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Teacher Attitudes of the Effectiveness of Reading Comprehension Strategies and Interventions

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Abstract

This study surveyed the attitudes of secondary teachers in a semi-rural school district in West Virginia in an attempt to gain an understanding of how teachers in the district perceived the comprehension skills of their students and the effectiveness of reading comprehension strategies and interventions currently being employed by the district and by individual teachers. The researcher developed a survey that was distributed to all the secondary schools in the district. The survey consisted of Likert Scale questions and opened ended responses. The results of the survey indicated that the participants believe that overall the comprehension skills of students in the district are adequate there is, however, a need for increased support for struggling students readers, especially students with learning disabilities. Results also indicated that most teachers believe that strategies and interventions focused on higher order thinking skills, such as summarizing and previewing, along with content specific motivational and vocabulary strategies are most effective in increasing reading comprehension skills.

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Chapter One

Statement on the Problem

Understanding that today's educational landscape is built upon the idea students in our classrooms are regularly falling behind on the global scale in terms of achievement, teachers are continually challenged with the daunting task of how to ensure that students are improving academically on a yearly basis. Many times improvement for some students may seem unattainable, or at best minimal. When one looks at the current levels of success on state and national achievement tests such as the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) modest gains in achievement can be seen, but the concern is that the increases are only seen in basic skills. Students still have difficulty analyzing and comprehending complex text that is the basis for many secondary education classrooms. So for educators and the educational system, how do we address the current state of literacy and comprehension as a nation and at the local and district levels, specifically at the secondary levels?

This study examined some of the current research being conducted in the areas of strategies and interventions, the ability of students to comprehend current content texts, and the perceived effectiveness of those strategies for both the general education and special education populations. The National Panel for Reading (2000) outlined five areas of literacy considered to be essential for the development of good reading skills. Researchers have since adapted the original five areas of phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension to secondary education instruction by replacing the areas of phonics and phonemic awareness with word study and motivation (Boardman et. al, 2008). The advanced texts that students encounter at the secondary level creates a dilemma for both students (especially learning disabled students) and teachers in the sense that struggling readers lack the ability and/or skills to decipher the

complex nature of new vocabulary and content specific reading passages (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2010). With the demands of state and federal agencies to annually increase standardized test scores looming largely on the minds of district officials, educators in the today's classrooms are tasked with finding new ways to ensure student success.

Research indicates that school districts have taken various approaches to addressing the concerns of educational community in regards to improving reading skills. One such approach is the state/district wide tiered approach in which students move through the different levels dependent upon their ability to achieve success in each tier. With the reauthorization of IDEA 2004 the federal government has given states and districts a framework for addressing education deficiencies on a larger scale, through its tiered Response To Intervention guidelines. Many states and districts have adapted this tiered approach to address the issue of improving student success in areas such as literacy. The literature on current research of tiered approaches seems to suggest that under a district or school-wide approach more resources can be allocated to reach a larger number of struggling students.

The other approaches to interventions for success in reading revolve around the specific strategies used in the classrooms. While much of the literature points to primary education and instructional strategies, many recent studies have focused upon the need for increased classroom supports and strategies to improve literacy and reading in the content areas. As students enter the secondary grade levels many teacher make the assumption that the students have the ability to read and comprehend the material in the content specific classrooms, but many times that assumption leads to students having little success in the content areas. As previously stated the complexity of content specific texts can lead to low student success rates (Fang & Schleppegrell,

2010), thus teachers must explore new strategies to help struggling readers in content specific

classes.

Rationale for the Study

The purpose of this research was to investigate the attitudes held by educators in today's

secondary classrooms toward the effectiveness of reading comprehension interventions and

strategies for struggling readers in content areas. The study took place, as stated, at the

secondary level; specifically, teachers from the middle and high schools in a semi-rural school

district of various socio-economic levels were surveyed to gather information about the current

level of comprehension of their students, strategies they currently employ for struggling readers,

and their opinions of the effectiveness of interventions in their particular content areas. Looking

at the attitudes of secondary level teachers toward the comprehension levels of their students and

the effectiveness of various interventions aimed at improving comprehension could be a valuable

resource for evaluating the real application of those researched based strategies in today's

educational curriculum.

Research Question

As the focus for this study was to survey the attitudes of secondary teachers in regards to

the effectiveness of reading comprehension interventions and strategies, the research question

that was considered in this study was as follows: What forms of interventions and strategies are

content area teachers at the secondary level employing in their classrooms and what are their

perceptions of the effectiveness of these strategies?

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

Introduction

With the ever-increasing demands for students to score higher and higher on standards-based achievement tests, today's secondary educators are continually facing the challenge of how to ensure that their students reach the pre-determined mark of mastery in their respective content areas. Furthermore, as more states adopt their own versions of the Common Core Curriculum Standards, literacy in the content area will become common place within the secondary classroom (WVDE Next Gen Standards, 2010). Educators now find themselves undertaking the challenge of how to cover all the standards prescribed to them by their state boards of education, including those standards based upon literacy instruction in the content area. With literacy instruction in the content area quickly becoming a priority within the secondary classroom, student success on achievement tests could be heavily indicative of the reading abilities of students. Improving student reading ability can become an obstacle for which many educators have difficulty finding a solution. Students with low comprehension levels will inherently have difficulty attaining mastery of standards associated with content areas that have a significant number of standards that deal with literary elements, such as History and Language Arts (Perie, Grigg, & Donahue, 2005).

In 2000, the National Reading Panel released its report on their review of over 100,000 previous studies focusing on how children learn to read. One of those areas identified as an essential part of literacy instruction is reading comprehension (National Reading Panel Report, 2000). In primary grades (K-5), comprehension and literacy are a high priority for educators; however as students enter the middle and high school years, the idea of literacy instruction gives way to the demands of content instruction. Frequently, secondary educators are caught in a

situation that requires them to evaluate the importance of content standards versus the importance of literacy in their respective disciplines, particularly comprehension of content-specific texts. According to Fang and Schleppegrell (2010), as students enter secondary grades they encounter more complex texts that require more specialized reading instruction. Educators cannot assume that literacy and comprehension instruction ends in the primary grades. Furthermore, with the increased emphasis on literacy instruction at the secondary level (WVDE Next Gen Standards, 2010) and a push toward inclusive classrooms (Fullerton, Ruben, McBride, & Bert, 2011) content teachers will have to find ways to improve the reading abilities identified learning disabled students in the general education setting.

Strategies and Interventions

When considering the topic of reading strategies and interventions, researchers, along with governmental and private research groups, have reflected upon the idea of how best to address the concerns of reading comprehension for struggling readers (Corrin, et al., 2010). Out of that analysis two interesting approaches have come to light: the first of which, attacking the reading comprehension problem at a school-wide or district level approach and the second being an individual classroom approach.

School-wide or district level approaches

The federal guidelines for intervention at the district level can be found in IDEA 2004 from the Department of Education. With the reauthorization of IDEA in 2004 Response To Invention (RTI) became a driving force in not only identifying at risk students for possible special educational services, but has also given states and districts a framework for creating a school-wide, or even, county-wide approaches for intervention to improve academic skills such as reading comprehension (IDEA, 2004). IDEA 2004 recommends RTI functioning as a three

tier approach for delivery of instruction for students that have been identified at risk or are

struggling in academic areas of math, reading, and behavior; instruction becoming more

intensive and personal, and vice versa, as students are moved into and out of each of the three

tiers.

Tier I instruction is recommended to take place in the general education classroom and

consists of providing students with instructional opportunities centered around researched based

strategies (IDEA, 2004). The federal guidelines give no meaningful definition of what constitutes

a "researched based strategy", but the generally researchers agree that research based strategies

are those that have been found effective for improving skills though research and testing. Later

in the literature review some of these strategies will be discussed. Students who are still

struggling after being monitored for progress in Tier I will move to Tier II.

In Tier II students will receive individualized accommodations that have been successful

for other students (IDEA, 2004) such as small group reading activities and reciprocal teaching

(Vaughan et al., 2010). In addition, Tier II students can receive alternative instruction from

teachers other than the general education teacher (IDEA, 2004) such as a reading specialist or a

content specific special educator. As students progress through the first two tiers they are

monitored for success; students that show little or no signs of improvement are moved to Tier III.

Tier III students are often then recommended for testing to receive special education services

after interventions have not resolved the academic issues (IDEA, 2004).

The RTI system is based on an intervention and monitoring schemata that will, in theory,

allow for better identification of students who genuinely fall on the special education spectrum in

reference to learning disabilities. While RTI at the federal level functions as more of an

identification tool for determining eligibility for special education services (IDEA, 2004), the

premise behind a tiered approach to intervention can, and has been modified by many states and private organizations in an attempt to fulfill the needs of struggling students.

The US Department of Education released a report in December 2012 on a study conducted by the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, in which the Content Literacy Continuum (CLC) was evaluated for the effectiveness of its tiered approach in addressing reading comprehension at the secondary level (Corrin et al., 2012). Following along the idea of a tiered approach, the CLC (developed by the University of Kansas Center for research on Learning) framework begins with students receiving instruction in the general education classroom in the form of teachers implementing instructional strategies and techniques that allow students to better understand and manipulate content specific material (Ehren, Deshler, & Graner, 2010). With the content teacher being placed in the position of providing the majority of support at the Tier I level, the supports or interventions are inherently more content specific (Corrin et al., 2012). Teachers at this level will address student concerns in a whole class approach. If the monitoring efforts show students are not progressing at the Tier I level, students will be placed into the second tier of instruction delivery. At this level the teacher looks for opportunities to address student concerns individually, but still within the general education classroom. Unlike RTI, Content Literacy Continuum protocols do not allow for students to be pulled out for instruction outside the general education environment in Tier II (Corrin et al., 2012). Again, keeping the students in the general education classroom allows for the content teacher to provide more content specific instruction that is essential for literacy instruction at the secondary level (Ehren, et al., 2010).

Following the tiered approach, if students are still not responding to inventions in tier one or two the students move on to tier three. In tier three the students are provided instruction by a

special educator of some sort, i.e. reading specialist or content specific special education teacher

(Ehren, et al., 2010). Tier four and five are structured for those students who are already

identified as special needs and are in need of personal support systems. The idea of including all

the teachers in a building or district in the literacy improvement efforts allows for specialized

content literacy instruction that is integral in secondary literacy and comprehension (King-Sears

& Bowman-Kruhm, 2010).

Another example of the school-wide approach to improving literacy and comprehension

for at-risk students is the West Virginia Department of Education's Support for Personalized

Learning (WVDE Policy 2419, 2011). Once again, the tiered approach is used for the Support

for Personalized Learning (SPL) program. Much like the aforementioned Content Literacy

Continuum, SPL takes place most often in the general education classroom, however the biggest

difference is that SPL is structured for all grade levels whereas CLC is a focused approach at the

secondary level (WVDE policy 2419, 2011; Ehren, et al., 2010).

SPL's first tier, referred to as Core Instruction, is structured to provide quality

educational opportunities for all students in the school (WVDE Policy 2419, 2011). Just as with

RTI and CLC, SPL monitors student progress at the Core Level and if students fail to respond to

instruction at the Core Instruction level they are moved into the Targeted Instruction Level (or

Tier II). At the Targeted Level students are still serviced within the general education setting,

but more intensive supports such as scaffolding or study groups are employed to help the student

succeed (WVDE policy 2419, 2011). Pull out instruction does not occur until students have

clearly showed signs that they are not capable of succeeding in the general education classroom.

At this point students are moved into the Intensive Support Level. Only about 3-5% of the

student population will receive instruction at this level (WVDE policy 2419, 2011).   Much like

the two previously mentioned approaches, SPL allows for students to have multiple opportunities

for success, and multiple teachers to guide them to success.

While the literature seems to suggest, school-wide tiered approaches are very effective,

these approaches have one serious downfall: Administrators and Teachers supporting and

continuing the programs. In other words, if everyone doesn't believe in the system and work

toward successful implementation and continuation of the process it will fail (Corrin, et al.,

2012). When one considers the advantages of having a complete school or district functioning as

a unit moving toward a common goal, it seems almost absurd that educators would have a

difficulty supporting and continuing a program that stands a chance of reaching the majority of

their struggling students.

Classroom Specific Approaches

According to Moje (2008), secondary literacy education should be characterized by

instruction that allows students to gain comprehension/literacy within the content area, rather

than just learning about the content within the various disciplines. Educators should apply as

much or more focus on ensuring that students can comprehend the language and context of

discipline specific materials as they do on specific content and information within the discipline

(i.e. dates of events in history or steps of the scientific method in science). Educators should

focus upon comprehension strategies that support understanding of material within their

discipline. More cognitive based strategies should be the center of comprehension instruction at

the secondary level (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2010). Students should learn new ways to

disseminate the complex language and principles found at the secondary level (Halliday, 2007),

such as word study activities to learn unfamiliar context specific vocabulary. Due to the

complexity of content specific texts, simple comprehension instruction in the elements of literacy

that are found in the primary grades seems to be inadequate at the secondary level, and more specialized comprehension strategies that focus on content specific material will allow for better knowledge acquisition and retention (King & Bowman, 2010).

Reading comprehension strategies employed by teachers in secondary content classes should focus on providing access to content through self-monitored comprehension of read material, additionally, teachers must be certain to be explicit in their instruction and usage of the strategies they chose to utilize to improve comprehension (Reed & Vaughan, 2012). Meaning that simply providing students with tools such as graphic organizers to fill in or complete is not enough; teachers need to instruct the students about the reason for why the strategy is important and how it can help them understand the material (Reed & Vaughan, 2012). Tell students why they are doing what they are doing (Manset-Williamson & Nelson, 2005). When students understand the strategies and how they work; they can more readily use those strategies independently in future interactions with content specific texts (Reed & Vaughan, 2012). Teachers need to involve their students in discussion of the specifics of the content they are reading (i.e. settlement patterns in social studies or formulas in science and math) and allow them to ask and use content specific vocabulary in discussion (Reed & Vaughan, 2012). Providing opportunity for students to analyze content specific material in discussion, oral or written, allows them to gain familiarity with the subject matter leading to greater comprehension of content specific material (Boardman et al., 2008). Teachers need to be cognizant of the idea that students need guidance not only of the material but how to access the material taught in their classrooms.

Specific Strategies

      Continuing the discussion of strategies in the classroom setting, one must also consider specific strategies or interventions for improving content literacy and comprehension. The literature written about secondary content literacy and comprehension is not as abundant as that written about primary grades, but the review did reveal many strategies for improving content literacy and comprehension at the secondary level. According to Boardman, Roberts, Vaughn, Wexler, Murray, and Kosanovich, (2008), literacy instruction for older students should focus on the following areas: Word Study, Fluency, Vocabulary, Comprehension and Motivation. These five areas differ from the five areas identified by the NPR (2000) report in that the areas of phonics and phonemic awareness have been excluded because most adolescent readers have adequately masters these two areas (Boardman et. al., 2008).

      Word Study

      According to Scammacca et. al. (2007) students who can accurately recognize and decipher complex words read more fluently, which can add to students' ability to comprehend more complex material. Instruction in word study techniques, such as structural analysis, allows students with week decoding ability to develop skills to break down unfamiliar, multi-syllabic in to smaller more understandable pieces (Boardman et. al., 2008). Teachers employing word study instructional techniques should focus on teaching students to understand word parts such as prefixes, suffixes, and root words (Boardman et. al., 2008). When students gain an understanding of the parts of multi-syllabic words they can more accurately make connections between the unfamiliar words and the text possibly leading to a greater degree of comprehension of complex texts, including those found in middle and high school grade levels (Scammacca et al., 2007).

Fluency

While fluency is an essential aspect of reading comprehension for readers at a younger age, research indicates that fluency instruction may not yield an increase in reading comprehension ability for older students (Scammacca et al., 2007). Although fluency instruction may not lead to increased comprehension for older students, it is an essential component for all readers including struggling adolescent readers (Rasinski, Padak, McKeon, Wilcong, Friedauer, & Heim, 2005). Fluency instruction should center around identification of and familiarity with content specific words to create a greater working vocabulary in content specific areas (Roberts et. al., 2008). Focused repeated reading strategies of content specific passages that require students to become more fluent with content specific words and information could lead to greater comprehension of the subject material in general (Roberts et. al., 2008).

Vocabulary

According to the NPR report (2000), instruction in the meanings of words is an essential element of reading comprehension. Fang and Schleppegrell (2010) state that the language used in secondary texts is unfamiliar and much more complicated than what students are exposed to in their daily lives, therefore, instructional practices focused on increasing student vocabulary, especially complex content specific vocabulary, leads to increased prior knowledge of adolescents and can possibly allow for greater student accessibility to content specific texts and increased comprehension in content areas such as Science and Social Studies (Boardman et. al. 2008).

According to Stahl (2003), students learn vocabulary gradually through repeated exposure, therefore, students should be offered multiple opportunities to establish familiarity and meaning for new words. Explicit vocabulary instruction strategies that incorporate the use of

simple definitions prior to reading, examples and non-examples, and visuals all lead increased

vocabulary retention and comprehension (Kim, Vaughn, Wanzek, & Wei, 2004). Another key

component of vocabulary instruction, according to Jitendra, Edwards, Sacks, and Jacobson

(2004), is to expose students to new vocabulary through frequent oral usage and repeated text

exposure. Lastly, vocabulary instruction being essential for all content areas, schools should

consider the implementation school-wide initiatives geared toward increased vocabulary

instruction. (Scammacca et. al. 2007).

Motivation

According to Morgan and Fuchs (2007), poor readers lack general motivation in terms of

reading. Students who have experienced consistent failure, especially those students with

learning disabilities, in the area of reading can gain distaste for reading, which can lead to a lack

of reading comprehension (Morgan & Fuchs, 2007). Many times students who lack the

motivation to read will spill over into their personal life goals causing a situation where such

students my not prepare for job interviews or even written drivers tests, therefore, motivation for

reading becomes not only an essential part of academic success but also maybe a determining

factor in personal success (Boardman et. al., 2008).

Melekoğlu and Wilkerson (2013) argue that motivational strategies should be a part of

reading instruction, which goes hand in hand with the correlation alluded to by Morgan and

Fuchs (2007) between lack of motivation to read and poor reading comprehension. Boardman et.

al. (2008) suggest teachers provide hands on interactions for students to engage in during reading

instruction including creating brochures, posters, and short videos after reading a selected text.

Teachers should also allow for students to have a degree of autonomy over their reading

activities, for instance, permit students to choose the reading material or chose their partners or

group members, or maybe even allowing the students to chose what product they will produce after reading, i.e. essay, poster, board game, or skit (Boardman. et. al., 2008). Creating a classroom environment that generates an atmosphere for enjoyment of reading may lead to increased student motivation because students who enjoy reading tend to seek out others who enjoy reading and share their reading experiences (Strommen and Davis, 2004).

Comprehension

The ability to understand written language being the ultimate goal of literacy instruction at all levels; teachers should make efforts to ensure that students are provided instruction in the use of strategies for improving comprehension (Boardman et. al., 2008). According to Watson et al. (2012) students need to establish a coherent picture of the task at hand to help foster the development of their working memory. Students need to create a sizable amount of prior knowledge in content specific material to gain a deeper understanding of the material presented at the secondary level (Watson et al., 2012). Teachers who employ strategies that incorporate previewing activities can help students activate prior knowledge in the secondary classroom (Boardman et al., 2008). Imploring students to access known schemata can be an essential key to success in content classes.

Students' inability to access texts that are laden with complex vocabulary and increasingly difficult concepts can lead to students experiencing difficulties in success as they grow older (King & Bowman, 2010). Therefore, teachers should try to create opportunities for students to garner skills in self-monitoring in terms of comprehension (Boardman et al., 2008). Students who can recognize and fix problems with their comprehension will become better readers and experience greater success.

Specific techniques for accessing content specific texts are fundamental to student

success (Reed & Vaughan, 2012). For example, social studies can engage learners in activities

such graphic organizers to help organize specific information from a speech or create timelines

to practice sequencing, fostering comprehension in the content area (Reed & Vaughan, 2012).

Another helpful practice for teachers to use in terms of accessing content texts is summarizing;

students can bind the concepts in content areas together through summarization techniques

(Watson et al., 2012). When content teachers focus on reading comprehension and content

literacy they can ensure the likelihood for student success even when students are struggling

(Deshler, 2005).

Students: General Education and Learning Disabled Students

During the research of the general topic of reading comprehension and reading

comprehension strategies/interventions, the issue of learning disabled students abilities to

comprehend content specific texts became apparent as much of the research that has been

conducted on reading comprehension and comprehension strategies focuses upon the need for

interventions for learning disabled students. As cited by Solis, Miciak, Vaughan, and Fletcher

(2014), in 2013 60% of eighth graders with disabilities scored below basic levels on the National

Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading test, whereas only 18% of students without

disabilities scored below basic reading levels on the same assessment. This statistic alone seems

to indicate that there is definitely a discrepancy amongst the general education population and

students that have been identified as learning disabled in terms of reading ability. While this

discrepancy is apparent, one must also look at the performance of the general education

population at the proficient level (proficient defined by the NAEP as being able to comprehend

and apply advanced concepts). According to the 2013 NAEP report only 34% of eighth grade

students reached the proficient level on the reading test. One can draw the conclusion that although general education students are performing at a greater rate at the basic level than their learning disabled peers, they still lack the ability, in many cases, to comprehend advanced content specific texts. Understanding that students with identified learning disabilities in reading will inherently have difficulty understanding content specific texts, one should also consider the apparent lack of ability to comprehend content specific texts amongst the general education population.

According to Roberts, Torgesen, Boardman, & Scammacca (2008), although most secondary students receive quality reading instruction at the primary levels they can still have problems with comprehension as they move into higher grades. While this statement is true for all struggling readers, LD students in particular are at risk of falling behind as they enter the secondary school level and are required to access more specialized complex texts (Roberts,et al., 2008). Literacy instruction in the content area needs to be a priority for both special and general educators (Seifert & Espin, 2012). The expertise of the general educator to expose the students (both general education students and LD students) to the content of specific subjects, coupled with the special educators expertise in intervention strategies provide an opportunity for students to more readily access and comprehend content material (Seifert & Espin, 2012). Unlike their general education peers, students with LD tend to have low working memory capacity, which leads to LD students struggling to activate prior knowledge of subject matter in content areas that could lead to better comprehension of content specific material (Watson, Gable, Gear, & Hughes, 2012). Weak working memory and a general lack of motivation toward reading adds LD students' weaknesses in comprehending content specific material at the secondary levels of education (Watson, et al., 2012).

After reviewing available literature on the topic of general education and LD comprehension, one can ascertain that many of the problems with secondary reading comprehension ability stem from the lack of priority to content literacy instruction at the secondary level. The ability levels and lack of prior knowledge for both general education and LD students compounds the issue of poor comprehension skills (Watson, et al., 2012). The need for secondary teachers to focus on content specific reading comprehension strategies could possibly be the bridge that is needed to close the gap between LD readers and general education readers, and quite possibly, could be at least one answer to improving comprehension levels for all students.

Another area of discrepancy between general education students and learning disabled students is motivation to read. A study conducted by Melekoğlu and Wilkerson in 2013 indicated that students with disabilities demonstrated low motivation towards reading after receiving instruction in reading geared toward increasing motivation, whereas, their non-disabled peers showed an increase in motivation after receiving the same instruction. While many of today's students are unmotivated readers regardless of reading ability, students with disabilities seem to be less likely to gain more motivation even with motivation oriented strategies such hands on activities or high interest reading selections (Melekoglu & Wilkerson, 2013). Watson et al. (2012) suggests that this lack of interest in reading from LD students is a result of repeated failure in the area of reading. One can understand that if a student feels inadequate in performing a task they probably will not be excited to complete it. Morgan and Fuchs (2007) found that there is a correlation between low motivation and student scores on assessments. This correlation between low motivation and test scores is evidence that educators should consider motivation to read an essential theme for literacy instruction at the secondary level.

Chapter 3: Methods

As the focus of this study is the attitudes of teachers toward the perceived effectiveness of reading comprehension strategies and interventions, the co-investigator chose to create a survey to gather data concerning the topic. After reviewing the literature regarding reading comprehension abilities of students in schools today and the strategies currently being employed to improve those abilities, the co-investigator determined that much of the literature indicated that teacher themselves were integral to the effectiveness of the strategies and interventions being used. Therefore, the co-investor decided that a survey would be the appropriate avenue for research to determine the attitudes of teachers toward the perceived effectiveness of the strategies and interventions. This chapter will outline the methods and procedures by which the co-investigator collected and analyzed the data.

Participants

The sample of participants selected for this study were drawn from the teachers at the all the middle and high schools in a semi-rural school district. As the pool was drawn from all the teachers at the middle and high schools, the participants work experience levels and certification areas will be inherently diverse which provided for a large range of opinions for the survey. The large pool of participants will also allow for a more generalizable population provided that the return rate of the surveys at an acceptable proportional rate to the overall number of participants selected for the study.

Permission to conduct the survey was obtained by the co-investigator from the county secondary education director. The results of the surveys were examined in an attempt to analyze the attitudes the teachers hold on the effectiveness of comprehension strategies used in their classrooms.

Materials

The primary research instrument used in this study was a paper/pencil survey completed anonymously by the participants. The survey was created by the co-investigator and consisted of three sections. The first section contained questions on the demographics of the participants. Section two consisted of Likert scale questions pertaining to the reading levels of students, strategies for reading comprehension and perceived effectiveness of interventions. The third section allowed for participants to answer free response questions focusing on their opinions of the effectiveness of current strategies and interventions for content area comprehension.

Procedures

As stated above the instrument used for this study was a paper/pencil type survey. The surveys were delivered by the co-investigator to the principals of each of the middle and high schools in the county/district. The surveys were placed a sealed manila envelope. Instructions for distribution of the surveys were given to the principals at each school. After participants complete the survey they returned the surveys to the principals to be placed back into the manila envelope for collection by the co-investigator.

Each survey consisted of the three aforementioned sections and also contained instructions on how to complete the survey and time frame in which to complete the survey. The co-investigator included an explanation of why the survey was needed the basis for which the study was being conducted.

The co-investigator collected the surveys two weeks after the date of delivery. Two days prior to the collection date the co-investigator contacted the principals at the schools to ask for a reminder to be sent to the participants to complete the surveys. On the collection date the co-

investigator personally visited each school to gather the surveys that had been completed and placed in the manila envelope.

After collecting the surveys from the principals, the co-investigator opened the manila envelopes and analyzed the data from survey responses. As the participants were drawn from both middle and high schools and from relatively different areas of the county, the rendered results of the responses provided for a diverse array of opinions. The diversity of the participants allowed for the results of the survey to paint a more complete picture of the attitudes held by the teachers in the county. The co-investor analyzed the collected data and recorded the responses in tables to present the quantitative results of the study. The qualitative data resulting from the free response section of the survey was presented in narrative form at the end of chapter four.

Chapter 4: Results

As the goal of this study was to determine the attitudes of participant teachers toward the effectiveness of reading comprehension strategies and interventions, the survey instrument was designed to ascertain the feelings of participants in regards to the role of the school in literacy, the current reading levels of their students, the reading levels of general education students compared to their special education peers, and teachers attitudes toward specific types of comprehension strategies. A total of 279 surveys were distributed across the county. Two of the schools in the study were excluded from the study due to the inability to collect the completed surveys in a reasonable time frame to analyze the responses. The resulting total number of surveys considered for the study was 215. Unfortunately, only 87 of the 215 surveys were returned resulting in a return rate slightly over 40 percent. While the low return rate limits the generalizability of the study, the data obtained from the completed surveys provided a good deal of relevant information for the study.

Demographics

The first section of the survey contained demographic questions. The results are illustrated in table 4.1. Of the 87 returned surveys 83 participants responded to the age demographic questions. Four percent of the respondents were in the age range of 21-25 and 9% were between 26-30 years of age. 29% of the respondents were between 31-45 years of age and 12% were between 46-50 years of age. Lastly, 33% of the respondents were over 50 years of age. Years of full time teaching experience was classified in five year increments with the following results: 0-5 years 20%, 6-10 years 32%, 11-15 years 12%, 16-20 years 10%, 21-25 years 9%, and 25 or more at 14%. In response to the demographic question of degree level,

respondents answered as follows: BA 8%, BA +15 20%, Masters 8%, and Masters + 64%. One

respondent had obtained a Doctorate.

Table 4.1 Demographics						
Age	21-25	26-30	31-45	46-50	50+	
	4%	9%	29%	12%	33%	
Years of Experience	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	25+
	20%	32%	12%	10%	9%	14%
Degree Level	BA	BA+15	Masters	Masters +	Doctorate	
	8%	20%	8%	64%	1%	

Likert Scale Responses

Section two of the survey consisted of Likert Scale questions. The survey was further

broken down into following topics: Literacy goals in the school, Student Levels, Teacher

attitudes of students with learning disabilities vs students without learning disabilities, Teacher

perceptions of Classroom Strategies, and Use of Strategies in the Classroom (how often do you

use each type of strategy).

Table 4.2 illustrates the results of topic one, Literacy in the School. The responses for Q5

were as follows, 7% of the respondents either strongly disagreed or somewhat disagreed whereas

91% either somewhat agreed or strongly agreed. Q6 resulted in the following percentages 3%

strongly disagreed, 21% somewhat disagreed, 62% somewhat agreed, and 12% strongly agreed.

Q7 responses were 2% strongly disagree, 13% somewhat disagree, 55% somewhat agree, and

28% strongly agree. Q.8 responses were 9% strongly disagree, 30% somewhat disagree, 42%

somewhat agree, and 18% strongly agree.

Table 4.2									
Topic: Literacy goals in the school	Strongly Disagree		Somewhat disagree		Somewhat agree		Strongly Agree		Total
	X	%	X	%	X	%	X	%	
Q.5 My school has a goal of increasing literacy for all students	3	3	4	4	33	39	45	52	85
Q.6 The literacy plan for my school is understood by all teachers	3	3	19	21	54	62	11	12	87
Q.7 My school has a plan for increasing literacy in specific content areas	2	2	12	13	48	55	25	28	87
Q.8 My school provides adequate opportunities to help teachers understand literacy goals and plans for the school	8	9	25	30	35	42	15	18	83

Table 4.3 illustrates the responses to the topic of teacher's perceptions of student levels. The responses for Q.9 were as follows: 1% strongly disagree, 12% somewhat disagree, 37% somewhat agree, and 35% strongly agree. Q.10 provided the following percentages: 2% strongly disagree, 20% somewhat disagree, 49% somewhat agree, and 28% strongly agree. Q.11 responses were 12% strongly disagree, 41% somewhat disagree, 38% somewhat agree, and 7% strongly agree. Q.12 resulted in the following results: 7% strongly disagree, 28% somewhat disagree, 52% somewhat agree, and 11% strongly agree. Q.13 responses were 8% strongly disagree, 35% somewhat disagree, 48% somewhat agree, and 8% strongly agree.

Table 4.3									
Topic: Student Levels	Strongly Disagree		Somewhat disagree		Somewhat agree		Strongly Agree		Total
	X	%	X	%	X	%	X	%	
Q.9 My students can recognize and read words from the text	1	1	11	12	37	44	35	41	84
Q.10 My students have reading fluency	2	2	17	20	42	49	24	28	85
Q.11 My students are motivated readers	11	12	35	41	33	38	6	7	85
Q.12 My students can comprehend what they read in their texts	6	7	24	28	44	52	10	11	84
Q.13 My students have sufficient vocabulary knowledge for this content area	7	8	30	35	41	48	7	8	85

Table 4.4 illustrates the responses to the topic of teacher attitudes of students with learning disabilities versus students without learning disabilities. Q.14 provided the following responses: 2% strongly disagree, 18% somewhat disagree, 60% somewhat agree, and 17% strongly agree. Q.15 responses were 1% strongly disagree, 11% somewhat agree, 54% somewhat agree, and 32% strongly agree. Q.16 provided the following responses: 4% strongly disagree, 19% somewhat disagree, 38% somewhat agree, and 38% strongly agree. Q.17 responses were as follows: 19% strongly disagree, 26% somewhat disagree, 42% somewhat agree, and 12% strongly agree. Responses to Q.18 were 2% strongly disagree, 20% somewhat disagree, 45% somewhat agree, and 31% strongly agree.

Table 4.4									
Topic: Teacher attitudes of students with learning disabilities vs students without learning disabilities	Strongly Disagree		Somewhat disagree		Somewhat agree		Strongly Agree		Total
	X	%	X	%	X	%	X	%	
Q.14 Students with learning disabilities recognize sight words and understand word parts in text less often than students without learning disabilities	2	2	13	18	42	60	12	17	69
Q.15 Students with learning disabilities read less fluently than students without learning disabilities	25	1	9	11	43	54	26	32	79
Q.16 Students with learning disabilities have less prior knowledge of content specific vocabulary than student without learning disabilities	4	4	16	19	32	38	32	38	84
Q.17 Students with learning disabilities enjoy reading the same as students without learning disabilities	16	22	22	26	35	42	10	12	83
Q.18 Students with learning disabilities comprehend less of what they read than students without learning disabilities	2	2	16	20	36	45	25	31	79

Table 4.5 illustrates the responses to the topic of teacher perceptions of classroom

strategies. Q.19 provided the following responses: 0% strongly disagree, 15% somewhat

disagree, 64% somewhat agree, and 20% strongly agree. Q.20 responses were 3% strongly

disagree, 31% somewhat disagree, 53% somewhat agree, and 12% strongly agree. Responses to

Q.21 were as follows: 3% strongly disagree, 28% somewhat disagree, 58% somewhat agree, and

8% strongly agree. Q.22 responses provided the following percentages: 1% strongly disagree,

8% somewhat disagree, 62% somewhat agree, and 29% strongly agree. Q.23 responses were 0%

strongly disagree, 6% somewhat disagree, 53% somewhat agree, and 40% strongly agree.

Table 4.5									
Topic: Teacher perceptions of Classroom Strategies	Strongly Disagree		Somewhat disagree		Somewhat agree		Strongly Agree		Total
	X	%	X	%	X	%	X	%	
Q.19 Vocabulary based strategies are most effective to content area comprehension	0	0	12	15	51	64	16	20	79
Q.20 Word study strategies (word parts, phonics, word origin ,etc.) are most effective for increasing content area comprehension	3	3	25	31	43	53	10	12	81
Q.21 Strategies that focus on fluency are most effective for increasing content area comprehension	3	3	23	28	47	58	7	8	80
Q.22 Strategies that motivate students to read are most effective for increasing content area comprehension	1	1	7	8	49	62	23	29	79
Q.23 Strategies that activate prior knowledge and foster analyzation (i.e. previewing and summarizing) are most effective for content area comprehension	0	0	5	6	42	53	32	40	79

Table 4.6 illustrates the topic of how often teachers use specific types of strategies in their classroom. Q.24 resulted in the following responses: 14% 0-1 times a week, 37% at least 2 times a week, 28% at least 3 times a week, and 20% 4 or more times a week. Q.25 provided the following percentages: 53% 0-1 times a week, 24% at least 2 times a week, 10% at least 3 times a week, and 11% 4 or more times a week. The responses to Q.26 yielded the following responses: 49% 0-1 times a week, 19% at least 2 times a week, 17% at least 3 times a week, and 13% 4 or more times a week. Q.27 responses were 13% 0-1 times a week, 16% at least 2 times a week, 31% at least 3 times a week, and 38% 4 or more times a week. Q.28 provided the following responses: 7% 0-1 times a week, 28% at least 2 times a week, 32% at least 3 times a week, and 31% 4 or more times a week. The responses to Q.30 were 2% 0-1 times a week, 20% at least 2 times a week, 30% at least 3 times a week, and 45% 4 or more times a week.

Table 4.6

Topic: Use of strategies (how often do you use each type of strategy)	0-1 times a week		At least 2 times a week		At least 3 times a week		4 or more times a week		Total
	X	%	X	%	X	%	X	%	
Q.24 Vocabulary	11	14	29	37	22	28	16	20	78
Q.25 Word study	42	53	19	24	8	10	9	11	78
Q.26 Fluency	36	49	14	19	13	17	10	13	73
Q.27 Motivation	10	13	12	16	23	31	28	38	73
Q.28 Direct instruction (telling students what and why they are doing what they are doing)	3	4	10	13	21	28	39	53	73
Q.29 Previewing	6	7	22	28	25	32	24	31	77

Q.30 Summarizing	2	2	15	20	22	30	33	45	72

Free Response Questions

The third section of the survey consisted of four free response questions, where participants were asked to answer questions pertaining to their feelings of keys to effective reading comprehension strategies, their feelings on the school's role in increasing reading comprehension skills, their feelings on school-wide/district-wide initiatives such as RTI and SPL, and any additional thoughts or comments. While many of the respondents choose not to answer the free response items, the responses provided some specific insight into how these teachers felt feel about the aforementioned topics. Responses varied greatly in regards to positive and negative comments.

As stated, the responses varied greatly in regards to positive and negative comments. Specifically, responses to Q.31 the key to reading comprehension strategies revealed that the majority of teachers feel diversified strategies and repetition are the most effective method for achieving student success in comprehension skills. Other positive responses to Q.31 included the ideas of ensuring that students obtain foundational reading skills in the early grades and the need for all content areas to take a stake in increasing reading comprehension skills for all students. The following response to Q.31 provided a particular insightful answer:

"Complete and effective foundational strategies of teaching students to read. We take for granted on the secondary level that students know how to read new material, or any material. Especially in areas that have high percentages of academic vocabulary, all

content areas must be trained in literacy and must efficiently implement it in the classroom."

Negative responses to Q.31 generally centered on the belief that students are not receiving effective reading comprehension strategies in the early years of education. Other negatives responses alluded to a general lack of time spent reading and lack of interest reading at home and school. The following responses to Q.31 portray the concerns of teachers surveyed:

"It has to start early in education. We have students who are almost non-readers and it is difficult to pursue reading as content at the high school level"

"Do Not promote students who cannot read"

While the responses to Q.32 followed the trend of varying between positive and negative comments, the general consensus to the question of the school's role in increasing reading comprehension skills was all teachers and administrators shared in the responsibility of creating an environment for student success. Responses ranged from providing cross-curricular strategies to single classroom responsibility. The belief that the school as a whole and the individual teachers providing individualized content specific strategies dominated the responses given by these teachers. The following responses were given to Q.32:

"Involving the whole school from planning, implementing and assessing the plan's effectiveness. Give teachers time in PLCs."

"Each department shares ideas within the groups to determine best practices for each content area."

"School leadership is critical. Reading should be viewed as a cross-curricular experience. Integration of math and science (i.e. numbers, graphs/technical reading skills)"

The vast majority of teachers who responded to Q.33 (What are your feelings toward initiatives such as RTI and SPL) indicated that they were not informed enough about the initiatives, or had no knowledge of the initiatives. Some teachers however did provide responses; most positive responses indicated that the programs were beneficial but the need for all teachers to be trained in the implementation and delivery for them to be successful. Negative responses generally pertained to the programs being redundant or just "a waste of time and money".

The last section of free response items asked teachers to provide any additional thoughts or comments. Most teachers chose not to provide additional comments. Many of the responses were well wishes and suggestions for how to make the survey more receptive. Two responses did provide some unique insight, due to the respondent's own struggles with learning disabilities. Those responses were as follows:

> "Schools and the educational departments want a "fix-it" solution to students with LD. I have LD (dyslexia) my successes in my life have been through my own determination which was enhanced by my parents and older siblings"

> "As a former student with LD in English, nothing helped me until I took action. I went to a book store and found books I wanted to read. After reading on my own in noticed my skills improve in spelling, speed, and comprehension. I still struggle with spelling and my LD."

Two teachers voiced their concerns in regards to the lack of interest in providing programs or services to struggling readers:

> "This county used to train teachers in Wilson Reading System to teach non-readers to read. It saddens me as a teacher, that I have been certified in this system, have non-

readers, but am not given the opportunity to use it because it doesn't prepare them for the test".

"Middle/High school in Putnam County lacks reading help programs. As a reading Specialist I see a need for this in my school."

Chapter 5: Discussion

The analysis resulting from the collected survey responses provided the researcher with an abundance of data to interpret. The following discussion will investigate the possible implications of the results in terms of how these findings might be used to better the opportunity for the county to improve student success. The discussion of the results has been broken down into the following sections: literacy goals in the school, student levels, students with learning disabilities vs. students without learning disabilities, attitudes towards types of strategies and frequency of use and a discussion of the free responses questions. Also in this chapter, the limitations and possible further research are considered.

Literacy goals in the school

On the topic of Literacy goals in the school, responses seem to indicate that the majority of teachers believe that their schools do have a plan for increasing all student literacy and comprehension in specific content areas. Specifically, teachers responded positively (somewhat agree or strongly agree) to the questions concerning goals that increase literacy for all students, most teachers understand the literacy plan, and the plan addresses content specific literacy. This is an encouraging piece of information, in that, in shows a positive view of how these teachers see the goals of literacy in their school. The responses to last question concerning the literacy goals of the school seem to suggest that teachers do not fully believe that the schools are providing adequate resources or opportunities for teachers understand the literacy goals of the school. If teachers and/or administrators are not fully vested in the plan it is has the inherent danger of being unsuccessful (Corrin et. al., 2011). Perhaps, more training and more efforts by administrators and teachers to effectively communicate literacy goals could lead to an increased sense of understanding of the literacy goals of the school.

Student Levels

Teachers were asked to respond to five questions pertaining to their perceptions of the reading skills of their students. In regards to the question focused on recognizing and reading words from the text, teachers overwhelmingly responded positively. Suggesting that teachers perceive their students' basic reading skills are for the most part more than adequate to be successful. Teachers' perceptions of student reading fluency followed suit with more positive responses, leading one to believe that teachers are confident their students have a fundamental grasp on reading.

To the question of students being motivated readers, responses began to show a more negative response (strongly disagree or somewhat agree) rate. The majority of responses to this question were negative, which could be a worrisome matter for teachers. Morgan and Fuchs (2007) state that poorly motivated readers generally have poor comprehension skills due to their distaste from reading resulting from repeated failures in the area of reading. Many times the issue of low motivation stems not only from failure in reading, but also, from a general lack of interest in content. According to Boardman et. al. (2008), teachers should incorporate hands on activities with reading assignments and allow students a degree of autonomy when choosing what to create after reading in an effort to increase motivation to read. Perhaps planning of more activities such as brochures, posters, or skits could help to increase motivation.

Students with Learning Disabilities vs. Students without Learning Disabilities

Teachers' responses to the items concerning the comprehension skills of students with learning disabilities compared to the comprehension skills of their peers without learning disabilities indicted that teachers felt that students with learning disabilities did not possess the same capacities of skills as their peers. While the feelings of the teachers in regard to this topic

might well be true, one could consider that the label of special education might influence the responses to the questions being that the majority of teachers surveyed teach in the general education classroom and are, perhaps, not familiar with the disabilities of their students. According to Seifert & Espin (2012), literacy instruction is the responsibility of both the special education teacher and the general education teacher. LD students, due to many times to their lack of working memory, are inherently at risk of falling behind at the secondary level (Watson, et al., 2012). Teacher attitudes, as represented by these responses, seem to echo this concern. A possible solution to these concerns could be found in the cooperation of the general education teachers and the special education teachers in planning strategies to increase comprehension skills of all students.

Attitudes towards types of strategies and frequency of use

Perhaps the most positive piece of data collected in this study was the attitudes teachers held toward the types of strategies being employed in the classroom. Responses seemed to indicate that most of the teachers felt that a diversified approach to strategies was the best way to increase reading comprehension skills. This is promising due to the inherent strides that can be made by differentiated instruction. If teachers are using multiple strategies to improve reading comprehension, then the likelihood of reaching more students is greatly increased.

While most teacher responses suggested that teachers believed all the strategies were important to increasing comprehension skills, the overwhelming majority of teachers seemed to favor using strategies that called upon higher order thinking skills, such as previewing and summarization. According to Watson et. al. (2012) and Boardman et. al. (2008) these types of strategies help students gain a better understanding and connection with what they read. Another encouraging result pertains to the teachers' use of vocabulary building strategies. Fang and

Schleppegrell (2010) suggest that the language found in secondary reading is very unfamiliar to students leading to lack of comprehension skills, therefore, efforts to increase student exposure to new and old vocabulary can play a key role in increasing student comprehension skills.

Free response

While the responses to this section were not numerous, the responses given did provide some unique insight. When asked what teachers believed the key to reading comprehension was the responses echoed the responses given in the Likert Scale questions. Teachers once again believed that a diversified approach was the key to success. Also many teachers believed that repeated practice was essential to increasing reading comprehension skills. The idea of repetition follows the suggestions of Roberts et. al. (2007), that repeated exposure to content specific material leads to greater understanding and comprehension.

Responses to the question of the school's role in increasing reading comprehension skills suggested that teachers felt that the entire school needed to be on board with increasing the skills of the students. Classroom teachers of all content areas are responsible for increasing the comprehension skills. Communication amongst teachers and administrators was a concern in terms of creating an atmosphere for learning. When asked how teachers felt about initiatives such as RTI and SPL, the results were a bit disturbing. Very few teachers in the county had any prior knowledge of the initiatives. This is perplexing because these programs were set up and funded by the federal and state governments, respectively. This seems to indicate that there has been a breakdown in communication between teachers and district level officials in terms of implementing these initiatives. According to Corrin et. al. (2012), district wide approaches such RTI and SPL are doomed to fail if communication breakdown. This is disheartening on two levels. First, the obvious benefit of a school or district moving in the same direction to help

struggling students is being missed, and second, there a general lack of effort in ensuring that

teachers are made aware of and trained to implement these initiatives.

Limitations

While the information collected from this research has the possibility of providing a great

deal of insight into the attitudes of secondary teachers in this county in terms of how they feel

about the current comprehension skills of their students and the effectiveness of reading

comprehension strategies. There were limitations to the study.

Perhaps the largest limitation of the study was the low response rate of the survey. While

many attempts were made to ensure a response rate that could provide a generalizable sample,

the response rate nevertheless came back at only 40%. Following the issue of generalizability,

the two largest schools in the county were excluded due to the inability of the researcher to

collect the surveys from the administration in a reasonable timeframe that would allow for proper

analysis of collected data. Along with the low response rate and the exclusion of two schools

from the study, one must also consider that the study took place in only one county of the state;

surveying multiple counties could provide with a more generalizable study.

Conclusion

While the limitations of this study may be a threat to the overall generalizability of the

study, the insight gained from the collected data could be a wonderful tool for creating new plans

and goals for the county in terms of increasing the reading comprehension skills of the students.

The attitudes of the teachers in this county seem to be very positive in terms of their perceptions

the current state of comprehension skills of the students and in terms of the strategies they

employ in their classrooms. Possible further research focused on the effectiveness and

implementation of specific research-based strategies could add to the knowledge base initialized

by this study. Also further studies that take a look at the communication of school personal and

district officials in terms of school literacy and intervention goals could possibly be beneficial.

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Appendix A

Anonymous Survey Consent

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled "Teacher Attitudes of Intervention Effectiveness" designed to analyze the attitudes held by teachers towards the effectiveness of reading comprehension strategies and interventions for struggling readers. The study is being conducted by Dr. Lori Howard, PhD. and Charles Hartley from Marshall University. This research is being conducted as part of the action research project requirement for completion of a Master's Degree in Special Education for Charles Hartley.

This survey is comprised of three sections. Section one containing five demographical questions. Section two includes twenty-five Likert scale questions pertaining to teacher attitudes towards student ability levels and intervention effectiveness. The final section contains four opened ended questions that require short written responses. The survey should take 5-10 minutes to complete. Your replies will be anonymous, so do not put your name anywhere on the form. There are no known risks involved with this study. Participation is completely voluntary and there will be no penalty or loss of benefits if you choose to not participate in this research study or to withdraw. If you choose not to participate you may either return the blank survey or you may discard it. You may choose to not answer any question by simply leaving it blank. Returning the survey to the principal to be placed in the collection envelope indicates your consent for use of the answers you supply. If you have any questions about the study you may contact Dr. Lori Howard, PhD. at 304-746-2076, Charles Hartley at 304-727-2603.

If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research participant you may contact the Marshall University Office of Research Integrity at (304) 696-4303.

By completing this survey and returning it you are also confirming that you are **18** years of age or older.

Please keep this page for your records.

Please answer the following Questions by circling your response.

Demographic Information

Age:

21-25

26-30

31-45

46-50

50+

Years of full time teaching experience

0-5

6-10

11-15

16-20

21-25

25+

Highest degree level

BA

BA +15

Masters

Masters +15 +30 +45

Doctorate

Please answer the following questions

What are your certification areas?

Do you teach inclusion classes?

Please answer the following questions by marking an X in the box that best represents your opinion

Topic: Literacy goals in the school	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly Agree
My school has a goal of increasing literacy for all students				
The literacy plan for my school is understood by all teachers				
My school has a plan for increasing literacy in specific content areas				
My school provides adequate opportunities to help teachers understand literacy goals and plans for the school				

Topic: Student Levels	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly Agree
My students can recognize and read words from the text				
My students have reading fluency				
My students are motivated readers				
My students can comprehend what they read in their texts				
My students have sufficient vocabulary knowledge for this content area				

Topic: Teacher attitudes of students with learning disabilities vs students without learning disabilities	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly Agree
Students with learning disabilities recognize sight words and understand word parts in text less often than students without learning disabilities				

Students with learning disabilities read less fluently than students without learning disabilities				
Students with learning disabilities have less prior knowledge of content specific vocabulary than student without learning disabilities				
Students with learning disabilities enjoy reading the same as students without learning disabilities				
Students with learning disabilities comprehend less of what they read than students without learning disabilities comprehension skills				

Topic: Teacher perceptions of Classroom Strategies	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly Agree
Vocabulary based strategies are most effective to content area comprehension				
Word study strategies (word parts, phonics, word origin ,etc.) are most effective for increasing content area comprehension				
Strategies that focus on fluency are most effective for increasing content area comprehension				
Strategies that motivate students to read are most effective for increasing content area comprehension				
Strategies that activate prior knowledge and foster analyzation (i.e. previewing and summarizing) are most effective for content area comprehension				

Topic: Use of strategies (how often do you use each type of strategy)	0-1 times a week	At least 2 times a week	At least 3 times a week	4 or more times a week
Vocabulary				
Word study				
Fluency				
Motivation				
Direct instruction (telling students what and why they are doing what they are doing)				
Previewing				
Summarizing				

Please briefly answer the following questions

The key to effective reading comprehension strategies and intervention is…

What role as a whole does the school have in terms of increasing reading comprehension abilities?

What are your feelings toward initiatives such as RTI (Responses To Intervention) and SPL (Supports for Personalized Learning)?

Additional Thoughts or Comments: