

Summer 8-22-2014

How Elementary Teachers Perceive and Implement Sustained Silent Reading

Bridget C. Lefler

The College at Brockport, bridge77lefler@yahoo.com

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/ehd_theses

 Part of the [Education Commons](#)

To learn more about our programs visit: <http://www.brockport.edu/ehd/>

Repository Citation

Lefler, Bridget C., "How Elementary Teachers Perceive and Implement Sustained Silent Reading" (2014). *Education and Human Development Master's Theses*. 488.

http://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/ehd_theses/488

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Education and Human Development at Digital Commons @Brockport. It has been accepted for inclusion in Education and Human Development Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @Brockport. For more information, please contact kmyers@brockport.edu.

How Elementary Teachers Perceive and Implement Sustained Silent Reading

By: Bridget Lefler

August 2014

Abstract

Sustained silent reading is defined as a period of uninterrupted silent reading (Siah & Kowk, 2010). Schools are using this practice in place of other reading programs to promote reading within the student body. Many legislators, administrators, teachers, and parents have emphasized the need for reading programs to improve children's reading proficiency (Siah & Kwok, 2010). One intervention to this problem is sustained silent reading. As Krashen (1993) points out, sustained silent reading "is the kind of reading highly literate people do obsessively all the time".

I investigated how other elementary teachers in my school perceive and implement sustained silent reading. During each 20 to 30 minutes interview, I asked open-ended questions that will focus on how and why the participants use sustained silent reading. I prepared the interview questions based on what I would like to know about the activity of independent reading. The questions I used for the interviews will help me to better understand how teachers put sustained silent reading into play and to obtain a more defined perspective on the effective strategies. I audio recorded each interview, dependent on individual consent and willingness to be audio recorded. I have also attached the interview protocol. Until I begin the process of transcribing each interview, I kept all audio recordings secured in a locked drawer. I transcribed each interview and delete the audio recording immediately after I completed data analysis. At no point in my study will the identities of my participants be revealed.

Key Words: sustained silent reading, elementary school, teachers, reading, strategies, implement

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction	1
Statement of the Problem.....	1
Significance of the Problem.....	2
Purpose of the Study.....	4
Study Approach.....	5
Rationale.....	6
Summary.....	7
Chapter Two: Literature Review	9
History of Sustained Silent Reading.....	9
Attitude Towards Reading.....	10
Importance of Reading.....	11
Benefits of Sustained Silent Reading.....	13
Self-Selection.....	14
Summary.....	15
Chapter Three: Methods and Procedures	17
Participants.....	17
Context of the Study.....	18
My Positionality as the Researcher.....	19
Data Collection.....	21
Interviews.....	21
Data Analysis.....	22
Interviews.....	22
Procedures.....	23
Criteria for Trustworthiness.....	24
Limitations of the Study.....	25
Summary.....	26
Chapter Four: Findings	27
Teachers.....	28
Mrs. Right.....	28
Mrs. Miles.....	28
Mrs. Birch.....	29
Mr. Bense.....	29
Mr. Randall.....	30
Theme#1: Knowledge of Sustained Silent Reading.....	31
Theme #2: Strategies.....	33
Theme #3: Changes Throughout the Year.....	35
Theme #4: Benefits.....	37
Theme #5: Challenges.....	41
Theme #6: Teacher Actions.....	43
Summary.....	46
Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations	48

Conclusions.....	48
Teachers See Students Become Stronger Readers Due to Silent Reading.....	48
Teachers Use Different Strategies to Implement Sustained Silent Reading Such as Organizing Book Levels and Reading Time.....	50
Organizing Books for Students.....	50
Reading Time.....	51
Teachers use Their Knowledge of Their Students and Observations in Order to Best Support all Students During Sustained Silent Reading.....	52
Implications for Students' Learning.....	53
Students Need to be Exposed to Sustained Silent Reading to Improve Their Reading Skills.....	53
Students Receive Helpful Support From Teacher Before and During the Implementation of Sustained Silent Reading.....	54
Implications for My Teaching.....	56
Better Knowledge of the Strategies to Implement Sustained Silent Reading...	56
Broader View of What is Expected in Each Grade Level.....	57
Knowledge of My Future Role as a Literacy Advocate.....	58
Recommendations for Future Research.....	58
Balance Sample Size and Representation of Grade Level.....	59
Broaden Research to Additional School Districts.....	59
Observe All Teachers During Sustained Silent Reading Time.....	60
Final Thoughts.....	60

References.....	62
------------------------	-----------

Appendixes

Appendix A: Participant Consent Form.....	65
Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet.....	67
Appendix C: Interview Questions.....	68
Appendix D: Interview Protocol.....	69

List of Tables

Table 4.1: Participant Information.....	31
Table 4.2: Is Sustained Silent Reading Beneficial?	37

Chapter One: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

It is the second week of school and my first student teaching placement. I am excited to be in a third grade classroom putting some of the ideas that I have learned in my education courses the past three years into practice. The teacher and I watch as the students slowly file back into the room from lunch, many are still carrying on conversations they started in the lunch room. The teacher announces,

Alright boys and girls, now it is time to get out your books you have chosen from the library last Thursday for sustained silent reading. I noticed some of you did a great job reading yesterday and I hope we can all continue to quietly read today. Get your books out and place them on your desk. When I see your group is ready I will call on your group to find a quiet, comfortable spot in the room to read. Remember if you are sitting on the floor or in the reading cubby you need to be aware of the people around you and give everyone their own space. I want to see you reading without talking to your neighbors.

She waits about thirty seconds and then calls on the group that was calm and quiet. “Group three you can find a quiet spot in the room or stay at your desk.” The students get up and find areas in the room that they think are comfortable to read. The lead teacher repeats this practice for the next four groups, calling one group at a time based on the students’ behavior.

Once each student is in a spot or at his or her desk with a book open, the teacher starts the timer. I watch her walk around the room and then sit down at her desk. She starts typing on her computer and scrolling through an email or lesson idea.

I shift my attention to the students; most seem to be focused on their reading. The longer I watch the more I see students look up at the teacher and then begin messing around.

The first to lose focus are two boys sitting against a wall. One boy is tapping the other boy's foot with his own. I then notice a girl fidgeting with something inside her desk. When I see this I looked back at my teacher, who was still focused on the computer screen. As the time goes on more and more students began to fiddle with each other and things around them.

After being at the school for a few weeks the students start to get into the routine of the school day I start to see a pattern. As I watch the students and the teacher I begin to wonder if there was a way to implement sustained silent reading that would be more useful to the students. Should not she be reading as well to portray her own enjoyment for free reading. Whatever happened to role modeling expected behavior?

As these things go through my head I feel frustrated and confused as to why my teacher is not approaching this as a more valuable activity and why the students are not "lost" in their books. By being lost in a book it means you are so involved and hooked into the text that you feel some of the emotions the main character does, like you are really there.

I want to know what I can do to make them feel like this part of day was precious and not time to mess around. If students are not able to sit down and read a book they have picked out, how will they build their stamina to read a piece later in life they have not picked out? It is our goal as teachers to make reading both enjoyable and beneficial for students. The more students practice reading, the better they will get at it (Yoon, 2002).

Significance of the Problem

Sustained silent reading is defined as an in-classroom reading activity in which teachers give students a certain amount of time to silently read self-selected material for enjoyment or information as a method of creating a passion of reading without assessment,

skills work, monitoring, or instruction from the teacher (Garan & DeVogd, 2006; Yoon, 2002). It was first developed over forty years ago by Lyman Hunt at the University of Vermont and is commonly used in classrooms today (Perks, 2006). Hunt refers to it as uninterrupted sustained silent reading or USSR (Gardiner, 2005). He knew he had discovered something significant for teachers and students. He wrote,

USSR is the essence of reading power, the ability to keep going with ideas in print.

Without it the reader is crippled; with the power of sustained silent reading the reader is on his own, he can propel himself through print. He is an independent reader and does not depend on outside direction by the teacher. (Hunt, 1997, p. 278)

Sustained silent reading can be used in grades from second to twelfth grade, but can be adapted and modified for lower grades (Yoon, 2002). The more students read, the further their reading skills progress and their vocabulary grows (Sedita, 2011). It is important to give students the opportunity to choose a book and read for enjoyment during the school day. This gives them the routine reading time they need where they can read what they want to read without stressors tied in with school such as answering questions after reading a chapter (Sedita, 2011). The effort the teachers are putting into sustained silent reading is based off of students being able to complete the phases of gradual release of responsibility in reading. If teachers ignore the independent learning phase it lead to students who do not read on a regular basis for information or pleasure (Fisher & Frey, 2008).

Some teachers question sustained silent reading and its influence on students today. They wonder if it is beneficial for students in the long run to take time out of the day and if students are gaining more reading skills by doing so (Krashen, 1993). With the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) and the new Common Core Learning Standards (2011), it is easy to get

swamped by all of the required modules and curriculum and not have enough time in the day for reading for enjoyment during sustained silent reading (Fisher, 2004). Some teachers who use sustained silent reading strategies, are curious as to if they should abandon this strategy or not to create more time for module curriculum (Fisher, 2004). The National Reading Panel researched on sustained silent reading and examined the impact of encouraging independent reading on overall reading. Most of the studies failed to find a positive relationship between encouraging reading and either the amount of reading or reading achievement (National, 2000).

Free voluntary reading is the most effective tool available for increasing a student's ability to read, write, spell, and comprehend (Krashen, 1993). These literacy areas are all connected, so by practicing to read the student can sharpen vocabulary skills, comprehension skills, decoding skills and more. If this is the case, I am wondering why is there so much confusion and debate about giving students a designated time to silently read in school multiple times throughout the week?

Purpose of the Study

It is my anticipation that by investigating the topic of sustained silent reading that I will be able to create a broader understanding on how experienced elementary teachers distinguish and implement sustained silent reading. By interviewing teachers, I hope to gain insight into why they do or do not favor sustained silent reading and learn how the teachers go about introducing and implementing the activity over the course of the school year. I would like to expand my previous knowledge of silent reading and intend to use my findings to help shape my approach and teaching of reading in the future.

When I think of sustained silent reading, I remember when I was a student in Mrs. Welche's classroom during independent reading time. I enjoyed reading books for pleasure and having time to myself where I could get caught up in a great read. I was given the opportunity to pick out my books I wanted to read, which made it even more enjoyable and rewarding. We were given ten minutes every day after lunch to silent read and unwind from the chaotic lunchroom.

I also recall what I saw and experienced during my time as a student teacher. In my first placement I saw sustained silent reading take place almost daily, but during my second placement I did not see it at all. This made me wonder why some teachers used this activity and some did not when reading was such an important part of the school day.

According to Yoon (2002) students in the United States read printed texts for about 18 minutes a day when they are outside of school. In addition to the minimal reading they do outside of school, students, due to the new and growing curriculum, are getting less time to read while they are in school (Fisher, 2004). With demanding curriculum models and expanding content, teachers are focusing more and getting their lessons done instead of giving students free time to read. The school year is getting more and more packed with curriculum and test prep, that it is almost impossible to get through every single lesson the state provides. This leads me to my research question: How do elementary teachers perceive and implement sustained silent reading?

Study Approach

My research study followed a practical research design. There were five elementary teachers who participated in the study who currently teach grades Kindergarten through five.

The participants, from several different school districts, are familiar with sustained silent reading. After interviewing and observing the elementary school teachers, I will analyze qualitative data using Grounded Theory design. The Grounded Theory design is a method of analysis followed by interpreting the phenomenon studied, categorizing of data, and generating new hypotheses based on the findings (Arcidiacono, Procentese, & Di Napoli, 2009). Through my research, I will gather data from my participants and through my observations and any theories or ideas I develop after collecting and analyzing the data will be created from the perspectives of the teachers involved in the interviews and my interpretation of the observations.

Through my interview and observation process, I will look further into how and why the teachers use or do not use sustained silent reading and why they believe the way they do about it. I plan to gain an insight on the different strategies that teachers are using to implement sustained silent reading in the classroom. I will write out a total of ten interview questions that I ask each teacher. I will also turn observation notes into organized texts and groups used for my analysis. I will organize similar findings together into categories, such as time of sustained silent reading or and technique for implementation. I anticipate that the data collection process will last approximately four weeks.

Rationale

I chose sustained silent reading as my research topic because I know there is controversy around activities such as sustained silent reading that are not cemented into the Common Core or new state modules. The goal of this study is to expand my knowledge on

how teachers connect with sustained silent reading and the ways they execute the reading activity.

Using a qualitative Grounded Theory research design will enable me to gain a more complex understanding through analyzing the interviewing and observing of the participating teachers. I do not want my interviewees to feel obligated or hesitant about answering questions in a group setting due to different views and perceptions of using sustained silent reading in their classroom so I will do the interviews individually.

I will also be using observation to further examine the teacher's sustained silent reading instruction. While collecting data, I will not be involved in any of the classroom activities. By seeing the classroom as an "outsider", I will be able to get a closer look at how teachers run their reading instruction time and what aspects are included. By using both interviewing and observing, I will be able to gather enough complex information to evaluate how teacher perceive and implement sustained silent reading. After reviewing and analyzing all of my data I should have a new insight of what works best in the classroom and how I can adapt these findings to my own philosophy.

Summary

Reading continues to be extremely important in any student's academic career. I am curious to see whether or not teachers use sustained silent reading in their classroom as a reading activity. Sustained silent reading is used for reading practice and enjoyment where students can choose any text that they want to read (Fisher & Frey, 2008). When I student taught I was able to be a part of a sustained silent reading program, but I know not every school is encouraged or required to use one. The school day is now filled with new Common

Core Curriculum and state modules, that it is tough to find time to allow students to free read (Fisher, 2004).

Even though I have been exposed to sustained silent reading, I hope to gather ideas and strategies towards sustained silent reading or even other reading activities. I want to know which strategies seem to work and which seem to not be as effective. When I am done collecting and analyzing my information, I should have a better idea of what reading strategies are working for this generation of students and how I can implement sustained silent reading in my own classroom. Reading for fun is very important and that students need to be given the chance to see reading in a “different light” rather than always reading complex texts and classic stories that have been around for generations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Sustained silent reading is defined as a period of uninterrupted silent reading (Siah & Kwok, 2010). Schools are using this practice in place of other reading programs to promote reading within the student body. Many legislators, administrators, teachers, and parents have emphasized the need for reading programs to improve children's reading proficiency (Siah & Kwok, 2010). One intervention to this problem is sustained silent reading. As Krashen (2004) points out, sustained silent reading "is the kind of reading highly literate people do obsessively all the time".

History of Sustained Silent Reading

Sustained silent reading has been around for many years. The design of this classroom activity can be traced back to University of Vermont professor Lyman Hunt (Perks, 2006). This practice was suggested in the 1960s but was soon followed up by McCracken and McCracken who offered guidelines for teachers to effectively execute the program of sustained silent reading (McCracken, 1971, Pilgreen, 2000). Sustained silent reading started becoming popular in the 1970s and the first guidelines consisted of having students read to themselves self-selected material for fifteen minutes every day without any form of assessment (Trelease, 2006). Over the years, different strategies have adapted and reworked sustained silent reading into other recognizable names. Some of these names and acronyms include Free Voluntary Reading (FRV), Drop Everything and Read (DEAR), Daily Independent Reading Time (DIRT), Super Quiet Reading Time (SQUIRT) and Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading (USSR) (Siah & Kwok, 2010, Garan & DeVogd, 2008). Regardless to the phrase used, the rationale of the reading period has stayed fairly constant:

“to develop each student’s ability to read silently without interruption for a long period of time” (McCracken, 1971, p. 521).

The focus on evidence based practices for the teaching of reading brings sustained silent reading into question in the future. Though there has been handfuls of studies conducted pertaining to sustained silent reading, few of these received approval from the National Reading Panel (2000). There has been criticism and reporting of flaw on the National Reading Panel’s findings saying that sustained silent reading is not working (Garan & DeVogd, 2008). We must understand that the way we interpreted the results were merely blurred and that the Nation Reading Panel did not find that sustained silent reading is ineffective (2008). It did not say that having students read in school was a bad idea. The panel did establish that sustained silent reading is not a stand-alone instructional practice to teach students to read (2000). Sustained silent reading should be “viewed as a complement of a teaching program” (McCracken, 1971, p. 521).

Attitude Towards Reading

There are many articles out there connecting sustained silent reading to a student’s attitude towards reading. Many of these texts focus on educational benefits for children through reading programs. The primary goal of silent reading programs has always been to increase a student’s enjoyment of reading (Gardiner, 2001). Students who read frequently on their own have better literacy skills (2001). Janise Arthur (1995) also investigated the relationship between sustained silent reading program and attitudes toward reading. She discovered several studies that linked daily reading opportunities with improved attitudes which produce other benefits.

Studies of children in kindergarten, primary, and middle grades who have demonstrated a voluntary interest in books were not only rated to have better work habits, social and emotional development, language structure, and overall school performance, but also these children scored significantly higher on standardized reading tests (Arthur, 1995, p. 2).

Wiesendanger and Birlem (1984) distinguished that nine of the eleven research studies they analyzed demonstrated evidence that students develop more positive attitudes towards reading in school with sustained silent reading. Sustained silent reading programs do more than improve student's attitudes toward reading. Similarly, Valeri-Gold (1995) incorporated sustained silent reading in her reading class and found that the majority of students felt that sustained silent reading had a positive influence on their attitudes about reading. They had read a lot more since sustained silent reading was implemented into their reading class (Valeri-Gold, 1995).

Importance of Reading

One of the key elements in a quality education is reading proficiency which has been claimed to be one of the important foundations of basic education (Siah & Kwok, 2010). The lack of reading skills in students is a primary concern among educators (2010). Due to this issue, teachers are striving to find new ways to motivate and engage students. Teachers want the chance to awaken that love of literacy in students and invite them to experience the magic in the classrooms (Garan & DeVogd, 2008). They want them to grow into "skilled, passionate, habitual, and critical reader" (Atwell, 2007). As a

way of cultivating a love for reading, sustained silent reading, has gained popularity in many classrooms (Yoon, 2002).

Teacher modeling is one of the most important things we can do for students. It is key that the teacher or other adults in the classroom have to read during sustained silent reading in order for it to be effective (McCracken & McCracken, 1978). Having a teacher read while the students are reading during sustained silent reading is very important because the teacher acts as a model (Yoon, 2002, McCracken & McCracken, 1978). Showing a reading behavior to them may be one of the most valuable sources of developing a reading attitude (Yoon, 2002).

Teachers are models, not just by being absorbed in reading but by what is done after reading (McCracken & McCracken, 1978). If some teachers talked about what they had read, shared some ideas, shared new words they learned, their students began to do it as well (1978). Gambrell (1981) stated that “students need to see that we value reading and that reading is important in our lives. Share with students. What better way to show them that reading is important?” (p. 898). By reacting orally after sustained silent reading, teachers are showing children that reading is communication with an author or a reactions to the author’s ideas. They are teaching that reading is more than entertainment, it is a chance to discover the self-realization of learning and the changes in behavior that come from mature reading (McCracken & McCracken, 1978, Yoon, 2002). “What a teacher does during and after sustained silent reading defines silent reading for children” (McCracken & McCracken, 1978, p. 407).

Benefits of Sustained Silent Reading

Sustained silent reading programs do more than improve students' attitudes toward reading (Gardiner, 2001). Students who enjoy reading also read more books and develop better skills in reading comprehension, spelling, and vocabulary (2001).

Higher achievement was noted by Erazmus (1987). This study found that lower achieving students who participated in an SSR program showed greater gains in reading achievement on the Metropolitan Achievement Test than a control group who chose not to participate in the voluntary reading program (1987).

Krashen (2005) stated that "In-school reading programs are likely to be of benefit to less mature readers, for they provide reading exposure and get students interested in reading" (p.446). Sustained silent reading programs do more than improve student's attitudes toward reading. Studies show that students who enjoy reading also read more books and develop better skills in reading comprehension, spelling, and vocabulary (Gardiner, 2001).

A study used the Nelson Reading Test to assess rates of improvement in vocabulary and reading comprehension among a group of high school students in Colorado (Kornelly & Smith, 1993). Students who had completed an 18-week silent reading program displayed an improvement of 1.9 grade levels. This result was more than four times the control group's rate of improvement (1993). Among students in the silent reading program, the percentage of those who read one or more books per month doubled from 12 percent to 24 percent during the same period (1993).

In a classic sustained silent reading program, a majority of middle school students can read about one million words and learn about 1,000 new words every year without

any instruction in vocabulary (Gardiner, 2001). “Sustained silent reading also helps language learners gain language skills in whatever new language they are studying, whether they are English language learners or English speakers who are learning a second language” (Gardiner, 2001, p. 3). Those who can read in a first or second language will also write and spell better in that language (Krashen, 1993).

At an elementary school with students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, Arthur (1995) selected at random students who identified themselves as recreational readers and those who did not. The fourth grade recreational readers had significantly higher reading achievement scores than did the nonrecreationl readers (Arthur, 1995).

Students need a variety of opportunities to practice reading every day. Krashen (2006) stated:

In fact, research strongly suggests that free reading is the source of our reading prowess and much of our vocabulary and spelling development, as well as our ability to understand sophisticated phrases and write coherent prose. The secret of its effectiveness is simple: children become better readers by reading. (p.43).

Students require supervised periods of reading practice, and the literature on student’s attitudes propose that they must be allowed to self select their reading materials for this practice to be most beneficial (Arthur, 2005; Yoon, 2002).

Self-Selection

Readers may pay closer attention, persist in their reading for longer periods of time, learn more, and enjoy their involvement to a greater degree when they read materials that interest them (Yoon, 2002). The self-determination theory proposes that

children are motivated when they have the choice and ownership in what they decide to read (Yoon, 2002). For that reason, providing children with an opportunity to select reading materials promotes their literacy development because they have their own ownership of what they read (Shannon, 1995).

Studies have demonstrated that individual preference of topics has a facilitative outcome on cognitive and affective functioning (Yoon 2002). When students chose material because of personal interest, they can break many of the barriers that come with chosen leveled reading such as frustration (Hunt, 1996). Schiefele found that students who were interested in the materials processed those materials more deeply than did students less interested in the materials (1991). Preference or choice might be a crucial motivational element leading to an increase of reading attitude and reading comprehension (Yoon, 2002). Therefore, by providing opportunities for self-selection in sustained silent reading, a teacher can foster children's involvement in reading materials and promote their literacy development (2002).

Summary

The effective practice of sustained silent reading is intricate and varied. The overall topic from the literature that has been reviewed is the thought that sustained silent reading, when used appropriately, can generate an atmosphere that is helpful to increasing to a student's reading ability. The use of strategies such as student choice and teacher modeling has an impact on the students that are participating in a sustained silent reading program.

Kirby's (2003) study produces a strong basis for this study. The outcomes from her study specified "over 70% of the students felt that SSR was both valuable and a good educational practice" (p. 44). The research of Kirby (2003) also expands on the significance of consistency and teacher modeling. "When students see that their teacher, the one they expect to be an expert on a particular subject, values something such as reading, they in turn see it as important."(p. 45).

Using all of these practices in a sustained silent reading program can lead students not only to students that are able to read better, but also to an increase in test scores. Yoon's (2002), Pilgreen's (2000), and Krashen's (2004) analyses of the various studies accessible on sustained silent reading provided confirmation that the practice of independent reading has benefits for students. Within their findings were a positive effect on student attitudes, reading habits, and increased vocabulary and comprehension achievement for students of diverse ages and abilities.

Chapter Three: Methods and Procedures

Setting aside time to read every day is a fairly easy thing to do. Making it significant is a bit more complex (Fisher, 2004). Pilgreen says Sustained silent reading needs to provide ways for students to sustain their excitement about the books they have read (2000). As a new and upcoming teacher, I am eager to collect strategies and techniques that work well in the classroom and benefit the students. As a graduate student that is pursuing a master's degree in Literacy Education, I am looking for ideas to add to my tool box of activities in the classroom/

As stated in chapter one, the purpose of this qualitative study is to help me gain a more defined understanding of how experienced teachers implement sustained silent reading. By interviewing and observing teachers I can get information that will be useful in answering my research questions. Due to the fact that reading is so important, I am hoping this study will provide insights and perspectives on their process through the research question: How do Elementary teacher perceive and implement sustained silent reading.

Participants

I interview approximately five elementary teachers from grades two through five who are familiar with sustained silent reading. Three of the teachers were female and two of the teachers were male. Four of the five participants are tenured and the same four have their master's degree. The participants are a variety of different ages between 24 and 50. They are all Caucasian and come from middle to upper-middle class households. All of the potential

participants have received their master's degree in Education. The years of teaching experience range from two years to twenty eight years.

I will select the participating teachers deliberately to gain in-depth insight into how teachers distinguish and execute sustained silent reading. The exact number of participants will depend on how many teachers are available and willing to be studied. The study is voluntary and will not place the participants at undue risk. Each teacher will complete an informed consent statement and his/her identity will be kept completely anonymous for the entire duration of the study. I will assign each teacher an anonymous number to use when referring to and documenting the data.

Context of Study

The study will take place in a rural school district in western New York and an urban school district in central New York. The rural school district located in western New York is a population of middle class; the median income for a household in the school district is approximately \$58,038 (usa.com). The urban school district in central New York is a population of mostly lower-middle class; the median income for a household in the school district is approximately \$31,477 (usa.com). The community is invested, involved, and supportive of the students' education connecting with a nationwide program that offers extended days, extended school year, and extra college guidance.

The district-wide enrollment for the western New York school, pre-kindergarten through grade twelve, lingers around 4,000 students. The demographics of the student population consist of the following: 89 percent white, 4 percent Hispanic/Latino, 3 percent African American, 2 percent Multiracial and 1 percent Asian (city-data.com). The school district has consistently accomplished good standings for sufficient yearly progress.

The district-wide enrollment for the central New York school, pre-kindergarten through grade twelve, hovers around 21,030 students. The demographics of the student population consist of the following: 53 percent African American, 28 percent White, 12 percent Hispanic/Latino, 6 percent Asian, and 1 percent Native American (www2.ed.gov). The school district has underperforming standards but has made growth in the past few years.

There will be two Elementary schools, in which I will collect the data. The first Elementary school in western New York, which includes grades four and five, consists of twenty four teachers, ranging in years of experience and credentials. Eighteen of the teachers are female and six are male. The second Elementary school in Central New York, which includes grades Kindergarten through sixth, consists of thirty five teachers, ranging in years of experience and credentials. Twenty eight of the teachers are female and seven are male.

My Positionality as the Research

I am a twenty four year old Caucasian female living in central New York. I grew up in a suburb of Syracuse and was raised in a middle-class family my whole life. I completed my undergraduate degree at The College at Brockport in Western New York. I have my Bachelor of Science in Childhood Education, Special Education, and History. Currently, I am pursuing my master's degree in Literacy Education at The College at Brockport. I hold New York State initial certifications in Childhood Education, grade one through six, and Special Education, grades one through six. After my graduate education I will be certified in Literacy, birth to grade twelve.

My first teaching experience was as a third grade Summer Enrichment Specialist through a summer school program in the city of Syracuse. I was asked to teacher the students English Language Arts with a co-teacher, and loved the experience. We involved the students

in reading quite frequently in the class whether it was during a Read Aloud, independent reading, or reading with partners. Students need to be exposed to an abundance of learning strategies to fulfill their education experience. The students were also engaged in diverse writing activities such as reflection journals, poems, descriptive essays and more. As our end of the summer culminating event, together as a class we wrote a short story about a boy changing his life to a healthy one. The book was then published through the young writers series. I was so proud of my students and all of the hard work they had done to be such great readers and writers.

Soon after my summer school teaching experience, I got into substitute teaching in the Brockport Central School District. Being a substitute teacher is a great experience and gives you hand-on practice of your own strategies and techniques such as classroom management and prioritizing. I quickly realized how beneficial it was to be in the classroom environment a few days a week. You must be extremely flexible and it is essential that you are able to adapt to any situation calmly. It is important to meet the needs of the children even though it is not your own classroom.

It is a teacher's responsibility to demonstrate a variety of different learning techniques and make sure each student's needs are being met. In addition it is also important to incorporate students' interests into the lesson to keep them engaged and listening. I am a firm believer of positive reinforcement and using the Gradual Release of Responsibility model. The Gradual Release of Responsibility model suggests that the cognitive load should change slowly and purposefully from teacher-as-model, to joint responsibility, to independent practice and application by the learner (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). By being more

independent students can teach themselves and teach others around them. As a teacher I strive for valuing all students' interests and integrating them into my instruction.

Literacy is a main part of our world. We see it every day when we read the paper, look at advertisements, decipher directions and much more. We need to prepare students by exposing them to all sorts of texts and cuing materials for writing. Reading is one of the strongest skills you can leave school with. I feel the more you read the more you learn to prepare yourself for the future. I want to nourish my students love for reading by allowing them to chose their own books for sustained silent reading time, without the worry of being tested on what they have read. By falling in love with books and stories, this will feed their love for reading and see why it is so important and valuable in our lifetime.

Data Collection

The rationale of this qualitative study is to investigate and comprehend the procedure of independent student reading. I will collect data from teacher interviews, and observations. Each information source will assist me into forming a complete depiction of how teachers perceive and implement sustained silent reading.

Interviews

The primary method of data collection will be interviewing. The interviews consist of ten questions that were planned and written before meeting with any of the participants. The main interview questions will be open-ended to allow the participant to offer his or her perspective. I will be asking the questions and letting the participants lead the discussion, inquiring different questions as needed to gain more information. Each interview will be recorded on an audiotape to make it easier to go back and analyze my data. These interviews

will last around twenty to thirty minutes and will be done privately with each teacher individually. I will then do a follow up interview if I am in need of clarification.

Data Analysis

I will write out and code each data source at the completion of data collection process. The data collection process will be the key part to obtaining data so that I can thoroughly analyze my findings into a result. I will do this by manually sorting, categorizing, and coding all of the data information I receive.

Interviews

Prior to beginning the analysis process, I will transcribe each interview, as well as my protocols from the interviews and observations. I will utilize the recorded audiotapes from the interviews to generate text documents with accurate recording (Creswell, 2008). This will entail reading my fieldnotes multiple times to fully understand what the participant was getting at in their interview. I will continue to use notes to record my preliminary understanding of the data and my thoughts about how I will categorize text documents. If I need to collect more data from follow-up interviews, I anticipate that once there are no new ideas or strategies emerging, I will have enough data to synthesize my information. I plan to take my time when looking over and rereading the documents. The objective of this strategy will be to gain a picture of the data as a whole (Creswell, 2008).

After I have a picture of what the information entails, I will begin to code the data. Coding data means to label information by describing the text segment or cluster of text segments (Creswell, 2008). I expect that this process will involve grouping the transcriptions, or parts of the transcriptions into certain categories or groups. To sort interview segments I will ask myself what the underlying meaning of the participants' words or actions are. I will

use manual analysis to sort and categorize the data. Manual analysis involves starting at the highest level handling method and determining whether it can actually be applied (Jaeger, 2003). This will entail reading the fieldnotes and listening to the interviews repeatedly then dividing the response into groups, and color coding specific parts within the text. While doing this, I will be looking for repetition and patterns though come up in the interviews and fieldnotes. Over time I will become familiar with the data and will be able to personally connect and understand it more deeply.

Procedures

The process of data collection will take approximately six weeks to complete. The following sequence is an estimate of my data collection procedures:

1. Weeks One and Two: I will gather and organize all of the contextual information that my participants provided during the initial consent stage. This information allowed me to gain a better picture of my participants and their backgrounds. I also informally met with the teachers to clarify any questions they had about the interview questions, which I provided with the consent documents. This allowed the participants to know exactly what information I was inquiring about.
2. Week Three: I will schedule interview times prior to beginning data collection. The interview schedule will depend on each participant's availability and when I can meet with them. I will complete the interviews over the course of three weeks.
3. Weeks Four and Five: I will complete three observations with different teacher participants. Each observation will be during sustained silent reading and will vary depending on the grade level and the teachers approach to implementing sustained silent reading. During these two weeks, I will organize and categorize my findings

from the interviews. I will work during these two weeks to establish the categories and themes that develop from the interviews.

4. Week six: I will complete follow-up interviews in the occurrence that I must have more information or explanation on what I gained during the interviews or saw during the observations. I will analyze and code data from the recorded interviews to make it easier to find themes and make connections across all interviews. Once I complete any necessary follow up interviews, I will begin reflecting and organizing my observation field notes. I will arrange any additional data into existing categories and themes, or generate new themes if needed.

Criteria for Trustworthiness

I plan to take my time during the research process and accurately reporting all of my findings and my interpretations in this study. The ideas I discover will be grounded in the data from the participants who I interview and observe. Due to the length of the study, extended engagement will increase the validity of my research design and in turn my findings. By interviewing and observing throughout the data collection phase will ensure creditability in my findings. I will make sure I follow my research procedures to stay on the right track, adapting it when appropriately needed. By using triangulation across multiple data sources, I will be able to increase the accuracy of my findings; interview transcriptions, interview protocols, observation protocols, and fieldnotes. Due to the fact that the data is coming from multiple participants and resources, the findings will be more valid and credible rather than if the information was just coming from one source.

I will make sure to use correct terminology coming directly from my participants within the study to draw on their language. By interviewing and observing teachers of different gender, grade level and experience, I will be able to collect data over a large spectrum of educators. I will ensure to keep in mind each individual and that diverse implications are explored.

Limitations of the Study

When conducting research it is important to minimize all potential flaws in order to be able to create the most accurate information possible. While interviewing is a solid technique for collecting qualitative data, it also has disadvantages and limitations. The participant may filter some things out of the interview to feel as if they are giving you (the interviewer) what you want. As the researcher and interviewer, I will be extracting certain information. Since I will be the one asking questions, I have some control over the nature of the participants responses. I will let the interview drive its course to gather more meaningful information that may not have been discovered if we stuck strictly to the interview questions. The interview will focus on sustained silent reading.

Depending on the interview setting and the relationship with the interviewer, the interviewee may feel compelled to participate in the study or provide inflated responses. Before the interview, I will explain to them that they may skip any questions they feel uncomfortable answering and discussing with me. I will state to each participant that my intentions are not to criticize or reveal his or her teaching methods I am looking to gain an in-depth perspective and understanding on how teachers perceive and implement sustained silent reading to better my knowledge on what tools and strategies I want to use in my own classroom.

In my study, I will use personal interpretation and my past experiences to collect and analyze the data sources. Qualitative studies contain researcher's interpretations but need to include triangulation, and deep descriptions to minimize the effect of my own interpretations (Creswell, 2008).

Summary

Understanding how teachers perceive and implement sustained silent reading is central to my study and may offer me an insight into useful strategies in my future as a teacher. Reading is such an important part of the curriculum and I want to see what people think of independent reading.

Through interviews and observations I plan to get a full understanding of aspects of sustained silent reading from different viewpoints. Through the eyes and perspectives of my participants I will better comprehend how I can utilize sustained silent reading in my future classroom. After data is collected I will take my time to analyze the information to create valid findings for my thesis.

Chapter 4: Results

As I mentioned in chapter one, the purpose of this study was to investigate how teachers perceive and implement sustained silent reading. During this study I explored how elementary teachers from across a range of elementary grade levels used various strategies and ideas about perception and implementations of sustained silent reading in order to be effective for all students during independent reading. During my interviews I focused on sustained silent reading implementation strategies, teacher behaviors, sustained silent reading benefits, and sustained silent reading challenges.

My research question was how do elementary teachers perceive and implement sustained silent reading?

I collected data through one-on-one interviews with teachers. The interview questions were predetermined. I interviewed four teachers who worked in a suburban elementary school in Central New York. The interviews ranged in length between 15 minutes and 30 minutes. The goal of the interviews was to gain insight into their implementations for sustained silent reading sessions at different grade levels and what specific strategies they used in the classroom to support the students. I analyzed all of the transcribed interview data using text segments and manual (Creswell, 2008). The entire data collection process lasted four weeks. Three of the participants in this study were female and two of them were male.

In this chapter, I present the themes and connections I made during and after the interview process. Each section outlines my interpretations of the data collected from the teachers. I have chosen to present the information through themes and connections I discovered across grade levels.

The participants teaching experiences range from two to twenty six years. All of the classrooms included in this study are inclusive. I have given each teacher a pseudonym name to protect their identity and confidentiality

Teachers

Mrs. Right: A Kindergarten Teacher

Mrs. Right has been a classroom teacher for eight years. She started off as a teacher's aide where she filled that position seven years prior to becoming a full time teacher. She has taught Kindergarten, first and third grades throughout her career. She has been teaching Kindergarten for three years and absolutely loves it. Mrs. Right has been involved in her school's reading program called Parents As Reading Partners (PARP). PARP is a program that asks parents to read with their children for at least fifteen minutes daily (NYSPTA, 2014). She branched off this concept and supplied book baskets and a classroom library to her students so that they could look at the pictures and "read" to themselves during independent reading time.

Mrs. Miles: A Second Grade Teacher

Mrs. Miles has been teaching for twenty three years and has taught Kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grades throughout her career. She has been teaching second grade for eleven years in an inclusive setting. She has the support of a room grandmother that has been working with her for eight years and has great collaboration among the other second grade teachers in her school As a second grade teacher, she focuses on the Daily Five Literacy

program which includes the five components of literacy centers such as read to self (sustained silent reading), reading to someone, work on writing, listen to reading, and word work (Boushey & Mosher, 2014).

Mrs. Birch: A Second Grade Teacher

Mrs. Brich has been teaching for twenty six years and has taught Kindergarten through sixth as Reading Teacher and first, second and third grades throughout her career. She has been teaching second grade for eight years in an inclusive setting. Her experience as a Reading Teacher has really helped guide her instruction in a way that focuses on the important skill of reading. She is great at integrating Literacy into different subjects and content areas. As a second grade teacher on the same teaching team as Mrs. Miles, she also focuses on the Daily Five Literacy program which includes the five components of literacy centers such as read to self (sustained silent reading), reading to someone, work on writing, listen to reading, and word work (Boushey & Mosher, 2014).

Mr. Bense: A Fourth Grade Teacher

Mr. Bense just started his teaching career in 2013. He has been teaching for one year and was placed in a fourth grade classroom. His concentration in English Education will give him that boost and make it easier for him to make connections with literacy education. Due to that fact that Mr. Bense is fresh out of college, he has new ideas and evidence based practices to bring to the table in his district. He has been to multiple conferences that focus on Literacy Education and reading to expand his knowledge and benefit the students in the classroom. Mr. Bense has an inclusive classroom, instructing many students with Individualized Education

Plans. Mr. Bense has support from a teacher's aide in his classroom who works hard to be a good role model and support system for Mr. Bense and the students. He tries to set aside time everyday for sustained silent reading, even though his principal does not have a school wide silent reading program.

Mr. Randall: A Fifth Grade Teacher

Mr. Randall has been teaching for fourteen years and has taught fifth and sixth grade throughout his career. He has been teaching fifth grade for eight years and has looped between fifth and sixth from time to time. Mr. Randall has strong background knowledge in English Education and Literature. This has helped him implement successful reading strategies and techniques in the classroom. He tries to get his young adolescents to silent read every day for thirty minutes. He sometimes feels this is not enough time but continues with his busy school schedule.

Table 4.1 lists the teachers’ contextual information and teaching experience.

Table 4.1: Participant Information

Teacher	Mrs. Miles	Mrs. Birch	Mrs. Right	Mr. Randall	Mr. Bense
Grade Level	2	2	K	5	4
Age	48	50	43	42	24
Years of Experience	23	26	8	14	2
Educational Background	Elementary Education Reading Specialist	Art History Elementary Education Reading Specialist Reading Recovery	Elementary Education Literacy Education	English Literature Elementary Education Adolescent English Education	English Elementary Education Special Education

In this chapter, I focus on the themes that occur throughout the interviews. I refer to five teachers’ individual case studies to support information based on the themes. These case studies helped me address my research question. I provide a cross-case analysis in which I make comparisons between and among the case studies.

Theme #1: Knowledge of Sustained Silent Reading

Through my interviews, I came to the conclusion that all teachers were well aware of what Sustained Silent Reading was. At the beginning of the interviews I asked them what they knew about the topic and if they have heard it referred to in different names or terms (for example D.E.A.R). All teachers stated that sustained silent reading was having students read independently. Mr. Bense stated that “sustained silent reading is a time during every school day where each student reads a book independently (6/23/14).” Mrs. Right explained that

“sustained silent reading is a strategies we use with students to get them use to reading on their own and practicing more (6/27/14).” Each teacher explained it in similar terms, but adapted it to their own ideas and teaching.

Once I asked the participants what they knew about sustained silent reading, I read to them a combined definition of sustained silent reading from Garan and DeVogd, 2006 and Yoon,2002:

Sustained silent reading is defined as an in-classroom reading activity in which teachers give students a certain amount of time to silently read self-selected material for enjoyment or information as a method of creating a passion of reading without assessment, skill work, monitoring, or instruction from the teacher.

The teachers responded well to the definition and agreed that it was to get the students to read for enjoyment. Mrs. Birch stated “it is a time to allow students to read without them having to worry about being asked questions. We want them to get lost in a book and enjoy reading so that they can see the importance of reading in small groups or participating in guided reading groups” (6/19/14. Mr. Randall had the same opinion as the definition and followed up saying that “sustained silent reading is a time when kids can escape the day and get into a good book” (6/23/14).

Although everyone has different definitions of sustained silent reading, what they know about it is all cohesive; they know it is an important reading activity that encourages students to read on their own. I am glad to have discovered through the interviews that the participants are well aware of the strategy and have heard about the important practices that pertain to it in the classroom.

Theme #2: Strategies

Starting with the Kindergarten teacher, I have found that Mrs. Right has a solid strategy for working silent reading into her foundation for early readers. She mentioned she was aware that many Kindergarten students are not able to read as soon as they enter Kindergarten, but she has them practice reading everyday during silent reading time.

Her students read with parents almost every night at home, so she brought this dedication to her classroom. She supplied students with books to enrich their minds and create an early love for reading in each child. Even though they may not be reading text, she stated “they can still build concepts about print and “read” the pictures. Concepts about print entail that students hold books the appropriate way, know the title, follow words from left to right, link illustrations to words, read from top of the page to the bottom of the page and more. At the beginning of the year, Mrs. Right does a model silent reading scenario and think aloud to show the student what they should be doing during this time.

Mrs. Right has her students read silently everyday during the same time. She has baskets filled with similar type books such as animal books, Dr. Seuss books, holiday books and others. Mrs. Right allows her students to pick two books from the book basket to have during independent reading time. By building and continuing these skills early, young Kindergarten students will be able to excel and reach their full potential as Kindergarten continues and once they reach first grade.

I have found that the two second grade teachers, Mrs. Miles and Mrs. Birch, were using the same program to deliver sustained silent reading through a program called The Daily 5. The Daily Five includes different components of reading as centers. The program includes sustained silent reading as a class activity. Mrs. Mile and Mrs. Birch both implement

it with the goal of no interruptions while students are reading. They start their students off in the beginning of the school year at silently reading for two or three minutes. The moment one student fidgets, gets up, talks, or gets off task, the teachers have all students stop reading for the day. Their goal as teachers is to try to encourage and train their students to build more and more time onto their silent reading block each day. They want to “build their students stamina so that they become stronger readers and can read for longer periods of time which will help them in third and fourth grade” (6/19/2014). The next week they may go to four or five minutes if each teacher feels their student is ready to add more time onto the silent reading block.

Both teachers stated that they enjoyed the program and its components. They both loved that the program started in Kindergarten and had two years for the students to get used to and master the silent reading before they continued the strategies in second grade. Mrs. Miles stated “It is great that the program starts in Kindergarten because by the time they get to us in second grade they have already done it The Daily 5 for two years and they know the drill for how each element works” (6/19/14). Interpret this explanation to mean that the teachers heavily stick to the program and work with each other throughout grade levels to prepare students for the skills they will obtain in the next academic year.

Mr. Bense and Mr. Randall have parallel strategies as well. Though they do not teach in the same grade level, they have the similar ideas about implementing sustained silent reading. They both have a great passion for reading and want to show their students that reading is and can be enjoyable, you just need to find the right book. Both teachers work at schools where the whole grade level or school reads at the same time. Mr. Bense and Mr. Randall are in a system where they have their students read towards the end of the day almost

as a debrief and relaxation activity before they go home. Mr. Bense has his students read for twenty minutes each day and Mr. Randall has his students read for thirty minutes each day.

What was interesting to me was that both teachers would occasionally pull their students to the back of the room during silent reading to ask them a few questions about the story and what were some things they liked about it and so on. This is important because it shows the students you really care about their interests and it is easier to make connections through them with reading a great book. The teachers want to find the right book for each student and get them hooked where they love it and want to share about the story. Mr. Randall stated “the goal is to get every kid involved in the book where they are giggling from reading or yelling at the book”. Mr. Bense also has them do a book project twice a year, where each student uses their silent reading book and makes a poster or game to try and get other students interested and reading that book. I have seen this similar project in my student teaching and the students really enjoyed advertising their books to classmates.

Both teachers portrayed that it is extremely important to keep students reading as they reach the higher primary grades. Mr. Randal had a great saying referring to reading as endurance in a sport. He linked it to building stamina through reading and making it enjoyable in the long run.

Theme #3: Changes throughout the year

After interviewing each teacher, I have found out that all teachers start off sustained silent reading at the beginning of the year and continue to add time to the reading block as students are ready for it and grow as readers. In the lower grades with Mrs. Right, Mrs. Birch and Mrs. Miles, they start off reading for two to five minutes. Mr. Bense and Mr. Randall start

off the school year having the students read independently for five to seven minutes. Each teacher stated something similar to having the students build reading strength and stamina by giving them this independent reading time. Mr. Bense stated that “it is important to push the students to read longer so that they get the practice and realize that they can read for a longer period of time and enjoy it” (6/20/14).

Mrs. Miles and Mrs. Birch build the silent reading strategy into their centers once the students are able to read independently for more than five minutes and know what sustained silent reading looks like. They continue to keep the silent reading time in the morning but expand off the skill and reinforce it during a center which is a great idea.

Mrs. Miles, Mrs. Birch and Mr. Bense all start the school year off by modeling and reading a book of their own independently while the students are reading. Mrs. Birch said “We as teachers know how important it is to show students that we think reading is important too and want to show them that we read books of our own” (6/19/14). All three teachers mentioned that they do not always continue to read as the school year goes on and the work load builds up because they have so much to do. Mr. Bense told me that he gets the students comfortable with reading independently and models to them in the beginning of the year for the first month of two but then does work of his own during sustained silent reading. I feel teachers should continue to read during sustained silent reading time for at least half of it to show the students they think reading is important as well.

After talking to Mr. Randall, I was very interested with his techniques. He stated that:

For the first few weeks I act like a cop in the classroom to enforce the rules and make sure everyone is reading and that I am serious about it. I want them to take it

seriously so I am very strict in the beginning. Once they understand that the sustained silent reading time is important and that students need to be reading, I cool off and start doing my work or pulling students back to my table to talk to them about their book.

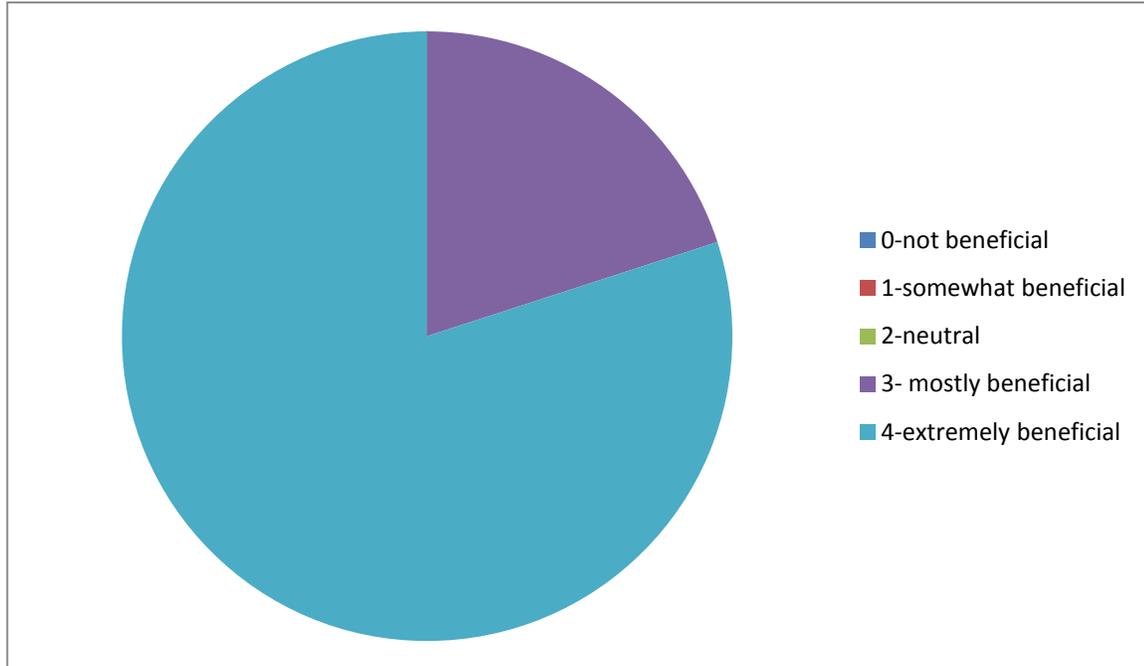
This is important because it makes students aware that their teacher does care about what they are reading and helps them with the deeper comprehension aspect. Mr. Randall turned this time into not only independent reading but also students get to reflect on their book every so often.

Mrs. Right doesn't really have big changes throughout the year besides making the sustained silent reading time longer. Due to the fact that she teaches Kindergarten students, she likes to keep the routine similar once they are accustomed to it so that the students are familiar with what they need to be doing. She mentioned "the more practice the students get with reading the better. That is why I continually have them read independently with the same strategies so that they can master those skills" (6/23/14).

Theme #4: Benefits

Table 4.2 is a graph of how beneficial teachers perceive sustained silent reading to be based off of a scale 0-4, zero being not beneficial, four being extremely beneficial.

Table 4.2: Is Sustained Silent Reading Beneficial?



When talking to each teacher participant, I found that they all valued sustained silent reading and felt the more students read the better they will become at different literacy strategies and skills. Most teachers thought sustained silent reading was extremely beneficial and viewed it as a useful activity.

Mrs. Right sees the benefit of sustained silent reading as giving students an opportunity to read where they have an amount of time set side with minimal distractions. It is very rare for children to have a place to go without the television being on or other family members talking, so the silent reading time given to students during the school day is very important to them. It gives students a place where they can just read to enjoy reading. Mrs. Right stated:

Even at a young age if you can start them off loving to just look through books it is great. Some of the little kids say “I can’t read yet” but I tell them that’s alright

just find a book that you are interested in and you can look at the pictures to see what the story is about. The students start to look forward to it every day.

She shows her passion for reading to students so that they will understand the importance of reading. This will help them to realize why it is important to learn literacy skill and will prepare them for the future.

Mrs. Right feels students benefit from building their confidence in reading early on. She makes sure they know it is alright if they do not know how to read right when they get to Kindergarten, as long as they look at pictures and start learning the concepts about print they will get there.

Mrs. Miles loves using The Daily Five program and has seen a number of benefits. Her strongest benefit is that her students are becoming immensely better readers. She told me “From the first day of school to the last day of school the students grow so much. By the end of the year I am surprised at how far some of them have come and it makes me proud to be their teacher” (6/19/14). Mrs. Miles sees her students grow in the areas of fluency, comprehension, and word decoding. These skills are expanding because the students have time to read independently every day to practice.

Mrs. Birch also uses The Daily Five program and witnesses a similar benefit. She compared the students in the past few years who use the program to students in her early teaching years who were not exposed to the program. She said “the program is great and really works. I love using it and see its benefits in the students. I love that they have time to read independently everyday because before students didn’t have that time and they weren’t as good readers” (6/19/14).

In the interview with Mr. Bense, he told me that the biggest benefit he sees is students enjoying reading and finding their book niche. “I love when I see the students laughing while reading their books. They also do such a great job during the book projects. They get so excited to present their books to their classmates and I love watching them” (6/27/14). He discussed that he needs to guide students in the beginning of the year to find books that fit each student, but once they find them they love sustained silent reading time. It is great that Mr. Bense adds in the additional aspect of sustained silent reading such as the book projects.

Mr. Randall says the biggest benefit in having his students partake in sustained silent reading is building stamina and brain growth. He related reading to an endurance sports and feels practicing everyday will build students stamina for reading. He told me that he can see such a difference from day one reading to the last day of school reading. “Students complain when the sustained silent reading time is up and want to read longer than the thirty minute period” (6/19/14). He stated that when he meets with students at his back table they come up with great connections to the book and love talking about the characters. Mr. Randall’s goal is to get every student involved in a book where they are giggling from reading or yelling at the book. During the interview he stated “I do see a lot of benefits from it because practice makes perfect and if you can get them to love something like reading it is way better than teaching them skills and drills” (6/19/14).

This was a powerful sentence to me because I have similar beliefs. I feel students can practice and practice and get better at something and that drilling children does minimal for them in learning something new.

Theme #5: Challenges

I have come to find out, that with any other teaching strategy, there are a variety of different challenges during the implementation of sustained silent reading. The challenges the participants talked about in the interviews differed depending on grade level and years of experience. Lower grades had more problems with getting up and distractions, while higher grade levels had trouble with the amount of time and sticking to one chapter book at a time.

Out of all the teachers I interview Mrs. Birch and Mrs. Miles have the most experience and are veteran teachers, but still run into difficult situations in the classroom. Mr. Randall is also a veteran teacher who has fourteen years of experience but he as well has challenges from time to time during implementation of silent reading.

Mrs. Miles described her challenging moments as “I make my students stay in their seats during sustained silent reading but it is difficult to keep them sitting in their seats without getting up to use the restroom or to get a drink. Second graders are still fidgety and they get distracted very easily.”

Mrs. Birch has a few different challenges because she has more students with disabilities in her classroom. She faces more behavioral challenges with the students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder that have a harder time maintaining their focus. She affirmed that:

It takes a lot of routine and repetition to get students back into the reading independently groove after summer vacation. Some students how have a difficult time reading the whole amount of time especially if they have ADHD or didn't take their medicine that morning. But after a while of teacher modeling and practicing

they do get good at focusing and knowing what is expected of them during sustained silent reading.

Mrs. Birch makes sure she uses the exact procedure that the Daily Five provides to ensure success in the area of independent reading and other literacy strategies.

Mrs. Brich stated that the scheduling for sustained silent reading is also an issue because she has so many students that get pulled out for services. She said “sometimes students miss a good chunk of sustained silent reading because they are at speech or occupational therapy. These students miss out on the independent time and I wish I could create a schedule where no one had to miss out on that” (6/19/14). This is tough because students need to go to their services but they also cut into the classroom time which is important as well.

Mr. Randall’s biggest struggle is time and distractions. He feels there are not enough hours in the school day to fit in more time for students to read independently. He stated “some students moan and complain when the thirty minute independent reading period is up and I hate to tell them they can’t continue reading.” On the other hand, Mr. Randall also has some students who get easily distracted and can’t focus for the whole time. Some students want to get up and get a drink or go to the bathroom, which is a chain reaction and sidetracks other students. When students get distracted and stop reading, this throws off their reading stamina and doesn’t allow them to build endurance for reading.

With fifth grade students it is extremely important to model good reading strategies and continue to use independent reading technique that they are aware of by adapting them to their age and grade level (Skinner, 1993).

During the school year, Mrs. Right faces similar challenges that Mrs. Birch had. Being a Kindergarten teacher, she felt that the biggest challenge was getting the students to sit still and staying comfortable for a certain amount of time. She described to me a strategy of having students always sit at their desks during sustained silent reading but she quickly realized this strategy did not work. She then stated “I switched my technique after a few weeks of school and began letting the students sit where they wanted to sit whether it was in a group on the floor or near the carpet.” This was interesting to me because she adapted her implementation to best fit the needs of the students, which is a habit every teacher should get into.

While working in an inclusive classroom can be difficult Mr. Bense seems to be getting the hang of it. He said his biggest challenge was getting the students to find appropriate books for themselves. “Some students pick out hard chapter books but then can’t get into it or they get frustrated because they don’t understand the book and it is too difficult” (6/20/14). Students need to find books of the correct reading level so that they can grow as a reader. This independent reading time is precious and needs to be used to the fullest extent. Students who switch books and drift off during reading are wasting reading time. We all want our students to find a book and get readers “flow” and Mr. Bense is trying new things to show students ways to pick out the right books for themselves.

Theme #6: Teacher Actions.

Mr. B showing students how to pick the “right” book for themselves.

Mr. B shows picture of brain. I even have a rule where if I looked up and we make eye contact (him and a student) then you are in trouble because you should be reading and not spacing out

Mrs. R book basket and let students read where they want to read. Bean bags

All teachers have different teaching approaches and way they implement their instruction. Based off of different experiences teachers adapt and grow their techniques in a way that works best for them and their students. While interviewing the teacher participants I came across a broad range of teacher actions in which they take part of during sustained silent reading.

Mrs. Right consistently reads while her students are partaking in sustained silent reading time. She reads a book of her own and brings in a variety of different types. If she finished a chapter book or one of her adult books she may switch it up and bring in a few of her favorite picture books to read such as *Green Eggs and Ham* by Dr. Seuss. In addition, she may bring in magazines with articles she is interested in to read. Mrs. Right told me that she also brings in her Nook from time to time. She lets the students look at it and tells them that the device is like an electronic book and that she uses it to read her different stories. This exposes the students to range of books and different texts to read.

Mrs. Miles focuses on providing students a wide variety of books. She wants each of her students to be able to pick out books appropriate for them and find books that interest them that they like to read. She described to me that she provides each student with a book basket where they can put six or seven books in for the week and each week they change the books out. She has her book library with a lot of books that are each labeled with a Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) reading scale. Mrs. Miles shows each student how to look for the “just right book” in the library and encourages them to pick a few extra books to put in their reading baskets. She stated “this ensures that they do not need to get up because they have spare books in their basket to read once they are finished with the first few books” (6/19/14).

Mrs. Birch compliments the whole class when they have done a good job focusing once the sustained silent reading time is over. This positive reinforcement encourages the desired behavior so that it will happen again in the future (Hasbrouck, 2006). Mrs. Birch wants her students to know what is expected of them and when they are doing a good job. She does not do it every time they act appropriately because she feels “that is the way they should be acting during sustained silent reading (6/19/14). She only does it when they have gone above and beyond to show her they are independent workers who enjoy reading.

Mr. Bense starts off the year by modeling independent reading himself. While the students are quietly reading he is also reading a book for enjoyment. He stated “I sometimes gasp or make noises on purpose to show the students how intrigued I am with a book. I want them to know that it is ok to react to a character or feel the emotions that they are describing in the story. (6/20/14).

After a few months Mr. Bense assigns a book project that gives students a chance to talk about their books and get other students to read them. It is a great way to get students to discuss main events in their books and work on speaking in front of their classmates. Mr. Bense has about three of these assignments a year and says he loves to see how they have grown in the types of books they read and the way they present them to the class.

Mr. Randall introduces sustained silent reading in a great way. For his few first lessons he gets the students thrilled about silent reading and reading for enjoyment. He said:
I get them really excited about what is going on in their brains as they read and show them a picture of a brain reading versus a brain watching television. The picture shows so much more thinking in the reading picture compared to the

picture of someone watching television. After that I read aloud and I try to get them excited about escaping into that other world even if it is non-fiction.

This is a great technique because it gets students interested in what their brains are doing while they are reading and why reading is so important.

Like Mr. Bense, Mr. Randall also does a book project that the students complete once a month starting in November of each school year. Each book project has a theme such as a mystery book or creating a game based off of the book. This motivated the students to read and find exciting ways to present the information to their classmates.

Summary

The interview process allowed me to hold one-on-one conversations with five, experienced elementary teachers. In doing so, I gained insight and perspective on how teacher use sustained silent reading in the classroom.

After I transcribed, coded, and analyzed the data provided multiple times, I was able to draw conclusions about how teachers implement sustained silent reading. The conclusions and implications I developed were based on the perspectives of experienced elementary teachers expressed during the interview process.

During the interview process, I focused on the following aspects of executing a sustained silent reading program: previous knowledge of sustained silent reading, classroom management during sustained silent reading, future advice for teachers implementing the activity, and challenges or benefits that have been seen. The findings I presented were grounded in the data provided by the participants and have been used to formulate

conclusions, implications for students and the researcher, and recommendations for future research studies, all of which I present in chapter five.

Chapter 5: Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations

The focus of this five week research study was based on the researching how elementary teachers perceive and implement sustained silent reading. I conducted my research in a suburban elementary school in central New York. The participants were five teachers in grades Kindergarten through fifth. I interviewed all five teachers in order to gain insights into their independent reading beliefs. The teachers' responses to the interview questions generated the study's findings. Interviewing teachers who have experience and professional development under their belt, helped me to realize how I can structure my sustained silent reading time in order to be effective with all students. My experiences with this study also helped me realize subjects I would like to further research in the future.

Based on the themes identified in chapter four, I was able to make several conclusions related to how teachers implement sustained silent reading and what factors play into planning the daily activity.

Conclusions

Teachers See Students Become Stronger Readers Because of Sustained Silent Reading

Compton-Lilly (2008) described reading processes as perception, attention, memory, problem solving, reasoning, language acquisition, and comprehension. The teachers I interviewed all saw their students excel in the reading process, linking it to sustained silent reading. By practicing independent reading every day, the students are putting the strategies into use that they learned in whole- group instruction or centers with the teacher.

Mrs. Right sees her Kindergarteners as “sponges that want to absorb everything” (6/23/14). She loves that she can see them grow and start to read in her classroom. “My students love books and once I start with the decoding and reading strategies they are so determined to

read the books in the classroom. I love it. Then at the end of the year I can see how far they have come. I think they really do benefit from the sustained silent reading and they enjoy it” (6/23/14).

Mrs. Miles and Mrs. Birch have been using The Daily Five Program (Boushey & Moser, 2014) for eight years. They say they have seen their students excel much more when using all aspects of The Daily Five Program including sustained silent reading compared to not using it (6/19/14). Mrs. Birch mentioned, “My students really do like it. They love doing it in their centers and when the students get pulled they complain because they know they will miss sustained silent reading time. For the students who get pulled and miss it frequently I feel bad because they need that time to use their skills” (6/19/14).

Mr. Bense described his class as an inclusive class room with the majority of the students having Individualized Education Plans. In my interview with him he was very passionate about his job and his students. He said:

I believe every student can succeed and if we give our students the right tools to do so they can excel in higher grades. Sustained silent reading is one of those activities that lets them practice their reading skills. By the end of the school year my students have come a long way and I think it is a combination of the teaching instruction, consistency, routines, and independent reading (6/20/14).

Mr. Randall also sees his students striving for success. He said “Being an English major in college has impacted me to value reading more and I portray that to my students. I want them to take sustained silent reading time seriously so that they themselves can see results of themselves as a better reader” (6/19/14).

All of the teachers I interview saw sustained silent reading as a plus in the classroom. From observations and academic evidence they shared with me their conclusions that sustained silent reading benefits students.

Teachers Use Different Strategies to Implement Sustained Silent Reading Such as Organizing Book Levels and Reading Time

Organizing Books for Students

Every teacher has different strategies and techniques that work best for their teaching style (Barber & Mourshed, 2007). While I interviewed my teacher participants, I came across many different strategies they used to implement sustained silent reading. They adapt their strategies for implementation of sustained silent reading depending on the grade level and interests of their students.

Mrs. Right gathers books for her students to read during sustained silent reading time and is constantly bring more into the classroom. She puts her books in alphabetical order with each section labeled so that students get use their alphabet. She know most of them cannot read all of the titles but many of them can find the books they are looking for based on the appearance or going to the letter section such as “D” for Daisy’s New Home. Mrs. Right has five sustained silent reading baskets. She places a variety of about 10 to 15 books in each basket and has about 3 students go to the basket during sustained silent reading time. She rotates the baskets every day or so in order for the students to read the books in every basket. She switches the books out of the basket with new books every week.

Mrs. Birch and Mrs. Miles level their books based off of Developmental Reading Assessment levels (Scholastic,2014). This system is linked in with the Daily Five (Boushey & Moser, 2014) and all of the students are aware of how the ranking and leveling of books work. Both second grade teachers encourage students to bring in books from the library or from home so that they are not limited to the leveled ones in the classroom library.

Being a fourth grade teacher, Mr. Bense organizes his books for sustained silent reading based on genre. Now that the students are a little bit older, they can decide what

books are right for them based on the series of books and by scanning the first few pages (Tankersley, 2005). Mr. Bense organizes by genre so that students can gravitate towards books they are interested in (6/20/14). He also stated, “I organize my classroom books this way so that students are exposed to different groupings of books, similar to what is found at the library. I do not want them to be discouraged if I level them and then tell them they have to stick to one level; I want them to explore their reading abilities themselves (6/20/14).

Mr. Randall organizes his books in alphabetical order as well but keeps multiple numbers of chapter books separate so that students can find them easily. He also encourages students to bring in books from the library and from home so that they are interested and engaged in what they are reading. His goal is to have every student involved in their books to feel the characters emotions.

Reading Time

Each grade level also experiences different sustained silent reading times during different parts of the day. The younger students start off only reading independently for a few minutes while the higher grade levels start them off reading for a longer time because the students have built up their reading stamina and they should be used to the sustained silent reading program.

Mrs. Right goes along with the P.A.R.P schedule extension and when the students hear a certain noise, such as a chime, over the loud speaker they have to go to their sustained silent reading baskets. This can happen at any time during the day. She models to the students what this should look like and has them practice a few times so that they get the hang of it. Once they hear the chime again they can stop. She stated ,“They reading time usually last for about ten to fifteen minutes and most of my students will look at the books for that long of a

time. I do have a few students that can't sit still and I just reinforce the rules and let them know they have a little longer to read" (6/23/14).

Mrs. Miles and Mrs. Birch do their sustained silent reading first thing in the morning. Mrs. Birch stated, "This system gets students to unwind and gets their minds going. I like to have them settle in after the bus and read before the day brings new distractions" (6/19/14). Both teachers start their students off by reading for about three minutes and slowly increase the time depending on how well the students read without getting up or distracting others. Mrs. Birch also sometimes uses sustained silent reading as a center where students will read for about ten minutes while other students are at different centers. She said "this works well for students who come in late in the morning or for students who need that extra independent reading time" (6/19/14).

Mr. Bense and Mr. Randall have their students start reading independently for about ten minutes because they are more mature and can sit for a longer period of time. They are used to reading silently and have built up stamina. They know what is expected of them because each teacher makes this well aware at the beginning of the school year before sustained silent reading blocks start.

Teachers Use Their Knowledge of Their Students and Observations in Order to Best Support All Students During Sustained Silent Reading

The teachers used their knowledge of their students' interests, abilities, and needs to plan their implementation of sustained silent reading. Younger students will need guidance and reassurance that some books may be too difficult and that as long as you are trying to comprehend the story, using decoding strategies to read, and looking at pictures, you are expanding your literacy skills. Older students may need to be guided to certain genres of

chapter books that link to their interests. It is extremely important for teachers to take into account students' interests when they are creating the classroom library and guiding students to books they should pick out for sustained silent reading. Learning how to read will be more likely to be rewarding and motivating for students if their interests are incorporated into daily plans and classroom activities (Tomlinson, et. Al ,2003).

Mr. Birmingham explained that he had books organized into genres such as fantasy and mystery so that students can find books they enjoy or books that pertain to that month's book project (6/20/14). This is beneficial for students to find books they want to read during sustained silent reading time instead of rushing to pick one they are not interested in.

Mrs. Right supports her early literate learners by telling them "it is alright if you can't read, look at the pictures to see what the story says" (6/23/14). It is important to let the students know that they will learn by practicing and reading books that interest them to gain skills.

Implications for Student Learning

Students Need To Be Exposed To Sustained Silent Reading to Improve their Reading Skills

Through interviews I learned that students need to interact with books at their independent level in order to become more engaged and proficient readers. As shown in my research study, the teachers planned for students to have multiple opportunities and uninterrupted time to do this effectively.

Each teacher touched on how effective sustained silent reading is. Many also mentioned that they have seen improvement in their students. Mr. Birch said "My students enjoy reading more and I noticed as the year goes on they get more fluent and into the books" (6/21/14). Mrs. Right mentioned "Most of my students cannot read in the beginning of the

year but exposing them to books early on feeds their growing hunger for information. They gain information on concepts about print and later in the year are reading” (6/23/14).

Some teachers mentioned that in their first years of teaching they did not use a sustained silent reading system and that their students were not as involved in reading. They stated that these students struggled more with literacy skills and weren’t as fluent from their observations. The teachers see students grow and enjoy reading more now that they are given time to read independently everyday at school.

Students Receive Helpful Support From Teachers Before and During The Implementation Of Sustained Silent Reading

Through interviews I have learned that it is extremely important to set a routine and strong modeling system for any new activity students will be doing in the classroom. Scaffolding is critical in building stronger skills off of a foundation activity such as sustained silent reading. The teachers describe a few different strategies to help their students in participating in sustained silent reading.

Before implementing sustained silent reading, Mr. Randall shows students a picture of how much positive stimulation a brain gets while watching television and while reading. He then has the students compare the two images and points out that there is so much more positive stimulation in the brain that is reading. He mentioned “the students really get a kick out of the brain images and it gets them excited to read” (6/19/14).

This helpful strategy shows students the significance of reading. For students to understand why they practice reading skills everyday is very valuable and will help them thrive to become better literate students (Hyde, Daniels & Zelman, 1998). Mr. Randall

started his introduction to sustained silent reading by telling students what the purpose of it was. By doing so he helped to make the activity more meaningful.

Mrs. Miles is a second grade teacher who sticks firmly to The Daily Five procedure of sustained silent reading. One of her big goals is to help students find that “just right” book so that they can excel as a literate learner. She leveled all of the books in her book library so that her students could find books appropriate for them. She also modeled a technique to know if a book is too difficult for a student. She described the technique as:

I think out loud so that the students know what is going on in my head. I first go over to the book library and say “hmm I am interested in a fiction book today” so I go to the fiction section of the library. Then I pick up a more difficult book and tell the students “I am going to read the only first two pages in my head to see if it is a good book for me”. Next I read the first two pages and tell them “I didn’t really understand what was going on and there were a lot of words that I couldn’t read in this first part of the book. Maybe I should look for a book that is more my level.” I then ask the students why they think this book may be too hard for me. Students may answer that I didn’t comprehend the beginning or that the words are too difficult. Next I do the same but pick out a book that is “too easy” and tell the students that I felt the book was too easy and wasn’t interesting to me. Finally I choose another book that is “closer to my level” and read the first two pages in my head. Then I tell them that I understand what is going on and that I am interested to continue to read (6/19/14).

This strategy is modeled so that students comprehend what they should do before they pick out a book to read independently. It is essential to go through the steps so that students know what to do.

Implications for My Teaching

Through this study, I acquired infinite knowledge to inform, support and extended my knowledge and teaching strategies for sustained silent reading. While it may take me several years using the activity to craft my own principled practice, the insights and perspectives of the experienced participants provided me with great information for my future teaching career. Significant implications I inferred from this study's findings related to my growth in knowledge of the activities organization, practice, expectations, and my future role as a teacher.

Better Knowledge of The Strategies to Implement Sustained Silent Reading

The purpose of this study, as I noted in chapter one, was to gain a better insight of how experienced teachers perceive and implement sustained silent reading in their classroom. Since I am a future educator fresh out of college, I am not aware of the best literacy practices used in the classroom, especially sustained silent reading. I was determined to find out more about the activity and to see if it would be something I want to use in my future classroom. After I interviewed the participants, coded and analyzed the data, and formed conclusions, I gained a better foundational knowledge of the reading practice.

I gained strategies that are useful during the implementation of sustained silent reading such as reading while your students are reading to model expected behavior, introduce students to why reading is important to lay the foundation of sustained silent reading, and adapt the activity to your students needs, some classes may not be able to read as long as you would like so you have to shorten the starting amount time. I will use all of these strategies when I implement sustained silent reading in my classroom.

I also gained strategies on how to manage your students while they are partaking in sustained silent reading. Some advice I got from the teachers was to be firm, set an early routine and stick to it, sometimes allowing students to read where they want is best, do not let students get up to sharpen pencils, go to the bathroom, or get water, and supply students with books that interest them.

Broader View of What is Expected in Each Grade Level

As I analyzed the shifts in how the grade level teachers implement sustained silent reading, I began to wonder if other teachers take into account the growth that take place between grade levels. Do the first grade teachers know that the Kindergarten teachers work hard to set the foundation of sustained silent reading in the students so that they know what to do when they do the activity in first grade?

It is important for all grade level teachers need to communicate their expectations and what they are doing for each grade level. This will make it easier for other grade level teachers to know what the goal is for their students and what skills they need to introduce early on. In addition, teachers will understand what skills have scaffolded their students to prepare them for skills needed in their present grade.

Conducting this study provided me with knowledge connected with sustained silent reading pertaining to each grade level. Each grade level implements sustained silent reading a little differently and I am now aware of the differences in each level. I do not know what grade I will teach in the future so this study is helpful because it examined lower levels and higher levels of primary schooling.

Knowledge Of My Future Role As A Literacy Advocate

This study has allowed me to gain fresh perspectives from experienced, classroom teachers about how they perceive and implement sustained silent reading in their classrooms. I anticipated that the findings and conclusions I found from this study will have future implications on my role as a future literacy advocate within my teaching. As my graduate background will allow me to be certified as a literacy specialist, I will be called upon to give my professional opinions and expertise.

I found that each teacher has their own techniques they add to sustained silent reading. This study has given me information about a lot of strategies that work for other teachers that I may want to try out or research more.

From the quantity of data collected from the five teacher interviews, I was exposed to many perspectives concerning sustained silent reading. As a literacy specialist, I will be able to use the perspectives and findings in this study to advocate for a reading program that fits the multiple perspectives and insights I experienced. I inspire to spread my knowledge to people who do not have the privilege to indulge in literacy education.

Recommendations for Future Research

As with all research, this study had limitations in research design. Based on the limitations I identified in chapter three, future research in teachers' implementation of sustained silent reading should be considered and focus on balancing the sample size and representation of grade levels, incorporating different school districts and observe all teachers during sustained silent reading time. These are aspects that could, if considered

in future studies, yield more perspectives and insights on teachers' implementations of sustained silent reading.

Balance Sample Size and Representation of Grade Level

As I discussed in chapter three, the number of participants representing each grade level was not balanced. While an adequate number of participants were available in grade two to reach data saturation, only one teacher participant represented Kindergarten, grade four and grade five, and no teacher participants represented grade three. While the perspectives presented in this study seemed to follow a pattern, the perspectives of the Kindergarten, grade three, grade four, and grade five cannot be generalized for the entire grade level. Therefore, it would be beneficial to investigate the same research question with a larger sampling specifically more balanced participant numbers across the grade levels represented.

Broaden Research to Additional School Districts

To smoothly amplify the validity of the findings and conclusions I presented, future research could look at how teachers implement sustained silent reading in other school districts. The expectations and programs placed on teachers change from school district to school district. In restricting the data collection to one school district, an effect of "district" positionality seems present. Like a researcher having an effect on conclusions made at the end of a study, a teacher population from the same school district, with the same expectations and necessities, will have predictable similarities. While I found many differences from the participants and from grade levels, there was

still a limitation in using participants from one school district and building. As a result, conducting a similar study based on the same research topic, but within other school districts using sustained silent reading, would increase the validity of the findings and conclusions.

Observe All Teachers During Sustained Silent Reading Time

Due to time constraints, I was never able to observe any teachers during an entire sustained silent reading block. I recommend that researchers observe teachers throughout a five-week period to examine the teacher and student behaviors during sustained silent reading. I think it would be appropriate for a researcher to observe teachers a few times during a five-week period in order to gain a better understanding of teaching actions, the program aspects, and individual students. Such research could supply more evidence of how teachers implement sustained silent reading.

Final Thoughts

The purpose of this study was to investigate how elementary teachers perceive and implement sustained silent reading. I designed this study of five teachers to deepen my knowledge of sustained silent reading as a literacy tool. Sustained silent reading has been used in education for decades (Chua, 2008). There has been a variety of different versions of sustained silent reading throughout the United States for over twenty five years (Gardiner, 2001).

I remember having sustained silent reading time in my elementary classroom when I was younger and enjoyed having time to read some of my favorite books. As I got

older and spent time reading educational books for undergraduate and graduate school, I heard of many different ways to implement this activity and different versions of it such as Drop Everything and Read or Q.U.I.E.T. Prior to this study, I was overwhelmed at all the options and ways to implement it to get students to enjoy reading. It was my hope that the study would reveal critical information to inform and support my own use of the activity. The process of interviewing experienced teachers yielded insightful perspectives about implementing sustained silent reading.

After analyzing the data from the interviews, I concluded that experienced teachers, from different grade levels, implement sustained silent reading in ways that best benefit their students. I formed this conclusion based on perspectives provided from the interviews, and perspectives I gained through analyzing and coding the five interviews.

During the process of conducting this study, I enhanced my researching skills such as effective data collection, analysis, and synthesis, and I learned effective qualitative research methods and ethical practices that I anticipate that I will use in future research projects.

References

- Arcidiacono, C., Procentese, F., & Di Napoli, I. (2009). Qualitative and quantitative research: An ecological approach. *International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches*, 3(2), 163-176.
- Arthur, J. E. (1995). *What is the effect of recreational reading on reading achievement of middle grade students?* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 391 143)
- Barber, M., & Mourshed, M. (2007). *How the world's best-performing school systems come out on top*. New York: McKinsey & Company
- Boshey, G. & Mosher, J. (2014). *The daily five: fostering literacy independence in the elementary grades*. Stenhouse Publishers.
- Chua, S. P. (2008). The effects of the silent sustained reading program on cultivating students' habits and attitudes in reading books for leisure. *Clearing House*, 81(4), 180-184.
- Compton-Lilly, C. (2008). Teaching struggling readers: Capitalizing on diversity for effective learning. *The Reading Teacher*, 61 (8), p. 668-671.
- Creswell, J. (2008). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education International.
- Erazmus, T. R. (1987). The effect of a recreational reading program on standardized test scores. (Master's Thesis). ERIC Document Reproduction Service (No. ED294169). Retrieved from http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/1d/88/1d.pdf
- Fisher, D. (2004). Setting the "opportunity to read" standard: Resuscitating the SSR program in an urban high school: One urban high school made significant efforts to provide students with the opportunity to read. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 48, 138-150. doi:10.1598/JAAL.48.2.5
- Fisher, D. & Frey, N. (2014). *Better Learning through Structured Teaching: A Framework for the Gradual Release of Responsibility, 2nd Edition*. Alexandria: ASCD.
- Gambrell, L.B. (1981). The clip sheet. *The Reading Teacher*, 34, 836-838.

- Garan, E. & DeVoogd, G. (2008). The benefits of sustained silent reading: scientific research and common sense converge. The Reading Teacher, 62, 336-344.
- Gardiner, S. (2005). Building Student Literacy Through Sustained Silent Reading. Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development.
- Hasbrouck, J. (2006). Drop everything and read –but how? For students who are not yet fluent, silent reading is not the best use of classroom time. *American Educator*, 30(2). Retrieved from <http://www.aft.org/newspubs/periodicals/ae/summer2006/hasbrouck.cfm>
- Hunt, L. C. (1997) The effect of self-selection, interest, and motivation upon independent, instructional, and frustrational levels. *The Reading Teacher*, 50(4),278-282. Originally published in *The Reading Teacher* 1970, 24.
- Hyde, A., Daniels, H., & Zemelman, S. (1998). *Best practice: New standards for teaching and learning in America's schools.* (2ndEd). Portsmouth, NH: Heinman.
- Jaeger, T. (2003). *Manual Analysis. Usenix.*
- Kornelny, D., & Smith, L. (1993). Bring back the USSE. *School Library Journal*, 39 (4), 48.
- Krashen, S. (1993). *The power of reading: Insights from the research.* Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited.
- Krashen, S. (2005). Is in-schoolfree reading good for children? Why the national reading panel report is (still) wrong. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 86(6), 444-447.
- McCracken, R. & McCracken, M. (1978). Modeling is the key to sustained silent reading. The Reading Teacher, 31, 406-408.
- National Reading Panel. (2000). Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching children to read reports of the subgroups (NIH Publication No. 00-4754).
- New York State PTA. http://www.nyspta.org/YourPTA/YourPTA_PARP.cfm
- Pearson, P. D., & Gallagher, G. (1983). The gradual release of responsibility model of instruction. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 8, 112-123.
- Perks, Kevin. (2006). Fun, Easy, and Effective: Sustained Silent Reading as a High School Practice. *Coalition of Essential Schools.*
- Pilgreen, J. (2000). *The SSR handbook: How to organize and manage a sustained silent reading program.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Schiefele, U. (1991). Interest, learning, and motivation. Education Psychologist, 26, 299-323.

Scholastic, (2014). Assess DRA Reading Levels. Leveled Reading.

Sedita, Joan. 2011. Sustained Silent Reading. *All About Adolescent Literacy*.

Skinner, E. A., & Belmont, M. J. (1993). Motivation in the classroom: Reciprocal effects of teacher behavior and student engagement across the school year. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 85(4), 571-581.

Tankersley, K. (2005). Literacy strategies for grade 4-12. *Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development*.

Yoon, J. (2002). Three decades of sustained silent reading: A meta-analytic review of the effects of SSR on attitude toward reading. *Reading Improvement*, 39 (2), 186-195.

<http://www.usa.com/school-district-3605580-income-and-careers.htm>

<http://www.usa.com/school-district-3628590-income-and-careers.htm#Household-Income>

<http://www.city-data.com/school/Brockport-New-York.html>

<http://www2.ed.gov/documents/labor-managementcollaboration/presentations/syracuse.pdf>

Appendix A: Participant Consent Form

Informed Consent Form for Interviews

CONSENT FOR INTERVIEW

The purpose of this study is to dive deeper and understand the different strategies teachers use to implement sustained silent reading. The researcher, Bridget Lefler, is a graduate student at The College at Brockport, SUNY in Education and Human Development Department. This study is a requirement for completing a graduate thesis. The researcher will conduct interviews with teachers to discuss their differing perspectives and experiences with sustained silent reading.

If you agree to participate in this research study, you will take part in an interview and be asked about your perspectives and experiences in executing sustained silent reading. Also, you may be randomly selected to be observed during a period of sustained silent reading. This will allow the researcher to see how you put sustained silent reading into practice. You have the option of participating in the interview and not an observation.

In order to participate in this study, your informed consent is required. You are being asked to make a decision whether or not to participate in the study. If you are willing to participate in the study, and agree with the statements below, please check your consent option and sign your name in the space provided at the end.

I _____ understand that:

1. My participation in this study is voluntary and I have the right to refuse to answer any interview questions.
2. My name will not be recorded. If any publication results from this research, I would not be identified by name.
3. My participation involves completing a personal information sheet regarding my education, experience, and certification. The information sheet will only be read by the researcher and only used for contextual information.
4. My participation involves answering ten open-ended interview questions about how I perceive and implement sustained silent reading. The questions will be provided to me prior to my scheduled interview, so that I have the opportunity to gather any resources I would like to share with the researcher.
5. Time is a minor risk. My participation will be no more than 30 minutes.
6. The interview will be audio taped. The audio tape will be used for data analysis only, and the interview will be transcribed. Only the researcher will listen to the interview. The results will be used for the completion of a Master's thesis by the researcher.

7. I may consent to the interview and refuse to be audio recorded.
8. All data, including audio tapes, will be kept in a locked filing cabinet by the researcher and will be destroyed by shredding after the research has been accepted.
9. My name may be randomly selected for an observation. I understand that I may refuse to be observed without penalty. Observations will not be recorded. The researcher will use field notes to record observations. All field notes will be shredded after the thesis research has been accepted.
10. I understand that the administration may request a summary of results. I understand that my name and information may be kept confidential. Administration will not know which teachers participated in the study.

I am 18 years of age or older, I have read and understand the above statements. All my questions about my participation in this study have been answered to my satisfaction. I agreed to participate in the study, with the understanding that I may withdraw, without penalty, at any time during the interview process.

I agree to participate in the interview and understand that I will be audio taped.

Signature of Participant _____ Date: _____

I agree to participate in the interview but do not agree to be audio tapes.

Signature of Participant _____ Date: _____

I agree to participate in the observation if I am randomly selected.

Signature of Participant _____ Date: _____

I do not grant consent for an observation.

Signature of Participant _____ Date: _____

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the researcher or thesis advisor using this contact information below.

Bridget Lefler
 Education and Human Development
 Literacy Education
 Graduate Student and Researcher
 The College at Brockport, SUNY
 (315) 657-4462

Dr. Don Halquist
 Education and Human Development
 Department Chair
 Thesis Advisor
 The College at Brockport, SUNY
 (585) 395-5550
 dhalquis@brockport.edu

Blefl2@u.brockport.edu

Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet

CONFIDENTIAL

Purpose:

Completing the information below will give me applicable information about your education and professional experiences. I will use this information to build the contextual information regarding the teacher participants in my thesis paper. If you do not wish to answer these questions, or particular questions, please leave it blank. Your identity will not be affiliated with this information. I will use an identification number on all data sheets. I will be the only person to know the identification numbers. Please return this sheet to me with your consent form.

Name: _____

Age: _____

Years of Experience: _____

Current grade level: _____

Other grade levels you have taught: _____

Highest degree of education: _____

Bachelor's Degree in: _____

Master's Degree in: _____

Certification(s): _____

Appendix C: Interview Questions

Questions:

1. What do you know about sustained silent reading?

Sustained silent reading is defined as an in-classroom reading activity in which teachers give students a certain amount of time to silently read self-selected material for enjoyment or information as a method of creating a passion of reading without assessment, skill work, monitoring, or instruction from the teacher (Garan & DeVogd, 2006; Yoon 2002).

2. Have you used some sort of sustained silent reading in your classroom? If so for how long and which grade level?
3. What classroom management strategies do you find effective with sustained silent reading?
4. Please describe how you introduce sustained silent reading at the beginning of the year?
5. Does your implementation of sustained silent reading change over the course of the school year? If so, how?
6. What do you see as the benefits using sustained silent reading?
7. What do you see as some challenges for using sustained silent reading?
8. What do you do while your students are reading?
9. What advice would you have for a teacher who is considering using sustained silent reading?
10. Is there anything else you would like to share about you perceptions or implementations of sustained silent reading?

Appendix D: Interview Protocol

Participant Identification Number: _____

Date of Interview and Time: _____

Purpose Statement: ****Start audio recording-** Identify participant by number, the date, and time.****** The purpose of this interview is for me to gain a better understanding of how experienced teachers perceive and implement sustained silent reading. Any insights and perspectives that you are willing to share will allow me to more effectively consider my application of the activity. If at any time you feel uncomfortable with a question I ask, please know that you have the choice to not respond. You may withdraw from the interview at anytime. I anticipate our interview will last 20 to 30 minutes. I will be recording our conversation if you have given consent.

Questions:

1. What do you know about sustained silent reading?

Sustained silent reading is defined as an in-classroom reading activity in which teachers give students a certain amount of time to silently read self-selected material for enjoyment or information as a method of creating a passion of reading without assessment, skill work, monitoring, or instruction from the teacher (Garan & DeVogd, 2006; Yoon 2002).

2. Have you used some sort of sustained silent reading in your classroom? If so for how long and which grade level?
3. What classroom management strategies do you find effective with sustained silent reading?
4. Please describe how you introduce sustained silent reading at the beginning of the year?
5. Does your implementation of sustained silent reading change over the course of the school year? If so, how?
6. What do you see as the benefits using sustained silent reading? Rank the benefit of sustained silent reading zero to four, zero being not beneficial and 4 being extremely beneficial.

7. What do you see as some challenges for using sustained silent reading?
8. What do you do while your students are reading?
9. What advice would you have for a teacher who is considering using sustained silent reading?
10. Is there anything else you would like to share about you perceptions or implementations of sustained silent reading?

Closing:

I truly appreciate your participation and willingness to share your time with me. Your participation and insights will help me use the reading program in a more effective way. As noted in your consent letter, I will keep your identity confidential.