Capstone Project
The Power of One Good Book:
Creating an Independent Reading Program in an Alternative School to Help Promote Literacy

by

John Forestell

A Capstone Project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in Teaching

Hamline University

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Advisor: Laura Halldin
Content Reviewer: Patrice St. Peter
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Overview</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development Presentation Google SlideDeck</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development Presentation Speaker Notes</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development Presentation Scheme</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development Presentation Evaluation Google Form PDF</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Committee Proposed Schedule</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile Google Form PDF</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Proposal</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference List</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Project Overview

After an uneven implementation of a Sustained Silent Reading initiative, I questioned and researched what other schools do to create success in Sustained Silent Reading. This renewed an interest in creating and implementing a more effective independent reading program directed by my research question: *How can a self-selected reading or sustained, silent reading (SSR) program be implemented to improve its effectiveness and positively create a culture of independent readers?* I hope to return my colleagues, at my small alternative school, to our original zeal for an SSR program through thoughtful, meaningful, professional development.

Through this, our building will develop a team of educators - a literacy committee - who will support the implementation as its scope expands, providing direction for future staff development and increasing student involvement in the implementation. This endeavor is also complemented by work done to best support students: creating classroom libraries, developing partnerships, and thoroughly examining the structures in place to see if modifying them could benefit student engagement.

This professional development is grounded in the research from the literature review. It ultimately produces the foundation for staff and students to participate in a year-long, school-wide initiative for a sustained, silent reading program based off student choice. While this initiative is targeted for a small, alternative school, it could be adapted and used by any school setting. The professional development portion of the project is contained within a Google Slides deck with speaker notes and information added to the slides. Based on Knowles (1992) work in adult education, the professional development asks participants to actively
interpret data, collectively evaluate our initiative, and support next steps to improve success.

After the professional development, there is a brief evaluation for the participants, based off my district’s professional development evaluation tool as a Google Form.

Beyond an initial professional development, the literacy committee that is formed by my colleagues who are passionate about changing or developing our SSR initiative needs guidance. During normal committee time, which meets approximately every third Tuesday in the month, I have created a plan that allows educators to become more knowledgeable about the data and practices of an effective Sustained Silent Reading program, without encumbering them to a large time commitment. The literacy committee proposed schedule asks educators to read chapters from two of SSR’s essential texts: *SSR Handbook: How to Organize and Manage a Sustained Silent Reading Program* (Pilgreen, 2000), and *Revisiting Silent Reading: New Directions for Teachers and Readers* (Heibert and Reutzel, 2014). By immersing ourselves in the data and best strategies we can more effectively guide our initiative. Time in committee will also be spent reading high interest texts to help promote them for student use and eventually help create pathways for student leadership to promote reading.

In order to create these student pathways and opportunities, another portion of my project will measure student motivation towards reading. Originally created by Pitcher and a team of researchers, the *Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile* is a survey that provides insight into students’ preferred types of reading and instruction. According to Pitcher et al., who developed the *Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile*, “Motivation to read is a complex construct that influences readers’ choices of reading material, their willingness to engage in reading, and thus their ultimate competence in reading, especially related to reading tasks” (2007, p. 395). The
necessary transition is for students to move from reading because they are instructed to do so, towards reading for their own personal growth and success. Using the Google Form of the Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile that I have created for this project, the literacy committee will be able to better obtain the kind of reading materials our students want to read, better plan our future steps, and better meet our student needs. Administered in the fall, we can receive baseline data and see how motivated our students are in their reading. By looking at that data and having targeted interventions for students through our SSR lens, we can then administer the same Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile towards the end of the school year to see if our changes in the SSR initiative had any positive effects on student reading engagement.

Finally, in order to support the creation of classroom libraries and purchase high interest books for students -- a critical aspect of the SSR initiative’s success -- I have written a grant proposal. Through my district’s Education Foundation, a grant for $3000 can be awarded to teachers that wish to enhance the efficacy of curriculum or instruction. The grants are submitted in October and usually awarded by mid-November if they satisfactorily meet the selection committee’s criteria. My grant is for the purchasing of approximately 500 books for our school, creating classroom libraries of about 30 to 50 texts. Access to libraries has a positive impact on reading development; the better the library, the higher the reading scores. In a study of the data from the PIRLS organization (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study), Krashen, Lee, and McQuillian found that while socioeconomic status is the strongest predictor of reading achievement, just lagging behind it was access to a library of at least 500 books (2012). Through the fulfillment of this grant we can improve the reading achievement of our students.
While these presentations, evaluations, and proposals complete the portions of the project I have created, at the time of writing, still more work is to be done. Improving student access to quality reading material is still a critical issue. I have reached out our local branch of the county library system and met with a librarian specialist in teen literature. Our school is unique; many students come to our school from neighboring school districts (Mahtomedi, North St. Paul, Stillwater, and Mounds View) which lie beyond our county’s borders. Fortunately, she is currently working on helping create a way for all students at the ALC to have a library card, regardless of if they live within our county or not. It will be up to the literacy committee to facilitate a cost-effective way for students to travel to the library. I am also, at the time of writing, waiting to hear if a capital expenditure has been approved to buy books and book storage for classrooms.

The completion of this capstone and its accompanying project, lays the foundation for dynamic and pragmatic changes at my school. By taking active steps to effectively revitalize our stagnating Sustained Silent Reading program, we are doing all we can to help improve our students’ reading achievement and help connect them to the culture of reading.
PDF of Professional Development Google Slide Deck: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TkmEBwPKFraPoR4hIjrlzfMG-UfYFRI0/view?usp=sharing

Professional Development Presentation with Speaker Notes:

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THE POWER OF ONE GOOD BOOK:

REVITALIZING OUR SSR PROGRAM TO ENHANCE STUDENT SUCCESS

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Welcome staff
Introductions
“And while that specific book worked in my life as a catalyst, I know that in the ten years of my teaching career that books have had the same powerful effect for different students. I gave Jared (all student names are pseudonyms), a ninth grader going through a difficult moment, a copy of Nick Hornby’s Slam (2008), due to the similar problems the protagonist faces in the story. He read it over the course of a few weeks and proudly announced to the entire class that it was the first book he had ever read by himself. Miranda had a similar moment of success when given Emma Donoghue’s Room (2010). She said, “I’ve never read something that made me want to keep reading before. I just wanted to know what was going to happen next!” Last year, Markiss, a senior in high school who was so credit deficient that it looked impossible that he would graduate on time, was given time and space with a good book. He quickly read Rick Riordan’s Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief (2005), and then went on to read every single book written by Riordan before he graduated on time. He said, “These books gave me a reason to make better choices, to focus on school. Percy Jackson is a big part of why I’m graduating.” Noah got so caught up in Sean Covey’s The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens (1998) that he wrote notes in the margins to future readers, “This part is important! PAY ATTENTION HERE!!!” Even Joe, who has proudly and defiantly said that he’s never read a book and now won’t be the time to break that streak, caved after being handed Stephen Chbosky’s Perks of Being a Wallflower (1999).

When students are given time and choice, reading can become a transformative experience. There can be a magical moment where students who have been reluctant readers suddenly cross over some invisible barrier and become members of the culture of reading.”
SSR, or even... Shut up, Sit Down, and Read

SSR grew out of reaction to pedagogical trends in the 1960s and 1970s that favored drills and worksheets to teach literacy skills (Armstrong, 2016), but data on silent reading, time spent reading, and reading achievement have gone back as far as 1937 (Manning, Lewis, and Lewis). The concept is not new. Lyman Hunt introduced “USSR,” or Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading, in 1970, and programs very similar in nature go by a myriad of names.
OBJECTIVES:

1. Reflect on our current SSR initiative. What works for us as teachers and students? What challenges do we face?
2. Understand the data and methodologies of best practice SSR approaches.
3. Evaluate our approach in comparison to information presented.
4. Creation of Literacy Committee to steer future direction.

Present Objectives.
Ask for clarifying questions, feedback, or additions.
REFLECT

With one or two people sitting close to you, reflect on the past two years of our SSR initiative. What successes have you or students experienced? What challenges do we still face?

Slide 5.
Elbow partner conversations about current SSR program
Each group gets post-it’s write successes and challenges
Go over all feedback as whole group
Ask for commonalities
Slide 6.

Placeholder slide before talking about history and efficacy of SSR
THE NATIONAL READING PANEL'S REPORT (2000)

"The studies examined the impact of encouraging independent reading on overall reading, rather than on reading fluency, per se. Most of these studies failed to find a positive relationship between encouraging reading and either the amount of reading or reading achievement. Furthermore, few of the studies actually monitored the amount of reading students did in the program; therefore, it is unclear whether the interventions led to more reading, or just displaced other reading that students might have done otherwise. Based on the existing evidence, the NRP can only indicate that while encouraging students to read might be beneficial, research has not yet demonstrated this in a clear and convincing manner" (p.33).
**Why Students Stop Reading**

Reading for pleasure increases throughout childhood until the age of twelve to thirteen, at which point it begins a decline that lasts through adolescence (Howard, 2011). Students who are unmotivated to read are hit twice as hard on their reading development. “The Matthew Effect” describes students with limited desire to read, leads them to less time spent reading (Stanovich, 1986), which can lead struggling readers to develop low reading self-efficacy and eventual negative attitudes toward reading.

Bottom image from: [https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/15384445/door-exits-books_884997.png](https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/15384445/door-exits-books_884997.png)

*Slide 8.*

Natural decline in reading motivation.
Readicide

Secondary students, in the United States, are reading at a rate significantly below expected levels; almost 8.7 million secondary students, about one in four, are unable to read and comprehend textbook material. Reading scores are the lowest in decade, and Kelly Gallagher thinks that teachers are partially to blame. Schools employ practices in order to raise reading scores, but may instead kill students’ love of reading, or commit readicide (Gallagher, 2009).

“Readicide” was the text that we read two years ago that helped push us towards including SSR time.
Research has shown that those with low levels of literacy are more likely to earn less money and experience poverty, and literacy has a significant relationship with a person’s overall happiness and success (Cockroft and Atkinson, 2017).
Research shows that dramatic increases in reading volume, time spent reading, is critically important for developing thoughtful literacy proficiencies; that the volume of reading students accomplish is tied to their reading achievement (Allington, 2014). However, not all students willingly engage in reading; identifying these students to best differentiate for an independent reading program is necessary.
More of the clear and convincing research
More clear and convincing data.

Gardiner: After eighteen weeks, reading achievement in vocabulary and comprehension showed an improvement of 1.9 grade levels over the control group.

Quinn: found that 100% of the experimental student group improved in their lexile scores from .5 grade level to 1.5 grade levels.

Dickerson: the reading ability of a sample of students from her classes improved one to three grade levels and 96% of her students reported that they enjoyed reading as much or more that before the intervention.

Ozburn: found that all students improved their reading level, averaging 3.9 grade levels

Cuevas et al: students in the experimental group gained 1.8-1.9 grade levels over the course of a semester in comparison to .7 grade levels for the control group.
Manning, Lewis, and Lewis, (2010), looked at over 200 different SSR case studies. Their findings were that none of the SSR studies they reviewed reported that students who had independent reading time scored significantly lower on any reading achievement measure than did students who had regular reading instruction -- in almost all instances, students who had access to reading time scored higher than their non-reading counterparts. Furthermore, outcomes were not “statistically significant for heterogeneously grouped readers, or for average and high level readers, but for low level readers and those learning English as a Second Language, reading scores were significantly higher than non-readers.”
SSR results in better reading comprehension, writing style, vocabulary, spelling, and grammatical development” and that SSR “provides a foundation” for acquiring and building literacy (Krashen, 2012).

Check in with staff.
What are thoughts on the data?
Are we convinced that SSR is good for students?
More specifics to show student benefits.

Parkdale Middle School implemented a SSR program, in 2006, where all members of the school were expected to read on a consistent and continual basis. Administrators advocated for the program by making it a top priority, providing ongoing professional development, and committing resources, time, and money. The result, as described by Daniels, Marcos, and Steres (2011), was a thriving school culture geared towards literacy and “a family of readers within the school” (p. 2).

Grant Street Secondary School, a social justice guided education site in New York City, implemented a daily, thirty minute SSR program and found that “reading growth in one year was two to three times greater that of their peers nationwide” (Francois, 2013, p. 8). Moreso, by providing meaningful independent reading experiences -- time and space for reading, and transforming SSR into a social enterprise though resources, conversations about books, and exposure to reading practice, Grant Street cultivated a culture of reading (Francois, 2013).

Noble High School, in rural southern Maine, also implemented a literacy program that included a schoolwide SSR program (Perks, 2006). Beginning with a literacy assessment, the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI), and a follow-up for students at below-proficient levels, the Diagnostic Assessment of Reading (DAR), Noble High School had accurate data on student literacy skills. The SSR roll-out occurred with twenty-five minutes of sustained, silent reading at the same time every day with a pass-fail grade assigned. Before the SSR implementation, approximately two-thirds of Nobel’s 1,100 students failed to meet minimum competencies on statewide measures, however, within two years of the program, 84% of the students were reading at or above the proficient level. Students who received targeted interventions during this time averaged gains in reading ability between two and three grade levels (Perks, 2006).
As we already have an SSR program in place, we can continue doing what we do, but to be more effective and address the challenges addressed in slide 5, we need to return to how to “best do” SSR. What makes an effective SSR program?
Step one: We need to identify our readers. Kelley and Clausen-Grace identify the spectrum of “Types of Readers.” Ask elbow partners to think of a student in common and guess where they are on this spectrum.

One of the ways to more accurately assess student reading motivation is through the Motivation to Read Profile, which I have created as a Google Form.
Janice Pilgreen is THE expert on SSR. The following slides are the Eight Factors that an SSR program needs and how they are best put in place.
Access to a variety of appealing texts -- classroom and/or school libraries with a wide range of genres, reading levels, and interests where students can self-select texts.
2. Reading materials that appeal to students

Reading materials that appeal to students -- this self-selection includes materials that appeal to students “regardless of the teacher’s preference” and may or may not be appropriately leveled for students (p. 9).
3. Conducive reading environment coupled with teacher encouragement

Slide 22.

Conducive reading environment coupled with teacher encouragement -- students will not be disturbed and may relax and enjoy reading.
4. Consistent or distributed time to read

Consistent or distributed time to read -- there is a regularly scheduled reading time to promote the habit of reading.
Reading modeled by the teacher -- teachers read while students read; not responding to emails, grading papers, or other administrative tasks.

“The beginning of the end of many SSR programs occurs when teachers stop modeling reading during SSR” (Perks, 2006, p. 18). That sentiment is echoed by McCracken (1971), when he said, “the failure of the teacher to set an example by reading silently invites students to quit reading, no matter how well the SSR habit seems to be established” (p. 523).
6.

Staff training given to support implementation

Staff training given to support implementation -- ongoing professional learning opportunities are in place, including book talks, recommendations, and furthering reading strategies. Teachers also establish guidelines and define roles.
Non-accountability -- students read freely and must not feel as though they are responsible for completing a task or demonstrating comprehension or improvement. Accountability is low pressure, such as short written requirements or follow-up discussions.
Follow-up activities that engage readers in creative, thoughtful, and non-evaluative ways -- these are purposeful learning objectives that generate enthusiasm for reading.
Slide 28.

Good News: We already do a lot of this!
Bad News: We could do it better?

Ask staff to think what we think are already doing -- but also what still needs improvement.
Gardiner (2001) thinks that the goals of SSR may be achieved with in ten minutes each day, possibly occurring just within a language arts or humanities class. Other researchers believe that ten minutes is not enough time to let students effectively enter the “flow of reading,” the moment where students become totally immersed in their reading (Grant, 2012). Allington, while talking about younger readers, believes that ninety minutes of reading time is best, highlighting that volume of reading directly correlates with reading achievement (2007). That, at the secondary level, would be nearly impossible to attain.
Slide 30.

Students must be shown that independent reading time is highly valued through teacher actions; teachers should assist in helping students choose books, observing students and identifying those with engagement issues, conferring, and reading, not by answering emails, grading papers, or writing lesson plans (Kelley, Clausen-Grace, 2009). During independent reading, it is important that teachers closely monitor students’ engagement, conference with students, chart off-task behaviors over time to find students who are not appropriately engaged, and then dig in to find the reason behind the lack of engagement (Hilden, Jones, 2012). They still need to model reading too. It is important to see the difference between a teacher being an effective model for reading; holding a book passively in front of a class is ineffective, while enthusiastically introducing books to students, discussing books, and promoting and teaching the skills and joys of reading is effective modeling (Reutzel, Jones, Newman, 2010).
Adding small things to what we already do helps enforce the learning skills and enhance reading ability.

Slide 31.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES
PRE-, DURING-, and POST-READING ENGAGEMENT MEASURES

- Mini-lessons
- Reading Records
- Response Records
- One on One Conferencing
- Open Ended Questions
- Informal Letter Essays every few weeks
- Book Talks/Presentations
- Posters/Advertisements
Slide 32.

In several case histories, those who grew up in poverty but, nevertheless, had access to books, give wide, self-selected reading the credit for their school success and acquisition of advance levels of literacy competence (Krashen, 2013). Access to libraries has a positive impact on reading development; the better the library (the more books, credentialed librarians, better staffing), the higher the reading scores. In a study of the data from the PIRLS organization (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study), Krashen, Lee, and McQuillian found that while socioeconomic status is the strongest predictor of reading achievement, just lagging behind it was access to a library of at least 500 books (2012).
Consult the staff and get a general feel about our strengths and challenges. What are staff willing to try and change to improve the SSR program.
FUTURE STEPS...

Slide 34.

Placeholder slide while preparing staff for future involvement and decision making.
These are some of our classrooms’ current libraries. This obviously doesn’t meet our students’ needs. So, the next step is procuring more texts.
At the end of last year we asked for Capital Funding to buy books -- that money is still undecided. In order to hopefully procure more books I have written a Brosious Grant proposal -- money to be used to improve instruction or curriculum.

But staff members can still help procure more texts by asking friends and acquaintances for funding or books.
In order to get the right texts for our students, they can all be administered the Motivation to Read Profile from the link to a Google Form. Teachers can blanket classrooms to fill out this survey, or use it strictly for students we observe struggling to read on a consistent basis.
Helping find the right books for students may be as easy as using two resources we already have access to: the internet and the local library. FAB Lexile (Find a Book) is a website that students can either enter in their Lexile score (if known in data) or grade level and interest in order to find books that would appeal to them. While tailoring books to individual students is ideal, it can also be costly -- taking small groups of focused student to the library speeds up efficiency and practicality.
The final piece is the Literacy Committee. This is the team of staff will take all of our feedback and take the next steps. There is a year long plan for professional development that helps staff immerse themselves in the literature and data around SSR.

LITERACY COMMITTEE

- Support the implementation as its scope expands
- Provide direction for future staff development
- Increase student involvement in the implementation.
- Create classroom libraries
- Develop partnerships
- Examine current structures, modify them to benefit student engagement.
Ask for literacy committee volunteers.
Thank staff for their time.
Give out link for Google Form evaluation.
Professional Development Presentation Scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Name: John Forestell</th>
<th>Professional Development Title: Power of One</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good Book: Revitalizing our SSR Program</td>
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**Lesson Rationale:**
The central focus of this professional development session is to educate and inform staff members at a small, alternative school on clear and convincing data of the effectiveness of, and best practice strategies for, Sustained Silent Reading in a classroom setting. By going over data points, conceptual understandings as to why we should continue using SSR should be enforced. Staff members will be asked to reflect on past experience and make connections to current use of SSR, identifying successes and challenges. This professional development is the first part of a new, focused approach to implementing SSR in our daily practice -- future steps involve the creation of a literacy committee to further steer the direction of the implementation.

**Content Objectives:**
Staff members will be able to:

1. Reflect on our current SSR initiative through open discussion and visual organization. What works for us as teachers and students? What challenges do we face?
2. Understand the data and methodologies of best practice SSR approaches.
3. Evaluate our approach in comparison to information presented.
4. Creation of Literacy Committee to steer future direction.

**Assessment & Feedback**

- **Prior Knowledge Assessment:**
  Staff members will informally discuss in small groups and then as whole their conceptions and perceptions of our current SSR program. By talking about what they see as successful we know where we can take pride, and by looking at challenges, we can begin to build better scaffolds to support our students. SSR has been in and out of vogue as a reading strategy, but after two years of misinformed use, many staff doubt its effectiveness. However, recent data shows that high structured and teacher monitored independent reading time is incredibly effective for improving students reading ability -- by going over clear and convincing data, I hope to address these misconceptions.

- **Formative Assessment:**
  Staff members will be asked several times to informally and formally synthesize information presented, provide feedback, and begin ideation of pragmatic implementation of strategies. If staff members are more recalcitrant to make changes, the literacy committee will slowly work in individual classrooms, gradually helping to change the classroom culture towards independent reading. By partner work and collaborative discussion, staff members will deepen their understanding, refine their strategy skills, and grow to a better understanding that SSR isn’t merely giving students a book and time to read, but it a carefully created system that helps all students grow in reading ability.

- **Summative Assessment:**
  After the presentation, staff members will have two, culminating experiences that allow for further evaluation of their understanding. The first is a Google Form evaluation of the presentation, based of our school district’s professional development evaluation. The second experience is through joining the literacy committee and engaging deeper in the data and strategies for SSR.
Professional Development Presentation PDF:  
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TkmEBwPKFraPoR4hIjrlZfMG-ufYFRl0/view?usp=sharing  

Google Form Presentation Evaluation:  
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1JlyvWT58d67fhdtipKFiaALJoDbC8A4yaxuhnlRFTYE/edit?usp=sharing

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<th>Time</th>
<th>Learning Activities</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
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<td>15 min</td>
<td><strong>Lesson Launch (Also know as a HOOK or anticipatory set)</strong></td>
<td>While the opening question may seem grandiose at first, it is designed to challenge assumptions about the power of reading in our students lives. I want to read student stories of the transformative nature of reading to enforce or challenge staff expectations.</td>
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<td>Opening Question: Has a book ever changed the course of your life?</td>
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<td>Presenter asks question and has elbow partners talk about this.</td>
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<td>After 5 minutes or when talking seems to be wrapping up, ask for group feedback.</td>
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<td>Follow up questions:</td>
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<td>1) What was the book?</td>
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<td>2) How did it change your life?</td>
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<td>3) Can books do this for our students?</td>
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<td>Share student stories and examples</td>
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<td>1 hr</td>
<td><strong>Instructional Task(s) Sequence</strong></td>
<td>Breaks in the presentation of information, key data, and provided by group reflections, discussions, interactions, and activities.</td>
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<td>Continue with Google Slide presentations.</td>
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<td>Reflection on slide 5 -- what are our SSR successes and challenges?</td>
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<td>History of SSR</td>
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<td>Problems with Low Literacy</td>
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<td>Clear and Convincing Data of the Effectiveness of SSR</td>
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<td>Identifying Types of Readers Activity</td>
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<td>Janice Pilgreen’s Eight Factors for SSR Success</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Specific Data for our Challenges</td>
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<td>Reflection</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Future Steps</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 min</td>
<td><strong>Lesson Summary and Closure</strong></td>
<td>The final reflection gives ownership to staff so they determine the direction of future steps.</td>
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<td>Since we all now know the efficacy of SSR, how do we want to proceed? In Final Reflection ask staff to decide what challenges we wish to address and change. Call for volunteers to join literacy committee for future direction. Distribute link for evaluation of presentation.</td>
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Link to PDF of Professional Development Evaluation Google Form:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ToyCQKy43qmgRtHXQyW1uekONhDB8kPK/view?usp=sharing
Literacy Committee Proposed Schedule:

Thank you for agreeing to be part of the Literacy Committee to help get us on the right track for our students to be more successful in our SSR initiative. We will base our continuing professional development off two crucial texts. Janice Pilgreen’s *SSR Handbook: How to Organize and Manage a Sustained Silent Reading Program* (2000), and Elfrieda Heibert and D.R. Reutzel’s *Revisiting Silent Reading: New Directions for Teachers and Readers* (2014). Time will also be spent reading young adult literature, preparing book talks and promotional materials for our students, and teaching students to do the same. We will meet in the conference room on the third Tuesday of each month. I hope you look forward to the work!

**August 28, 2018:** Committee Formation

**September 18, 2018:** Read *SSR Handbook*, Chapter 2, “The 8 Factors For SSR Success.” Assign YA Book. Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile


**November 20, 2018** YA Book Talk Demonstration and Sharing.

**December 18, 2018** Possible award of Brosious Grant, selection of reading materials. New YA Book assigned.

**January 22, 2019** Read *Revising Silent Reading*, Chapter 8, “Scaffolded Silent Reading: Improving the Conditions of Silent Reading Practice in Classrooms.” Distribution of classroom libraries.


**March 19, 2019** YA Book Talks. Student representatives selection.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 21, 2019</td>
<td>Looking at AMRP data and evaluation of SSR initiative.</td>
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Link to PDF of Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile Google Form:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ULLNhB22qMtY6ZkOdIG7mie-8BwRE9z/view?usp=sharing
Grant Proposal:

In 1997, Mr. Rutherford Brosious gave a $1,000,000 endowment to the White Bear Lake Area Educational Foundation, in recognition of the high quality education he had received in White Bear Lake. Because he felt very strongly about the positive impact teachers have on their students, he directed that a portion of the yearly income from the endowment be used to fund grants that an individual or group of teachers could apply for. The purpose of a Brosious teaching grant is to enhance the rigor of the curriculum or instruction within the school district.

The Power of One Good Book

“The reading of a book, it is true, has sometimes changed a person’s entire life… In such cases, the book usually opens up a new view of life or a new sense of the potentialities, of human nature and thus resolves some profound need or struggle. The probability of any particular works having so profound and transfiguring effect cannot, however, be predicted or planned for… The possibility that literature may offer such inspiration should, nevertheless, make us eager to stimulate our students to roam freely through a great many types of literary experiences.”

-- Louise Rosenblatt

Two years ago, when I joined the staff at White Bear Lake’s ALC, we began an initiative to improve student literacy levels by incorporating independent reading into each class period. The need for this initiative was apparent; only eighteen percent of the ALC’s graduating seniors were considered proficient readers as measured by the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment in Reading. Research has shown that those with low levels of literacy are more likely to earn less money and experience poverty, and literacy has a significant relationship with a person’s overall happiness and success (Cockroft and Atkinson, 2017). Allington (2014) concludes that dramatic increases in reading volume, time spent reading, are critically important for developing thoughtful literacy proficiencies; that the volume of reading students accomplish is tied to their reading achievement.

At the ALC, we sought data into our Self-Selected Reading (SSR) program. By having students take the reading portion of the Accuplacer test, we were able to see some gains in literacy levels over the course of the school year. Of ninety-five students surveyed from the beginning of the second quarter to the end of the fourth, 59% that originally tested into the “Needs Improvement” were reduced to 50% -- which is still a significant amount of students that were not proficient.
The 15% of students originally identified as “Limited Proficiency” was bolstered to 20%, as some of the students in need of improvement moved into this category, and the original 8% that tested as “Proficient” was increased to 30%. Although direct instruction and other methodologies may be a factor, we all recognize that SSR is a possible correlating factor for this change in student success.

When students are given time and choice, reading can become a transformative experience. There can be a magical moment where students who have been reluctant readers suddenly cross over some invisible barrier and become members of the culture of reading -- all because of the power of one good book. I have personally seen this happen in my classroom. I gave Jared (all student names are pseudonyms), a ninth grader going through a difficult moment, a copy of Nick Hornby’s *Slam* (2008), due to the similar problems the protagonist faces in the story. He read it over the course of a few weeks and proudly announced to the entire class that it was the first book he had ever read by himself. Miranda had a similar moment of success when given Emma Donoghue’s *Room* (2010). She said, “I’ve never read something that made me want to keep reading before. I just wanted to know what was going to happen next!” Last year, Markiss, a senior in high school who was so credit deficient that it looked impossible that he would graduate on time, was given time and space with a good book. He quickly read Rick Riordan’s *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief* (2005), and then went on to read every single book written by Riordan before he graduated on time. He said, “These books gave me a reason to make better choices, to focus on school. Percy Jackson is a big part of why I’m graduating.” Noah got so caught up in Sean Covey’s *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens* (1998) that he wrote notes in the margins to future readers, “This part is important! PAY ATTENTION HERE!!!” Even Joe, who has proudly and defiantly said that he’s never read a book and now won’t be the time to break that streak, caved after being handed Stephen Chbosky’s *Perks of Being a Wallflower* (1999).

The biggest obstacle we face as a staff is providing texts to students that meet their needs; books that students can identify with, books that provide a high level of interest and engagement, and books that are in sync with student reading abilities. The ALC does not have a library, access to the South Campus Library is limited, and field trips to the Ramsey County Library in Maplewood are infrequent. According to case-studies, those who grew up in poverty but, nevertheless, had access to books, give wide, self-selected reading the credit for their school success and acquisition of advance levels of literacy competence (Krashen, 2013). Access to libraries has a positive impact on reading development; the better the library (the more books, credentialed librarians, better staffing), the higher the reading scores. In a study of the data from the PIRLS organization (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study), Krashen, Lee, and McQuillian found that while socioeconomic status is the strongest predictor of reading achievement, just lagging behind it was access to a library of at least 500 books (2012).
Through the Brosious Grant I hope to create a series of smaller classroom libraries with rotating texts to eventually create an ALC library with 500 diverse, unique, engaging, and leveled texts, ranging from fiction and nonfiction novels, to graphic novels, magazines, periodicals, and more.

Project Description:

The creation of classroom libraries to support the ALC’s current literacy initiative would offer high interest texts that will help students advance in their reading achievement. Beyond the books, helping students connect to the culture of reading requires work. The formation of a literacy committee at the ALC is the initial step. This group of committed educators would begin reading and promoting young adult literature through book talks, posters, and announcements. Once the re-invigorated initiative gains momentum, a student literacy group will also be created, allowing students the opportunity and platform to talk about what they are reading and create other promotional materials. Evaluation tools, such as the Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile, will be used to assess the success of the program.

**Instructional Goals:** The primary goal of “The Power of One Good Book” is to help students develop the literacy skills necessary to be successful in school and in life through access to engaging texts when given time and choice. We also want to support and promote the culture of reading among our students, some of whom are reluctant readers.

**Objectives:** Our goal can be accomplished most effectively by meeting the following objectives:

1. Provide a measurable increase in the volume of reading for our students. Notable researchers, Richard Allington and Kelly Gallagher, note that this directly correlates to academic success.
2. Support classroom teachers at the ALC to be more knowledgeable about engaging young adult literature and helping teachers connect students to texts.
3. Encourage learning and reading with group discussions with students’ peers.
5. Increase the level of proficiency and interest in reading.

**Teaching Methods:** In August, with the formation of an ALC literacy committee, we will begin creating supports for teachers and students, and various promotional materials, so that teachers can more easily direct students towards engaging reading materials. Through book talks, announcements, and posters teachers will promote reading.

The purchasing of new materials would bolster our meager book selection. In addition to fiction and nonfiction novels, we will supplement our collection with scripts, graphic novels, Manga, and Hi-Lo readers (High Interest, Low Reading Level) to augment our choices for student
reading, so that each student can find a text they identify with, that they find engaging, and that they can access at their reading level.

Another method of promoting reading will be the matching of students to specific titles through the use of lexile scores or interest surveys. Using our chromebook resources, the website fab.lexile.com, can connect students to stories they would be interested in reading -- we can either purchase these texts or direct students to the Ramsey County Library. Students who self-identify as readers will be able to create promotional materials or be given leadership opportunities to connect with their peers and recommend texts.

**Potential Expansion or Sharing**

If the Brosious Grant is awarded, it will provide the ALC with the initial steps towards creating our own classroom libraries. Guiding students towards texts is important; asking struggling readers what type of book they would enjoy reading is a good idea, but their responses often lack details to help connect them to the best choices. The teacher’s job is to aid in finding “the right book for the right reader,” and then to teach students to fully engage every time they read. Allington (2014) notes that poor children have considerably more limited access to books than their wealthier counterparts and Krashen (2013) points out that access to books, through community or school libraries, can make up for the effects of poverty on literacy development. Since access to books correlates with voluntary reading, making books available to students is incredibly important. Thus, the creation of a classroom library is a necessity.

While there is some discrepancy in how to best establish a classroom library, it is agreed that every classroom, no matter the subject, is important for setting the tone and modeling how effective readers surround themselves with books (Humphrey, Preddy, 2008). Librarians recommend that each classroom have fifty to seventy-five books available to students and these classroom libraries should be refreshed every six to nine weeks by an exchange of material at a SSR Lending Library.

Other research supports that classroom libraries must have at least twenty unique texts per pupil; this means that if a teacher taught five sections with an average of twenty students each, a classroom library would need at least 400 unique books (Atwell, 2007). Ozburn (1995) recommends thirty-five books per student and stresses that collections are continuously updated. When the self-selected reading program is successful, we will be able to expand our scope, securing more funds and texts through various community organizations. More established and successful SSR programs have classroom libraries of up to 2000 texts. This initial foray will hopefully supply each classroom at the ALC with 30 to 50 books which will continue to expand over time. While this project’s scope is primarily targeted towards students at the ALC, it’s
The general premise is good for all students. I will be spreading information about the effectiveness of SSR programming to North and South Campuses’ language arts departments.

### Time Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Submit Grant Proposal</td>
<td>October, 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expected Grant Notification</td>
<td>Mid-November, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deliver Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile</td>
<td>Mid-November, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finalize book lists based off student interest survey data</td>
<td>December, 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Purchase materials</td>
<td>Late December, 2018, Early January, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation of classroom libraries and distribution of texts</td>
<td>Beginning of Semester 2, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Committee promotes new materials</td>
<td>January- June, 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Re-administer the Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile to measure change in student attitude towards reading</td>
<td>March- May, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare the summary report</td>
<td>June, 2019</td>
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### The Evaluation of the Objectives

“The Power of One Good Book” will be evaluated in several ways. First, though the Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile and interaction with the Lexile Find a Book website, we will ensure we have high interest titles at appropriate reading levels.

Secondly, we will also have students keep a reading log so that titles read during school year will provide an indication of interest in fiction and nonfiction novels, graphic novels, and other materials and direct us towards what kind of reading our students enjoy.

Thirdly, by using the Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile as a “post-test” we will measure the degree of change in our students’ attitudes towards reading. I believe that access to new and high-interest materials will show a marked change in response.
Budget

While a precise budget will be difficult to provide, I will give the grant committee a idea of the potential cost. If each classroom is supposed to be replete with 30 to 50 high interest texts, I will provide what a potential individual classroom may cost. While all the prices come from Amazon.com, there is a cost saving potential of finding texts at Half Priced Books or at thrift stores. Any excess of funds would just go towards buying more texts for classrooms. Book titles come from Time Magazine’s “Best 100 Young Adult Books of All Time,” and the American Library Association.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiction</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry</td>
<td>Mildred Taylor</td>
<td>$7.19</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Monster</td>
<td>Walter Dean Meyers</td>
<td>$3.38</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. The Golden Compass</td>
<td>Philip Pullman</td>
<td>$7.19</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E Frankweiler</td>
<td>K.L. Konigsburg</td>
<td>$7.48</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Wonder</td>
<td>RJ Palacio</td>
<td>$2.99</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. The Sword in the Stone</td>
<td>TH White</td>
<td>$6.52</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. The Hobbit</td>
<td>JRR Tolkien</td>
<td>$3.57</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Jacob I Have Loved</td>
<td>Katherine Paterson</td>
<td>$5.59</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9. The Alchemyst</td>
<td>Michael Scott</td>
<td>$8.79</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. The Westing Game</td>
<td>Ellen Raskin</td>
<td>$5.99</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11. A Monster Calls</td>
<td>Patrick Ness</td>
<td>$7.55</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12. The Illustrated Man</td>
<td>Ray Bradbury</td>
<td>$7.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Every Day</td>
<td>David Levithan</td>
<td>$6.78</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Where Things Come Back</td>
<td>John Corey Whaley</td>
<td>$7.48</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Dangerous Angles</td>
<td>Francesca Lia Block</td>
<td>$8.98</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. The Knife of Never Letting Go</td>
<td>Patrick Ness</td>
<td>$5.27</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Boy Proof</td>
<td>Cecil Castellucci</td>
<td>$7.19</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Sabriel</td>
<td>Garth Nix</td>
<td>$7.48</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. The Giver</td>
<td>Lois Lowry</td>
<td>$4.89</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. Looking for Alaska</td>
<td>John Green</td>
<td>$7.47</td>
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</table>

Fiction Total: 129.77

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non Fiction</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Anne Frank, The Diary of a Young Girl</td>
<td>$6.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Vincent and Theo</td>
<td>Deborah Heiligman</td>
<td>$8.00</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. NotYourPrincess</td>
<td>Mary Beth Leatherdale</td>
<td>$9.06</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. The 57 Bus</td>
<td>Dashka Slater</td>
<td>$12.97</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. In the Shadow of Liberty</td>
<td>Kenneth C Davis</td>
<td>$12.59</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Symphony for the City of the Dead</td>
<td>MT Anderson</td>
<td>$11.99</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Enchanted Air</td>
<td>Margarita Engle</td>
<td>$7.48</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Popular: Vintage Wisdom for a Modern Geek</td>
<td>Maya Van Wangenen</td>
<td>$4.48</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Laughing at my Nightmare</td>
<td>Shane Burcaw</td>
<td>$6.98</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Non Fiction Total: $93.53

Graphic Novels:
1. *The Wall*, by Peter Sis $11.98
2. *Blankets*, by Craig Thompson $8.29
4. *March BOOKS 1-3*, by John Lewis $28.08
6. *I am Alphonso Jones*, by Tony Medina $15.14
7. *Spill Zone*, by Scott Westerfield $12.85
8. *Pashmina*, by Nidhi Chanani $10.48
10. *Trashed*, by Derf Backderf $12.88

Graphic Novels Total: $134.06

Hi-Lo Novels
1. *One of Us is Lying*, by Karen M McManus $12.52
2. *The Hate U Give*, by Angie Thomas $9.38
4. *The Silence of Six*, by EC Myers $8.41
5. *Everything, Everything*, by Nicola Yoon $8.79
6. *If I Was Your Girl*, by Meredith Russo $12.23
7. *This Is Where It Ends*, by Marieke Nijkamp $10.38
9. *Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass*, by Meg Medina $6.39

Hi-Lo Novels Total: $112.16

The Brosious Grant committee can see that a classroom set of 50 books costs an estimated $469.52. While creating a school library of close to 500 books would cost ten times the amount, we are asking for the full amount of the grant, $3000, and will find cost effective measures to stretch our dollars and reach our goal.


Slide 6, 11, 15, 37, 40:


Slide 7:

Slide 9:


Slide 10:


Red Not OK / Failure Symbol. Retrieved June 14, 2018 from https://vector.me/browse/261864/red_not_ok_failure_symbol

Slide 13:


Slide 14:

Arrow up on a black circle background. Retrieved June 14, 2018 from https://www.flaticon.com/free-icon/arrow-up-on-a-black-circle-background_25366
Slide 18:

Slide 28:

Slide 29:


Slide 30:

Slide 32:

Slide 38:

Ramsey County Library Profile. Retrieved June 18, 2018 from https://twitter.com/rclreads