2017	20 Minutes
	February 17, 2017	Canceled
	February 23, 2017	20 Minutes
	March 2, 2017	20 Minutes
	March 9, 2017	20 Minutes

After describing the case of Deborah, I provide a description of Joanna (pseudonym), which is comprised of information gleaned from her initial questionnaire,

her two interviews, pictures of her classroom library, and field notes from the eight observations I conducted of her independent reading program.

Gaining Entry

After gaining approval for my proposal from my committee on July 26, 2016, I began revising the Institutional Review Board (IRB) application so that I could submit it as soon as possible. Simultaneously, I revised my district Request for Research and submitted it to the Director of Accountability and Research on August 1, 2016. Additionally, I mailed a letter to the building principal at Robert B. Dow, Sr., Elementary School (pseudonym), my proposed research location, describing my research plans and requesting permission. The Director of Accountability and Research responded immediately, but not as I expected. Unfortunately, the director explained that the committee would not meet until after school began in late August. As a result, I did not receive official permission from the district until September 19, 2016. In the interim, I received an email from the building principal, explaining that she would permit me to conduct research on her campus, with the stipulation that I communicate with the two literacy coaches on her campus and copy her on any communication. Additionally, although I submitted my university IRB on September 22, 2016, I did not obtain permission to begin my research until October 31, 2016. This created a dilemma, as I planned to conduct my research during the second nine weeks' grading period, and the second nine weeks had already begun. Therefore, I contacted the building principal and the Director of Accountability and Research, requesting permission to conduct my research, beginning in the middle of the second nine week grading period and extending

into the third nine weeks; I subsequently received permission to change the dates of my data collection.

Once permissions from IRB, district, and campus were granted, I prepared copies of questionnaires, envelopes, and stamped, self-addressed envelopes for 14 third, fourth, and fifth grade teachers at Robert B. Dow, Sr. Elementary School. I used the campus's website to obtain the names of the teachers. In order to separate my role as a district literacy coach from my role as a doctoral researcher, it is important to note that I temporarily rented a post office box at the local post office. This was used as the mailing address for the return of the forms, rather than my home address or my campus mailing address. Due to IRB requirements, I needed to separate my campus/work commitments from my doctoral student/researcher commitments. Therefore, potential participants were not to feel swayed to participate because I was a literacy coach at a nearby campus. The owner of the post office store is a church acquaintance of mine, and she arranged to rent me a post office box for the short-term duration of my data collection. I received a key to my post office box and a key to the front door of the store, as I would be checking the post office box in the evening, on my way home from work. The store was approximately two miles from my house.

After preparing the questionnaire and envelope packets, I made arrangements with one of the literacy coaches to meet me at Robert B. Dow, Sr. Elementary School so that I could place the questionnaires in the teachers' mailboxes. As I drove over to the campus on the afternoon of November 1, 2016, I was excited at the prospect of beginning this process, as I had waited so long! The Title I campus where my research began, is located in a small city outside of a large metropolitan city in the mid-southwestern United

States. The elementary school was built adjacent to a shopping mall. In fact, there are only two ways to drive to the school, and one of those ways is to drive through the mall parking lot. As I entered the subdivision where the school was located, I noticed that many of the houses seemed run down, some needed paint, and some of the lawns needed mowing. These were just some of the signs of poverty in the subdivision.

I arrived on the campus of the elementary school and was greeted with a long, one-story, beige building that was situated directly across from a number of run down, one-story houses. A visitor parking lot sat directly in front of the school, and an employee parking lot was located to the left of the building. There were still quite a few cars in the parking lot, which I assumed were mostly teaching staff, because of the lateness of the day. I arrived at the campus at approximately 4:30 p.m. I parked in the employee parking lot, walked up the sidewalk, and entered the front office, expecting to see the literacy coach, as we had planned to meet. However, the literacy coach was not there. In fact, no one was in the front office. Frustrated, I texted the literacy coach, but did not receive a return text. Several minutes later, another teacher, who I recognized, but did not recall her name, entered the office. She explained that the literacy coach was in a meeting, and that she would direct me to the mailboxes. I followed her out of the office, around the corner, and into the teacher work room. As I entered, I noticed a turquoise laminated built-in shelf directly to my left, with labeled mail slots for every staff member. The teacher left me in the workroom, and I quickly and carefully placed the letters in the mailboxes. As I drove home from my future research location, I was hopeful that every single one of the teachers would fill out the questionnaire and return it to me. However, as the month of November crawled by, I checked the post office box every evening after school, and

every evening it was empty. I was getting discouraged. As I noted in my reflective

journal on November 19, 2016,

> So many roadblocks cleared behind me, but many remain ahead of me,
>
> unfortunately. I received permission from IRB too late to begin collecting data at
>
> the beginning of the second nine weeks of school. Because of the delay, I had to
>
> obtain permission from my committee to begin data collection in the middle of
>
> the second nine weeks and go nine consecutive weeks. My problem is that it has
>
> been two weeks, and I have no participants. I have received one questionnaire
>
> back and the teacher has eleven + years of teaching experience. Now I have a
>
> week of vacation, and I am not expecting to find any questionnaires in the post
>
> office box when I check it on Wednesday.

At that point in gaining entry, I emailed one of the literacy coaches and requested

that she remind the teachers to complete their questionnaires, and she assured me that she

would. Then, around the end of November, I received another questionnaire! Alas, that

teacher had been teaching over ten years. I reached out again to the literacy coach,

explaining that I had received two questionnaires and that both teachers did not meet the

criteria for the length of teaching time. Interestingly, the literacy coach explained that

there were two dual language teachers on campus, who taught third grade and had been

teaching between three and six years. However, she added that the teachers had discarded

their questionnaires. Could I supply them with new questionnaires? Could I! I rapidly

created two more questionnaire and envelope packets, drove over to the campus as soon

as dismissal was over, and delivered them to the teachers' mailboxes. On Saturday,

December 3, 2016, I met with Dr. Gerber, the chair of my committee, to discuss my

predicament. I explained that I believed I would have participants who met the criteria during the next week. As Dr. Gerber and I discussed the situation, she mentioned that I might have to change the research location to my own campus, where finding teachers who met the criteria might be easier. However, that this would potentially cause a conflict of interest with recruitment and would be more difficult with gaining revised IRB approval for a new site of inquiry, due to the implied conflict of interest, and the fact that the teachers at my school had also purchased classroom libraries under my direction and guidance.

The following week, no questionnaires arrived in my post office box. Every evening, I walked confidently to the door of the store, unlocked the front door, and then unlocked my post office box. Imagine my disappointment, finding an empty post office box night after night. I could not believe that I was encountering such difficulty trying to find participants! On that Friday, December 9, 2016, I attended a literacy coach meeting at the district office. Both of the literacy coaches approached my table, and assured me that they would try and help me. Again, I was encouraged, but troublingly, no questionnaires arrived in my mailbox, although I checked the mailbox daily. Therefore, concerned about my circumstances, on December 14, 2016, I emailed Dr. Gerber to explain that I had received no further questionnaires. I was very frustrated, as the middle of the nine weeks had passed, and I had no participants. She emailed me back immediately and directed me to recruit the two participants who sent me back the questionnaires, and to omit the length of three to six years of teaching time as a criterion. Consequently, I emailed the literacy coaches and explained that I was changing my criteria, and that I would be contacting Deborah and Joanna by phone. Finally, I emailed

the building principal and the Director of Accountability and Research, explaining the change in dates for data collection, and again received permission for the change in dates.

Excitedly, I telephoned Deborah and Joanna that evening, and left messages on their school telephones. Several days passed, and I had not heard from either participant. At that point, a fellow doctoral cohort member advised me to email the participants; I then emailed both participants and added my cell phone number to my email. Subsequently, Deborah emailed me and gave me her cell phone number. Deliriously happy, I promptly called Deborah, and she agreed to participate in the research. Because we were into a two-week December vacation break, Deborah and I decided that I would call her back on January 2, 2017, once school was back in session. Then on Thursday, December 22, 2016, I received a text from Joanna, explaining that she would like to meet with me. We made arrangements for me to meet her at her house on Friday, December 23, 2016, at 10:00 a.m.

On the morning of the meeting with Joanna, I was nervous. As I drove the seven-plus miles to her house, rain drizzled lightly. Suddenly, my cell phone lit up and I received a text from Joanna. She explained that she was running late and asked me to meet her at 10:30 a.m. "Absolutely," I texted back, and I stopped at a local discount store to kill time. About 10:30 a.m., as I pulled into her driveway, I hesitated. Should I park on the street or in the driveway? Joanna lived in a narrow cul-de-sac, and curb space was scarce. I decided on driveway parking. The rain continued lightly as I walked up the path and expectantly rang the doorbell. Joanna answered immediately and invited me into her living room. A Christmas tree stood in the corner, festively trimmed for the season. Joanna asked me to sit on the couch and to wait for a minute, while she settled her

daughter in the adjacent room to watch a movie. Joanna then returned to the living room, took a seat, and I explained my research. Joanna informed me that she did not implement traditional independent reading in her classroom. Rather, she implemented reading centers that included independent reading. I responded that I was still eager to have her participate in the research, and I gave Joanna two copies of the informed consent, which she promptly read and signed. I thanked Joanna profusely for agreeing to meet me during her vacation. We agreed that I would contact her on January 4, 2017 to set a time for our initial interview. As I drove away from Joanna's house, I was ecstatic. Finally, things were beginning to fall into place!

When Deborah and I spoke on the phone, Deborah asked to have a copy of the interview questions, and I agreed. Because I wondered whether this practice might skew the data I gathered from Deborah, I did some investigating to determine what other researchers thought. Actually, I found more researchers in favor of providing interview questions than against. When interviewing secondary teachers who were employed in an online school, DiPietro, Ferdig, Black, and Preston (2008) provided the participants with the interview questions during their first meeting, and administered the semi-structured interviews during their second meeting with teachers. Similarly, Burke and Miller (1999), when interviewing business managers about intuition and the workplace, made the decision to frontload their participants with the interview questions. However, Stanlick (2011) argued against this practice, explaining that some participants' responses might be practiced and inauthentic. However, I still emailed Deborah a list of the questions on December 27, 2016. Figure 4 displays the email that I sent Deborah.
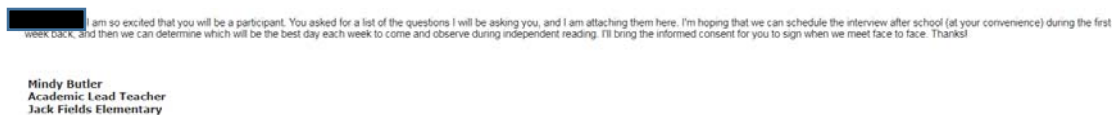
Figure 4. Email Communication with Deborah

Deborah: Questionnaire

According to Deborah's questionnaire, she implemented independent reading in her classroom for about 30 minutes per day. Additionally, she noted in her questionnaire that the campus did not provide her books for a classroom library. Consequently, she provided her classroom library for the students, which contained between 400 and 500 titles. Deborah's questionnaire responses indicated that students were allowed to choose books for independent reading based on complete choice, reading level, and genre-based choices. Deborah indicated that she did not use a reading interest inventory to determine student interests. Finally, Deborah acknowledged that her classroom library included the following texts: (a) texts based on movies, (b) graphic novels, (c) comic books, and (d) magazines.

Deborah: Initial Interview

On January 3, 2017, Deborah emailed me and asked me if Thursday after school would be a convenient time for us to meet, sign the informed consent, and conduct the interview. "Absolutely!" I emailed back (See Figure 5)

>>> Margaret Ogleon 1/3/2017 7:50 AM >>>
Good morning Melinda and Happy New Year! I wanted to respond to you before life happens, how does Thursday after school look for you? Just let me know and I will be here.

.

3rd Grade

"The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education.
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Figure 5. Deborah's Email Response

The second semester had just begun. Our first day back had been a district-wide professional development on our curriculum roll-out, and the students had just returned for school after their Christmas break. Two days later, nervous and excited, I drove over to Robert B. Dow, Sr. Elementary School to obtain the signed informed consent and to conduct my initial interview with Deborah. Earlier that morning, I tested all my equipment to double-check that everything was working. I planned to record the interview using two digital audio recorders and one digital video recorder. I carefully placed all three recording devices in my purse, put in extra AAA batteries, and placed the tripod in my trunk. As I drove to the campus about 3:00 p.m., I was very excited. It is important to note that in order to get to the campus, drivers typically drive through the parking lot of the mall to get to the subdivision, although there is a longer route to access the campus from the north. Therefore, I drove into the parking lot of the local mall, negotiated around the west side, and then took a left into the subdivision where the campus was located. As I approached the campus, I realized with dismay that I was in the dismissal line, and that it was so very long! Car after car after car stretched before me, and street access was blocked. Aware that I could not use my cell phone to text Deborah in a school zone, I hoped that I would be on time. Luckily, the line moved fairly quickly, and Deborah was late meeting me in the front office, because her dismissal duty ran longer than 3:30 p.m. About 3:40 p.m., Deborah walked into the office and offered her

hand. Deborah was a tall and slender White female, approximately 35 years old, and dressed professionally in slacks and a blouse. I shook her hand, and again offered my thanks to her for agreeing to participate in the study. I then accompanied her to her classroom in the third grade hallway. In order to get to her hallway, we walked down the main hallway to the second set of double-doors on the right. Upon turning right, we walked a few hundred feet. As we walked, I noticed a library on my right. There were half-walls in the library, which rose up about four feet. I imagined that noise probably carried when library classes were being conducted, and I felt sorry for the librarian. The library on our campus is similarly built, and the noise factor can become outrageous. Once past the library, we turned left down the third grade hallway, and entered the first classroom on the left. Upon entering the classroom, I noticed that a female student was straightening books in the classroom library. Deborah asked the student helper to return to the cafeteria, and then explained that the student stayed after school every day to help her, before attending the YMCA after school program. As the student left, Deborah sat down at the enormous, kidney-shaped guided reading table, which was located near the whiteboard on the right side of her room. As I scanned the classroom, I noticed that most of Deborah's classroom library was situated in the left-hand corner. The library consisted of two bookshelves, which had been placed on the left wall and the front wall, with adjoining edges meeting in the corner of the room. Over-sized picture story books were displayed on the tops of these two bookshelves. On the shelves, books were arranged by reading level and genre and had been placed in bright, lime-green, turquoise, and pink bins. Additionally, on the right wall near the back corner, there was another bookcase labeled with non-fiction picture and chapter book labels. These books were organized

into bright turquoise, lime-green, and pink bins. Deborah's teacher desk was located in the far right corner of the room, and the immense guided reading table where Deborah and I sat took up the space between the teacher desk and the non-fiction classroom library. On the opposite wall, personal computers were arranged on computer tables. Light-blue laminate cabinets, designated for storage, spanned the back of the classroom. Student desks were arranged in sets of four, facing each other. Anchor charts with reading rules and reminders were tacked up on the walls. A whiteboard stretched across the front of the room. In front of the whiteboard, Deborah had arranged a large, circular rug which she said was designated as the large group meeting area.

After reading through the informed consent, Deborah signed it and returned it to me. I gave her a copy and I set up the recording equipment, carefully checking each recorder before starting the interview. Finally, we were able to begin!

During this initial interview, Deborah indicated that she implemented independent reading, and that she met concurrently with selected groups of students for guided reading. Because she wanted to meet with two guided reading groups per day, her independent reading and guided reading time was implemented for about 40-50 minutes daily. At the beginning of the year, Deborah spent about six weeks to prepare students for independent reading: (a) Deborah modeled independent reading; (b) students practiced independent reading for small amounts of time; and (c) and Deborah and the students discussed what worked and what did not work during independent reading. The time for independent reading increased incrementally from a few minutes per day at the beginning of the year to 40-50 minutes at the end of that six-week practice time.

Deborah indicated that one purpose of independent reading was to build reading stamina. For this purpose, she wanted students to choose something they wanted to read, and stated, "I think that time is important because we're trying to increase their reading level but also building their stamina with reading…" Deborah explained that building reading stamina contributed to success with taking the annual state reading assessment. Additionally, many of Deborah's interview responses focused on the issue of teaching deep comprehension. Similarly, when Deborah described her guided reading teaching, she responded, "I'm going to be working more of comprehension – specific comprehension things, topics, you know main, identifying main idea and things like that." Furthermore, Deborah frequently mentioned the varied ability levels of the students in her classroom (e.g., students with dyslexia, students in Response to Intervention (RtI), gifted and talented (GT) students, and struggling male readers). Deborah explained that many of these students participated in differentiated interventions. For example, the students identified with dyslexia and students in RtI were required to complete an online reading intervention for an assigned number of minutes each week. Additionally, the GT students had just begun reading a chapter book for a book club; the students were responsible for reading their chapter book during independent reading. and they met with the GT teacher on Fridays to discuss their books. Importantly, the GT students were pulled out of independent reading during their book discussions.

When interviewed about her classroom library, Deborah confirmed that she provided her own books; the school did not provide a library for her. Deborah stated that she had many chapter books, picture books, and nonfiction books in her library, as well as some poetry books. Students were allowed to choose books from her library, provided

that they chose books at their independent reading level, so they did not have to struggle with vocabulary. Deborah also relied on the school library for additional texts, and expressed gratitude for the support of the school librarian. When asked what students were interested in checking out from the school library, Deborah elicited, "a lot of the boys like to get the comic book type things, and you know some of the kids, girls love the Junie B. Jones books…" However, Deborah elaborated that during their recent study of presidents, many students began checking out books about presidents. Deborah then added that she was preparing a unit on biographies, focusing on famous African Americans, as Black History Month was approaching.

Deborah reported that her own book recommendations to students stemmed from her passion for reading; she recommended books such as the Harry Potter and Percy Jackson series. Deborah also noted that she did not have specific reading conferences with students who were off-task during independent reading. When a student was off-task, Deborah would give the student "the teacher look" or relocate the student to a more remote spot in the classroom. Deborah emphasized that she had become frustrated that so many of the boys were reading comic books, and "that does not keep their attention for very long, but it's also not geared towards comprehension." Further, Deborah specified that because she did not consider comic books appropriate independent reading material, the students were first required to check out a chapter book. The second book could be a comic book, but the chapter book had to take priority during independent reading time.

When interviewed about her knowledge of popular culture, Deborah indicated that she knew very little about the topic. In fact, before the scheduled interview, Deborah had requested a copy of the interview questions. As a result, she explained that she had

done some research about popular culture before the interview. Deborah responded that she had found a biography lesson using trading cards: In the lesson, students would research a famous person and create a trading card to exchange with their peers. Consequently, Deborah planned to offer students a choice of creating a trading card for their upcoming biography project. In addition, Deborah explained that she liked using current events, if she thought the students would be engaged. Specifically, she mentioned a recent news article involving a local football player who had visited an injured child in the hospital.

When interviewed about her education, Deborah explained that she acquired her education degree later in life, enrolling in a post-baccalaureate program at Hannaford University (pseudonym) in the eastern part of the state, which is about an hour and a half drive from the research location. Deborah asserted that she took all of her education courses face-to-face, with no online classes. In fact, she seemed very proud of the fact that her post-baccalaureate program was not online. Deborah mentioned that she did her student teaching in the eastern part of the state. Deborah also shared that she had recently completed an online Masters of Education program at Hannaford University, acquiring her degree in Technology Leadership. At the time of the study, Deborah had been teaching third and fourth grade for eight years, and was in her third year teaching third grade at Robert B. Dow, Sr. Elementary.

I thanked Deborah for her responses, and turned off the recording equipment. After packing up my equipment, I arranged the time for our first teacher protocol, thanked Deborah, and left the classroom. As I drove out of the parking lot, I was ecstatic that my study had finally begun. One step in the right direction!

Deborah: Observations Using Observation Protocols

After the first interview, I arranged teacher observation visits in Deborah's classroom on a week-to-week basis, emailing her every week to schedule the day. I visited Deborah's classroom during her scheduled independent reading time for 20 minutes every week. However, one visit had to be canceled due to Deborah's illness.. During the second teacher observation, Deborah distributed two passages about Martin Luther King, Jr. Students chose a passage, read the passage, and completed the multiple choice questions at the end of the passage. While the students were reading the passages, Deborah assessed another student for a Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA).

On the occasion that I visited Deborah's classroom for the third week, Deborah was reading *Teammates*, a story of how Jackie Robinson endured difficult circumstances while being the first African American to integrate Major League baseball. The students were gathered around Deborah on the circular carpet, which served as a meeting area. Interspersed with reading aloud, Deborah asked students what they were thinking, and she led a discussion of how Jackie Robinson persevered despite dreadful racism. Once Deborah completed the discussion, she sent several students to guided reading, and directed the remainder of the students to move to independent reading.

When I entered the classroom for the fifth teacher observation, the students were gathered on the carpet and Deborah was reading *Spaghetti in a Hot Dog Bun: Having the Courage To Be Who You Are*. After reading the book, Deborah implored the students to treat each other with respect. Deborah then assigned partner reading, with the purpose of encouraging students to get along with each other. Student chose a partner that they had

never partnered with before, chose a book to read, and read the book orally to one another, taking turns.

Over the course of the other teacher observation protocols, students were preparing for and taking a standardized reading assessment one week, and on another occasion, students were editing and publishing a story about water drops. Deborah explained that the students were planning to present their stories at the Open House that evening, and a field trip the day before had interrupted their preparation time. Nonetheless, independent reading did occur during all or part of the other five teacher observations. The occurrences during the teacher observations can be found in Table 13.

Table 13

Deborah's Teacher Observation Protocol Occurrences

Weeks	Teacher Observation Protocols: Independent Reading
One	Two students were being assessed. All other students were independently reading.
Two	All students were reading a passage about Martin Luther King, Jr., and answering multiple-choice questions. No students were independently reading.
Three	Deborah was reading a book about Jackie Robinson and discussing racism with the students. During the last 5 minutes, she sent all students out to independently read, except for three students she met with in guided reading.
Four	Two students were being assessed. All other students were independently reading.
Five	Deborah was reading a book about students getting along. Students were then asked to find partners and read a book together.
Six	Deborah was not at work on this day. Teacher observation protocols were canceled.
Seven	Deborah was giving a reading test during this time. No independent reading occurred.
Eight	Deborah was conferring with students as they prepared their water drop stories for Open House. No independent reading occurred.
Nine	Deborah conferred individually with students as they read independently.

During these teacher observations, Deborah sent students out to independently

read, conducted mid-year reading assessments with individual students, met with small

groups of students for guided reading, and on one occasion, conferred with individual

students about book choice. Deborah consistently observed and redirected the students

who were off-task during independent reading. On one occasion, I noticed several

popular culture titles on the classroom floor, including a book about the videogame *Halo*, and biographies of Demi Lovato and Selena Gomez.

Deborah: Classroom library.

During every teacher observation, I photographed Deborah's classroom library, which consisted of two sets of bookshelves. One bookshelf contained fiction and was located along one classroom wall. The other bookshelf contained nonfiction texts and was located on the opposite wall. The pictures of the library did not change drastically from week to week, and the displayed picture books on the top of the bookcases were not replaced during my teacher observation protocols. Deborah indicated in her questionnaire that she did not have books about videogames, books based on movies, or books based on superheroes. Popular culture texts were not present in the pictures of the classroom library. One picture of Deborah's classroom library can be found in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Photograph of Deborah's Classroom Library

Deborah: Post interview

After the final teacher observation, I arranged to meet with Deborah for a second interview. During the interview, I could hear the frustration in Deborah's voice. Deborah explained that the third grade team had been under a tremendous amount of pressure. At some point during the nine weeks of my teacher observations, one of the third grade teachers had resigned. As a result, Deborah and her teammates had taken on extra daily duties, prepared lesson plans for the substitutes, and had supervised and supported a few of the many substitute teachers who taught in the adjoining classroom. Deborah also reported that the students in her classroom were no longer receiving the opportunity to check out books in the school library, which taxed Deborah's own small classroom library, and frustrated Deborah. Deborah explained that, due to unforeseen circumstances, students were watching movies when they went to the school library at their designated time.

When asked about her ideal independent reading time, Deborah indicated that she would want the students to have the opportunity to check out books from the school library more frequently, because her library could not support all the student reading interests in her classroom. When asked if she still allowed students to check out one chapter book and one comic book, Deborah indicated that checking out comic books from her own classroom library was a problem, because her library did not contain enough comic books and graphic novels to support student choice. Surprisingly, Deborah did acknowledge that she had the opportunity to add campus-purchased texts to her classroom library but decided against adding the texts because she did not want to be responsible for paying for lost library books. She stated, "I can't be consistent with a

check-out system." Deborah elaborated by explaining that her class was the "revolving door" this year, as many students had withdrawn and just as many more had enrolled. As a result, Deborah was concerned about students withdrawing from school without returning their books.

Deborah indicated that over the course of the last nine weeks, she had instituted a reading response log, and now required students to choose a chapter book to read during independent reading and to respond to the book they were reading:

At the beginning of the week, I'm making them get a chapter book on their level or close to their level, and that they keep all week and they're reading that…have to read that book and do a reader response with that.

Deborah explained that she expected the students to use their reading strategies as they were reading the chapter books, because of the upcoming annual state reading assessment. Finally, Deborah expressed that she felt a great responsibility to prepare students for the rigor required in the upper grades.

Joanna: Questionnaire.

On Joanna's initial questionnaire, she indicated that she implemented independent reading in her classroom four times per week for about 20-30 minutes. Joanna also reported that she did not require students to complete a reading interest survey, to determine what types of books the students were interested in. Joanna estimated that she provided her own classroom library of between 100-499 titles for the students to select books to read during independent reading, and students had free rein to select any of the titles they wanted to read. Additionally, Joanna acknowledged that her classroom library

contained texts based on videogames, texts based on superheroes, graphic novels, and magazines.

Joanna: Initial Interview

After texting back and forth several times, Joanna and I scheduled our initial interview on January 11, 2017, at 3:45 p.m. Because of timing issues, I conducted my first teacher observation protocol the morning of Joanna's initial interview. As a result, I drove to Robert B. Dow, Sr. Elementary School twice on January 11, 2017. This time, however, I took the longer route to the north of the school, and encountered no traffic! Joanna was several minutes late meeting me in the front office, as her dismissal duties took her a little longer on this day. I recognized Joanna from our meeting at her house in December. Joanna, a White female about 35 years of age with a medium build and short brown hair, was dressed in jeans and a campus tee shirt, and she greeted me with a smile. As we walked to her classroom in the third grade hallway, I saw Deborah standing in the hallway with several other teachers. "Hello," I said. She returned my smile and my hello, and I accompanied Joanna to her classroom. Joanna and Deborah served on the same grade level team; Deborah's was the first classroom on the left, and Joanna's classroom was the last classroom on the left. As we entered the classroom, I noticed Joanna's daughter sitting at one of the desks. Joanna's daughter attended second grade and naturally spent time in her mother's room every day after school. After saying hello to her daughter, Joanna and I sat down on opposite sides of her guided reading table, which served double-duty as teacher desk and guided reading table, and was located in the far right corner of her classroom. I once again set up the recording equipment and prepared for the open-ended initial interview.

While Joanna was attending to her daughter, I glanced around the room. On the right wall, two sets of bookcases had been placed side-by-side; the first set of books were mostly chapter books, and were organized into rectangular, labeled, red book bins. A large red sign, "Redbox Books," had been mounted on the wall over the bookcase. The second set of bookcases consisted of picture books, both fiction and non-fiction, and these texts were organized into rectangular blue book pins, which had been labeled with the genre of the books contained within. On the wall opposite the bookcases, five personal computers sat adjacent to each other on light-gray, laminated computer tables. At the front of the room was a whiteboard that spanned the wall, and on the right side of the whiteboard, student learning statements for each content area had been neatly scribed in blue dry-erase marker. Light-blue, laminated cabinets with silver handles stretched across the back of the room. Student desks and chairs were placed symmetrically in the classroom; two sets of desks had been arranged in half-rectangles, facing each other. On the walls, anchor charts for reading and math were tacked or taped up. In the far left corner of the room, Joanna had placed a large black chest over which she had tacked up a sign that stated, "Our Writing Tools Suitcase." A poster of a traffic light was tacked up near her guided reading table; clothespins labeled with students' names were clipped on yellow, green, or red.

Joanna, born and raised in a mid-western state, attended Harding University (pseudonym) in that same state. After obtaining her teaching degree, she was recruited to move to her current city to teach in a neighboring school district. While working in the neighboring district, Joanna first taught second grade, then served as a Technology Specialist and finally served as a Reading Specialist. Additionally, Joanna presented

professional development for other teachers in that district. While working in the adjoining district, Joanna obtained her Masters in Administration at Carle L. Brown University (pseudonym), a college located 90 miles from Joanna's residence. Joanna enrolled in an accelerated, one-year program, taking three classes per semester and six classes during the summer. Joanna acknowledged that attending college and teaching school was extremely challenging, especially because she gave birth to her daughter during this time. Indeed, Joanna admitted that she was very proud of her accomplishments. After serving eight years in that district, administrative changes caused Joanna to seek employment in another district, and she moved to Robert B. Dow, Sr. Elementary School. Joanna indicated that the change in employment was a good move for Joanna and her daughter.

At the time of the study, Joanna had been teaching for three years at Robert B. Dow, Sr. Elementary School. During her first year at this new school, Joanna taught a Reading and English Language Arts (RELA) block for both third and fourth graders, which she found extremely difficult, as providing differentiated lessons for two grade levels of students was challenging; she often taught the third grade students with the same rigor and high standards that she used with the fourth grade students. During her second year, Joanna's assignment was teaching fourth grade RELA in a departmentalized classroom. In other words, Joanna taught three RELA classes, and students rotated to two other teachers every day for their additional content areas. Joanna found this teaching assignment extremely challenging; planning for three separate RELA classes was difficult. As a result, during the spring semester of her second year, Joanna convinced her principal to let her teach a third grade, self-contained classroom for her third year at

Robert B. Dow, Sr. Elementary. Joanna declared that she was much happier teaching one class, and emphasized that self-contained teaching helped her to know the students better. Since moving to her current district, Joanna had also been called upon to present professional development on Social Studies to teachers across the district. In fact, Joanna had just presented information on Social Studies at the recent curriculum rollout. Additionally, she presented professional development on technology to other teachers on her campus.

During this initial interview, Joanna and I sat at her guided reading table, which was located in the far right-hand corner of her classroom, and doubled as her teacher desk. I began the interview by asking Joanna to define independent reading; she defined the term as a time for students to read self-selected texts (e.g., selected from the classroom or the school library) and a time to craft a written response about the texts they were reading. To emphasize the fact, Joanna pointed out a nearby anchor chart with question stems to support students in writing reading responses. Joanna stressed that she wanted students to read books that were on their reading level, as she did not want students to struggle with text that was too difficult or too easy to read. Joanna then went on to explain that students read independently in centers while Joanna implemented guided reading. Students were also scheduled in other centers during the guided and independent reading portion of this session: computers, writing sentences, and book clubs. Computer stations consisted of: (a) Istation, a computer-based reading instructional and assessment program endorsed by the state board of education and purchased by the district; (b) Raz Kids, a reading program purchased by the campus, which provided electronic texts at student reading levels; and (c) PebbleGo, a computer reading program

which provided texts read orally for struggling readers. For Joanna's book clubs, a group of students reading at a similar reading level selected a chapter book from a small selection pre-chosen by Joanna, read the book during independent reading, and then met with Joanna to discuss the book. Joanna based her decisions for guided reading and placement in centers on students' needs and reading levels, and she kept the groupings flexible as students progressed in their reading abilities. That is, she frequently moved students from group to group. When queried about what kinds of texts Joanna noticed the students choosing during independent reading, she replied that the male students in her class liked to read *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, graphic novels, *Minecraft*, and sports-based non-fiction picture books depicting popular sports figures. Indeed, Joanna indicated that she found the male students very difficult to motivate to read. In fact, Joanna complained that many of the male students played and were off-task. As a result, Joanna purchased additional texts based on videogames, graphic novels, and sports books with the purpose of enticing the male students to engage in independent reading. In so doing, Joanna explained that the male students were more motivated to read during independent reading because of the additional texts she provided for her classroom library. Although Joanna indicated that students were allowed to self-select any text at their reading level from her library, she did mention that her goal was to entice students to select alternate genres. Joanna endeavored to lure students to sample other genres by prominently displaying attractive texts from other genres or content areas on a book display case which was located at the front of the classroom. Occasionally, Joanna felt successful in her attempts because she was able to tempt a male student to choose and try out a text from the display case. Alternatively, Joanna noticed that the female students in her classroom were

interested in reading books about animals and versions of fairy tales based on the original fairy tale; Joanna reported that she did not observe female students in her classroom selecting many popular culture texts.

When describing the types of text she provided in her classroom library, Joanna mentioned that she placed her chapter books in red bins in her "Redbox Books" section, because she was using a Hollywood-type theme in her classroom. Specifically, she indicated that she owned the Magic Tree House series books, the Junie B. Jones series, the Geronimo Stilton series, and many other fictional chapter books; all these books were organized on her "Redbox Books" bookshelves. Alternatively, she related that her fiction and non-fiction picture books were organized in blue bins on the shelves adjacent to the "Redbox Books" section. Other genres mentioned by Joanna were fairy tales, fables, folktales, and poetry. Interestingly, Joanna indicated that she occasionally culled books in her library that did not get much readership. For instance, Joanna would bring a bin of books to the front of the classroom, pull titles out of the bin, and determine if any students had recently read the title. If students indicated limited interest, Joanna pulled the books from her classroom library for a period of time. Joanna explained that she had many boxes of books at home, took unpopular books home for a period of time, and brought in books that had not seen the light of day for a few months. Similarly, Joanna pointed out that she occasionally would place a book bin in front of the class, and provide a book talk for a particular text or texts, with the express purpose of motivating students to try out new genres. When asked about other methods of enticing students to sample other texts, Joanna explained that students sometimes selected the current chapter book she read aloud. For example, she was currently reading *The Witches*, and she noticed a

few students selecting the same title from the school library. Lastly, in order to encourage more student participation in selecting texts for the classroom library, Joanna frequently polled the class to determine what titles students desired to be added to her library. However, when I asked about specific, individual conversations with students about the texts they were reading, Joanna acknowledged that such discussions were infrequent. One discussion Joanna did recall involved a student from India who had recently enrolled in the school and who read English at a beginning Kindergarten reading level. Unfortunately, the student had selected a text at a much higher reading level, and Joanna told the student that he needed to choose an easier text. For the most part, Joanna explained that she assigned students who read at beginning reading levels to computer reading programs, to avoid a teasing issue that might have developed when other students observed students reading very simple texts. In another instance, Joanna reported that she met with a male student who was constantly off-task when it was his turn to read independently in stations. According to Joanna, he professed his dislike of reading, and often refused to read. In this case, Joanna offered the student an alternative, unpleasant choice to independent reading, and the student chose independent reading over the alternative. For the most part, Joanna responded that rather than discuss text choices with students on an individual basis, she used a portion of her guided reading time to determine student interests about particular topics and texts.

Joanna noted that for the first nine weeks of the school year, she implemented a full, independent reading time for students. During this time, students practiced reading independently, applied comprehension strategies to their reading, and crafted written reading responses. Students self-selected texts from the classroom library and school

library and chose comfortable spots in the classroom. Unfortunately, Joanna conceded that her students were unable to use reading strategies properly, and many were unable to self-select their own reading spots. For example, she attested that many of the male students played, rolled around on the floor, and changed reading spots to be near their friends. Consequently, Joanna decided to rearrange her reading block, and students were placed in rotating reading centers. Using this system, a few students read independently each day. The number of students permitted to read independently varied from day to day, depending on the reading developmental needs of each student. The students who were assigned to independent reading still chose their own texts and constructed written reading responses, but were now required to remain at their seats for the duration of the time. In time, a few of the students earned back the right to seek their own place in the classroom. Surprisingly, Joanna reported that many students chose to remain in their seats rather than seeking out a comfortable reading spot away from other students. Ultimately, Joanna affirmed that the use of centers during guided reading time was successful; independent reading time as an assigned center was proving more beneficial as Joanna strived to provide differentiated guided reading lessons ranging from teaching beginning English Language Learners (ELLs) to decode simple words in English to supporting more proficient readers to infer, synthesize, and summarize texts.

When questioned, Joanna defined popular culture as the graphic novels and books based on popular videogames and movies. In fact, she provided several examples of what she considered popular culture texts: (a) *Disney's Descendants*, (b) *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, and (c) *Minecraft.* Moreover, Joanna added that her own daughter had recently requested a book based on "Trolls," a popular children's movie.

Joanna: Observations Using Observation Protocols

The first protocol took place on the morning of January 11, 2017, the same day as Joanna's initial interview. I visited Joanna from 8:50 a.m. until 9:10 a.m. After the first observation, I checked weekly by email or text with Joanna to determine which day of the week was convenient for her. Additionally, I emailed the literacy coaches every week, copying the building principal, to inform them of the times that I would be in their building. Each week, I entered the front office, conversed with the very friendly receptionist, and signed-in on the district form. Interestingly, I had my own logout procedures on my own campus. Each time I left the my campus for teacher observations, I emailed the principal and signed in and out on a clipboard, as the principal wanted to be informed when staff members left the building. Additionally, every time I left the building for the teacher observations, I spent about an hour and a half on the road and at the research location.

I visited Joanna's classroom a total of eight times for a period of 20 minutes (see Table 14).

Table 14

Joanna's Data Collection Timeline

Dates of Interviews	Dates of Observations	Time Spent in Observations
January 11, 2017	January 11, 2017	20 Minutes
March 9, 2017	January 17, 2017	20 Minutes
	January 26, 2017	20 Minutes
	January 31, 2017	20 Minutes
	February 8, 2017	20 Minutes
	February 17, 2017	Canceled
	February 23, 2017	20 Minutes
	March 2, 2017	20 Minutes
	March 9, 2017	20 Minutes

I used a teacher observation protocol, and recorded my observations of Joanna during each visit. During the first observation, Joanna was assessing one student's reading level, using a DRA. While Joanna assessed the student, she assigned the other students to centers: (a) pyramid sentences (e.g., creating sentences by following a pyramid template), (b) Istation, (c) vocabulary workshop (e.g., students read a passage and then used context clues to infer word meanings); and (d) independent reading. During the observation, Joanna divided her time between focusing on the student reading assessment and supervising the students in her classroom by frequent scanning of the classroom. While conducting the reading assessment, she often verbally redirected students who were displaying off-task behavior. In addition to assessing and redirecting, Joanna phoned another teacher for a copy of a DRA assessment, answered two phone calls about students placed in Individual School Suspension, spoke to several students who approached her guided reading table, and took attendance. At one point during the observation, Joanna approached me and explained that the students who were independently reading were sitting at their desks, because they played and rolled on the floor when they chose their own reading spots.

On the occasion of the second teacher observation protocol, Joanna provided assigned reading to the class: Students chose from one of two Martin Luther King, Jr. reading passages. Joanna noted that the students were working in small groups, reading one of the passages, and answering the multiple choice questions. Meanwhile, Joanna sat at her guided reading table and administered two DRA reading assessments. In a manner similar to the first teacher protocol, Joanna divided her time between observing the students in the classroom, redirecting off-task behavior, locating additional copies of one

of the passages, discussing a behavior situation with a teacher next door, and assessing the student who sat at her table. At one time during the teacher observation, Joanna directed the students to cease reading in groups, as she decided that many of the students were noisy and off-task. Consequently, Joanna assigned the students to work on their own to read the passages and answer the multiple-choice questions.

On the occasion of the sixth week, I greeted the receptionist, signed in, and walked halfway down the hallway. There I met Joanna, who explained that Deborah was sick, and that another third grade teacher was also absent. Joanna was frantically trying to find someone to cover one of the classes. As a result, Joanna asked if we could cancel our protocol for the week, and I agreed.

On subsequent visits, Joanna implemented guided reading lessons, sitting at her guided reading table with small groups of students. She assigned the other students center work, including an independent reading center for selected students. Joanna taught reading strategies to students in small group, verbally redirected student behaviors, and occasionally gave students consequences, which consisted of directing a student to move a clip or clothespin to a particular color when given a consequence for misbehavior. On one occasion, Joanna met with students in a book club rather than in a traditional guided reading lesson. At this time, Joanna directed a discussion of the setting of the chapter book, *Stone Fox*. See Table 15 for a depiction of the occurrences of the eight teacher observation protocols.

Table 15

Joanna's Teacher Observation Protocol Occurrences

Week	Teacher Observation Protocol
One	Joanna assessed two students, while supervising the classroom. Students were in centers: computers, independent reading, and pyramid sentences.
Two	Joanna assessed two students, while supervising the classroom. Students are reading passages about Martin Luther King, Jr., and answering multiple-choice questions.
Three	Joanna worked with five students in Guided Reading group. The other students were in centers: Computers, independent reading, vocabulary workshop, and book clubs.
Four	Joanna worked with five students in two Guided Reading groups. The other students were in centers: Computers, independent reading, vocabulary workshop, and book clubs.
Five	Joanna worked with five students in two Guided Reading groups. The other students were in centers: Computers, pyramid sentences, vocabulary workshop, and book clubs (no independent reading other than book club).
Six	Deborah was ill today, and no teacher observations occurred.
Seven	Joanna worked with five students in two Guided Reading groups. The other students were in centers: Computers, independent reading, vocabulary workshop, and book clubs.
Eight	Joanna worked with 5 students in two Guided Reading groups. The other students were in centers: Computers, independent reading, vocabulary workshop, and book clubs.
Nine	Joanna worked with three students in a Guided Reading Group. Three students were independently reading, and all other students have assigned reading.

Joanna: Classroom library

During each teacher protocol, I took photographs of the classroom library. Although the library did not change demonstrably from week to week, the photographs demonstrate the inclusion of popular culture texts in Joanna's library. In the "Red Box Books" section, several book bins were filled with graphic novels, books based on videogames, and books based on popular television and movies. A picture of some of the popular culture texts in Joanna's library can be seen in Figure 7.

Figure 7. Photograph of Popular Culture Texts in Joanna's Library

Joanna: Post interview

I met with Joanna for a follow-up interview after the eighth visit to her classroom. We arranged to meet in her classroom after school. I was curious as to how much independent reading occurred outside of the daily 20 minutes when I was observing in the

classroom, and I was very inquisitive as to how Joanna would rearrange her guided reading and independent reading "if she were in charge of the world". When I questioned Joanna about her ideal independent reading time, she replied that she would love to have every student reading, responding, and on-task. When pressed further, Joanna explained that she would prefer more time for guided reading, because teaching students in small groups was the most effective; she believed that students made the most reading progress while learning in small groups. At that point in the interview, Joanna described the student reading gains that were being achieved by each differentiated guided reading groups and book clubs she was facilitating.

Joanna then showed me her center schedule to demonstrate the amount of independent reading her students received during her guided reading time, repeating that the schedule remained extremely flexible and changed constantly based on student need. For instance, the ELL students who struggled to read English were pulled out every Friday to focus on everyday vocabulary instruction. Surprisingly, Joanna explained that she did not feel that these struggling ELL readers were ready for independent reading, because they were unable to apply strategies while reading. Other students were pulled out for dyslexia instruction several times per week. Joanna then mentioned that many students were currently working on a project that integrated the content areas of science and math into reading time. The project consisted of choosing a planet, researching that planet, creating a three-dimensional alien who lived on the planet, and devising a passport for the alien, so the alien could visit the planet Earth. Therefore, Joanna had provided a quantity of picture books on the planets in the solar system. Students were encouraged to choose books on planets to read during independent reading, and Joanna

remarked that indeed, many of the students had chosen to read books on planets, and that they were very engaged in their alien project.

When asked about the amount of time students read independently outside of the guided reading time, Joanna commented that she required that students read when they finished an assignment early. As a result, students received more independent reading time than they were allotted during their reading centers. However, Joanna conceded that the many of the struggling readers worked longer on their assignments, so they were not typically the recipients of extra time. Further, Joanna mentioned that the students who read more books during the extra time for independent reading were her proficient readers, and not her struggling readers.

I was curious as to how often and when students were allowed to select books from Joanna's classroom library, so I asked Joanna to elaborate. This response was very similar to her response during the initial interview: Students were allowed to select a new book from the classroom library after they had read their current book, crafted a written response, and turned that response in to their teacher. Therefore, Joanna reported that the timing of selecting a new book varied, based on the student. After turning in a reading response, students were allowed to select a new book, provided that students were assigned to an independent reading center. Otherwise, students waited until their next independent reading center time to select a new book. However, students did have the opportunity to keep more than one book in their possession for independent reading; students were allowed to check out books from the school library when they went to their Library Specials time, which occurred once per week.

As I had not observed any one-on-one reading conferences with students during my teacher observations, I was also interested in how Joanna enticed students to sample other genres. Although I asked this question during the initial interview, I was still curious as to other methods Joanna might use. Joanna noted that she occasionally placed new, interesting books on her guided reading table, hoping that students might notice the titles and inquire about them. Indeed, she reported that many of the students asked if they could read these titles. To maintain suspense and interest, Joanna responded that the students could check them out the next time they were allowed to self-select a book from her library. Finally, I was curious as to how Joanna's independent reading might change or morph from the beginning to the middle to the end of the year. Joanna repeated her experiences at the beginning of the year; she initially implemented an independent reading time wherein every student read self-selected books, found a reading spot, applied reading strategies while reading, and crafted written responses. Troublingly, because there were so many male students in her classroom that were off-task, playing and rolling around on the floor, Joanna devised a new plan: While students met with Joanna in guided reading groups or book clubs, students would be assigned centers including independent reading, vocabulary workshop, and computer reading time. I wondered if Joanna might be interested in trying out an uninterrupted independent reading time toward the end of the year. However, Joanna indicated she was very satisfied with her method of providing centers for her current class, as so many of the male students continued to exhibit off-task behaviors. As a result, Joanna believed her guided reading and centers would serve her well until the end of the current school year. After completing the post interview questions, I thanked Joanna, and asked her if she had

any questions for me. Joanna did ask my advice as to how she could be a better reading teacher, based on my observations. I replied that I would be providing Joanna with my observations and asking for her feedback, once I completed the dissertation.

Survey

When I met with my committee for my proposal, one of the committee members suggested that I add a survey, which would include frequently-read popular culture texts: Did teachers have these titles in their classroom library? Originally, I had planned to conduct qualitative research using a multiple case study. Once the survey was added to the research, my chair and I determined that the study would require a mixed methods methodology. I began to work on the survey; I drew up a sample list of popular culture texts, sent the list to the committee member who suggested the survey on August 1, 2016, and she approved the texts. Shortly thereafter, I met with my chair to discuss the survey. We agreed that the list of popular culture texts should be revised to include only texts that were listed on the American Library Association's challenged book list (ALA, 2016a). Additionally, it was determined that I should revise the survey to include questions that would elicit teachers' perceptions about popular culture texts. While searching for popular culture surveys, I found research conducted by Dickie and Shuker (2014); the researchers developed a popular culture survey that was administered to educators in New Zealand. After emailing Dr. John Dickie and Dr. Mary Jane Shuker on September 5, 2016, I was thrilled when the researchers emailed me their survey and gave me permission to use it for my research. Therefore, I incorporated Dickie and Shuker's (2014) popular culture work into my existing survey. As the survey was a component of my research, I had to complete it before I sent in my IRB. Once completed, I had to

determine how to use the university's new online survey program, Qualtrics. In early September, I emailed the department secretary at our college, and although the secretary had no knowledge about the program, she promised to email me the moment she acquired the information. I followed up in early October, and the department secretary still did not have any information about using Qualtrics. However, when I attended my Dissertation Support group, I met representatives from the college's library, and one of the librarians gave me a contact name. I sent an email to the contact, and he sent me information so that I could log in to Qualtrics, upload my survey, and take tutorials to determine how to use the program. That occurred on October 12, 2016. Once I obtained permission to begin my research at Robert B. Dow, Sr. Elementary School, I sent an email to the 34 teachers on the campus, and included a link to the survey. Additionally, I sent emails to the two literacy coaches to ask them to remind teachers to check their junk mail, as the survey email most likely ended up in teachers' junk mail mailbox. I waited several weeks, and no one had responded, so I sent out a reminder email. Finally, on December 7, 2016, one teacher filled out the survey! One other teacher took the survey on January 21, 2017, and there were no further responses, although I sent out several reminders, and I sent out several emails to the two literacy coaches, requesting that they remind teachers to take the survey. After discussing these minimal results with my chair, we determined that I had not received enough responses for me to conduct mixed methods research.

Institutional Review Board Revisions. It is important to note that the title of my research that went to IRB was "Early Career Elementary Teacher's Perceptions of Popular Culture Texts During Independent Reading." I was interested in participants who taught reading, who taught third, fourth, or fifth grade, and who had been teaching

between three and six years. However, because the two participants had been teaching for over ten years, the IRB needed to be revised. Upon the advice of the chair of my committee, I contacted the Research and Compliance Administrator at my college, and inquired about the procedure for IRB revisions. I completed a revision of the IRB, and emailed it to the Research and Compliance Administrator in January of 2017. I checked at the end of March, and I had not received approval for the revisions. However, I decided to wait a little longer before following up. Troublingly, I forgot to follow up until the end of July 2017. Upon emailing the Research and Compliance Administrator, she responded that my revision had not been approved, and assured me that I would hear from IRB on the following Monday. Finally, my IRB revisions were accepted on July 31, 2017.

Summary

In Chapter IV, I have described the events and stumbling blocks that led up to the data collection stage of my research. Additionally, I have provided a narrative of the questionnaires, initial interviews, teacher observation protocols, teacher libraries, and post interviews. In Chapter V, I provide information about the themes that emerged from the data.

CHAPTER V

Findings: Data and Analysis

In this chapter, I analyze the data from the two case studies of the classroom teachers' free voluntary reading (FVR) program. The study followed Leech and Onwuegbuzie's (2010) 13-step methodological framework for qualitative research. During this analysis, I employed Steps 9 and 10: Step 9: I analyzed the data and Step 10: I interpreted the data. Further, I discuss the methods of analysis that I used; the themes that emerged from the data; and evidence for each theme. I then provide a cross-case analysis of both Deborah and Joanna's (pseudonyms) data and themes. Lastly, I answer the following research questions, integrating the themes into the writing:

1) How do teachers perceive the use of popular culture texts during independent reading?; and

2) How do teachers make decisions about student choices of popular culture texts during independent reading?

In the analysis of the data from the two case studies of the classroom teachers' FVR program, I provide analyses of the data corpus stemming from Deborah's case study, which resulted in themes that emerged from transcripts, field notes, observations, photographs, and analytic memos. In a similar manner, I offer an analysis of the themes that emerged from Joanna's data. Finally, I provide a cross-case analysis of both Deborah and Joanna, and in this cross-case analysis I compare and contrast the themes for the two participants.

Steps Eight and Nine: Analysis Methods

In order to analyze the data corpus from the case studies of Deborah and Joanna, and with the purpose of triangulating the data, I employed three methods of analysis: thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), keywords-in-context (Bernard & Ryan, 2010; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007), and visual ethnography (Pink, 2007; Schwartz, 1989).

Thematic analysis. Thematic analysis can be defined as drawing out and inferring themes and patterns from data (e.g., interviews, observations) (Aronson, 1995; Benner, 1985; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Cresswell, 2014; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña (2014). As Benner (1985) described, "The interpreter identifies common themes in the interviews and extracts sufficient interview excerpts to present evidence to the reader of the theme" (p. 10). Thematic analysis allowed me to infer pertinent themes and patterns, as I read and analyzed interview transcripts, teacher observation protocols, and analytic memos. Thematic analysis is made up of six phases: (a) Phase One: Familiarizing Yourself With the Data; (b) Phase Two: Generating Initial Codes; (c) Phase Three: Searching for Themes; (d) Phase Four: Reviewing Potential Themes; (e) Defining and Naming Themes; and (f) Producing the Report (Braun & Clarke,2006). Table 16 provides a chart of the six phases of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Table 16

Six Phases of Thematic Analysis

Six Phases of Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)	Analysis Processes
Phase One: Familiarizing Yourself With the Data	Read and re-read the interview transcripts and teacher observation protocols
Phase Two: Generating Initial Codes	Created first-and second-cycle codes (Saldaña, 2013)
Phase Three: Searching for Themes	Read and analyzed codes for themes.
Phase Four: Reviewing Potential Themes	Reviewed and revised themes.
Phase Five: Defining and Naming Themes	Created definitions for themes and named themes.
Phase Six: Producing the Report	Constructed and revised the report.

Phase one: Familiarize yourself with the data. During this phase, I transcribed the interviews, using the audio recordings for the transcription. Once the transcriptions were completed, I listened to the audio recordings multiple times, while reading my transcriptions. While conducting the transcription process, I frequently typed my thoughts and reflections in analytic memos. Additionally, I typed up all my handwritten observations from the teacher observation protocols, and read the notes multiple times before beginning the coding process.

Phase two: Generating initial codes. During Phase Two: I coded the interview transcriptions (two for each participant) and the teacher observation protocols (eight for each participant) using In Vivo coding (Saldaña, 2013). In Vivo coding is the process of extracting exact words or phrases from the data (Saldaña, 2013). Thereafter, I coded the interview transcriptions (two for each participant) and the teacher observation protocols

(eight for each participant) employing Process coding (Saldaña, 2013). When employing Process coding, the researcher studies the data, inferring actions (e.g., what is the participant doing?) and lists the verbs as gerunds (e.g., complaining, comprehending) (Saldaña, 2013). In Vivo and Process coding were the first cycle of my coding process (Saldaña, 2013). First-cycle coding can be defined as extracting initial codes from the data.

   Phase three: Searching for themes. I employed second-cycle coding during my search for themes. Second-cycle coding can be defined as using another coding process to re-examine the data (Saldaña, 2013). I transferred all the In Vivo and Process codes (two interview transcripts and eight teacher observation protocols for two participants) to large chart paper. After transferring the codes, I taped up the charts on the walls of my office, so that the codes could be visible and more easily read.

   I read and re-read codes over the course of several weeks. Many times during or after studying the codes, I generated analytic memos, jotting down my inferences, thoughts, and reflections as they arose. Additionally, I posted my research questions as a visible reminder, so that I might search for themes through the lens of the research questions. Concurrently, I typed up a list of questions to keep in mind as I explored themes in my data; Saldaña (2013) recommended keeping a list of questions such as "What are people doing? What are they trying to accomplish?" (p. 21). Displaying these questions assisted and focused my inferring and reflecting as I scrutinized the codes for themes. As I studied the codes, I noted my thinking and reflections in the form of analytic memos, and began jotting down themes that emerged from the data.

Phase four: Reviewing potential themes. As I reviewed the themes that emerged from reading and re-reading the codes generated from the interviews and the teacher observation protocols, I revised and refined the themes, deleting themes that did not align with the research questions, and adding themes as I continued to read and analyze the codes.

Phase five: Defining and naming themes. As I determined the themes emanating from the data sets, I constructed definitions for each theme, integrating pertinent quotes from the interview transcripts and field notes from the teacher observation protocols. Concomitantly, I created interesting titles for the themes, using quotes from the data to revise the theme titles.

Phase six: Producing the report. I wrote the report after I inferred and defined the initial themes, and continued to revise the report until publication of this document.

Keywords-in-context analysis. Additionally, to triangulate the data, I conducted a second analysis method, that of keywords-in-context (Bernard & Ryan, 2010; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). Keywords-in-Context analysis is a method of analyzing data by examining, comparing, and contrasting salient words used by participants, and studying the sentences or phrases surrounding those words. This is done by creating a concordance, which can be defined as creating word lists, including the frequency of each word used in a particular text (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). In the cases of Deborah and Joanna, I downloaded a "Simple Concordance Program (Reed, 2017) and entered the transcripts of the participants' initial and post interviews, first eliminating my questions. For each transcript, I created a concordance of the words used by the participants, and selected substantive words for each transcript. It is interesting to note that the selected

words for both participants were almost identical (e.g., read, reading, book, and books). However, several salient words were unique to the participants' concordances (e.g., Deborah: kids; Joanna: groups). For each salient word, I created a keywords-in-context list by phrase and by sentence. Alternatively, I treated the participants' teacher observation protocols in a slightly different manner; I extracted the participants' actual dialogue for every protocol, compiled the dialogue into one document, and created a simple concordance list for each participant. Consequently, I studied the concordances, noted important words that emerged from the list, and again created a keywords-in-context document for both phrases and sentences used. Next, I scrutinized the sentences created for each participant, constructing analytic memos as I examined the sentences for meaning and theme. Lastly, based on the analysis of the keyword-in-context, I revised and deleted themes.

Visual ethnography. Lastly, because the photographs were multimodal in nature, I could not use the aforementioned analyses of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) or keywords-in-context (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). Instead, I used a visual ethnography (Pink, 2007) analysis technique to analyze the images that I captured. As Pink (2007) implied, analyzing visuals reflexively can convey meaning to the data, albeit subjective meaning. In other words, Pink (2007) advised that visuals be viewed and analyzed within the context of the other data. Indeed, visual research is richer when considered in relation to the other data sets. Importantly, Pink (2007) suggested that researchers remember that another researcher or participant might infer other meanings from the visual data; researchers or participants bring their own schemata to the viewing of the visual, stressing the salience of using reflexivity when analyzing visual data. For this purpose, I

scribed analytic memos while viewing and reflecting on the photographs. For my visual data collection, I took several pictures of the participants' classroom libraries each time I visited the classrooms for teacher observation protocols. Thereafter, I had the pictures developed and mounted them in chronological order on poster board. Additionally, the photographs were filed digitally by participant and by week in password-protected files. Once the photographs were displayed, I studied the pictures, in digital and print form, considered them in conjunction with the other data sets (e.g., transcripts, teacher observation protocols) and constructed analytic memos, noting my reflections and inferences about the visuals in comparison and contrast to the other data sets. On completion of the analytic reflections, I scrutinized the existent themes, and, upon reflection, revised the themes based on the visual ethnographic analysis. To triangulate further, I employed member checking whereby I provided the participants with a copy of the interview transcripts, and the themes derived from the research. I requested feedback from each participant.

The Case of Deborah

    Thematic analysis. Deborah's first interview, post interview, and teacher observation protocols were first analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis consists of inferring themes through a six-stage process: (a) Phase One: Familiarizing Yourself With the Data; (b) Phase Two: Generating Initial Codes; (c) Phase Three: Searching for Themes; (d) Phase Four: Reviewing Potential Themes; (e) Defining and Naming Themes; and (f) Producing the Report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In Vivo coding and Process coding were employed for first cycle coding of thematic analysis (Saldaña, 2013). In Vivo coding can be defined as extracting

repeated words or phrases that may stand out prominently in some way to the researcher (Saldaña, 2013) and Process coding may be defined as inferring codes by examining the process that is occurring during a particular response from the participant. For example, when using In Vivo coding, a quote from Deborah was, was, "That's where we start with comprehension….Deep comprehension which is a huge shock from second to third grade to leap..." and the resulting code extracted might be " deep comprehension" and "huge shock"..… When employing Process coding, codes are typically generated by naming the verb and listing the verb using its gerund (e.g., explaining, complaining) (Saldaña, 2013). For example, when using Process coding, the quote being analyzed was: "And so, it seems that they've been watching movies," and the resulting code might be "observing."….During second cycle coding the codes were themed. Table 17 provides a code map of the various codes that led to the themes.

Table 17

Code Map for Deborah

In Vivo	Process
Lower kids	Reading
My high kids	Providing choices
Encouraged to read	Discussing
Comic book type things	Allowing or limiting
Do reader response	Liking, loving, enjoying
Building up skills	Teaching
Lower level kids	Planning
Flipping pages	Assessing/assigning
	Preparing
	Striving, Endeavoring

Themes that emerged from second-cycle coding were: a) ever-present annual reading test pressure; b) passion for teaching and accountability (e.g., job expectation of students reading on   grade level by the end of the year); c) differentiation of reading instruction; and d) choice in selecting texts for independent reading.

Figure 8 provides a thematic map for Deborah.
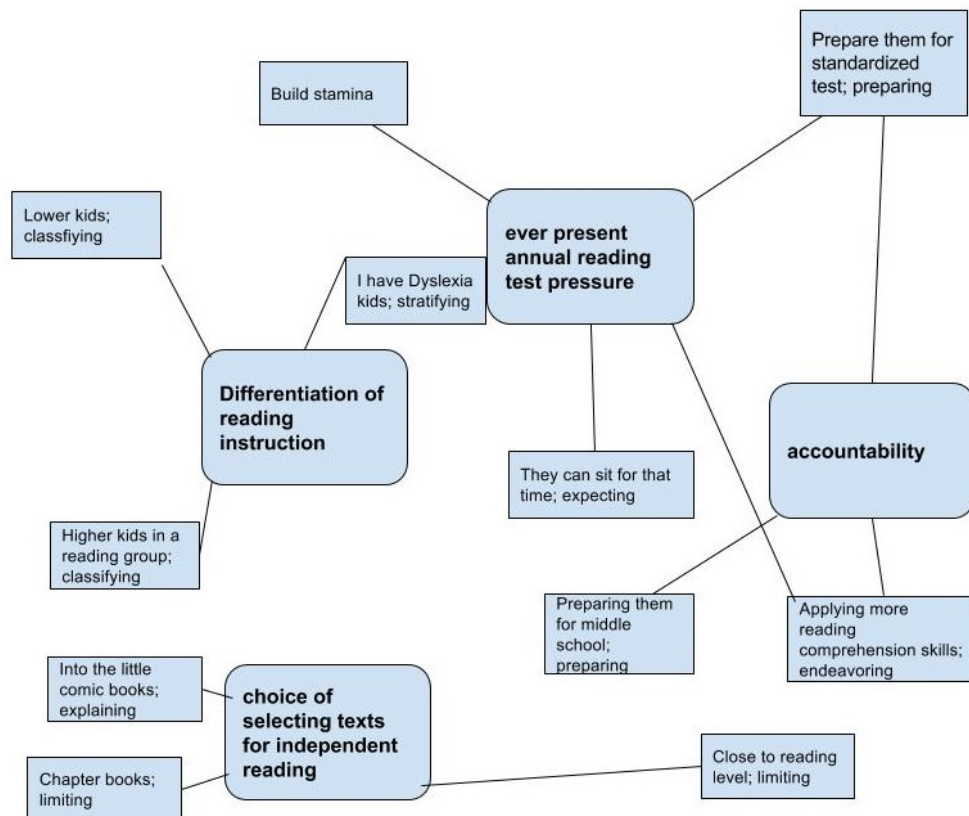
Figure 8: Thematic Map for Deborah

Keywords-in-context. After conducting thematic analysis to infer themes, I employed keywords-in-context analysis (Bernard & Ryan, 2010), a qualitative analytical process in which words, parts of words, or phrases are analyzed through the use of a simple concordance program (Bernard & Ryan, 2010; Reed, 2017). A concordance is a

list of word parts, words, or phrases, including frequency of use, contained in a particular text. I created three separate concordance lists for Deborah, one for the first interview transcript, one for the post interview transcript, and one for the teacher observation protocol. It is important to note that I omitted my interview questions from the two interview transcripts, and I created a new document from the teacher observation protocols by extracting just the teacher dialogue from the classroom observations. Once the concordance lists were created from Deborah's documents, I selected salient words and constructed keywords-in-context documents using both phrases and sentences. Lastly, I scrutinized the sentences extracted from the three documents, reading the sentences multiple times, and jotting down my reflections in analytic memos. Table 18 provides the words extracted from the three documents, and Table 19 displays the extracted sentences from one of the substantive words.

Table 18

Words Selected from the Concordance for Deborah

First Interview		Post Interview		Quotes from Protocol	
Quantity	Words	Quantity	Words	Quantity	Words
17	Reading	16	Reading	13	Reading
20	Kids	13	Book	18	Book
16	Library				

Table 19

Keywords-in-Context Table for the Word "Reading"

Line Numbers	Sentences/Fragments
3	Right, and understanding what you're reading and why the characters are doing what they're doing.
4	They do independent reading when I'm doing small group when I'm doing my guided reading time and so… but it varies we have a schedule and I'm revamping the schedule cause I lost a student and I have a new student and again moving into…
5	…reading club and so they're going… we start that next week where they're gonna be reading chapter books
9	Right now, most of them are reading fiction cause the are just really starting to … we've gotten them to get more interested in the chapter books but we're about to move into biographies…
15	…so that's helped a lot with my dyslexia kids to get them interested in doing more reading…
33	33 I think that time it's important because we're trying to increase their reading level but also building their stamina with reading preparing them for STAAR so they can sit for that time during STAAR test so I want it to be something they've chosen and something that they enjoy that that way it's going to keep their attention.
37	So we had six-eight weeks of just modeling and I increased the time… you know… began it with just okay three minutes… I timed 'em and let 'em all go … and then okay well what did we notice …what did…you know…make an observation… what were others doing? What were you doing? Were you…Did you get straight to reading?
41	Usually I'll just you know say well we need to get back on task …say their names and say what's an..an expectation? Remember our expectations during independent reading and…
48	I love reading and so I share with them things that I've read that I have in my library and suggest that to them. So you know several..like *Star Girl* but of course I love Harry Potter and Percy Jackson.
50	Usually just conversations they'll share with me what they're reading or I know their interests what they're interested in…and I'll, "Hey, have you read this?" and suggest the book to them…

Line Numbers	Sentences/Fragments
51	Yes, I had..I mentioned it earlier …a lot of the boys are into the comic books… and so you know independent reading …that does not keep their attention for very long.
53	No, cause I think Sometimes the graphic novels, they just need a brain break you know…so if they've been reading a chapter book and they're kind of burnt out on that, that it's okay…and I have lots of picture books that they can read that are just fun and are just a fun story.
56	We also did a project with traditional literature…the kids were reading a traditional literature and they got to choose …they wanted to make a flip book -they wanted to actually make the character, that main character in the story, and then inside and then flip it up and it had all the details.

After employing both thematic analysis and keywords-in-context analyses, I deleted the theme "passion for teaching" and revised "differentiation of reading instruction" to "classification of students". For the purpose of labeling the codes with more interesting names, I revised Classification of students to Classification of students: "I have a few boys…". Similarly, I renamed the other themes: (a) ever present annual test pressure to ever present annual test pressure: "So they can sit for that time"; (b) Accountability to Accountability: "Huge Shock"; and (c) Choice of texts during independent reading to Choice of texts during independent reading: "Brain Break".

Visual Ethnography. Visual ethnography was employed as a third method for the purpose of triangulation. Visual ethnography can be defined as using reflexivity to glean meaning from visual media (Pink, 2007; Schwartz, 1989). As Pink (2007) advised, visuals are seldom analyzed on their own, out of context with other data. In employing visual ethnography for a third method of analysis, I took reflexive notes as I scrutinized the photographs of Deborah's classroom library. As I reflected on the photographs, I

considered how the pictures supported themes inferred from the interview transcripts and the teacher observation protocols. Next, I provide a description of Deborah's classroom library, extracting salient quotes or observances from the interviews or teacher observation protocols.

Deborah's classroom library was situated in two separate locations in the classroom. Four large picture books were prominently displayed on top of two wooden bookcases that stood in the northwest corner of the classroom. These displayed books were never moved or changed during the teacher observation protocols. Located on the bookcase to the left bookcase was a copy of *Bylines: A Photobiography of Nelly Bly* (Macy, 2009). Adjacent to this book stood an old copy of *The Wizard of Oz* (Baum, 1900). Although the original was first published in 1900, this copy was abridged and published in 2015. On the shelf between the two picture books, Deborah had placed a small, light-turquoise bucket. The cup remained in the same place during every protocol. On the adjacent bookcase stood a large picture book entitled *The Velveteen Rabbit, or How Toys Become Real- The Classic Edition* (Williams, 2013), and the other large book was entitled *Texas*, and appeared to be an informational text on the state of Texas. A small orange bucket, a replica to the turquoise bucket on the other shelf, stood between the two displayed books; one bookmark sat in the bucket. Similarly, the books remained in place during the nine weeks I visited.

The books contained in these bookcases had been placed in bright pink, turquoise, and neon-green, rectangular bins, about the size of a shoe box. Visible books included paperback chapter books and paperback picture books. Interestingly, although the titles of the books in the front of the bins changed slightly from week to week, the books were

never out-of-place or in disarray. Additionally, Deborah had labeled the bins with the genre or the level of the books. Deborah sorted most of the books in her classroom library according to the reading level. There are several options for teachers to choose from when sorting books by level: (a) Text-Level Gradient that measures levels by alphabet (A-Z) (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996); (b) the Developmental Reading Assessment DRA) text-level gradients that measure levels by number (Kelly & Clausen-Grace, 2006); or (c) Lexile. A lexile is a number that is typically derived from a formula of word counts and word length (Allington, 2001; Klare, 1984). For Deborah's purposes, she chose the Fountas & Pinnell text-level gradient for the book bins. However, she labeled many of the individual books with a DRA text-level gradient (e.g., 24, 28, 30). To provide an example, *Midnight on the Moon* (Pope Osbourne, 1996) had been assigned a text-level gradient of level 28; however, the text was observed in the bin labeled "M".

The informational text was housed on a metal bookshelf in the opposite corner of the room. On top of this bookshelf, Deborah had placed a bin for homework and two bins containing magazines. During the first interview, Deborah mentioned that her classroom library contained some magazines. However, the magazines were not primarily for independent reading. When I asked Deborah about the magazines, she replied,

> I do have *some* magazines but mainly we use those to… in different activities that the kids are doing that they go in and search for pictures to cut to put in with whatever we're working on especially like in science and different things.

The informational books were slightly more askew than the books on the wooden shelves, and were also placed in bright plastic bins of the same make and color as those in the adjacent library. These informational texts were not leveled, but were labeled by type

of informational text. At no time during the observation protocols did I observe popular culture texts in the classroom library, although I did notice a few popular culture books on the floor of the classroom, among them a book about *Halo,* a videogame, and a biography of Demi Lovato, a popular singer.

It is interesting to note that while Deborah mentioned that she loved the Harry Potter series, the Percy Jackson series, and *Stargirl* (Spinelli, 2002), and she asserted that those titles were in her classroom library, they were never observed by the researcher. Further, although Deborah expressed that she frequently mentioned the books to her students because they were personal favorites, they were not prominent in her display of books.

The appearance of Deborah's classroom library did not change from week to week, with the exception of different titles in the front of some of the bins. As an illustration of the lack of change, Deborah explained that she did not purchase books for her classroom library during the time of my research. In fact, she noted that she had not purchased any titles since the beginning of the year. Interestingly, although Deborah supplied her own classroom library, she hinted that the school had provided a library, and that Deborah had declined the use of that library. Deborah further explained that since her classroom was the "revolving door" this year (e.g., many students withdrew and enrolled), Deborah did not want to chance losing books when a family transferred to another school.

> This year, um, and you know, the school provided us with and my intention was to put them again, incorporating those…but then I just haven't, you know with, I've had the highest turnover in my class of any of the third grade classes. I've, you know, I've had about 30 kids I've taught so far this year. So my classroom has

been the revolving door this year. So I just felt, I don't want to be responsible for

paying for those books, so I have not put any of those into where, where, you

know, circulation because I don't have a check out system, can't be consistent with

the checkout system…Because a lot of the kids, they've just left, have had no

notice.

Additionally, during the post interview, Deborah lamented that children were no

longer able to check out books from the school library; Deborah reported that students

watched movies when they visited the library. Because students could no longer check

out books from the library, Deborah explained that a large burden was placed on her own

classroom library, because she did not stock any comic books in her library, and her

lower-level boys were permitted to read comic books as a brain break after they had

finished responding to their on-level, chapter book.

Although I did not perceive a change in the number of books in the library during

the time I visited, I took photographs of the library from a distance; I did not take

pictures of individual books, and the pictures I captured were slightly blurry. On two

occasions, on the fifth and ninth visit, Deborah directed students to visit her library.

During the fifth visit, Deborah had just finished reading *Spaghetti in a Hot Dog Bun:

Having the Courage to Be Who You Are* (Dismondy, 2008). Deborah explained to me that

students were not getting along with each other, and that was the reason for that particular

book choice. Deborah added that because of the issue, that she had conducted a "Come to

Jesus" meeting before reading the book. A classroom chart containing a classroom pledge

had been placed on the kidney-shaped guided reading table, and students had signed the

constitution in various places with pen and marker. Deborah then directed the students to

partner with someone they had never partnered with before, choose a book from either

their desks or the classroom library, and partner read. Students were to disperse with their

partners, finding a comfortable spot in chairs or on the floor, and share books with each

other. During the ninth week, the final visit, Deborah was meeting individually with

students; these conferences concerned a change in independent reading procedure. The

conference consisted of checking the chapter book the student was reading, writing down

the student's reading level in an agenda book, and explaining Deborah's expectations for

reading response. When a student was called over, Deborah first asked the student if she

or he had chosen a chapter book on or close to their reading level. During this visit,

Deborah directed a student to the classroom library to choose a book. While the student

was searching for a book, Deborah began another conference. Figures 9 and 10 provide

an example of the photographs from Deborah's classroom library.

Figure 9: Deborah's Classroom Library

Figure 10: Deborah's Classroom Library

Deborah's classroom library photographs, when considered in the context of the interviews and the teacher observation protocols, supported the inferred themes of accountability: So they can sit for that time!" and choice of self-selected books during independent reading: "Brain Break". To provide an example of how the photographs supported the theme of accountability, as the standardized testing date loomed closer, Deborah directed students to select chapter books on or about their current reading level. Once finished with those particular texts, students were to write a reading response before selecting a new chapter book. On one such occasion, Deborah explained to a student, "On most of my chapter books, I have the reading level on either a sticker or written in Sharpie." Look for 28." For the purpose of providing an illustration for the theme of choice of texts during independent reading, I suggest that the visuals reflected upon in

context with Deborah's interview transcripts and teacher observation protocols support this theme. Indeed, students were permitted to choose any on-level chapter book, provided the book was on or about their reading level. Moreover, students were permitted to choose a picture book or other book to read "for fun." Similarly, students were allowed to select a "comic book" from the school library. Unfortunately, at some point during my data collection, students were no longer permitted to check out books from the school library, and Deborah lamented that occurrence, explaining that she did not possess comic books in her classroom library.

Themes for Deborah

  "Ever present annual test pressure: So they can sit for that time!". Pressures from the impending standardized tests restricted students' choice of reading materials during independent reading and the amount of time allowed for independent reading. During one of the teacher observation protocols, Deborah administered a practice standardized reading test instead of implementing independent reading during her scheduled time. Deborah frequently mentioned that students should be reading chapter books at their instructional level, with the purpose of preparing students for the annual standardized test. On several occasions in the initial and post, Deborah expressed that she believed that one purpose of independent reading is to build stamina to allow students to sit for long periods of time during the annual standardized reading test. Deborah explained,

   It's important because we're trying to increase their reading level but also

   building their stamina with reading, preparing them for STAAR so they can sit for

that time during the STAAR test, so I want it to be something they've chosen and something that they enjoy that, that way it's going to keep their attention.

During the post interview, Deborah explained that, in order to focus more on student reading comprehension, she was now requiring students to choose one chapter book on their reading level at the beginning of the week. She responded,

…because I'm trying to get them, you know, now that we're getting closer to STAAR, to start applying more of their reading comprehension skills that we've been working on all year to make them apply it more during their independent reading.

Students were required to read the chapter book and write a literature response about that book in their reading response journal. Students were allowed to choose a second book to read, and the second book could be a comic book to read after the rigorous exertion of reading and responding to the chapter book. Deborah explained, "Sometimes the graphic novels, they just need a brain break, you know, so if they're reading a chapter book, and they're kind of burned out on that, that it's okay…" Importantly, during two of the eight teacher protocols, students were reading passages and answering multiple choice questions: One of the two occasions was a scheduled reading test. Although Deborah implemented her reading program using a balanced literacy framework, independent reading time was sometimes shortened or omitted because test practice or assessment was implemented. Finally, during the post interview, when asked about the importance of independent reading as a component of balanced literacy, Deborah again returned to the subject of the standardized test:

I think it's very important, because the kids do have to start, begin,

you know again I hate tying things back to STAAR, but they do have to build up their, you know, for their sustained ability to focus for longer periods of time.

Accountability: "Huge Shock". While Deborah taught reading using balanced literacy as a framework, the theme of accountability and preparation for future grades was prominent throughout the analysis of the data corpus. Deborah explained that students were expected to reach a specific reading level, and the evidence that she was working diligently to help students achieve this goal permeated the interviews and the teacher protocols. She explained,

…because I'm trying to get them, you know, now that we're getting closer to STAAR, to start applying more of their reading comprehension skills that we've been working on all year - to make them apply it more during their independent reading, because at home, you know, they're not doing it.

Deborah required students to choose chapter books on their independent reading level and allowed students to choose a second book; the second book could be a comic book or other text. Deborah elaborated about the need to prepare third graders for the future:

…because third grade, you know, that's where we start with comprehension.

Deep comprehension, which is a huge shock from second to third grade to leap.

Deborah's awareness of the culture of expectations was evident in other ways: On two separate occasions during teacher protocol visits, Deborah assessed students using a Development Reading Assessment in order to determine students' reading levels for the middle of the year. While Deborah assessed the individual students, the other students read independently. Similarly, on two other visits, Deborah sat with and taught a small

group of students in a guided reading lesson while the other students read independently. During the assessment of individual students and teaching small groups of students in guided reading, Deborah kept an ever-vigilant watch on the behaviors of the students who were reading independently, redirecting the off-task readers by a look, by a reminder of the rules, or by moving a student to another place in the classroom. Deborah explained that assessing students' reading levels, teaching comprehension skills in guided reading groups, and managing classroom behaviors during independent reading were a means to an end: preparing students for the next grade and beyond. She explained,

> So, I feel my job, part of my job, is to get them, start preparing them for middle school, and where they're going to have to read more of the, you know, texts that are going to be required as part of their curriculum, so you know I think it's so important that they're able to start building up those skills of, you know, reading for longer and longer periods of time independently."

During the second interview, Deborah articulated that she was frustrated by the revolving door in her classroom that year; students were withdrawing and enrolling at an alarming rate, sometimes without any notice. She elaborated, "I'm revamping the schedule because I lost a student and I have a new student." During the second interview, she stated, "…I've had the highest turnover in my class of any of the third grade classes. I've, you know, I've had about 30 kids I've taught so far this year." Most of the student movement was occurring in third grade, primarily in Deborah's classroom. Deborah indicated that she knew she would be held accountable for all the students in her classroom, despite enrollment dates.

Classification of students: "I have some boys…". A theme of stratification of students was prominent during Deborah's interviews. That is, Deborah tended to speak about students as groups, and not individuals, especially in terms of "low" or "high or "boys" and "girls". Deborah frequently referred to specific groups of students in her classroom, stating, "My lower kids have to have a certain number of minutes on Istation every week and my high kids…we developed a literacy-like reading group." Deborah explained that the high students were in the Gifted and Talented (GT) program. In the GT program, the students chose a book to read, read the book during independent reading, and then met with the GT teacher outside of the classroom for their literature discussion. Deborah mentioned: "…and then they meet every Friday with the *GT* teacher and do activities with the book."

Additionally, Deborah mentioned that the three dyslexia students in her classroom typically used a software program that provided an audio component while students were reading printed text. Periodically, the dyslexia students attended specialized lessons provided by their dyslexia teacher. When asked what books students tend to check out, Deborah remarked, "Some of my, a couple of the higher ones, they like to pick the Harry Potter and the harder books, the larger chapter books…"In fact, Deborah declared that "…the ones I see getting the comic books are my lower level kids." Based on observations during the teacher observation protocols, interview responses, and coding of data, Deborah frequently described the students by classifying them.

Choice of texts during independent reading: "Brain Break".. Although Deborah explained that she allowed students to self-select texts for independent reading, restrictions applied for some texts, especially for popular culture texts. Whether selecting

from the school library or from the classroom library, students were expected to first

select a chapter book at their specific reading level. Then, students received the option to

select a second book of the students' choice. Deborah related:

> A lot of the boys are into the comic books, and so you know independent reading,
> that does not keep their attention for very long, but also it's not geared towards
> comprehension and really so I had to limit them…we did have to have that
> conversation.

I questioned Deborah further in the second interview about her comment that comic

books are "not geared toward comprehension". Deborah elaborated:

> The ones I see getting the comic books are my lower level kids, and so I think
> they like it just because it's the pictures, it's the Spiderman and Super(sic), you
> know, it's the characters they like….I've noticed them flipping pages that they're
> not really reading the dialogue that's going on in there.

> According to Deborah, choice of texts available from the school library became

limited during the time that I was collecting data. For a reason unknown to Deborah, the

students began watching movies during their library time instead of checking out books.

Because students were no longer checking out books from the school library, Deborah

expressed concern that she did not have enough books in her classroom library to support

student choice. In particular, Deborah felt that she did not have a large inventory of

comic books for the students. In both the responses to the questionnaire and in the first

interview, Deborah indicated that her library contained many chapter books, picture

books, non-fiction texts, poetry, magazines and graphic novels. Although I observed

several popular culture texts during teacher observations, few graphic novels were

observed in the classroom library. In fact, a book bin with a graphic novel label was filled with books other than graphic novels and comic books. Additionally, no popular culture texts were observed when photographing the classroom library over a nine-week time frame. Importantly, although students were not prohibited from reading comic books and graphic novels, Deborah regarded popular culture texts as a "brain break" after students exerted themselves reading and responding to chapter book reading.

The Case of Joanna

Joanna's first interview, post interview, teacher observation protocols, and photographs of the classroom library were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), keywords-in-context (Bernard & Ryan, 2010), and visual ethnography analysis (Pink, 2007; Schwartz, 1989).

Thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is the process of inferring themes from the data sets, employing a six-step process: (a) Phase One: Familiarizing Yourself With the Data; (b) Phase Two: Generating Initial Codes; (c) Phase Three: Searching for Themes; (d) Phase Four: Reviewing Potential Themes; (e) Defining and Naming Themes; and (f) Producing the Report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). During the thematic analysis process, Joanna's interview transcripts and teacher observation protocols were coded using In Vivo and Process coding for first cycle coding. (Saldaña, 2013). In Vivo coding is the process of creating codes using actual words extracted from the transcripts (Saldaña, 2013). For example, the actual transcript states, " It's when they're reading a book of their choice and then also part of independent reading is responding to their reading in a var… they can do it a variety of ways," and the In Vivo code might be "responding to their reading". Process coding can be described as inferring the action verb that is

occurring as the participant is speaking, and listing the verb as a gerund. To illustrate, the transcript read "It's kinda books on their level, that aren't too, you know… maybe a little challenging but not so challenging that they can't read it independently" and the process code might be "explaining". During second cycle coding of thematic analysis, the In Vivo and Process codes were themed. Table 20 provides a code map that led to themes.

Table 20

Joanna's Code Map

In Vivo Coding	Process Coding
Looks different for certain kids	Explaining
Give them the option	Providing Choices
They play a lot	Differentiating
They go more for graphic novels	Observing
At least this way they're reading something	Reflecting
To encourage them	
Boys getting graphic novels	

Themes that emerged from second cycle coding were: a) perseverance in teaching; b) choice in selecting texts for independent reading; and c) accountability (e.g., job expectations of students reading on grade level by the end of the year). Figure 11 provides a thematic map for Joanna for the inferred themes after employing thematic analysis.
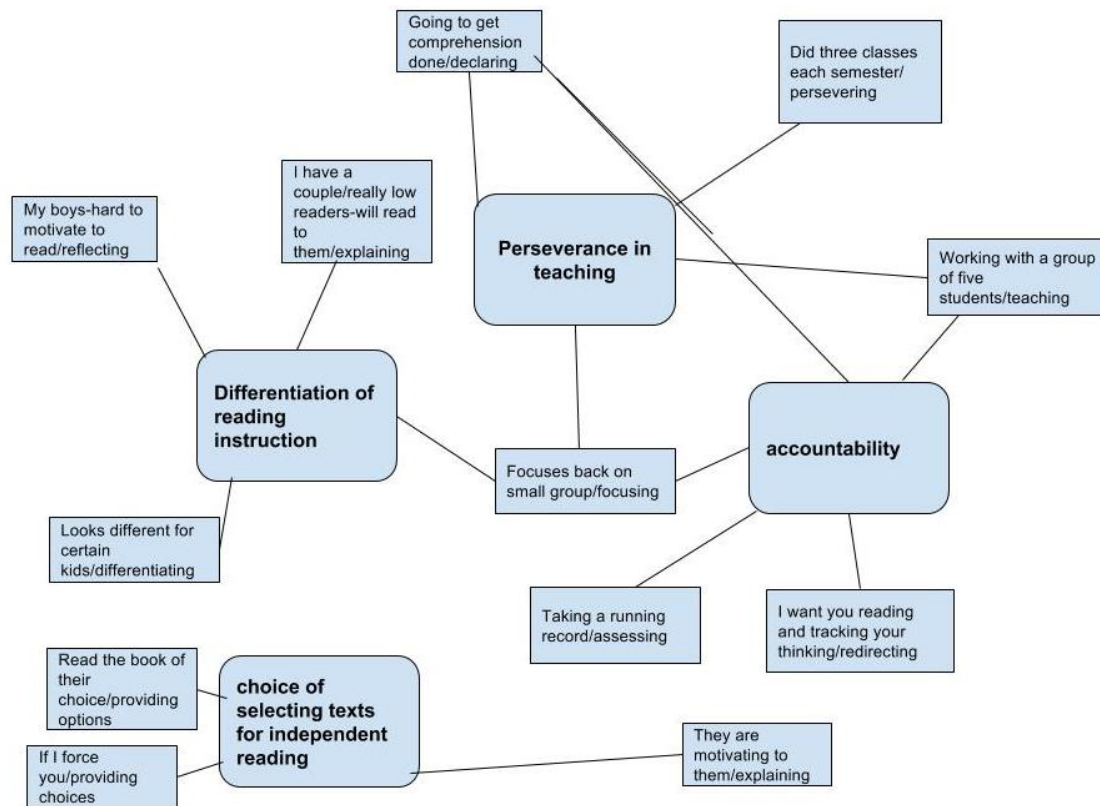
Figure 11: Thematic Map for Joanna

Keywords-in-context analysis. After inferring the initial themes using thematic

analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), I performed a keywords-in-context analysis (Bernard &

Ryan, 2010). In order to employ this analysis, I first created concordances of the first

interview, post interview, and the teacher observation protocols. Simply put, a

concordance is a list of words used in a text; word counts for each word are also

provided. I created text documents for the first and post interview by deleting my

interview questions; Joanna's responses were left in the documents. For the teacher

observation protocols, I extracted Joanna's direct quotes, and created a new text

document. Following the creating of the text documents, I created the concordances,

using a Simple Concordance Program (Reed, 2017). Consequently, I chose substantive

words from the concordances, and constructed keywords-in-context documents for each

substantive word. A list of the important words can be found in Table 21, and a list of

sentences or fragments from one document can be found in Table 22.

Table 21

Words Selected from the Concordance for Joanna

First Interview		Post Interview		Quotes from Protocol	
Word	Quantity	Word	Quantity	Word	Quantity
Read	21	Read	13	Read	6
Reading	34	Reading	33	Reading	4
Book	28	Book	12	Book	3
books	39	Books	17	Group	4
		Group	18	Stop	8

Table 22

Keywords –in-Context for the Word "Reading" from Joanna's First Interview

Line Number	Sentence/Fragment
2	It's when they're reading a book of their choice and then also part of independent reading is responding to their reading in a var… they can do it a variety of ways. so a lot of mine I give them choice like I kinda model at the beginning of the year some different ways they can do responses… like a letter.
5	Yeah, and I want them to have something that somewhat challenges them to you know, help increase their reading level? But nothing that… like I said so challenging that they're sitting there just stuck.
6	Happens during guided reading time. So I have a schedule where they rotate throughout the week where they might be doing Istation, or working on writing sentences, right now I have some different activities… independent reading or they're meeting with me.
7	And some of the independent reading time looks different for certain kids
16	And others are just they can do their independent reading, and then others are just strictly independent reading - reading their books library books or books that they got from the… from my library.
20	I notice the boys especially reading, since I have a lot of boys, they read a lot of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, graphic novels…
22	They play a lot during independent reading so I have, I have found more graphic novels this year …to try to get them, because they are willing to read those.
25	…because the boys that I did try to do one, were not reading the books… they didn't care…
26	Even though their reading level was there, they didn't want to do it.
27	No, so, since there was no motivation, I took them out of it and just put them back in with the independent reading.
29	So I figured out at least this way they're reading something.
34	…and I've noticed when I started doing that, they've started… at least reading something other than the same old book…
35	Cause a lot of the boys too I see them reading the same book over and over again….like it's time to move on to something else…
39	And like I'm reading them *The Witches* right now.
51	…than reading independently…cause I have a couple of that are at level 3's, a couple at level 10, I have a couple that are new from India, so their reading level is lower.

Line Number	Sentence/Fragment
52	So I encourage them sometimes, at least If I see them not really reading, I mean at this point with my newcomers if they're at least picture reading, they're being exposed.
57	…and we'll look at a bucket of books…like, okay I've noticed nobody reading this book…
63	I mean right now during independent reading, I don't… I guess there's no really expectation like you have to read fiction, you have to read non-fiction cause I do feel that if I dictate what they read, they're not going to read.
64	So if I force you like you have to sit and you have to read this during independent reading, I'm losing their interest then.
65	When I meet with them in guided reading groups, I try to kind of gauge and I'll ask them what kind of books do you like to read?
67	Well, I have a student that is very easily upset and does not like to do anything that I ask him to do if he's not willing to do it…. So there's a time…and a lot of times it's like…"Hey you just need to calm down and we need to make a choice because this is independent reading time"
68	And if you're not going to read, then this is your other choice that you have to do, usually nine out of ten times they'll straighten up, cause I don't give them a really a pleasant choice. So then they kind of get back on track with it. I really don't have any major issues of them not wanting to read, I just have to be very structured in where they're reading right now.
71	So I don't know if they've decided that I can focus better or what but once we stopped the, "You can sit wherever you want as long as you're comfortable" reading kind of option, I've noticed much better independent reading time.
75	I became a reading specialist 'cause I had a friend at a school that they were looking for somebody, and she was like I know you love reading, would you be interested?
110	…and it…those…That child in particular, he does a lot more time with Istation than independent reading…. just because he is so far below grade level.

After constructing the keywords-in-context documents, examining the sentences

and fragments generated from substantive words, and jotting down reflections in analytic

memos, I reviewed the themes generated during the thematic analysis process. I deleted

the theme of accountability, because I did not see as much evidence for this theme as I

inferred during my first qualitative analysis process. Importantly, I renamed the other themes in an effort to make the titles more exciting. I revised the themes in the following manner: (a) Perseverance in teaching became Perseverance in Teaching: "We're going to get comprehension done"; (b) Choice of texts during independent reading became Choice of texts during independent reading: "At least this way, they're reading something"; and (c) Differentiation of reading instruction became Differentiation of reading instruction: "It depends".

Visual ethnography. For the visual ethnography analysis, I kept digital files of Joanna's classroom library by the weeks that I visited. Additionally, the pictures were printed, and I affixed them to poster boards by week. I then analyzed both the printed pictures and the pictures in digital format. As I scrutinized the pictures, I reflected constantly about the interview transcripts and the field notes from the teacher observation protocols.

Joanna provided her own texts for her classroom library. All of her fictional texts were housed in two bookcases on the east side of her classroom; one shorter bookcase was a brilliant red, and one taller bookcase was brown wood. A sign with "Redbox Books" was posted above the brown bookcase. Joanna mentioned that she was decorating her room with a Hollywood theme and she remarked, "It's just a play off Red Box." All of the books on these two bookcases were housed in deep, red bins, about the size of a large shoebox. Each bin was labeled by either genre, type of book, or by author (e.g., "Poetry", "Graphic Novels", "Chapter Books- Diary of a Wimpy Kid"). Figures 12 and 13 provide examples of "Redbox Books" and the labels for the various book bins.

Figure 12: Joanna's Classroom Library
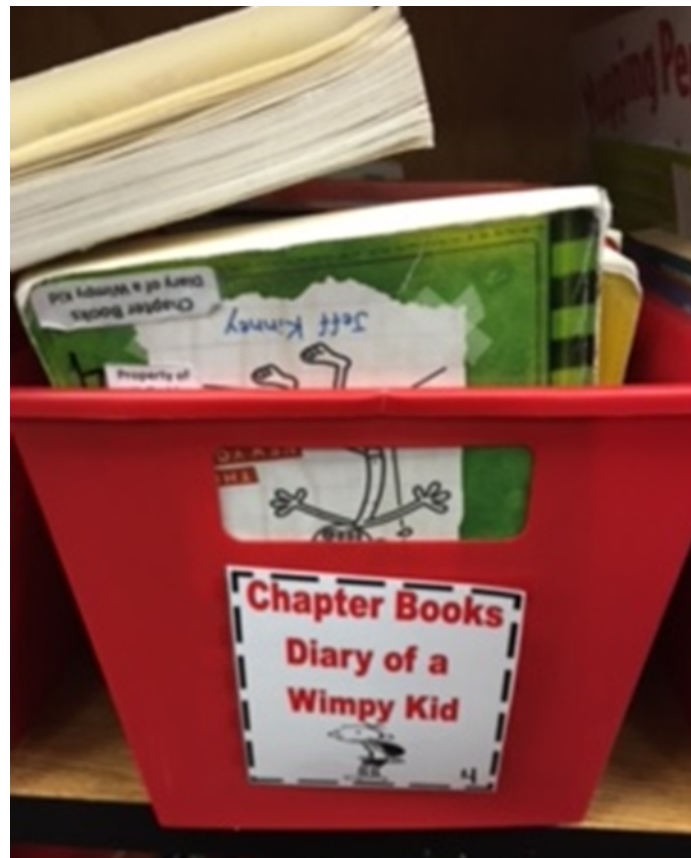
Figure 13: Labels in Joanna's Classroom Library

Interestingly, I observed two red bins of informational text amidst the fictional texts, one for "Sports" and one for "Nonfiction." Featured on top of the red bookcase were an electric pencil sharper, and two clear glass jars, one marked "Dull" and one marked "Sharp". These jars contained sharpened and unsharpened pencils. Adjacent to the jars, stood a plastic file box with three drawers with the following labels, "Bookmarks", "Band Adges" (sic), and "Timers". To the left of the two "Red Box" bookcases sat another long, low bookcase, reserved for informational texts. Books in this bookcase were stored in shallow, dark-blue bins. Joanna described how she organized her library, and how she connected books from the various bins into her genre studies:

> There, so I kind of visually try to separate it a little bit too …so they know these are kind of chapter books a little bit… and there is some mixed in there that aren't chapter books like the fairy tales and fables… and folktales and some of the poetry books and things are in there… but they at least kind of know…and as we go into different genres, I point out to them, 'Here's where these books are! Look, here's fairy tales you can read.'

Additionally, Joanna had placed a wooden book displayer at the front of her classroom, under the chalk rail. When she was teaching a particular genre, she displayed books of that genre in the display case. At the time of the post interview, Joanna mentioned that students were creating individual projects about planets, because the class was studying planets in Science. Correspondingly, during the eighth week of teacher observation protocols, I noticed books about planets on the wooden display at the front of the room. Joanna mentioned this in her post interview: "So a lot of them have chosen our independent reading to read a lot of planet books right now. So ... I'm going to put those

books up here, and encourage them to pick up those books." Previously, during the fourth

visit, one of the photographs revealed picture book biographies displayed on the wooden

display case in the front of the classroom, indicating that the class may have been

studying the genre of biography.

When interviewing Joanna about her knowledge of popular culture texts, Joanna

surmised that,

> Well, I think it's things like *Minecraft, Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, some of those
>
> graphic novels like with *Batman* and things like that they want to read. Things
>
> they're watching on tv…like some of the girls they have *Descendants'* books.
>
> Like I see them …when they went to the book fair and stuff ….That's what I see
>
> them buying.

Joanna's classroom library books represented her knowledge of what the students

in her classroom wanted to read. Joanna asserted that the boys were very interested in the

Diary of a Wimpy Kid series and graphic novels. Figure 14 provides an example.

Figure 14: Graphic Novel Bins from Joanna's Classroom Library

Contrastingly, Joanna mentioned that the girls were more interested in fairy tales and fictional stories with animals in them. Although Joanna explained that she frequently purchased book requests for girls, fairy tales and books with animals were not visible in the classroom library. In fact, when reviewing the photographs, I did not observe labels for fairy tales or for fiction with animals as characters. However, Joanna mentioned that the boys this year were very hard to motivate to read. When Joanna tried implementing FVR at the beginning of the year, she asserted that the boys rolled around on the floor and played. Additionally, Joanna explained that she had purchased more graphic novels and super hero books to tempt the boys this year.

> Me: So what I'm hearing is you've added more graphic novels to your classroom
> library this year?
>
> Joanna: Yes

Me: Because you're feeling that those boys just are not picking up those books

that you want them to read okay…

Joanna: So I figured out at least this way they're reading something

Me: Um mmm. So as you also increased the graphic novels were you increasing

books like Minecraft and…

Joanna: Yes, I bought some more Minecraft books. Like if I go to Goodwill or

any Half Price Books, and I see some, I pick them up.

It could be said that this excerpt supports the reasons why the popular culture

texts that the boys requested were more visible in the library than the fairy tales and

books with animals as the characters were. As another illustration that more books were

purchased for boys, Joanna noticed the girls purchasing *Disney Descendants'* books at

the book fair, but did not specify that she purchased any *Disney Descendants'* texts for

the girls who desired popular culture texts.

The books in the library were organized and neat; books were rarely out-of-place.

The red bins, containing mostly fiction, were quite deep, and as a result,, most titles were

hidden from view when I photographed them. Contrastingly, the blue bins holding the

informational text were shallower, thus the titles were more visible from week to week.

Frequently, the informational books in the front of the bins remained the same, with a

few exceptions. I did notice that books about Barack Obama and Rosa Parks disappeared

and reappeared over the course of a few weeks.

The theme of choice of texts for independent reading: "At least they're reading

something" was most strongly supported by the photographs from Joanna's classroom

library. Although students did not participate in a traditional FVR or independent reading

time every day, when the students were permitted to read; they had free choice to choose any text on the shelves of Joanna's library, provided the students had completed a written reading response from their last completed book. During the post interview, when questioned about the importance of independent reading, Joanna professed,

> I think it's really important 'cause that's where the kids get to read things that they want to read. And things because when class, it's what I choose for them to read. In guided reading, it's what I choose for them to read. So independent uh, reading is their choice.

As another example of how Joanna's classroom library supported the theme of choice of texts during independent reading: "At least they're reading something", during the first interview, when queried about independent reading expectations, Joanna emphasized,

> I mean right now during independent reading, I don't… I guess there's no really expectation like you *ha*ve to read fiction, you *have* to read non-fiction cause I do feel that if I dictate what they read, they're not going to read. So if I force you like you have to sit and you have to read this during independent reading, I'm losing their interest then.

Ultimately, when reflecting upon the photographs in relation to the interview transcripts and the teacher observation protocols, the theme of choice of texts during independent reading: At least they're reading something" was strengthened by reflecting on the photographs in conjunction with the other data sets.

Themes. After employing thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), keywords-in-context (Bernard & Ryan, 2010), and visual ethnography (Pink, 2007), the following themes for Joanna emerged:

Perseverance in teaching: "We're going to get comprehension done". The theme of perseverance in teaching, hard work, and "pushing through" is evident throughout Joanna's interviews and teacher observation protocols. While obtaining her Masters in Administration, Joanna persevered through a grueling time as she was teaching full-time and going to school. She remarked,

> I did the accelerated one, and so I was done in a year….And was pregnant and
> had a baby all during that, so it was crazy….I was glad when it was over, and I
> did three classes each semester and I want to say I did six or eight during the
> summer.

Additionally, during Joanna's first two years at Robert B. Dow, Sr. Elementary, Joanna accepted rigorous and challenging formats for her teaching, relaying,

> So I taught the RELA block…so I had third grade in the morning…fourth grade
> in the afternoon. That was challenging because I had two sets of lesson plans.
> Fourth grade…I planned with fourth grade, but I didn't plan with third grade
> because I wasn't on their same side, so that was kind of a challenge. So I told the
> principal, 'I'm sorry. I can't ever do this again.' It was just…it was hard.

Despite the challenges involved in teaching in this format, Joanna persevered, requesting a change in classroom format at the end of the school year. While I was observing in Joanna's classroom, she kept to her schedule of meeting with two guided reading groups. While she met with guided reading groups, she consistently observed the

behavior and actions of the remaining students, often redirecting when she noticed a student who was off-task. As an example, after meeting with two guided reading groups on the fourth visit, , Joanna remarked to me, "One way or another, we're going to get comprehension done.". On every occasion, Joanna was consistently using every minute to teach and guide. One such example was during the fifth visit; my notes read:

> To me: "We're not all the way finished." The lessons back-track a little. This is my boy's book club."
>
> To the students: Where did the story take place? Has anyone ever been to Wyoming?" Joanna pulls up a map of the USA on her laptop. Seven kids are on IStation (assessment). Two kids are on Chromebooks. Three kids are writing on clipboards. One kid is making a list. One kid has a marker. One student is reading during IR. Joanna looks on her laptop (USA map) - shares with students,
>
> To the students: "Do you guys understand where Wyoming is?" Joanna is working with boys who have chosen *Stone Fox* to read. Joanna helps a student with a Chromebook, and then she continues with her book club students. She holds a book and says,
>
> To the students: "You have to help us find text evidence. Where is our text evidence?"
>
> To me: "With this group, we're working on a lot of text evidence." Joanna continues working with a small group. She is focusing completely on our small group of students.

Indeed, Joanna's consistency in her schedule, her teaching, and her supervision of the classroom was evident. Week after week, Joanna met with one group of students in

guided reading, reassigned the students to a reading center, and called another group to the table. While the guided reading was occurring, Joanna systematically, consistently, and repeatedly scanned the room and verbally redirected students who were off-task in their reading centers. During the third teacher observation protocol, Joanna was distracted by several students and admonished, "You need to get out of your backpack and get going….What should you be working on?" …"No, sir, move your clip!" On the occasion of the last teacher observation protocol, Joanna was not feeling well and mentioned her illness to me, stating, "They know I'm sick, and some are purposely trying to antagonize me." Nevertheless, Joanna sent students out to centers, called a guided reading group over and continued in her usual fashion, focused on her guided reading students, scanned the room, and redirected the off-task behaviors. Although Joanna expressed that independent reading was an important part of her classroom, she also professed the belief that guided reading was the type of teaching where she could achieve the biggest effect. During her post interview, Joanna opined,

> 'Cause I feel like that's where I make the most ... Well, my guided reading during that time, is where I get kids to make the most growth. They're just ... Like when I'm pulling small groups and working with them on the skills they haven't mastered and helping their fluency, that's where I'm really getting to hear them read and working on improving things. Whole group, it's hard to do that.

Therefore, while I was in the classroom, Joanna rarely deviated from her daily schedule of pulling at least two guided reading groups, while the rest of the students were working in centers. As the result of early negative experiences implementing FVR, independent reading was now included as a center, with two or three students rotating

through once or twice per week. Perhaps because Joanna believed so strongly in the power of guided reading, she displayed diligence and perseverance in meeting in small groups with students during every visit.

Choice in selecting texts for independent reading: "At least this way, they're reading something." Joanna stressed that students should be able to self-select texts for independent reading. She explained that if she required students to read a particular text, they would not read. Therefore, she frequently shopped thrift stores, searching for texts to add to her classroom library. In fact, she reported that the male students would read only popular culture texts. Even more importantly, she asked students what books they would like for the classroom library before she used her acquired book points to purchase books through a national book club company. However, although students had complete choice of the books they selected from the classroom library, they were often limited in the amount of time allotted for independent reading. Some students read their books when they were in a center or when they finished an assignment early. Additionally, students were required to read their self-selected book and craft a written response before returning to the classroom library to select a new book. When asked how often students selected new books, Joanna responded,

> It depends how quickly they finish the book…so when they finish a book, they're required to do a reading response….So once they've done their reading response, then they can choose a new book. …They can go get a new book…during independent reading time….So not like during class time or anything like that…unless they're finished with their work.

Assigned reading for book clubs also restricted the amount of time that students were able to read their self-selected texts. For book clubs, students reading on a similar reading level collaboratively selected a book from a group of books that Joanna had pre-selected for them. Once students finished reading their chapter assignments, they were allowed to return to their free choice for independent reading. As mentioned previously, during the post interview, Joanna reported that students were recently encouraged to choose books about planets for their independent reading, because Joanna assigned a project that included choosing a planet, researching the planet, creating a three-dimensional alien for that planet, and creating a passport for the alien. Joanna asserted that some of the struggling English Language Learner (ELL) students were not ready for independent reading, stating, "…like my ESL group, they're really not at a place yet, where I feel like they're fully…can be released to full like independent reading. They need a lot of vocabulary, Istation, some of those skills." Therefore, choice was situational. In other words, student choice of texts was limited by ability, assignments, and time. However, when Joanna presented her schedule and calculated the total minutes of independent reading, she demonstrated that many students received a significant number of minutes per week for independent reading, specifying, "This group gets a lot more, so they're having…that's 90 minutes, plus about 20 minutes here. So they're getting a lot more time." Granted, Joanna acknowledged that she included reading assigned chapters for book club as part of students' total independent reading time each week.

Joanna commented that the male students in her classroom selected and read the popular culture texts in her classroom library. In fact, because so many male students

desired these popular culture texts, she purchased more popular culture texts during the course of the year. Joanna mentioned, "My boys this year are hard to motivate to read….They play a lot during independent reading so I have, I have found more graphic novels this year, to try to them…because they are willing to read those." On the other hand, it should be noted that although Joanna provided complete choice of popular culture texts, she endeavored to inspire the male students to try out other reading materials. On one such occasion, she organized book clubs for male students and for female students. Unfortunately, the male students were not interested in reading their assigned chapters. Joanna recounted,

> …because I had in my book club interestingly ended up being all girls…because the boys that I did try to do one, were not reading the books….They didn't care…even though their reading level was there, they didn't want to do it….No, so since there was no motivation, I took them out of it and just put them back in with the independent reading…. So I figured at least this way they're reading something.

In sum, choice, whether complete or managed choice, resonated throughout the interviews and the teacher observation protocols. Students were allowed to choose the texts they wanted to read, but were limited in when, where, and how often they could select and read those texts.

Differentiation of reading instruction: "It depends".. The theme of differentiation appeared in many variations. In fact, many of Joanna's responses to my questions included references to groups of students rather than individuals. She

frequently referred to groups of students as "high" or low". An example of this type of response is included here:

> Whereas, kind of my mid-range group, that maybe they're like my level 28s, 30s, they're kind of a little bit behind. We're working a lot on like main idea and how to like lo- Actually read and get information…. Because they're struggling with that. Um, and then my lower ... I have one group that is my ESL group.

Indeed, Joanna frequently adapted and differentiated the balanced literacy framework based on the needs of her students. At the beginning of the year, Joanna implemented FVR for all students, but abandoned the practice, based on her observations of the students' reading habits. Joanna commented,

> The beginning of the year, I really tried to do full independent reading in conferences, like one-on-one conferences….The thing is, that was not working for this class. Yeah, I had kids that were too low, struggling. They couldn't apply those strategies….and we were working on that….but it wasn't successful because the kids weren't ready for it.

Therefore, Joanna abandoned FVR, revising the balanced literacy framework to include independent reading as a center, along with centers for vocabulary acquisition, grammar practice, and computer-based reading instruction. Joanna described her schedule in this manner:

> Happens during guided reading time. So I have a schedule where they rotate throughout the week where they might be doing Istation, or working on writing sentences, right now I have some different activities… independent reading or they're meeting with me.

Indeed, Joanna indicated her belief in the power of guided reading instruction, over whole group instruction and independent reading, declaring,

> …because I feel like that's where I make the most….Well, my guided reading
> during that time is where I get kids to make the most growth. They're just…like
> when I'm pulling small groups and working with them on the skills they haven't
> mastered and helping their fluency…that's where I'm really getting to hear them
> read and working on improving things. Whole group, it's hard to do that.

Additionally, Joanna was aware of the student reading levels and the reading support that every student in her class required. She constantly readjusted her schedule, including guided reading lessons and centers, based on student needs. To illustrate, as she explained her intricate guided reading and center schedule, Joanna commented: "This is very fluid because if I see something not working with the group, I change it." As a further illustration, Joanna led extremely different guided reading groups. During one visit, Joanna implemented a lesson for determining main idea, and on another occasion, taught decoding and phonics. Joanna's knowledge of students' reading acquisition was evident, as were her thoughtful and consistent guided reading lessons. Interestingly, Joanna differentiated independent reading for some students. She explained,

> Because the other ones, like my ESL group, they're really not at a place yet,
> where I feel like they're fully ... can be released to full like, independent reading.
> They need a lot of vocabulary, Istation, some of those skills ...

In sum, Joanna differentiated instruction during guided reading, pulling groups of students based on comprehension strategy needs, genre-specific needs, and reading level

needs, and she differentiated instruction for some of the independent readers, assigning computer-based reading instruction and vocabulary work.

Cross Case Analysis of Deborah and Joanna

After comparing the themes derived from first and second cycle coding in thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), the keywords-in-context analysis (Bernard & Ryan, 2010), and the visual ethnography analysis (Pink, 2007) one prominent theme emerged: choice in selecting texts for independent reading.

Choice in selecting texts for independent reading. Deborah and Joanna shared similar beliefs about choice of texts for independent reading. Indeed, both Deborah and Joanna preferred students to select texts that were on their reading level. During the initial interview, Deborah expressed,

> Because they get to check out two books out of the library when they go and so I
> said, 'Okay you can get one comic book but the other one has to be something on
> your level …chapter book or something else that you can actually you know…sit
> down and you read for a longer period of time.

On or about the ninth week of teacher observations, Deborah had tweaked her text selection requirements and added a written response criterion. She elaborated,

> And so, at the beginning of the week, I'm making them get a chapter book on
> their level or close to their level…that they keep all week and they're reading
> that…have to read that book and do reader response with that.

In a similar manner, Joanna emphasized that although students were allowed to choose popular culture texts from the classroom or school library, Joanna wanted students to check out texts that were close to their reading level. Joanna ascertained, "It's

kind of books on their level, that aren't too, you know, maybe a little challenging but not so challenging that they can't read independently." Additionally, although Deborah and Joanna mentioned that they encouraged students to experiment by reading other genres, the participants stressed that students should be allowed to choose texts based on their interests. Deborah specified, "I want it to be something they've chosen and something that they enjoy that [sic] that way it's going to keep their attention." In a like manner, Joanna mused, "I guess there's no really expectation like you have to read fiction, you have to read non-fiction, because I do feel that if I dictate what they read, they're not going to read."

Deborah and Joanna differed in the text choices they permitted students to make for independent reading; Joanna permitted students to choose popular culture texts, provided the texts were close to grade-level. In fact, she continuously sought out popular culture texts to add to her classroom library. Conversely, Deborah allowed students to read comic books as a "brain break" after reading an on-level chapter book and crafting a written response. In sum, although Deborah and Joanna shared similar beliefs about student choice of texts for independent reading, they parted company on the usefulness of popular culture texts.

Research Question I

How do teachers perceive the use of popular culture texts during independent reading?

The theme of choice of selecting texts for independent reading resonated throughout the search for the answer to this question. Deborah considered the use of popular culture texts during independent reading as unnecessary to the purpose of

supporting students as they developed comprehension. In fact, Deborah's view of comic books was very emphatically stated. She stressed, "…a lot of the boys are into the comic books, and you know independent reading, that does not keep their attention for very long, but also it's not geared towards comprehension, and really so I had to limit them…" The reading of comic books became so problematic for Deborah, that she permitted students to read popular culture texts at the end of independent reading. The books were to be read solely for relaxation after students exerted themselves by comprehending more rigorous texts. Interestingly, Deborah noted that the only students desiring the comic books were her "low" readers. When questioned further on this topic, Deborah elaborated,

> Because of the ones that I see getting the comic books are my lower level kids, and so I think they like it just because it's the pictures, it's the Spiderman and Super…, you know, it's the characters that they like. I think it's more, the, just because I've noticed them flipping pages that they're not really reading the dialogue that going on in there.

Importantly, although Deborah indicated that she possessed some graphic novels and books based on movies in her classroom library, she noted that were no comic books in her inventory. As a result, when the librarian stopped checking out books to students, there were no comic books for the students to read. Additionally, no other popular culture texts were revealed in the pictures of the classroom library.

Contrastingly, Joanna used popular culture texts during independent reading in another fashion. Although Joanna expected students to choose a text on or near their reading level and to produce a written response, students were free to choose popular

culture texts from the classroom or the school library. Joanna alluded to the fact that during this particular school year, there was a larger than normal demand for popular culture texts among the male students in her classroom. As a result, Joanna shopped for and purchased additional popular culture texts, locating them in used bookstores and thrift shops.

Additionally, for Deborah, the theme of ever-present annual test pressure: "So they can sit for that time!" factored into her decisions as to what texts students read in her classroom. Deborah expected that increased time on task during independent reading would prepare students to take the annual standardized reading test by building reading stamina. For Deborah, steadily increasing the number of minutes students spent reading on-level chapter books during independent reading prepared them to tackle the standardized reading test. Deborah stated that the students reading comic books and graphic novels were not really reading; students were looking at pictures and flipping pages. Moreover, Deborah relayed that comic books and graphic novels did not build comprehension. In contrast, Joanna permitted students to read popular culture texts during independent reading. In fact, Joanna suggested that many students would not read at all unless they were provided with a choice of popular culture texts. Consequently, Joanna sought out additional popular culture texts during the year, by using points to purchase additional titles from a national book club company. Further, she visited thrift stores to search for popular culture titles to add to her classroom library.

In sum, Deborah and Joanna differed in their use of popular culture texts during independent reading. Deborah regarded comic books as a deterrent to comprehension, treating popular culture texts as dessert, reserved for a few minutes of time after

devouring the entrée or the required on-reading-level chapter book. On the other hand, Joanna permitted popular culture texts to be chosen and read as the main course, provided those texts met the guidelines of reading level and written reading response.

Research Question 2

How do teachers make decisions about student choices of popular culture texts during independent reading?

Once again, the theme of choice in selecting texts for independent reading was the most prominent theme that emerged. Deborah based her decisions about student choices of popular culture texts on her observations of the male students in her classroom. Deborah emphasized that the only students desiring comic books were "lower-level" readers. Furthermore, Deborah believed that "lower-level" were not really reading the words in the comic books. In fact, Deborah believed that these students were simply looking at the pictures in the text. Simply put, Deborah implied that there was no educational value in comic books. As she argued, "…they're not geared for comprehension." Therefore, Deborah made the conscious decision to enforce the checking out of one chapter book and one comic book; the comic book was only to be read after the student spent a majority of the independent reading time applying comprehension strategies to the first book.

Conversely, Joanna's decision-making was more complex. Joanna explained that the male students in her classroom desired and devoured popular culture texts. She spent time and money finding additional popular culture texts to add to her classroom library. Interestingly, Joanna may have regarded popular culture texts as a necessary evil; if popular culture texts are the only text the students will read, then let them read popular

culture texts. As she mused, "So I figured out at least this way they're reading something."

In addition, the theme of ever-present annual test pressure: "So they can sit for that time!" entered into Deborah's decisions about the use of popular culture texts in the classroom; Deborah required that students read an on-level, chapter book during independent reading. If the students spent most of their independent reading time reading their on-level, chapter books, then they were permitted to read a popular culture text as a "brain break", as a reward for their hard work on the other text. Deborah explained that students built stamina for the annual standardized reading test by working diligently on their comprehension during independent reading time.

For Deborah,, the theme of accountability: "Huge shock" supported the answer to Research Question 2. Teachers are expected to prepare students to pass the annual standardized reading test. Additionally, students are expected to meet a particular reading level by the end of the school year. In order to meet these expectations, Deborah required students to read chapter books during independent reading, to build stamina and to build comprehension. In fact, according to Deborah, the only purpose of independent reading was to build stamina and comprehension.

In sum, both Deborah and Joanna may have harbored some misgivings about popular culture texts. For Deborah, popular culture texts were a distraction from comprehension. Joanna provided popular culture texts for students because she knew that the selection of popular culture texts was necessary; "At least they're reading something". Importantly, although Deborah and Joanna permitted popular culture texts to be read during independent reading, their reasons differed greatly.

Summary

      In Chapter V, I have provided the findings for the cases of Deborah's and Joanna's perceptions of popular culture texts during independent reading. The findings were derived from initial interviews, post interviews, teacher observation protocols, and photographs. I conducted a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), keywords-in-context analysis (Bernard & Ryan, 2010), and a visual ethnography analysis (Pink, 2007) of each single case. For the thematic analysis I used the methods of In Vivo coding (Saldaña, 2013) and Process coding (Saldaña, 2013). For the keywords-in-context analyses (Bernard & Ryan, 2010), I created Simple Concordance Projects (Reed, 2017), selected important words from the concordances, and analyzed the sentences and fragments containing those words. Photographs were analyzed using visual ethnography (Pink, 2007); I scrutinized and reflected on the photographs in context with the transcripts and teacher observation protocols. Following the single case analysis of each participant, I then did a cross case analysis of Deborah and Joanna (Stake, 2006, Yin, 2014). Lastly, I answered the research questions, incorporating the themes generated from the analyses. Next, in Chapter VI, I discuss Steps 11 and 12 in Leech and Onwuegbuzie's (2007) 13-step methodological framework for qualitative research: (a) Step 11: Legitimate Data, and (b) Write the Research Report. Additionally, I provide discussions and implications based on the collected data and the findings discussed in Chapter V.

CHAPTER VI

Summary, Implications, and Recommendations

In Chapter V, I discussed the analyses that I used during the research, and I presented the themes that emerged from those analyses. Chapter VI includes Steps 10-13 of the Qualitative Data Analysis Model (QLM) model: (a) Step 10: interpret data; (b) Step 11: legitimation of the data; (c) Step 12: write the qualitative research report; and (d) Step 13: reformulate the research question(s) (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2010). In Chapter VI, I provide my findings based on my research questions, the conceptual framework, and my literature review. Following the section of findings, I describe the threats to internal and credibility, offer recommendations for future research, and discuss the revision of my research questions. Finally, I provide a summary and conclusion of my study.

Overview

The benefits of integrating popular culture texts into the classroom are numerous, yet many teachers do not see the advantages of such an integration. In various studies researchers have conducted interview research and many teachers responded that they did not see the value of popular culture texts, did not possess a knowledge of popular culture materials, or were concerned that colleagues would perhaps think poorly of a teacher who integrated popular culture (Gerber & Price, 2013; Lambirth, 2003; Marsh, 2006). When employing a balanced literacy framework in a classroom, independent reading is a vital component of that framework (Allington, 2001; Kittle, 2013; Miller, 2009). Indeed, students who are permitted to select their own texts are more motivated to read during the allotted time (Allington, 2001; Atwell, 1998). Many students, when given choice of texts

to read during independent reading, often choose popular culture texts; that is, they choose texts based on their favorite videogames, television shows, and movies (Worthy, 1996, 1999). In this qualitative case study research, I endeavored to explore the perceptions of such popular culture texts by interviewing and observing two elementary schoolteachers at a Title I school during their independent reading time every week for nine weeks.

Discussion of Findings

      Step 10: Interpret data.

      Research question 1: How do teachers perceive the use of popular culture texts during independent reading? The theme of choice of selecting texts for independent reading figured prominently in my findings in seeking an answer to the first research question. Deborah perceived that popular culture texts were not important ingredients for an independent reading banquet, except for a light and easy dessert to "read" after students read more rigorous texts. In fact, as the date drew closer to the state standardized reading test, students were required to choose chapter books on or close to their reading level. Once Deborah deemed that students had spent enough time reading and providing a written reading response, students were then permitted to spend a few minutes reading comic books and graphic novels. Contrastingly, Joanna perceived that popular culture texts were an important component of her classroom library, because she believed that many of the males in her class would read only popular culture texts. Without the addition of popular culture texts in her classroom library, the male students would not engage in reading texts during their independent center time, after completing assignments, or during other instructional down time. In fact, when male students did not

complete their book club reading assignment after being selected to be a part of the book club, Joanna took the male students out of the book club and allowed them to return to free choice of texts during independent reading. She reflected, "…at least they're reading something." Indeed, for both Deborah and Joanna, popular culture texts were perhaps perceived as a necessary evil, although they implemented their independent reading quite differently.

Additionally, for Deborah, the theme of "Ever present annual test pressure: So they can sit for that time" figured into my findings for the first research question. Deborah remarked frequently that students needed to build their reading stamina to prepare for the endurance of taking the state standardized reading test, "preparing them for STAAR so they can sit for that time during the STAAR test." In fact, in both her first and post interviews, Deborah reported that one of the important purposes of independent reading was to build reading stamina. Interestingly, Deborah did not believe that students became stronger and longer readers by reading popular culture texts. In fact, she stated that reading popular culture texts did not build comprehension. Rather, students were to choose from chapter books close to their reading level. As stated above, popular culture texts were permitted at the end of independent reading, as a reward for reading chapter books.

To sum up, the participants perceived the use of popular culture texts as a means to an end; perhaps as the texts that students would gravitate to as they completed their third grade travels. Popular culture texts might be interpreted as the journey towards making progress on the annual standardized reading test and reading level goals. For Deborah, popular culture texts were the reward for hard work at the end of a daily

segment of that journey, and for Joanna, popular culture texts were perhaps the frame of the chassis, the foundation that steered the students toward a love of reading.

   Research Question #2: How do teachers make decisions about student choices of popular culture texts during independent reading? As in the first research question, the theme of choice of selecting texts for independent reading figured prominently into my findings for this second question. In the context of selecting texts, decision making varied for Deborah and Joanna. Deborah believed that students in her classroom were not really reading the "comic books." Indeed, she reported that students were not reading the words on the page, they were "flipping pages" and looking at the pictures. Because Deborah believed that popular culture texts, in this case "comic books", did not support the building of reading comprehension, "comic books" were to be saved until the end of independent reading, used as a light and easy read after applying comprehension strategies reading a chapter book. Consequently, Deborah did not keep many comic books or graphic novels in her own classroom library. Depending upon availability, students could check out popular culture texts from the school library and read them at the end of their independent reading time. Troublingly, Deborah reported that students were no longer allowed to check out any books from the school library after returning from the Christmas break, and she complained that she could not provide "comic books" for the students from her own classroom library. Contrastingly, Joanna determined that many males in her classroom would only read popular culture texts during independent reading. Her decision may have resulted from her reported failed implementation of whole class independent reading at the beginning of the school year. Indeed, Joanna reported that even after a few weeks of practicing independent reading, many of the male

students simply rolled around on the floor and would not engage in reading. As a result, Joanna implemented independent reading as a center or station during her guided reading time each day. Additionally, she scoured thrift shops and used bookstores to purchase more popular culture materials for her classroom library, and she used book points from a book company to acquire additional popular culture texts that students requested. Interestingly, Joanna may have purchased more popular culture texts for the male students in her classroom than for the female students. As an example, Joanna reported that some of the female students requested titles like *Disney's Descendants*, but I never observed that title in the classroom. Another factor may have influenced Joanna's decision making process about books for independent reading selection. Towards the end of the data collection time period, Joanna assigned a science and reading project for every student; students chose a book about planets, created an alien from that planet, and constructed a passport and a story about the alien's trip to visit planet Earth. Consequently, Joanna reported that most students chose a planet book during that time, and the students read those texts during independent reading. Therefore, Joanna's decision-making about planet texts may have affected the number of students who chose popular culture texts to read.

In Deborah's case, the themes of "Ever-present annual test pressure: "So they can sit for that time!" and "Accountability: Huge shock" may have influenced Deborah's decision-making process about the texts students were permitted to read. While Deborah perceived the importance of choice of texts for independent reading, the purpose of self-selected, independent reading was to build reading stamina so students could prepare for the endurance of taking the state standardized reading test. And, as Deborah reported in

her interview, the state's reading standards and expectations for third grade students are vastly more rigorous than second grade students. Thus, both of the above themes may have been factors in Deborah's decision making; Deborah's concerns about expectations and standardized testing may have affected her decision making about what students should read. As an illustration, at the beginning of my teacher observation protocols, Deborah permitted students to read most of the texts in her classroom library, and she tolerated the use of "comic books" checked out from the school library. However, the "comic books" were to be read at the end of independent reading, because "they did not aid comprehension." Towards the end of the data collection period, Deborah revised the texts that students were permitted to read or check out from her classroom library. At this time, students were permitted to only read chapter books on or around their reading level. In addition, students were required to craft a weekly, written, reading response about that chapter book. Only after reading the chapter book for a prescribed period of time, were students allowed to read their "comic books." This change in Deborah's decision-making process about the choice of texts that students were allowed to read may have stemmed from feeling the pressure of the impending test, to continue to prepare students for the demands of the state standardized reading test, and to meet campus reading expectations.

Yet another factor may have influenced Deborah's decision-making process about texts. During the post interview, Deborah mentioned that she had been offered additional classroom library texts which had been purchased by the school. However, Deborah reportedly declined the offer of those texts to her classroom library, indicating that she could not afford to pay for missing texts if students did not return them. To illustrate, Deborah explained that her classroom was the 'revolving door" in her grade level; more

students had withdrawn and more new students had been enrolled in her classroom than in any other classroom. In fact, Deborah exclaimed that many students withdrew without any word to the front office; the students simply did not return to school, and so did not return any materials. Consequently, Deborah was hesitant to permit students to take home texts that belonged to the school. Deborah hinted that if a student did not return a school-owned text, Deborah might be required to pay for the text. On the other hand, if a student took home a text from Deborah's own classroom library, she did not have to replace the text. Thus, Deborah may have made the decision *not* to provide students with additional texts in the classroom, because she did not want to pay the school for replacements if any text went missing.

The decision-making process for use of popular culture texts was multi-faceted. Deborah was preparing the third graders in her class for the very near future of the annual standardized reading test and the distant future of rigorous classrooms in the upper grades. Thus, Deborah permitted a tiny bit of "comic book" reading as a reward for diligence. Conversely, Joanna knew what the male students would read, and she provided as many titles as she could for them, although she may have regarded the texts as a necessary evil.

Discussion of Findings in the Context of the Conceptual Framework

In the cases of Deborah and Joanna, FVR (Free Voluntary Reading) in the truest sense of the definition, was not implemented in either classroom. That is, Krashen (2004) defined FVR as a time each day where students are allowed complete choice in reading materials and no assignments are tied to the reading. Simply put, students are reading for pleasure with no strings attached. In a later publication, Krashen (2011) incorporated

Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) under the umbrella of FVR, noting that in SSR, student work was sometimes required, although students "are not tested on what they've read" (p. 1). Additionally, Krashen (2004) explained that in some versions of SSR, teachers confer with students as they read. In a one-on-one conference, a teacher might discuss the text, listen to the student read, or teach a reading strategy (Calkins, 2001).

Based on my findings, Deborah implemented SSR on a daily basis in her classroom, with a few exceptions. Students were allowed to choose almost anything they desired to read, and they were provided time to read on most days. I was present in Deborah's classroom during eight consecutive weeks, except for the week when Deborah was absent. During those eight visits, students were reading independently five out of eight times. On the days when independent reading did not occur, students were taking a practice standardized reading test two times, and on one occasion were writing a water drop essay for their Open House that evening. While students independently read, Deborah conducted one-on-one conferences one time, on the occasion of my last visit. During this visit, Deborah met one-on-one with several students. During these conferences, Deborah wrote down the students' reading level in their planners (e.g. the calendar that travels back and forth between home and school). Deborah explained to these students that they were to choose a chapter book on or around their reading level. Deborah then instructed the students to respond in writing to her once per week. During the other four visits, students were independently reading. While students read, Deborah worked with small groups of students in guided reading activities. During this time, Deborah frequently scanned the classroom and called out to specific students when they

were misbehaving or not reading, under the perception of students engaging in off-task behavior.

Joanna, on the other hand, had implemented SSR early on in the year; students practiced reading for longer and longer time periods each day, and Joanna implemented one-on-one conferences. Joanna reported that many students were not engaged; some male students rolled around the floor, edging closer and closer to their friends. She explained, "The beginning of the year, I really tried to do full independent reading in conferences, like one-on-one conferences, like the Jennifer Serravallo. Thing is, that was not working for this class." Serravallo (2015) recommended that teachers teach and practice a number of strategies as students practice independent reading, such as "Keep Your Eyes and Mind in the Book" and "Ask Questions to Engage with the Text" (p. 47). After trying SSR in this fashion for several weeks, Joanna abandoned the practice of whole class independent reading. Dissatisfied, Joanna revised her schedule, and implemented independent reading as a station while she met in small groups for guided reading. Some of the stations consisted of (a) a vocabulary workshop wherein students learned new words and vocabulary acquisition strategies; (b) Istation instruction for reading (e.g., computer-based reading instruction); (c) grammar workshop (students worked with various parts of speech or constructed sentences; and (d) independent reading. The students scheduled for SSR chose any text they cared to read (e.g., school or classroom library, or brought from home). The students chose whether to sit at their seat or in a spot somewhere else in the classroom. Joanna required that students construct a written reading response before returning the classroom library for a new book.

Deborah implemented a version of SSR. Importantly, Deborah did not permit student choice of reading popular culture texts during the bulk of the independent reading time. Students were permitted to read "comic books" at the end of independent reading, as a reward for working on comprehension strategies in other texts. Although Deborah did not include "comic books" in her own classroom library, students were permitted to check them out from the school library or bring them from home. Contrastingly, although the students in Joanna's classroom were permitted free choice of texts in the classroom library and Joanna's library was generously stocked with popular culture texts, Joanna implemented a very different, revised version of SSR.

Ultimately, both Deborah and Joanna implemented some form of FVR or SSR with students within their balanced literacy framework. However, students did not consistently have the freedom of choice, time, reading location, or the freedom to abandon a book. Additionally, a written response was required for most of the texts read in both classrooms. Certainly not FVR in the purest sense.

Discussion of Findings and the Review of the Literature

Theme: Choice in selecting texts during independent reading. The theme of choice of texts during independent reading was prominent for both Deborah and Joanna. Indeed, Deborah and Joanna allowed students to choose any texts from their classroom libraries. Many researchers have suggested that student choice of texts during independent reading leads to student engagement (Allington, 1994, 2013; Allington, & Gabriel, 2012; Dickerson, 2015; Gallagher, 2009; Garan & DeVoogd, 2008; Hunt, 1970; Kittle, 2013; Krashen, 2004, 2005; Lesesne, 2006; Strommen & Mates, 2004; Trudel, 2007-08; Wolk, 2010; Worthy, 1996, Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999). Interestingly,

some educators have conducted action research by permitting students to choose from a specific genre for independent reading (Butler & Votteler, 2016). The purpose of this type of managed choice aligns the strategies and standards taught in the mini lesson and read-aloud to the independent reading practice (Miller & Moss, 2013). In the cases of Deborah and Joanna, the classroom libraries were differentiated by the preferences of the teacher. Deborah's library held few of the "comic books" or graphic novels that she disliked. That is, Deborah remarked that "comic books" did not support the deep comprehension students were supposed to use while engaged in independent reading. Although Deborah did report that she possessed other popular culture texts in her library, I did not observe those texts during the teacher observation protocols. Ryan (2013) suggested that students need abundant texts to choose from, both in school and classroom libraries. Troublingly, as Deborah reported, students were suddenly prevented from checking out texts from the school library during the latter weeks of my data collection. Consequently, Deborah's students were unable to access "comic books".

Worthy (1999) surmised that students across all economic classes preferred popular culture texts to other texts. However, even when popular culture texts were found in school and classroom libraries, the quantities of popular culture texts were so slight that the supply rarely met the demand (Worthy, 1999). Deborah tolerated the use of "comic books" but did not stock them in her own classroom library; students were permitted to read "comic books" at the end of their independent reading time, after reading a chapter book. Students were permitted choice in choosing chapter books, as long as the chapter books were on or around the students' reading level.

Unlike Deborah's classroom library, Joanna's library contained popular culture texts, including graphic novels. In fact, Joanna frequented library book sales, thrift stores, and used bookstores to purchase additional engaging popular culture texts for the students in her classroom. Although students were permitted to choose any text from Joanna's library, students were expected to read the text and compose a written response to the text before returning to the classroom library to find a new text. Interestingly, Joanna may have stocked her library with popular culture texts because she believed that many of the male students would not choose a text that was not a popular culture text. As Joanna reported: "…at least they are reading something". Similarly, Worthy (1996) argued that students, when unable to locate popular culture texts in school libraries, refused to read. Additionally, Worthy et al. (1999) posited that teachers entice and engage students with popular culture texts, while gradually scaffolding and guiding the students into other texts. In a like manner, Joanna permitted the checking out of popular culture texts from her classroom library, while blessing and encouraging other texts to be read. Specifically, Joanna blessed books at the guided reading table, intentionally placing a new book on the table in the hopes that the placement might spark students' curiosities about the new title. Similarly, Joanna promoted books related to school projects as well, as she promoted books about planets by placing these books prominently in the wooden book displayer in the front of the classroom and assigning a project wherein students created an alien from their chosen planet project.

Ultimately, choice of popular culture texts during independent reading depended on the perceptions by the teacher of popular culture texts. Both participants *provided choice with conditions*. In the case of Deborah, popular culture texts were employed as a

reward for application of reading strategies in other, more worthwhile texts. Similarly, Flowerday and Schraw (2000) noticed that some teachers in their study permitted choice as a reward for working hard at other tasks. For Joanna, popular culture texts may have been perceived as a necessary evil, to provide engaging materials for the male students. As Gutiérrez (2010) concluded: "The bottom line is, if we don't let kids read what they want, they will do other things they want to do – and reading will get left behind" (p. 228).

Deborah's Theme: "Ever present annual test pressure: So they can sit for that time!". Deborah believed that independent reading developed reading stamina. To that end, Deborah perceived that students who chose a chapter book and diligently applied reading strategies during independent reading would be successful maintaining the energy to complete the annual standardized reading test. Additionally, test preparation occasionally infiltrated Deborah's independent reading time. Specifically, during two of the eight teacher observation protocols, independent reading was canceled due to practicing for the upcoming standardized test. In a like manner, Yeung and Curwood (2015) observed that although Australian teachers and high school students were interested in integrating popular culture texts into the curriculum, as the time for standardized testing loomed closer and closer, both students and teachers agreed that popular culture text integration should be set aside, and more test preparation should ensue. Alternatively, Krashen (2001) suggested that students who self-select books and read during daily independent reading time fare about the same as students who engage in daily direct instruction. Therefore, protecting the daily independent reading time is imperative. Unfortunately, as in Deborah's case, other activities, such as test preparation

and completing water drop essays crept in and took over students' independent reading time.

  Deborah's Theme: Accountability: "Huge Shock". Throughout Deborah's interviews, teacher observation protocols, and pictures of classroom libraries, the theme of expectations and accountability filtered through. Teachers are expected to support students in building reading comprehension skills, reaching an expected reading level, and to make progress on the annual standardized reading test. Indeed, Deborah's speech and actions brought the theme of accountability and expectations to the forefront. Deborah demonstrated this theme in many ways: a) assessing students using the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) and Istation; b) assigning test passages and multiple-choice questions; c) requiring students to select chapter books on or near their reading level for independent reading; and d) assigning students a written reading response about their selected chapter book. Additionally, while independent reading occurred in the classroom, Deborah met with several students in a guided reading group, all the while monitoring the other students' classroom behavior, but not their reading behaviors. Moreover, Deborah's responses during the interviews concerned preparing students for the next grade and beyond, building reading stamina to be able to withstand the long hours of the annual standardized reading test, and using the independent reading time to build "deep comprehension". As Deborah lamented, her quest of meeting her campus expectations was thwarted when her classroom became the "revolving door" of the third grade. Students withdrew and students enrolled at a faster rate than the other teachers in her grade level. Troublingly, Deborah reported that many of the students in

her classroom spoke Spanish at home, did not read at home, and thus did not have the advantages in childhood that her own children had experienced.

However, Deborah might have trusted that explicitly teaching comprehension strategies during her balanced literacy framework, permitting students to self-select and read any book from her classroom library or the school library, and conferring with those students about their thinking as they read those books, would support Deborah in her goals towards achieving her campus expectations (Kelley& Clausen-Grace, 2006; Krashen, 2004). Indeed, independent reading is an essential component of the balanced literacy framework (Pressley, et al., 2002).

Deborah's Theme: Classification of students: "I have some boys…"

Deborah's comments about "high" and "low" students in her classroom supported and strengthened the theme of classifying or stratifying students. For example, Deborah mentioned that some of the boys in her classroom did not really settle down during independent reading:

> but a lot of 'em I have several of the boys..the really the ones that are… I have a few boys that are a little more reluctant …and they have assigned spots but they can get a *pillow* and they have assigned corners on the carpet… that way they're not by a friend and then that has helped a lot when I we… I finally had to do that…

Engerman et al. (2015) suggested that some male students do not fit into the typical business of school behavior; sitting quietly in their seats is not typical for some male students. In a like manner, Deborah and Joanna pointed out that some of the male students in their classrooms rolled around on the floor, talked or flipped pages during

independent reading, or played around with other classmates. Engerman (2016) pondered this behavior, querying, "As we continue to see poor achievement rates result from low engagement rates from boys, we should wonder, "Why are boys unmotivated to learn in traditional classroom settings?" (p. 3). Importantly, when male students engage with interesting, engaging material (e.g., popular culture texts), students may become more motivated to learn (Engerman, 2016; Engerman et al. 2015; Newkirk, 2002; Smith & Wilhelm,2002).

Deborah remarked that struggling readers had to participate in a number of minutes of Istation instruction every week, and students with characteristics of dyslexia were pulled out of the classroom for instruction. Further, Deborah explained that GT (gifted and talented) students were participants in a special book club, and the literacy coach met with them once per week to discuss their assigned book. When asked about blessing particular books, Deborah mentioned that she loved the Rick Riordan and Harry Potter series, and that her "high" kids sometimes chose those titles to read.

Allington (2001, 2009) argued that in many cases, struggling readers are pulled out of the classroom for interventions during reading instruction, thus students who need more time to choose and read books during independent reading actually spend less time reading. As Allington (2009) stated, "First is the issue of what the struggling reader might miss if he or she is sent out of the classroom at a time other than the reading block time (p. 15). In Deborah's case, district and state expectations for Istation reading instruction and pull-out dyslexia reading intervention may have hindered the students who needed additional daily independent reading time than their more proficient peers.

Joanna's theme: Perseverance in teaching: "We're going to get comprehension done". Joanna was diligent in keeping to her daily reading schedule. Students met with Joanna in guided reading groups or strategy groups, while other students participated in daily Istation instruction, or stations, which included independent reading, vocabulary workshop, or grammar work. Importantly, Joanna believed in the fidelity of meeting in small groups, and would have spent more time in guiding reading, had she had more daily instructional reading time. Ultimately Joanna believed so deeply in the strength of guided reading and small group instruction, that she abandoned implementation of whole class independent reading.

Burkins and Yaris (2014) reported that when guided reading became a popular instructional strategy (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996), independent reading (and other components of balanced literacy) may have taken a back seat because of "instructional whiplash" (p. 26). That is, guided reading may have minimized other aspects of the balanced literacy framework, such as independent reading and shared reading. Similarly, this may be the case for Joanna. She believed so deeply in the power of guided reading, that the independent reading in her classroom became a station where two or three students were allowed to choose a book from the classroom library and read. During that time, some students were meeting in small groups with Joanna, a few were working in a small vocabulary or grammar station, and several were working on Istation assessment or instruction. Although students had free choice of books from the classroom or school library, including popular culture texts, this type of independent reading did not lend itself to settling in to read quietly while all classmates were similarly engaged. Joanna

argued that she provided independent reading at other times, such as when students finished an assignment early.

Joanna's theme: Differentiation of reading instruction: "It depends". At several times during her interviews, Joanna explained that she differentiated reading instruction for the students in her classroom. Joanna noted that her reading instruction was "very fluid"; she consistently reassessed students, and kept her small groups very flexible, often changing students based on her reading data. During the post interview, Joanna expressed that some of the students, "…because the other ones, like my ESL group, they're really not at a place yet, where I feel like they're fully ... Can be released to full like, independent reading." Instead, Joanna assigned those students vocabulary workshop and Istation instruction. However, when English language learners are permitted to self-select and read texts from the classroom or school library such as in a FVR program, students' second language acquisition is supported (Krashen, 1993). Moreover, when students work with popular culture texts, their second language acquisition may be enhanced (McGinnis, 2007).

Step 11: Legitimation of the Data. The importance of trustworthiness in qualitative research cannot be overemphasized (Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, 2014). Simply put, trustworthiness can be defined as validity or "truth value" (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). According to Kvale (1995), "The present understanding of validity starts in the lived world and daily language, where issues of reliable witnesses, of valid documents and arguments, are part of the social interaction" (p. 21). In my quest to establish validity and trustworthiness, I employed the Qualitative Legitimation Model (QLM) (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). This model or framework both lists and examines

the threats to internal and external validity when conducting qualitative research. Internal validity can be described as researcher ethics (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). That is, internal validity is the way the researcher conducts a study in respect to truthfulness and objectivity. Contrastingly, external validity can be defined as the transferability or generalizability of the research (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). When constructing the QLM, Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) compiled and defined a number of threats to internal and external credibility, creating a resource for qualitative researchers to refer to when conducting research. I determined that the following threats were applicable to my research. Table 23 demonstrates the threats to internal and external validity that I considered throughout my study.

Table 23

Threats to Credibility

Threat to Credibility	Internal and External	Stage of Research Design	Method to Evaluate / Increase Legitimation
Ironic Legitimation	Internal	Data Interpretation Stage	Member checking Triangulation of Methods
Face Validity	Internal	Study Design Data Collection	Member checking Triangulation of data collection Analytic memos
Descriptive Validity	Internal	Data Collection	Member checking Audio recordings Triangulation of data collection Methodology in Context
Observational Bias	Internal	Data Collection Data Analysis Data Interpretation	Audio Recordings Transcripts Analytic Memos Triangulation of Methods Member Checking
Researcher Bias	Internal	Data Interpretation	Member Checking Triangulation of data collection Audio Recordings Post Interviews
Reactivity	Internal	Data Collection Data Interpretation	Triangulation of methods Post Interviews
Confirmation Bias	Internal	Data Interpretation	Post Interviews Analytic Memos
Structural Corroboration	Internal	Data Collection Data Interpretation	Triangulation of data collection Member Checking
Action Validity	External	Data Analysis Data Interpretation	Triangulation of methods and data collection

Threats to internal validity.

Ironic legitimation. The threat of ironic legitimation can be described as the threat of the numerous inferences that may develop from analyzing data (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2004). As a researcher, I had to remain vigilantly aware that every qualitative research study contains multiple truths. I recognize the truth that my interpretation of the data may not be the only interpretation that exists. Therefore, I attempted to decrease the threat of ironic legitimation by following up with participants via email and requesting feedback based on the emerging themes. Additionally, I employed thematic analysis, keywords-in-context, and visual ethnography as a means of triangulating the methods used. Importantly,

Face validity. The threat of face validity may be regarded as a failure to enlist sufficient participants, a failure to conduct too few interviews, or a failure to spend sufficient time observing participants (Lather, 1986). Because I only secured two participants, I endeavored to conduct follow-up interviews and engage in 8teacher observations for each participant. Additionally, I employed member checking. That is, I requested that the participants review their interview transcripts and inferred themes, and to respond with corrections and feedback. Further, I constructed analytic memos during my data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation stages. I re-read these reflexive memos many times as I considered the research questions. Because I had only two participants, and there was a chance of loss of confidentiality, each participant only reviewed her own interview transcripts.

Descriptive validity. Descriptive validity is an additional threat to trustworthiness or internal credibility. According to Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007), a researcher should

persevere to provide an honest description of the events that occur in a research study. In an effort to reduce the threat of descriptive validity, I audio and video recorded the participants' initial and post interviews. Recognizing descriptive validity as a salient threat, I provided an additional chapter, "Methodology in Context", as an attempt to detail as accurate a description of the research study events as possible, as a suggestion from the chair of my committee, who also included a similar chapter in her dissertation (Gerber, 2008). Importantly, the participants' audio recordings supported the writing of the "Methodology in Context" chapter.

Observational bias. Observational bias can occur when a researcher fails to spend enough time observing and taking field notes on the research site. More importantly, when a researcher fails to analyze enough data during data analysis, observational bias as a threat to internal credibility may exist (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). Acknowledging this threat, it was essential that I spent an appropriate amount of time conducting teacher observations and using an observation protocol to guide my observations. Therefore, I visited participants in their classrooms eight times over a nine-week time period, observed the participants carefully using the observation protocol to guide my observations, and took copious field notes that allowed me to have a holistic view of the FVR program during my visits. Additionally, I employed three methods (e.g., thematic analysis, keywords-in-context analysis, and visual ethnography) to limit the threat of observational bias.

Researcher bias. Researchers' biases can pose a threat to internal validity during data collection and data analysis. Therefore, it is vital that researchers acknowledge their biases, but remain as objective as possible while interviewing, taking detailed field notes,

scrutinizing data, and making inferences based on that data (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). Therefore, I used the following to eliminate as many threats as possible: a) member checking in the form of emailing participants with the transcripts of the initial and post interviews and a list of the themes generated from the thematic analysis; b) Triangulation of data corpus (interview and post interview, teacher observation protocols, and photographs of classroom libraries; and c) audio and video recordings of the initial and post interviews. It was imperative that I left my biases at the door as I collected, analyzed, and interpreted the data. .

Reactivity. Another viable threat to trustworthiness is reactivity, a threat that is based on participant reaction to the research process itself. To put another way, the participant may behave in a manner different from their typical behavior, simply because they are involved in the research (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). To limit reactivity, my data collection consisted of initial interviews and post interviews. Importantly, the post interview helped to clear up any confusion or misunderstandings I may have encountered in the initial interview. Triangulation of methodology also supported my efforts to minimize reactivity; a) thematic analysis, b) Keywords-in-context, and c) visual ethnography. Reactivity may manifest itself as a Hawthorne Effect (Landsberger, 1958). The Hawthorne Effect can be defined as in this example: A participant may perceive that she is receiving preferential treatment from the researcher, simply because the participant was selected for the study.

Confirmation bias. According to Greenwald et al. (1986), confirmation bias may occur when a researcher fails to recognize that other interpretations may exist in addition to the researcher's interpretation contained in the written research report. Therefore, in an

effort to reduce confirmation bias, I employed post interviews after the teacher observation protocols were completed. The post interviews supported my thinking as I compared and contrasted the responses from the first interview to the second interview. Additionally, I used a reflexive journal to construct analytic memos as interpretations and inferences occurred to me. As with the post interview, the analytic memos were invaluable as I completed the data collection, the data analysis, and the data interpretation. Indeed, another researcher analyzing the same data may arrive at an entirely different interpretation of that data (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007; Phillips, 1987).

Structural corroboration. Threats to internal validity are many and varied, and establishing structural corroboration may reduce the threat of collecting minimal data for a study (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). When a researcher designs a qualitative study, collects two or more types of data during data collection, structural corroboration is attempted (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007; Phillips, 1987). As Phillips (1987) asserted, "For structural corroboration is the process by which various parts of the account or description or explanation give each other mutual support" (p. 18). To establish structural corroboration for this study, I conducted initial and post interviews, visited and took field notes in classrooms over a nine-week period, and took photographs of the classroom libraries during each visit. Triangulation of data supported me as I inferred themes, searched for meaning, and wrote the implications for this study.

Threats to external validity.

Action validity. According to Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007), when a research study is used by other researchers to support or replicate further studies, action validity is

employed. That is, if my qualitative study is read or replicated by future researchers, action validity may be established. In fact, if the study is read by practitioners, those practitioners may revise their practices regarding choice and popular culture text, and in this way, the threat of action validity may be minimized. To this end, I employed triangulation of data a) interviews, b) teacher observation protocols, and c) photographs of classroom libraries, triangulation of methodology: a) thematic analysis, b) Keywords-in-context, and c) visual ethnography to increase the chance that future researchers and practitioners may desire to research my topic more fully.

Step 12: Writing of the Research Report

Step 12 of the QLM (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2010) is the composition of the final report after pondering the significance of the study, investigating the literature, considering the methodologies needed for the study, and the collection, analysis, interpretation and findings of the data corpus. Based on the study, I offer the following implications:

Implications: Lost in expectation land.

True FVR was not fully implemented in Deborah's or Joanna's classrooms. Students were permitted to choose any text from the classroom library with some restrictions. In Deborah's classroom, students chose a chapter book on or near their reading level and wrote a reading response. Once the reading response was completed, students were allowed to read a "comic book" from the school library, as Deborah's library did not contain any "comic books." In the case of Joanna, students were permitted to choose any text in the classroom library, provided they constructed a written reading response before returning the book and checking out another. In Joanna's classroom, time

was restricted, as independent reading was a station during guided reading time. Troublingly, teachers may feel the pressure of expectations bearing down upon their shoulders. Students must reach their end-of-year reading level; they must make progress and/or pass the standardized reading test. Students must learn comprehension strategies and apply them when they read. As Joanna stated: Teachers have to "get comprehension done." Deborah and Joanna may have felt the pressure to meet expectations. Deborah was concerned with preparing her students for future grade levels. Indeed, she reported that she felt the need to expose them now to conditions they would experience as they progressed through the grade levels. National, state, district, and campus expectations may keep teachers from implementing independent reading on a consistent basis. In Deborah's case, standardized test practice occasionally took precedence. Joanna perceived that her independent reading did not function properly (e.g., some students played and did not read), so she implemented independent reading as a station during guided reading.

Deborah's library contained few popular culture texts because they did not "aid comprehension". Independent reading practice built stamina so that students could endure the annual standardized reading test. Popular culture texts were strictly for pleasure reading, and that kind of pleasure reading had no real place in Deborah's classroom.

Although Joanna persevered in helping students meet expectations, her diligence was not in establishing FVR. Indeed, Joanna perceived that she would be able to teach students more effectively in small groups, in vocabulary and grammar stations, and via computer-based reading instruction. Joanna's efforts to minimize independent reading may have stemmed from a perception that students wasted time fake reading.

Neither Deborah nor Joanna engaged in consistent, individual conferences with students as they read independently. Indeed, Deborah and Joanna were implementing strategy groups or guided reading groups while students read independently. Consequently, teacher conversations with students were mostly brief classroom management directives concerning negative behavior. Although Deborah and Joanna possessed knowledge of whole-class independent reading and individual reading conferences, state, district, and campus expectations may have prevented the participants from conducting individual conferences with their students.

Implications: Choice with conditions

Although Deborah and Joanna promoted choice in their independent reading component of the balanced literacy framework, the choice was limited by conditions or specific rules set out by the participants. For example, Deborah declared that she did not have many "comic books" in her classroom library. Students were permitted to read "comic books" at the very end of independent reading. Prior to reading "comic books", students were expected to choose a text on or about their reading level, read that text while applying reading strategies, and write a reading response. At that time, students could then partake of a "comic book" if they had checked it out from the school library or brought the text from home. As Deborah explained, comic books do not "aid comprehension" and students read them to look at pictures and flip pages. Thus, Deborah censored some popular culture texts by not including them in her own classroom library.

Contrastingly, Joanna permitted free choice of any popular culture text in the classroom library. However, students crafted a reading response to every text they checked out; students were not permitted to check out another text, popular culture or

other, until they had constructed a written response to the reading. Additionally, Joanna created reading events wherein students might have to choose a non-popular culture text from time to time. On one such occasion, Joanna assigned a project about planets; students were to choose a planet, and create an alien and a passport for the alien to travel to Earth. Consequently, Joanna placed many books about planets on the front displayer, and reported that many students were now reading books about planets. Importantly, Joanna implemented independent reading as a station, and so students did not have solid chunks of time to read every day. As Joanna pointed out, students still had plenty of time to read, but the independent reading was chunked through the day, as students read independently when they finished an assignment early.

Therefore, for both Deborah and Joanna, choice was conditional, but for very different reasons. Deborah censored "comic books" because she did not perceive them as valuable for supporting reading comprehension, application of reading strategies, or building stamina. On the other hand, although Joanna provided as many copies of popular culture texts that she could locate, a written assignment was required before a student could choose another book.

Implications for Educators

Although few researchers have investigated educator perceptions of popular culture (Gerber & Price, 2013; Lambirth, 2003; Marsh, 2006; Peacock et al., 2016), the benefits of integrating popular culture into the classroom include student engagement, critical literacy, and bridging students' literacies across home and school (Dyson, 2001; Gainer, 2007; Gerber, 2008; Morrell, 2002; Newkirk, 2002; Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999). Teacher education programs and curriculum coordinators in both public

and private schools might offer college courses and professional development wherein students gain a knowledge of popular culture and study the advantages of integrating popular culture into school curricula (Marsh, 2006; Peacock et al., 2016). A more viable option for educators might be to locate the abundant popular culture education and resources available in Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and Open Educational Resources (OER). Specifically, a MOOC typically offers online college courses and certificates for a fraction of the cost of traditional courses. An OER can be defined as an online library with multiple resources. In addition, popular culture resources, such as practitioner journals, and topical online learning can be accessed through professional educator associations such as the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE).

Of equal importance, stakeholders, administrators, and educators should consider the balance between creating lifelong readers and achieving student success on standardized reading tests and meeting reading expectations (e.g., expected reading levels at the end of a schoolyear). When teacher and student expectations are too important, teachers may fall into the trap of compromising best practices in the implementation of reading workshop via a balanced literacy framework. Most districts and campuses have crafted mission statements and goals for graduating lifelong learners, 21st century-style. However, educators and administrators sometimes abandon best practices in the name of national, state, district, and campus expectations. Educators must advocate for best practices in teaching reading by joining professional educational organizations and attending professional education conferences. Educators should invite administrators and stakeholders into their classrooms to observe students as they participate in daily independent reading or FVR. Additionally, educators might meet with administrators and

stakeholders, with the purpose of emphasizing that daily independent reading or FVR produces similar data (e.g., standardized test scores, standardized test practice scores, and Development Reading Assessment (DRAs) to classrooms where independent reading is not implemented with fidelity, such as limited time, limited choice, or using independent reading time as a time to catch up on other missed work.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future researchers undertaking a study of teacher perceptions of popular culture might consider the inclusion of student perceptions of popular culture. In fact, studying student choices of popular culture texts from public, school, and classroom libraries and texts brought from home may yield interesting themes for popular culture researchers. In addition, interviewing students about their choices would be an important component to add to a future study. Additionally, a focus group of teacher educators and students might be added to the study for triangulation purposes.

In this study, one of the data sets that I included was the analysis of photographs of classroom libraries (Pink, 2007). In a future study, I would recommend strengthening the methodology of visual ethnography by incorporating photographs and videos of the classroom libraries into teacher and student interviews (Pink, 2007). Simply put, photographs and videos of the libraries would be placed in front of participants; participants would be asked to comment on what they notice. Additionally, I would recommend inventorying and categorizing the popular culture texts within the school library and the classroom libraries of the research sites. Analyzing the contents of the various libraries and comparing student check-out rate and retention (how long they keep

the books out) of those materials may bring about additional understanding as themes emerge.

Step 13: Reformulating the Research Questions

As I engaged in analyzing data with the various methods of thematic analysis, Keywords-in-context, and visual ethnography, themes emerged that did not always coincide with the research questions for this study. Further, implications from the study brought about further reflection. The original questions are as follows:

    a) *Research question 1: How do teachers and students perceive the use of popular culture texts during independent reading?*

    b) *Research Question #2: How do teachers make decisions about student choices of popular culture texts during independent reading?*

After much thought and reflection, the research questions for a future study might be revised to include questions 1 and 2 above, but adding the questions below:

    a) *Research Question #3: How do students make decisions when selecting texts for independent reading?*

    b) *Research Question #4: What factors figure into teacher decision making about the implementation of daily independent reading?*

Perhaps then, the best approach for this type of study would be a mixed methods study. Collecting quantitative data (e.g., inventories of classroom libraries during each visit and inventories of popular culture texts in the school library) and qualitative data (interviews with teachers and students and teacher-student observations in the classroom) would provide a clearer picture of decisions teachers make when censoring or permitting choice of popular culture texts, and decisions students make when selecting popular culture texts

for independent reading. Additionally, combining qualitative methodology with a quantitative methodology may create a bricolage of sorts. That is, a mixed methods approach may assist the researcher to envision or interpret new meanings. Further, employing mixed methods may reduce the threats to internal and external credibility.

Conclusion

Many factors play into teacher decision making of the use of popular culture texts in the classroom. Undoubtedly, teachers consider their own personal biases, likes, and dislikes about popular culture texts for decision making of inclusion or exclusion of popular culture texts from their own classroom libraries, and permit or allow the checking out of those popular culture texts based on their perception of the value of those texts. However, national, state, district, and campus expectations of student achievement may affect teacher perceptions of popular culture texts and independent reading implementation. Indeed, teachers may sometimes put aside their own beliefs about best practices in conducting a reading workshop within a balanced literacy framework, based on the expectations for student success.

Summary

In this chapter, I have presented Steps 10-13 of the QLM (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2010). Those steps included: (a) Step 10: interpret data; (b) Step 11: legitimation of the data; (c) Step 12: write the qualitative research report; and (d) Step 13: reformulate the research question(s) (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2010). In so doing, I have provided findings, implications, recommendations for future research, and information concerning the credibility of the study.

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APPENDIX A

The Freedom to Read Statement

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures

leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1.*It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2.*Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought.

The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3.*It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.* No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4.*There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.* To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5.*It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

> 6.*It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

> 7.*It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can*

> *demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad"*
>
> *idea is a good one.*

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read

Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

A Joint Statement by:

American Library Association

Association of American Publishers

Subsequently endorsed by:

American Booksellers for Free Expression

The Association of American University Presses

The Children's Book Council

Freedom to Read Foundation

National Association of College Stores

National Coalition Against Censorship

National Council of Teachers of English

The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression

APPENDIX B

The Students' Right to Read

Date: April 30, 2009

Category: Censorship, Intellectual Freedom, Reading

The NCTE Executive Committee reaffirmed this guideline in November 2012.

This statement was revised April 2009 to adhere to NCTE's Policy on Involvement of

People of Color.

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1981

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The current edition of The Students' Right to Read is an adaptation and updating of the original Council statement, including "Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of a Work," prepared by the Committee on the Right to Read of the National Council of Teachers of English and revised by Ken Donelson.

The Right to Read and the Teacher of English

For many years, American schools have been pressured to restrict or deny students access to books or periodicals deemed objectionable by some individual or group on moral, political, religious, ethnic, racial, or philosophical grounds. These pressures have mounted in recent years, and English teachers have no reason to believe they will diminish. The fight against censorship is a continuing series of skirmishes, not a pitched battle leading to a final victory over censorship.

We can safely make two statements about censorship: first, any work is potentially open to attack by someone, somewhere, sometime, for some reason; second, censorship is often arbitrary and irrational. For example, classics traditionally used in English classrooms have been accused of containing obscene, heretical, or subversive elements. What English teacher could anticipate judgments such as the following–judgments characteristic of those made by many would-be censors:

- Plato's *Republic*: "This book is un-Christian."

- George Eliot's *Silas Marner*; "You can't prove what that dirty old man is doing with that child between chapters."

- Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days*: "Very unfavorable to Mormons."

- Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*: "A filthy book."

- Shakespeare's *Macbeth*: "Too violent for children today."

- Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*: "Serves as a poor model for young people."

- Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*: "Contains homosexuality."

Modern works, even more than the classics, are criticized as "filthy," "un-American," "overly realistic," and "anti-war." Some books have been attacked merely for being "controversial," suggesting that for some people the purpose of education is not the investigation of ideas but rather the indoctrination of certain set beliefs and standards. The following statements represent complaints typical of those made against modern works of literature:

- J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*: "A dreadful, dreary recital of sickness, sordidness, and sadism." (Without much question, Salinger's book has been for some time the most widely censored book in the United States.)

- Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*: "Its repetitious obscenity and immorality merely degrade and defile, teaching nothing."

- Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*: "The word rape is used several times. Children should not see this in any literature book."

Some groups and individuals have also raised objections to literature written specifically for young people. As long as novels intended for young people stayed at the intellectual and emotional level of *A Date for Marcy* or *A Touchdown for Thunderbird High*, censors could forego criticism. But many contemporary novels for adolescents focus on the real world of young people–drugs, premarital sex, alcoholism, divorce, high school gangs, school dropouts, racism, violence, and sensuality. English teachers willing to defend the classics and modern literature must be prepared to give equally spirited defense to serious and worthwhile adolescent novels.

Literature about ethnic or racial minorities remains "controversial" or "objectionable" to many adults. As long as groups such as African Americans, Pacific Islanders, American Indians, Asian Americans, and Latinos* "kept their proper place"–awarded them by an Anglo society–censors rarely raised their voices. But attacks have increased in frequency as minority groups have refused to observe their assigned "place." Though nominally, the criticisms of racial or ethnic literature have usually been directed at "bad language," "suggestive situations," "questionable literary merit," or "ungrammatical English" (usually oblique complaints about the different dialect or culture of a group), the underlying motive for some attacks has unquestionably been racial. Typical of censors' criticisms of ethnic works are the following comments:

- Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*: "The book is biased on the black question."

- Anne Frank's *Diary of a Young Girl*: "Obscene and blasphemous."

- Eldridge Cleaver's *Soul on Ice*: "Totally objectionable and without any literary value."

Books are not alone in being subject to censorship. Magazines or newspapers used, recommended, or referred to in English classes have increasingly drawn the censor's fire. Few libraries would regard their periodical collection as worthwhile or representative without some or all of the following publications, but all of them have been the target of censors on occasion:

- *National Geographic*: "Nudity and sensationalism, especially in stories on barbaric foreign people."

- *Scholastic Magazine*: "Doctrines opposing the beliefs of the majority, socialistic programs; promotes racial unrest and contains very detailed geography of foreign countries, especially those inhabited by dark people."

- *National Observer*: "Right-wing trash with badly reported news."

- *New York Times*: "That thing should be outlawed after printing the Pentagon papers and helping our country's enemies."

The immediate results of demands to censor books or periodicals vary. At times, school boards and administrators have supported and defended their teachers, their use of materials under fire, and the student's right of access to the materials. At other times, however, special committees have been formed to cull out "objectionable works" or "modern trash" or "controversial literature." Some teachers have been summarily reprimanded for assigning certain works, even to mature students. Others have been able to retain their positions only after initiating court action.

Not as sensational, but perhaps more important, are the long range results. Schools have removed from libraries and classrooms and English teachers have avoided using or recommending works which might make members of the community angry.

Many students are consequently "educated" in a school atmosphere hostile to free inquiry. And many teachers learn to emphasize their own safety rather than their students' needs.

The problem of censorship does not derive solely from the small anti-intellectual, ultra-moral, or ultra-patriotic groups which will always function in a society that guarantees freedom of speech and freedom of the press. The present concern is rather with the frequency and force of attacks by others, often people of good will and the best intentions, some from within the teaching profession. The National Council of Teachers of English, the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, and the American Library Association, as well as the publishing industry and writers themselves agree: pressures for censorship are great throughout our society.

The material that follows is divided into two sections. The first on "The Right to Read" is addressed to parents and the community at large. The other section, "A Program of Action," lists Council recommendations for establishing professional committees in every school to set up procedures for book selection, to work for community support, and to review complaints against any book or periodical.

The Right to Read

An open letter to the citizens of our country from the National Council of Teachers of English:

> *Where suspicion fills the air and holds scholars in line for fear of their jobs, there can be no exercise of the free intellect. . . . A problem can no longer be pursued with impunity to its edges. Fear stalks the classroom. The teacher is no longer a stimulant to adventurous thinking; she becomes instead a pipe line for safe and*

sound information. A deadening dogma takes the place of free inquiry. Instruction tends to become sterile; pursuit of knowledge is discouraged; discussion often leaves off where it should begin.

Justice William O. Douglas, United States Supreme Court: Adler v. Board of Education, 1951.

The right to read, like all rights guaranteed or implied within our constitutional tradition, can be used wisely or foolishly. In many ways, education is an effort to improve the quality of choices open to all students. But to deny the freedom of choice in fear that it may be unwisely used is to destroy the freedom itself. For this reason, we respect the right of individuals to be selective in their own reading. But for the same reason, we oppose efforts of individuals or groups to limit the freedom of choice of others or to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large.

The right of any individual not just to read but to read whatever he or she wants to read is basic to a democratic society. This right is based on an assumption that the educated possess judgment and understanding and can be trusted with the determination of their own actions. In effect, the reader is freed from the bonds of chance. The reader is not limited by birth, geographic location, or time, since reading allows meeting people, debating philosophies, and experiencing events far beyond the narrow confines of an individual's own existence.

In selecting books for reading by young people, English teachers consider the contribution which each work may make to the education of the reader, its aesthetic value, its honesty, its readability for a particular group of students, and its appeal to adolescents. English teachers, however, may use different works for different purposes.

The criteria for choosing a work to be read by an entire class are somewhat different from the criteria for choosing works to be read by small groups.

For example, a teacher might select John Knowles' *A Separate Peace* for reading by an entire class, partly because the book has received wide critical recognition, partly because it is relatively short and will keep the attention of many slow readers, and partly because it has proved popular with many students of widely differing abilities. The same teacher, faced with the responsibility of choosing or recommending books for several small groups of students, might select or recommend books as different as Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, Jack Schaefer's *Shane*, Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovitch*, Pierre Boulle's *The Bridge over the River Kwai*, Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*, or Paul Zindel's *The Pigman*, depending upon the abilities and interests of the students in each group.

And the criteria for suggesting books to individuals or for recommending something worth reading for a student who casually stops by after class are different from selecting material for a class or group. But the teacher selects, not censors, books. Selection implies that a teacher is free to choose this or that work, depending upon the purpose to be achieved and the student or class in question, but a book selected this year may be ignored next year, and the reverse. Censorship implies that certain works are not open to selection, this year or any year.

Wallace Stevens once wrote, "Literature is the better part of life. To this it seems inevitably necessary to add, provided life is the better part of literature." Students and parents have the right to demand that education today keep students in touch with the reality of the world outside the classroom. Much of classic literature asks questions as

valid and significant today as when the literature first appeared, questions like "What is the nature of humanity?" "Why do people praise individuality and practice conformity?" "What do people need for a good life?" and "What is the nature of the good person?" But youth is the age of revolt. To pretend otherwise is to ignore a reality made clear to young people and adults alike on television and radio, in newspapers and magazines. English teachers must be free to employ books, classic or contemporary, which do not lie to the young about the perilous but wondrous times we live in, books which talk of the fears, hopes, joys, and frustrations people experience, books about people not only as they are but as they can be. English teachers forced through the pressures of censorship to use only safe or antiseptic works are placed in the morally and intellectually untenable position of lying to their students about the nature and condition of mankind.

The teacher must exercise care to select or recommend works for class reading and group discussion. One of the most important responsibilities of the English teacher is developing rapport and respect among students. Respect for the uniqueness and potential of the individual, an important facet of the study of literature, should be emphasized in the English class. Literature classes should reflect the cultural contributions of many minority groups in the United States, just as they should acquaint students with contributions from the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

The Threat to Education

Censorship leaves students with an inadequate and distorted picture of the ideals, values, and problems of their culture. Writers may often represent their culture, or they may stand to the side and describe and evaluate that culture. Yet partly because of censorship or the fear of censorship, many writers are ignored or inadequately

represented in the public schools, and many are represented in anthologies not by their best work but by their "safest" or "least offensive" work.

The censorship pressures receiving the greatest publicity are those of small groups who protest the use of a limited number of books with some "objectionable" realistic elements, such as *Brave New World*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Catcher in the Rye*, *Johnny Got His Gun*, *Catch-22*, *Soul on Ice*, or *A Day No Pigs Would Die*. The most obvious and immediate victims are often found among our best and most creative English teachers, those who have ventured outside the narrow boundaries of conventional texts. Ultimately, however, the real victims are the students, denied the freedom to explore ideas and pursue truth wherever and however they wish.

Great damage may be done by book committees appointed by national or local organizations to pore over anthologies, texts, library books, and paperbacks to find passages which advocate, or seem to advocate, causes or concepts or practices these organizations condemn. As a result, some publishers, sensitive to possible objections, carefully exclude sentences or selections that might conceivably offend some group, somehow, sometime, somewhere.

The Community's Responsibility

American citizens who care about the improvement of education are urged to join students, teachers, librarians, administrators, boards of education, and professional and scholarly organizations in support of the students' right to read. Only widespread and informed support in every community can assure that:

- enough citizens are interested in the development and maintenance of a superior school system to guarantee its achievement;

- malicious gossip, ignorant rumors, and deceptive letters to the editor will

  not be circulated without challenge and correction;

- newspapers will be convinced that the public sincerely desires objective

  school news reporting, free from slanting or editorial comment which

  destroys confidence in and support for schools;

- the community will not permit its resources and energies to be dissipated

  in conflicts created by special interest groups striving to advance their

  ideologies or biases; and

- faith in democratic traditions and processes will be maintained.

A Program of Action

Censorship in schools is a widespread problem. Teachers of English, librarians, and school administrators can best serve students, literature, and the profession today if they prepare now to face pressures sensibly, demonstrating on the one hand a willingness to consider the merits of any complaint and on the other the courage to defend their literature program with intelligence and vigor. The Council therefore recommends that every school undertake the following two-step program to protect the students' right to read:

the establishment of a representative committee to consider book selection procedures and to screen complaints; and

a vigorous campaign to establish a community atmosphere in which local citizens may be enlisted to support the freedom to read.

Procedures for Book Selection

Although one may defend the freedom to read without reservation as one of the hallmarks of a free society, there is no substitute for informed, professional, and qualified book selection. English teachers are better qualified to choose and recommend books for their classes than persons not prepared in the field. Nevertheless, administrators have certain legal and professional responsibilities. For these reasons and as a matter of professional courtesy, they should be kept informed about the criteria and the procedures used by English teachers in selecting books and the titles of the books used.

In each school the English department should develop its own statement explaining why literature is taught and how books are chosen for each class. This statement should be on file with the administration before any complaints are received. The statement should also support the teacher's right to choose supplementary materials and to discuss controversial issues insofar as they are relevant.

Operating within such a policy, the English department should take the following steps:

Establish a committee to help other English teachers find exciting and challenging books of potential value to students in a specific school. Schools without departments or small schools with a few English teachers should organize a permanent committee charged with the responsibility of alerting other teachers to new books just published or old books now forgotten which might prove valuable in the literature program.

Devote time at each department meeting to reviews and comments by the above committee or plan special meetings for this purpose. Free and open meetings to

discuss books of potential value to students would seem both reasonable and normal for any English department. Teachers should be encouraged to challenge any books recommended or to suggest titles hitherto ignored. Require that each English teacher give a rationale for any book to be read by an entire class. Written rationales for all books read by an entire class would serve the department well if censorship should strike. A file of rationales should serve as impressive evidence to the administration and the community that English teachers have not chosen their books lightly or haphazardly.

Report to the administration the books that will be used for class reading by each English teacher.

Such a procedure gives each teacher the right to expect support from fellow teachers and administrators whenever someone objects to a book.

The Legal Problem

Apart from the professional and moral issues involved in censorship, there are legal matters about which NCTE cannot give advice. The Council is not a legal authority. Across the nation, moreover, conditions vary so much that no one general principle applies. In some states, for example, textbooks are purchased from public funds and supplied free to students; in others, students must rent or buy their own texts.

The legal status of textbook adoption lists also varies. Some lists include only those books which must be taught and allow teachers freedom to select additional titles; other lists are restrictive, containing the only books which may be required for all students.

As a part of sensible preparations for handling attacks on books, each school should ascertain what laws apply to it.

Preparing the Community

To respond to complaints about books, every school should have a committee of teachers (and possibly students, parents, and other representatives from the community) organized to inform the community about book selection procedures; enlist the support of citizens, possibly by explaining the place of literature in the educational process or by discussing at meetings of parents and other community groups the books used at that school; and consider any complaints against any work. No community is so small that it lacks concerned people who care about their children and the educational program of the schools.

No community is so small that it lacks readers who will support the English teachers in defending books when complaints are received. Unhappily, English teachers too often fail to seek out these people and to cultivate their good will and support before censorship strikes.

Defending the Books

Despite the care taken to select worthwhile books for student reading and the qualifications of teachers selecting and recommending books, occasional objections to a work will undoubtedly be made. All books are potentially open to criticism in one or more general areas: the treatment of ideologies, of minorities, of love and sex; the use of language not acceptable to some people; the type of illustrations; the private life or political affiliations of the author or, in a few cases, the illustrator.

If some attacks are made by groups or individuals frankly hostile to free inquiry and open discussion, others are made by misinformed or misguided people who, acting on emotion or rumor, simply do not understand how the books are to be used. Others are made by well-intentioned and conscientious people who fear that harm will come to some segment of the community if a particular book is read or recommended.

What should be done upon receipt of a complaint?

If the complainant telephones, listen courteously and refer him or her to the teacher involved. That teacher should be the first person to discuss the book with the person objecting to its use.

If the complainant is not satisfied, invite him or her to file the complaint in writing, but make no commitments, admissions of guilt, or threats.

If the complainant writes, contact the teacher involved and let that teacher call the complainant.

Sometimes the problem seems less serious and more easily resolved through personal contact over the phone. If the complainant is not satisfied, invite him or her to file the complaint in writing on a form prepared for this purpose. (See sample below.)

Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of a Work

Author _____

Paperback_____ Hardcover _____

Title _____

Publisher (if known) _____

Request initiated by _____

Telephone _____

Address _____

City / State / Zip _____

Complainant represents

_____ Himself/Herself

_____ (Name organization) _____

_____ (Identify other group) _____

1. Have you been able to discuss this work with the teacher or librarian who ordered

it or who used it?

_____ Yes _____ No

2. What do you understand to be the general purpose for using this work?

   o   Provide support for a unit in the curriculum?

   ___ Yes ___ No

   o   Provide a learning experience for the reader in one kind of literature?

   ___ Yes ___ No

   o   Other _____

3. Did the general purpose for the use of the work, as described by the teacher or librarian, seem a suitable one to you?

____Yes ____ No

If not, please explain.

_____

_____

4. What do you think is the general purpose of the author in this book?

_____

_____

5. In what ways do you think a work of this nature is not suitable for the use the teacher or librarian wishes to carry out?

_____

_____

6. Have you been able to learn what is the students' response to this work?

____ Yes ____ No

7. What response did the students make?

_____

_____

8. Have you been able to learn from your school library what book reviewers or other students of literature have written about this work?

____ Yes ____ No

9. Would you like the teacher or librarian to give you a written summary of what book reviewers and other students have written about this book or film?

____ Yes ____ No

10. Do you have negative reviews of the book?

____ Yes ____ No

11. Where were they published?

_____

12. Would you be willing to provide summaries of their views you have collected?

____ Yes ____ No

13. What would you like your library/school to do about this work?

____ Do not assign/lend it to my child.

____ Return it to the staff selection committee/department or reevaluation.

____ Other–Please explain

_____

_____

14. In its place, what work would you recommend that would convey as valuable a picture and perspective of the subject treated?

_____

_____

Signature _____

Date_____

At first, except for politely acknowledging the complaint and explaining the established procedures, the English teacher should do nothing. The success of much censorship depends upon frightening an unprepared school or English department into some precipitous action. A standardized procedure will take the sting from the first outburst of criticism. When the reasonable objector learns that he or she will be given a fair hearing through following the proper channels, he or she is more likely to be satisfied. The idle censor, on the other hand, may well be discouraged from taking further action. A number of advantages will be provided by the form, which will

- formalize the complaint,

- indicate specifically the work in question,

- identify the complainant,

- suggest how many others support the complaint,

- require the complainant to think through objections in order to make an intelligent statement on work (1, 2, and 3),

- cause the complainant to evaluate the work for other groups than merely the one he or she first had in mind (4),

- establish his or her familiarity with the work (5),

- give the complainant an opportunity to consider the criticism about the work and the teacher's purpose in using the work (6, 7, and 8), and

- give the complainant an opportunity to suggest alternative actions to be taken on the work (9 and 10).

The committee reviewing complaints should be available on short notice to consider the completed "Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of a Work" and to call in

the complainant and the teacher involved for a conference. Members of the committee should have reevaluated the work in advance of the meeting, and the group should be prepared to explain its findings. Membership of the committee should ordinarily include an administrator, the English department chair, and at least two classroom teachers of English. But the department might consider the advisability of including members from the community and the local or state NCTE affiliate. As a matter of course, recommendations from the committee would be forwarded to the superintendent, who would in turn submit them to the board of education, the legally constituted authority in the school.

Teachers and administrators should recognize that the responsibility for selecting works for class study lies with classroom teachers and that the responsibility for reevaluating any work begins with the review committee. Both teachers and administrators should refrain from discussing the objection with the complainant, the press, or community groups. Once the complaint has been filed, the authority for handling the situation must ultimately rest with the administration and school board.

Freedom of inquiry is essential to education in a democracy. To establish conditions essential for freedom, teachers and administrators need to follow procedures similar to those recommended here. Where schools resist unreasonable pressures, the cases are seldom publicized and students continue to read works as they wish. The community that entrusts students to the care of an English teacher should also trust that teacher to exercise professional judgment in selecting or recommending books. The English teacher can be free to teach literature, and students can be free to read whatever

they wish only if informed and vigilant groups, within the profession and without, unite in resisting unfair pressures.

The Committee on the Right to Read of the National Council of Teachers of English:

- Edward R. Gordon, Yale University, Chair

- Martin Steinmann, University of Minnesota, Associate Chair

- Harold B. Allen, University of Minnesota

- Frank A. Doggett, D. U. Fletcher High School, Jacksonville Beach, Florida

- Jack Fields, Great Neck South High School, New York

- Graham S. Frear, St. Olaf College, Minnesota

- Robert Gard, Camelback High School, Phoenix, Arizona

- Frank Ross, Detroit Public Schools, Michigan

- Warren Taylor, Oberlin College, Ohio

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APPENDIX C

Questionnaire

Dear Elementary Teacher,

I am a doctoral candidate in Literacy at Sam Houston State University. I am conducting research on teacher perceptions of student choice of popular culture texts during independent reading under the guidance of Dr. Hannah Gerber, an Associate Professor of Literacy from Sam Houston State University.

This questionnaire will be used by me to select my final participant sample of six participants for my study of teachers' perceptions of popular culture texts in the classroom; participants will be interviewed about independent reading and popular culture texts, will be observed during independent reading once per week during one grading period, and will consent to pictures being taken of your classroom library once per week. However, completing the questionnaire is 100% voluntary and you do not wish to complete the questionnaire, it will in no way impact your status or standing in your current job, nor will it impact any status or standing with Sam Houston State University.

If you wish to complete the questionnaire, please do so to the best of your ability and mail it back to me using the stamped, self-addressed envelope that is included. Completing the questionnaire signifies your consent to have your questionnaire data used in publications and presentations on teacher perceptions of reading, as well as my selection of six participants for a research study. I will keep all of your questionnaire data locked safely in a file cabinet in my office, and it will be destroyed by September 17, 2017. However, should any of your data be used, I will not identify you by name. Rather, a pseudonym will be used and your identity will remain confidential at all times.

Should you have any questions about this study, please contact me at msbutler@shsu.edu. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant in this study, please contact Sharla Miles at the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at Sam Houston State University at (936) 294-4875 or by emailing her at irb@shsu.edu
Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,
Melinda S. Butler

Name _____

1. How many years of teaching experience do you have?

    ___ 0-2 years

    ___ 3-6 years

    ___ 7-10 years

    ___ 11 plus years

2. What grade do you currently teach?

    ___ Third Grade

    ___ Fourth Grade

    ___ Fifth Grade

3. Have you ever taught another area of education (middle school, high school, or university)?

    ---yes

    __no

3. Do you currently teaching Reading on your campus (if no, please do not answer any of the following questions)?

    ___ yes

    ___ no

4. How often does Independent Reading occur in your classroom?

    ___ daily

    ___ 4 times per week

    ___ 3 times per week

    ___ 2 times per week or less

5. Approximately how long do students have for Independent Reading?

    ___ 15-20 minutes

    ___ 20-30 minutes

    ___ 30-40 minutes

    ___ 40-50 minutes

6. Is your classroom library…

    ___ purchased for you by your campus

___ purchased by you

___ a combination of texts purchased by you and the school

7. How many titles are in your classroom library?

___ Approximately 1-24 titles

___ Approximately 25-49 titles

___ Approximately 50-99 titles

___ Approximately 100-499 titles

___ Approximately 500-99 titles

___ More than 1000 titles

8. How do students choose texts for independent reading in your classroom?

___ reading level

___ complete choice

___ genre-based

___ other

9. At any point in the school year, do you use a reading interest inventory to determine what your students are interested in?

___ yes

___ no

10. If you use a reading interest inventory, do you use the inventory to match students to texts that they may be interested in reading during Independent Reading?

___ yes

___ no

___ not applicable

11. Do you have any of the following types of texts in your classroom library?

___ texts based on videogames

___ texts based on movies

___ texts based on television shows

___ texts based on superheroes

___ graphic novels

___ comic books

___ magazines ___ other

APPENDIX D

Interview Questions:

Tell me how you define independent reading.

Tell me about the independent reading time in your classroom.

What kinds of texts do the students read during IR? What are some examples?

What types of choice do students are available in texts that students are allowed to read during IR?

What resources do you have available for independent reading in your classroom library?

Is the school library a place students go for independent reading resources? If so, how and what types?

What kinds of texts do you expect students to read during IR? What are some examples?

How do you communicate with students who are reluctant/or off-task during IR? Tell me about a recent conference/communication you had with an off-task or reluctant reader.

Tell me a bit about your educational background and teacher preparation?

What sorts of book recommendations do you make for students who are not reading their self-selected books?
Tell me about a time when you have had to make a decision about a text a student wanted to read during IR. What factors affected your decision?

Tell me what you understand about popular culture texts.

APPENDIX E

CLASSROOM LIBRARY	Y	N	FIELD NOTES AND TEACHER LANGUAGE
• Books are categorized and labeled			
• Wide variety of genres (e.g., mystery, biographies, poetry, science fiction)			
• Evidence of Popular Culture Texts in Classroom Library			
• Books to accommodate all readers' interests and levels			
DURING READING	**Y**	**N**	**FIELD NOTES AND TEACHER LANGUAGE**
Teacher confers with students during independent reading.			
Teacher makes text suggestions based on students' interests.			

APPENDIX F

Post Interview Questions

What would your ideal independent reading look like?

How often do you add books to your classroom library?

How often do students check out books from your classroom library?

What do you think of independent reading as a component of balanced literacy?

Tell me about the importance of guided reading and literature circles that happen during your independent reading time.

How does independent reading change from the beginning to the middle to the end of the year?

How much time do students spend in independent reading time per week?

APPENDIX G

The following survey was adapted and used my permission from Dr. Mary Jane Shuker
and Dr. John Dickie.

John Dickie <John.Dickie@vuw.ac.nz>
Mon 9/5/2016 8:51 PM
Inbox

Mark as unread

Hi Melinda
I have spoken to Mary Jane and we are happy for you to have a copy of our survey and adapt it if you wish to.

We mailed the survey out to teachers as a little 12 page booklet. We had quite a lot of background/demographic questions for the teachers at the beginning of the survey and we didn't use much of that information. I had the feeling that the total length of our survey may have put some teachers off wanting to complete it so I suggest it could be shortened by reducing some of the first questions.

Best wishes for your research. We really enjoyed our own research, especially meeting the children and teachers.

I found the popular culture research that Anne Haas Dyson did with young children to be inspirational and fun to read.

Kind regards

John Dickie

Dear Elementary Teacher,

I am a doctoral candidate in Literacy at Sam Houston State University. I am conducting research on teacher perceptions of student choice of popular culture texts during independent reading under the guidance of Dr. Hannah Gerber, an Associate Professor of Literacy from Sam Houston State University.

I would like for you to complete an anonymous survey on elementary school teachers' perceptions of popular culture texts and independent reading. You will not provide any identifying information in the survey, so your responses will in no way be able to be linked back to you. Completing the survey is 100% voluntary and if you do not wish to complete the survey, it will in no way impact your status or standing in your current job, nor will it impact any status or standing with Sam Houston State University. However, clicking forward to complete this survey signifies that you have granted informed consent and acknowledge that your responses may be used in research and publications about teachers' perceptions of popular culture texts.

If you wish to complete the survey please do so to the best of your ability. I will keep all of the survey data in a password-protected file.

Should you have any questions about this study please contact me at msbutler@shsu.edu. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant in this study, please contact Sharla Miles at the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at Sam Houston State University at (936) 294-4875 or by emailing her at irb@shsu.edu.

Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,

Melinda S. Butler

Doctoral Candidate Sam Houston State University

In the left-hand column, please place a checkmark next to the books you have in your classroom library and indicate the number of copies that you have in your library in the right-hand column. Thank you!

✓	Titles	Author	Number of Copies
	A Wrinkle in Time (1962)	Madeleine L'Engle	
	Anastasia Again (1981)	Lois Lowry	
	Blubber (1974)	Judy Blume	
	Bone #1: Out From Boneville (2005)	Jeff Smith	
	The Adventures of Captain Underpants (1997)	Dav Pilkey	
	Drama (2012)	Raina Telgemeier	
	Draw Me a Star (1998)	Eric Carle	
	Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince (2006)	J. K. Rowling	
	Hop on Pop (1963)	Dr. Seuss	
	If I Ran the Zoo (1950)	Dr. Seuss	
	James and the Giant Peach (1961)	Roald Dahl	
	Julie of the Wolves (1972)	Jean Craighead George	
	Junie B. Jones and a Little Monkey Business (1993)	Barbara Park	
	Olive's Ocean (2005)	Kevin Henkes	
	Pinkerton, Behave! (2002)	Steven Kellogg	
	The Adventures of Super Diaper Baby: The First Graphic Novel (2002)	Dav Pilkey	
	The Stupids Step Out (1977)	Harry Allard	
	The Watson's Go to Birmingham (1995)	Christopher Paul Curtis	
	The Witches (1983)	Roald Dahl	
	Walter the Farting Dog (2001)	Kotzwinkle & Murray	
	Where's Waldo? (2007)	Martin Hanford	

If given the money to purchase these titles please rate the following texts from 1-21, (1 being the title you would most like to have in your classroom library, and 21 being the least favorite title that you would like to have in your classroom library. Thank you!

| Rate from 1-21	Titles	Author
	A Wrinkle in Time (1962)	Madeleine L'Engle
	Anastasia Again (1981)	Lois Lowry
	Blubber (1974)	Judy Blume
	Bone #1: Out From Boneville (2005)	Jeff Smith
	The Adventures of Captain Underpants (1997)	Dav Pilkey
	Drama (2012)	Raina Telgemeier
	Draw Me a Star (1998)	Eric Carle
	Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince (2006)	J. K. Rowling
	Hop on Pop (1963)	Dr. Seuss
	If I Ran the Zoo (1950)	Dr. Seuss
	James and the Giant Peach (1961)	Roald Dahl
	Julie of the Wolves (1972)	Jean Craighead George
	Junie B. Jones and a Little Monkey Business (1993)	Barbara Park
	Olive's Ocean (2005)	Kevin Henkes
	Pinkerton, Behave! (2002)	Steven Kellogg
	The Adventures of Super Diaper Baby: The First Graphic Novel (2002)	Dav Pilkey
	The Stupids Step Out (1977)	Harry Allard
	The Watson's Go to Birmingham (1995)	Christopher Paul Curtis
	The Witches (1983)	Roald Dahl
	Walter the Farting Dog (2001)	Kotzwinkle & Murray
	Where's Waldo? (2007)	Martin Hanford

The following survey is used by permission from Dr. John Dickie and Dr. Mary Jane Shuker.

Aspects of Popular Culture

For the purpose of this survey children's popular culture may include such things as **television, video games, movies, comics, toys, music, books, games, magazines, cards and sports.** You may have other examples. Uses of popular culture may include teacher and/or child initiated examples. Which of the following are being used in your school?

Please indicate by marking the response that most clearly matches your service's experience, where:

    1 = Frequently [daily or almost daily]
    2 = Sometimes [once or twice a week]
    3 = Never/Rarely

	Frequently	Sometimes	Never/Rarely
1. Children's TV programs	①	②	③
2. Adult TV programs	①	②	③
3. Music	①	②	③
4. Computer games	①	②	③
5. Comics	①	②	③
6. Children's TV Cartoons	①	②	③
7. Books	①	②	③
8. Magazines	①	②	③
9. Toys associated with TV programs	①	②	③
10. Food associated with TV programs	①	②	③
11. Sports teams or "national heroes"	①	②	③

12. Could you please give some examples to illustrate the above aspects of popular culture.

_____

13. Could you describe any examples of children using characters, plots or any ideas from popular culture in activities at your school? For example, are there any particular movies or TV programs that children draw on in their dramatic play, reading, writing, storytelling writing or art work? The written work may include visual representations such as symbols or logos.

_____

Early Childhood Teachers/Educators Only (Pre-K- Kindergarten)

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements by marking the response that most clearly matches your teaching experiences and/or how you feel, where:

1	=	*Strongly disagree*
2	=	*Disagree*
3	=	*Somewhat disagree*
4	=	*Somewhat agree*
5	=	*Agree*
6	=	*Strongly agree*

	Strongly agree				
	Agree				
	Somewhat agree				
	Somewhat disagree				
	Disagree				
	Strongly disagree				
14. Making links to popular culture is appropriate in early childhood c programs.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥				
15. Incorporating aspects of popular culture helps children to make sense of literacy in early childhood.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥				
16. Incorporation of traditional children's literature is part of the early childhood literacy programs.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥				
17. Incorporation of literacy links to popular culture is part of the early childhood service's literacy programs.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥				

1st to 5th Grade School Teachers Only

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements by marking the response that most clearly matches your teaching experiences and/or how you feel, where:

1 = Strongly disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Somewhat disagree
4 = Somewhat agree
5 = Agree
6 = Strongly agree

	Strongly agree					
	Agree					
	Somewhat agree					
	Somewhat disagree					
	Disagree					
	Strongly disagree					
18. Making links to popular culture is appropriate in school curricula in what is taught and what is assessed.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. Incorporating aspects of popular culture helps children to make sense of literacy in school literacy curricula.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. Incorporation of traditional children's literature is part of school literacy curricula.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. Incorporation of literacy links to popular culture is part of my school's literacy curricula.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. Reading and writing standards are likely to discourage teachers from incorporating popular culture into classroom lessons.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. Reading and writing standards won't interfere with teachers' ability to link to popular culture.	1	2	3	4	5	6

24. Would monitoring children's interest in popular culture contribute to your overall teacher judgment of children's standards of reading and writing? Please comment below:

APPENDIX H

Sam Houston
STATE UNIVERSITY
A Member of The Texas State University System

Institutional Review Board
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
903 Bowers Blvd, Huntsville, TX 77341-2448
Phone: 936.294.4875
Fax: 936.294.3622
irb@shsu.edu
www.shsu.edu/~rgs_www/irb/

DATE: October 31, 2016

TO: Melinda Butler [Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Hannah Gerber]

FROM: Sam Houston State University (SHSU) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: *Early Career Elementary Teachers' Perceptions of Popular Culture Texts During Independent Reading [T/D]*

PROTOCOL #:   2016-09-25283

SUBMISSION TYPE: INITIAL REVIEW—RESPONSE TO MODIFICATIONS

ACTION: APPROVED

APPROVAL DATE: October 31, 2016
EXPIRATION DATE: October 31, 2017

REVIEW TYPE: EXPEDITED

REVIEW CATEGORIES: 7

Thank you for your submission of your **Response to Modifications** for this project. The Sam Houston State University (SHSU) IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received **Expedited** Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure which are found on the Application Page to the SHSU IRB website.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. Please use the

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Sam Houston State University IRB's records

VITA

Melinda S. Butler, M.Ed.
Academic Lead Teacher
Jack M. Fields, Sr. Elementary School
2505 S. Houston Avenue
Humble, TX 77396
Work: 281 641-2727
mbutler@humbleisd.net

Education:

Sam Houston State University Ed.D. Projected: May, 2018

Sam Houston State University M.Ed. August 2007

Northern Arizona University B.S. May 1980

Certifications and Licensures:

Reading Specialist Certificate, EC-12, Texas Department of Education

English as a Second Language Certificate, EC-12, Texas Department of Education

Elementary Self-Contained, Grades 1-6, Texas Department of Education

Honors:

Campus Teacher of the Year, 2007-2008 and 2013-2014

Outstanding Doctoral Student, Sam Houston State University (2014-2015)

First Place, 3 Minute Thesis, Sam Houston State University (2017)

Public School Teaching

August 2007-present Instructional Reading Coach
Jack Fields Elementary

August 2006-June 2007 Fourth Grade Language Arts Teacher
Jack Fields Elementary

August 2003- June 2006 Third Grade Self-Contained Teacher
Jack Fields Elementary

August 2002- June 2003 Fourth Grade Language Arts Teacher
Jack Fields Elementary

August 2001-June 2002 Third Grade Language Arts Teacher
Stafford IntermediatE Scholarship

Peer-Reviewed Publications

Butler, M. S., & Votteler, N. K. (2016). Disequilibrium: An Instructional Coach's Reflection. *Texas Association for Literacy Educators (TALE) Journal.* Accepted for publication in *4*(1).

Published Book Reviews

Butler, M. S., (2013). Out of the Cold: A Robyn Hunter Mystery. A Review. SIGNAL Journal (37) 1,

Butler, M. S., (2014). Bruised. A Review. SIGNAL Journal (37) 2.

Butler, M. S., (2017). Making Bombs for Hitler. A Review. TALE Newsletter (7)1.

Peer-Reviewed National Professional Presentations
(underlined represents student contributions)

Gerber, H., Abrams, S. S., Price, D., Miller, M., Votteler, N., Stufft, C., Benge, C., Neimeyer, D., Kwoka, L., & Butler, M. S. (December, 2013). From Donkey Kong to Metroid to Call of Duty: Teachers implementing games-based literacy learning to engage students. Paper proposed to the 2013 Literacy Research Association Conference, Dallas, Texas.

Butler, M. S., (2013). Changing lives: One reader at a time. Poster Session for the 2014 National Council of Teachers of English Annual Meeting. Washington D.C.

Gerber, H., Ranzau, S., Abrams, Arzt, J., Garland, K., Kajder, S., Maije, A., Malo Juvera, V., McDermott, M., Moran, C., Olsese, N., Schipke, R., Warner, J., Yerk, M., Young, C., & Butler, M. S. (2013). Exploring story through technology in English education: Using a wiki for summer professional reading groups (Butler Roundtable Topic), at the 2014 National Council of Teachers of English, Washington, D.C.

Benge, C. L., Butler, M. S., Athans, K., Keelan, J., Morris, A., & Combs, J. P. (2016). Using academic notebooks in doctoral writing: An investigation of doctoral students' and instructors' perceptions. Paper proposed to the 2016 American Educational Research Conference, Washington, D. C.

Butler, M. S. (2017). "Hey, can you find me a book? Reclaiming reading engagement through the use of popular culture texts at the National Council of Teachers of English Conference, St. Louis, Missouri.

Regional, State, and Local Presentations

Butler, M. S., & Orand, D. (2008). Presentation at the 2008 Sam Houston Area Reading Council/Texas Association for the Improvement of Reading Conference, Sam Houston State University, The Woodlands, Texas.

Butler, M. S., Tijero, K., & Gary, M. (2009). Presentation at the 2009 Sam Houston Area Reading Council/Texas Association for the Improvement of Reading Conference, Sam Houston State University, The Woodlands, Texas.

Butler, M. S., (2012). Independent reading: The I's and why's at the Passport to Learning Conference, Humble Independent School District, Humble, Texas.

Butler, M.S., Chatham, T., Thompson, R., & Ucci, P., (2012). Independent reading: The Is and whys, at the Sam Houston Reading & Writing Project Conference, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas.

Butler, M. S., (2013). The (em)power of I Am: Action research in a Title 1 elementary school, at the 2013 Joan Prouty Conference, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas.

Butler, M. S., (2013). Independent reading: No fake reading allowed at the Passport to Learning Conference, Humble Independent School District, Humble, Texas.

Butler, M.S., & Ucci, P., (2013). Multi-genre writing, at the Sam Houston Reading & Writing Project/Texas Association for the Improvement of Reading Conference, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas.

Butler, M. S., (2014). Changing lives: One reader at a time at the 2015 Texas Council of Teachers of English State Conference, Houston, Texas.

Butler, M. S., Keelan, J., and Davis, R. (2015). Utilizing transmedia texts in the classroom at the Texas Association for Literacy Education Conference, Sam Houston State University, The Woodlands, Texas.

Butler, M. S. (2015). Independent reading: No fake reading allowed at the Baylor University/Texas Association for the Improvement of Reading Conference, Baylor University, Waco, Texas.

Butler, M. S. (2016). "Hey, can you find me a book?" Providing access to popular culture texts for economically disadvantaged students at the Texas Association for Literacy Education Conference, University of the Incarnate Word, San Antonio, Texas.

Butler, M. S. & Montelongo, T. (2017). All wrapped up (in a text): Strategies to move students towards immersion in independent reading at the Texas Association for Literacy Education Conference, Texas A & M University, Corpus Christi, Texas.

McIntush, K., Butler, M. S., & Coyne, J. (2017). Tech tools you can use at the Bring 'Em Back, Kats Conference at Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas.

Butler, M. S. (2017). "Hey, can you find me a book?" Reclaiming student reading engagement through the use of popular culture texts at the Baylor TAIR Conference at Region 12, Baylor, Texas.

Butler, M. S. (2018). Super Heroes, Captain Underpants, and Amulet: Integrating popular culture into reading workshop at the Texas Association for Literacy Education Conference, West Texas A & M University, Canyon, Texas.

Conference Proposals Submitted

Butler, M. S., (2013). Changing lives: One reader at a time. Presentation proposed for the 2014 National Council of Teachers of English Annual Meeting. Washington D.C. (accepted as combined poster session).

Butler, M. S., (2014). Changing lives: One reader at a time. Presentation proposed for the 2015 Texas Council of Teachers of English State Conference, Houston, Texas (accepted and presented).

Gerber, H., Ranzau, S., Abrams, Arzt, J., Garland, K., Kajder, S., Maije, A., Malo Juvera, V., McDermott, M., Moran, C., Olsese, N., Schipke, R., Warner, J., Yerk, M., Young, C., & Butler, M. S. (2013). Exploring story through technology in English education: Using a wiki for summer professional reading groups (Butler Roundtable Topic). Presentation proposed for the 2014 National Council of Teachers of English, Washington, D.C. (accepted as roundtable leader).

Keelen, C., Keelan, J., & Butler, M. (2014). Utilizing transmedia texts in the classroom. Presentation proposed for the 2015 Texas Association of Literacy Educators, The Woodlands, Texas (accepted).

Keelan, J., and Butler, M. S. (2015). Time for transmedia: Integrating digital literacy into literature circles. Presentation proposed for the 19th European Conference on Literacy, Klagenfurt, Austria (accepted but unable to attend).

Butler, M. S. (2015). Independent reading: No fake reading allowed. Presentation proposed for the Baylor University/Texas Association for the Improvement of Reading Conference, Baylor University, Waco, Texas (accepted).

Butler, M. S. (2015). Adventure Time to WWE: Integrating popular culture texts into classroom libraries. Presentation for the International Council for Educational Media Conference, Medellin, Colombia (accepted but unable to attend).

Butler, M. S. (2016). "Hey, can you find me a book?" Providing access to popular culture texts for economically disadvantaged students. Presentation proposed for Texas Association for Literacy Educators Conference, University of the Incarnate Word, San Antonio, Texas (accepted).

Butler, M. S. & Montelongo, T. (2017). All wrapped up (in a text): Strategies to move students towards immersion in independent reading. Presentation proposed for the Texas Association for the Texas Association for Literacy Education Conference, Texas A & M University, Corpus Christi, Texas (accepted).

McIntush, K., Butler, M. S., Coyne, J. (2017). Technology you can use. Presentation proposed for the Bring 'Em Back, Kats Conference, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas (accepted).

Butler, M. S. (2017). "Hey, can you find me a book? Reclaiming reading engagement through the use of popular culture texts. Presentation proposed for the National Council of Teachers of English Conference, St. Louis, Missouri (accepted).

Butler, M. S. (2017). "Hey, can you find me a book?" Reclaiming student reading engagement through the use of popular culture texts at the Baylor TAIR Conference at Region 12, Baylor, Texas (accepted).

Butler, M. S. (2018). Super Heroes, Captain Underpants, and Amulet: Integrating popular culture into reading workshop. Presentation proposed for the Texas Association for Literacy Education Conference, West Texas A & M University, Canyon, Texas (accepted).

Butler, M. S. (2018). Super Heroes, Captain Underpants, and Amulet: Integrating popular culture into reading workshop. Presentation proposed for the International Literacy Association, Austin, Texas (not accepted).

Service

Advisory Board, Sam Houston State University Reading Masters' Program, 2016.

Advocacy Committee Co-Director, Texas Association of Literacy Educators, 2016 present.

Exhibits Chair, Texas Association for the Improvement of Reading, 2011-present.

Family Promise of Lake Houston volunteer

President-Elect, Texas Association for the Improvement of Reading, 2017-present.

Texas Council of Teachers of English Association Elementary (PK-5) Section Committee, 2018-present.

Public Schools Service

Instructional Coach Team (met monthly with the district Elementary Coordinator to plan instruction for upcoming Instructional Coach trainings) (2011-2013)

Campus Site-Based Team Member (2012-present)

Team Member for Instructional Support Team (2012-present)

Curriculum Development Team (2014-2015)

Humble Leadership Academy (2016-2017)

Professional Affiliations

American Educational Research Association

Association of Texas Professional Educators

International Literacy Association

Literacy Research Association

National Council of Teachers of English

National Writing Project (Sam Houston Writing Project)

Texas Association for the Improvement of Reading

Texas Association of Literacy Educators

Texas Council of Teachers of English