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How Does Young Adult Literature Foster Reading Growth in the Striving Secondary Reader?

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HOW DOES YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE FOSTER READING GROWTH IN
THE STRIVING SECONDARY READER?

By

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A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master
of Arts in Literacy Education

Hamline University

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To James and Beverly Ryan who instilled in me a value for education that is insatiable.

To my parents, Catherine and Vernon Wagner, who fostered my love for reading and literacy. To my husband, Justin, and children, Jacob and Chloe, who are patient, kind, and loving souls.

Thank you for supporting me every step of the way.

I love you all with all my heart.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Introduction

Every year in my ninth grade reading classes, I meet students with similar educational stories: students who have had reading intervention sometimes beginning in elementary grades or sometimes not until the last few years of middle school. Each year, they are told that they will be in “this class” until they can read at grade level. Each year, they come in, ask the same questions, and make the same comments: *Do we really have to read in here? Are we going to read books? I don't read books. You can try to make me read, but I won't. I can read just fine. I know what I'm doing. Why am in this class again?* There was a time when these questions seemed repetitive and dry.

However, I now realize they are indicative of something much larger than just teenage angst. After years of being told, they will learn to read, my students do not understand why they are still in these classes. Most of them are capable of identifying the words phonetically and have adequate fluency skills, but they lack critical reading and comprehension skills required to be successful in high school. Strong reading skills must be a clear and intentional academic focus areas as they begin their high school careers. In addition to having strong reading skills, students must be engaged in what they are reading and find a motivation to read. If they can find this, they can find a passion for reading and develop a lifelong interest.

The reality of my classroom is that I have students who have often changed schools on multiple occasions, who do not qualify for Special Education or ELL support services, who are on free and reduced lunch, and who have parents with no post-secondary education. Reading and the value that it has is often overlooked or pushed aside as a result of so many other things needing to be addressed. However, books, and in particular those that are focused to the young adult audience, can help to engage readers and can also help them through tough situations (Gallagher, 2003).

This year a parent walked into my ninth grade reading class and asked where the stack of worksheets was and what book she needed to read in order to help her student fill them out. She wanted to know what standardized test we were going to be prepping for and how many days a week we would spend on practice tests. Her son hated those practice tests, so she wanted to let me know she would schedule his orthodontist appointments during my class on those days. She told me that no matter how many times she tried, he just did not do well enough on those tests to get him out of this class. She informed me that he hated reading, had never liked any of the books chosen for his reading classes, and she could not blame him because so did she.

This conversation had a profound effect on me as an educator. It wasn't that the parent didn't care about the success of her student: it was that her son had never learned to like reading or see its value. Not every student will like every book, and every student will have to read things they dislike in school. However, if a student has never found a way to engage with a text of interest, it will be much harder to get them to engage in a text they find boring or dry. I realized this student had never been asked to do authentic reading throughout his secondary education. He had never been given the option in a

reading class to choose his own book, to choose how he would read it and, as a result, had never felt motivated or engaged to read.

Shortly after that experience, I truly began to understand the importance of using high interest, highly motivating texts in the classroom. Three years ago I handed a student the book, *Uglies* by Scott Westerfield. This student hated reading and had a fifth grade reading level entering ninth grade. At first he rolled his eyes and I had to wake him up twice during pre-reading. Then, something happened around page 10, he sat up straight, then slumped back down after he realized I saw him engaging, he wrapped his arms around the book and began to read. After school that day he stopped by to see if he could borrow the book. The next day he came back and handed it to me. He had read the whole book. He loved it. He told me he had never read a book like this before and that it actually made him want to read. He even told a friend it was a good book in class that day.

This student had gone from being a reluctant, unmotivated, and unengaged reader to a motivated and engaged reader with one text. For the rest of the year he chose to read dystopian novels in class. This is where my belief in the power of young adult literature began and this is what led me to my capstone question: *How can young adult literature foster reading engagement in the striving secondary reader?*

In today's society the school system is complex. At the secondary level, reading is often overlooked. Reading courses are developed from boxed programs and classrooms are filled with textbooks and novels that have been read for the past fifteen years. This can occur due to many reasons; however, the lack of knowledge among educators, administrators, and parents about how fostering reading engagement will lead

to better prepared students leaves reading out of many curriculums. For striving secondary readers in budget strapped schools, administrators often think it is too late to help students love reading and that they can only work to get them to pass the tests and fulfill graduation requirements. Educational stakeholders often argue that there are too many other critical issues at hand (such as mental health, poverty, family crises, etc.) and that reading is the least of the student's issues.

These arguments can often leave students without the necessary skills in reading such as: the ability to find, relate to, and comprehend a text. As a classroom teacher, I take the position that we must try to solve these issues. How can I help students to gain at least an appreciation of, if not a love, for reading? What is the magic concoction? How do I help my students to find the motivation to do something that they have struggled with for years?

High interest, high quality literature is crucial to the success of secondary readers. Students who find themselves engaged, interested, and wanting to complete the reading they encounter in high school will find success in reading. My interest in young adult literature and its effect on developing the literacy skills of striving secondary readers has developed after years of struggling to engage students in both whole class texts and individual reading. As a result of this journey I am left asking myself the following question: *How can young adult literature foster reading engagement in the striving secondary reader?* In this chapter, I will describe my personal journey as a reader and the professional experiences that have lead me to this capstone question.

My Early Years

My love for reading began as far back as I can remember. The words to the book *Tikki Tikki Tembo* by Arlene Mosel are the first things I can remember my dad saying to me. I was an avid reader from a young age. My room was filled with books. My books became my life. In the days before computers, iPods, and Game Boys, the world of *The Secret Garden* and *The Baby Sitter's Club Little Sister* series became my favorite books. One of my favorite pastimes growing up was visiting the library, carrying my canvas bag that proudly displayed the names of all the books I had read written in whatever marker I could scavenge, and filling the bag with as many books as I was allowed to check out. I would wander the stacks for hours and hide behind the end caps reading. In the third-grade, I can remember sneaking into the teen reading section and slipping a book underneath my arm. I thought that this was a deviant act as I was clearly not a teenager yet. I took the book, it happened to be one from the *Babysitter's Club* series (the teen novel version of the series I mentioned earlier), and I hid behind the end cap reading about first dates, crushes, and high school drama. I was convinced that no matter what I needed to learn I could figure it out in a book. This is where my love of young adult literature began. These books taught me everything I thought I needed to know.

For my eleventh birthday, my dad bought me an anthology of poetry books and my appreciation and true admiration of literature and reading deepened. I ran to my dad telling him I was in love with Emily Dickinson, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and I was drawn to Edgar Allen Poe. It was also at this time in my life that I was placed into an advanced reading course in my school for enrichment purposes. This was my first

memory of specific reading instruction and curriculum. However, in that course we were not allowed to read our own books or choose from any texts. Instead we were given a Junior Great Books annotated reader. I was not put off by this then; I thought it must mean that I need a greater challenge that my books could not give me. At this point, it had never occurred to me as child, that any other child would not know how to read or would not like to read or had never found a book that they found themselves entranced with.

High School and College Years

As I grew into a teenager my love of books continued. Books became my escape. The fantasyland whenever I was sad, lost, or angry became the escape that I so desperately needed at different times. Books helped me navigate my parents' divorce, my crushes on boys, the loss of friends, and any general teenage angst that I was feeling at the time. However, it was at this point that my relationship with books and my love of reading changed dramatically.

As a socially motivated teenaged three-sport athlete, my reading time dwindled and stacks of magazines with the intermittent teen novel slowly replaced the stacks of books. Although I still loved to read, my classes and interests began to get in the way of reading for enjoyment. In high school, the days of reading for a certain number of minutes to win prizes or limousine rides disappeared. Although I was lucky enough to have developed an intrinsic love and appreciation for reading, many of my peers did not have the same values and motivation. Throughout my high school career I was not given a time when I could choose a text to read and bring that back to my classes. Instead, I was only given direct books to read. If I did not like the book, that was not up for

discussion during class time. In fact, it was frowned upon and points were docked. As a result, the number of novels I read dwindled.

This continued throughout college, as I was constantly reading anywhere from one to four books at the same time for the courses I was taking. My understanding of reading changed as I began to become immersed in nonfiction, technology, and social media. However, during this time, as I studied teaching secondary English, I was able to look at texts that I would use in my classroom. I realized that reading was not just escaping into the land of *Little Women* or Harry Potter; it was also understanding current events and how to progress through that tricky philosophy text book. But, I was still able to fall in love over and over again with new books. I have always gravitated towards young adult novels such as *Twilight*, *Divergent*, and other dystopian novels. This drift back to rediscovering my inherent love of literature was what drew me to teaching English and Reading at the secondary level.

In college I began to realize the true importance of reading education and the true value of individual reading ability. During my time as an undergraduate student I took a women's literature course that will forever have a profound effect on me. I had never taken the time to look at what underlying messages texts might tell me. I read the *Poisonwood Bible* and became enamored with novels that were told through multiple perspectives. Then, I took the most difficult course of my life, British Literature. For the first time I read *Pride and Prejudice* and *Jane Eyre*. I found myself in heated (yet polite) arguments with my professor and peers about the meanings and interpretations. It was also in this course that I read the one book that I truly dislike, *Bleak House*. I truly hated this book; however, I was finally given a chance to discuss my hatred of the book with

peers. Then, my hatred became conflicted. The fact that I was actually able to discuss a book I hated made me begin to find a place for this novel in my list of books that weren't so bad. It was then that I began to realize that with each book I read a small part of it remained inside of me. I truly began to realize that reading and literature made me a more understanding person and more compassionate to the world around me.

Through my undergraduate coursework in Communication, Arts, and Literature for Secondary Education I was able to begin to look at reading from a brand new perspective. I realized that my high school peers who were not able to understand the materials were either not in college anymore or were not successful in college. As I began to observe classrooms reading behaviors and the way that students were reading truly intrigued me. These college experiences solidified the fact that not only was reading an integral part of my world. My passion for reading was something that I wanted to help foster in the world around me.

Teaching Experience

My experiences as an undergraduate and beginning teacher allowed me to understand that reading was more than just something I felt passionate about. I discovered that reading is an art and that reading is a learned skill. As I began my career in the public school system I fell into reading education by happenstance. I student taught under a teacher who taught both English and Reading. This school had been struggling for years with how to help students reach success in both school and on high stakes tests for reading. This struggle for competency and success in reading and literacy skills became one of the most prevalent issues that faced me as a beginning teacher. It became abundantly clear to me in my first few weeks as an educator that

helping all students achieve success in reading was going to be a challenge for both myself as an educator, but for the school as an institution as well.

The district I was in began a pilot journey into a new reading program and curriculum that year. That year the district chose to implement a high priced program to help assist their students to achieve success in reading. This was my first experience with a differentiated teaching model for reading within a singular classroom. I was impressed with the amount of support for the students that this program had. In each class there were three paraprofessionals and one teacher. The students in that classroom did not qualify for Special Education services, but some did qualify for English Language Learner services. In this program students were given choices of novels based on their reading levels to read independently.

I watched as struggling readers finished novels for the first time and enjoyed what they were reading. The students were able to have small sessions with their teacher where they learned specific reading skills and were later expected to apply these skills to their independent novels. This reading program was rigorous, intense and from my new and outside perspective allowed students to find enjoyment in reading. I found that the students who were able to choose their novels and texts both in this class and again outside of class were able to reach the literacy goals set for them.

I have worked as a reading teacher for the past four years in a school without a prescriptive program. I have worked with a collection of high interest novels and research strategies that I have gained through my reading licensure program and through my graduate program. I have joined professional organizations and contacted educators throughout the state to try and figure out how to implement a program that was cost

effective and also helped students to make progress and develop an appreciation of reading. However, I am always led back to the fact that high interest novels are the way to hook and maintain an interest for students.

Each year as my students come to the first day of my classes, I am faced with a new set of issues. The reading instruction they are to receive is vital to their success. The quality of secondary literacy curriculums varies across districts and often among schools within the same district. Funding is often concentrated in elementary and middle schools, leaving high schools with disjointed resources that are often not age appropriate. The elementary and middle level programs and assessments that are available do not work well for high school students. The motivation required to achieve success for high school students is different from younger students. These issues must be recognized by teachers, parents, administrators, school boards, and the community in order to remedy the situation facing many high school students today.

Reading skills are high stakes skills at all ages, however in high school it becomes an entirely different game. The subject matter across all curricular areas is increasingly complex. Students, who cannot read their history or science materials, do not pass their classes. If they do not pass, they fail and not on track for graduation. If a student does not meet the goals of specific standardized tests that student cannot graduate. The inability to find the motivation and engagement to read then becomes one of the very real things that keep students from achieving success in the world. The consequences are real and immediate.

Administrators, parents, teachers, students, and the community should be concerned about the quality and type of reading curriculum that students are have access

to. All students require specific instruction in reading to some extent. Also, all students will be expected to read a variety of materials from a broad range of genres. In addition, all secondary students must receive education in reading skills, comprehension, and must learn how to read in varying courses. The inclusion of young adult literature in reading intervention, English and content classrooms will assist in increasing the following: graduation rates, student retention, and school success marks that are made available to the public. High motivation and engagement in reading leads to students being more involved in school itself. The reward in being a proficient reader comes then in the payoff of success in school, enjoyment of a book, and finding motivation and engagement in a variety of texts. This once again leads me back to my initial question: *How can young adult literature foster reading engagement in the striving secondary reader?*

Summary

In chapter one, I explained my personal interest in reading as an art, a skill, and an academic course. I discussed the importance of a high quality curriculum that includes high engagement young adult literature to foster reading growth in a striving secondary reader. In addition, I explained that a crucial component of any reading curriculum for striving secondary learners includes high engagement young adult literature. I also pointed out the importance of this curriculum to educational stakeholders. Students who are engaged and motivated and are able to achieve success in reading become more successful in school.

The ability to find the motivation to read and engagement in reading will allow students to become successful in school and therefore lead to college and career

readiness. Young adult literature is a crucial component of allowing all students to find this success. In this capstone, I explore how current research informs and assists in the development of curriculum that uses high interest and high engagement young adult literature at the secondary level. In chapter two, I provide background on the literacy needs of secondary students and struggling secondary readers. I also discuss the complexity of literacy interventions and the importance of using young adult literature to help striving secondary learners. In chapter three, I discuss my plan to develop an annotated text set and lessons plans for young adult literature. I I also describe the setting and demographics that were basis for the text set. In chapter three I describe how my project was designed and who it was designed for. In chapter four I present my annotated text set and lesson plans. I also evaluate my curriculum design and process and explain its importance as an integral piece of fostering engagement and motivation in striving secondary readers. Finally, in chapter five I present my conclusions, review my capstone question, and revisit my literature review. I also present my limitations and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

My love of young adult literature has transformed from a passion I had as a teenager to a belief in educational curriculum. As a teen I was amazed by the different worlds that literature could whisk me away into. Today, I am constantly amazed by the power that books can have for my students. They find ways to change the world, strategies for empathy, and ways to find themselves as they come of age. Watching students of all levels, particularly reluctant and striving secondary readers embrace reading and become engaged in young adult literature has lead me to the research I review in the chapter. In this chapter I review research literature focused on: *How does young adult literature foster reading engagement in the striving secondary reader?*

To begin, I define and explain the striving secondary reader. In doing this I explore the complexity of the striving secondary literacy learner. It is highly important to recognize that the needs of secondary learners are vastly different from that of an elementary learner. In addition, I discuss the importance of engagement and motivation for the striving secondary reader. Second, I discuss the complexity of literacy at the secondary level. This focuses on the importance of high engagement texts for striving secondary readers. Finally, I investigate the research surrounding young adult literature and its impact on striving secondary readers.

The Striving Secondary Literacy Learner

Striving readers are defined by Zimmerman and Tomasello (2014) as an entire group of students who are below grade level. At the secondary level, striving readers have often had at least one year of reading intervention already. Often students come into reading interventions courses at the high school level disenfranchised and burnt out when it comes to improving their reading skills. As a result, these striving readers often become reluctant readers who do not like or want to read based on their previous experiences with reading (Zimmerman and Tomasello, 2014). Many of these students have difficulties in selecting books that are appropriate for both their Lexile and their interests due to the fact that they have not found engagement or motivation in reading (Zimmerman and Tomasello, 2014).

According to Gallagher (2010), teens in the United States are not only falling below their peers worldwide in reading ability, more importantly they are becoming increasingly reluctant to read. Gallagher cites four reasons that he believes there is a rise in striving/reluctant readers: "(1) Schools act as though they value the development of test takers more than the development of readers, (2) Schools are limiting authentic reading experiences, (3) Teachers are overteaching books, and (4) Teachers are underteaching books" (Gallagher, 2010, p.37). While most research refers to striving readers as those that are below grade level it is important to note that reading and literacy instruction is something that must be available to all secondary learners. Reading instruction must be differentiated to allow all learners to achieve college and career readiness and success.

Complexity of literacy learning at the secondary level. Learning and developing both reading and literacy skills at the high school level is different from learning at the elementary and middle school level (Harvey, 2013). The focus in secondary reading and literacy skills moves away from learning how to write the alphabet, phonics and fluency instruction, and basic grammar and sentence structure rules. Instead, the secondary learner must focus on the larger scale aspects of comprehension, deeper understanding, and analysis skills to further develop their literacy skills (Fischer and Ivey, 2006). This shows that literacy and reading instruction at the secondary level should be focused on using high level texts that students can dive into.

However, according to Cantrell, Almasi, Carter, Rintamaa, and Madden (2010) research has shown that “students who do not read well by the end of third grade are likely to experience failure throughout their educational career” (p. 257). Young adult literature could be a part of the equation that is missing when trying to help secondary learners who are consistently failing throughout their educational careers. The inclusion of high interest texts could help as a way to work with those difficulties, while also engaging the reader. These studies have led to programs such as Minnesota’s *Reading Well by 3rd Grade* (Minnesota Department of Education, 2011). However, as Cantrell et. al (2010) stated, policies and funding still do not support or address the reading difficulties that continue among adolescent learners (p. 257).

Students entering high school with low literacy skills are not set up for success because they are unable to progress to the higher skills needed to achieve graduation standards and reach post-secondary benchmark requirements. The need for literacy interventions for striving secondary readers becomes apparent based on the large

numbers of students entering high school below grade level. “Many students are entering secondary school reading at levels that are significantly below grade level. In some secondary schools, these students constitute the large majority of the population” (Shumaker, Deshler, Woodruff, Hock, Bulgren & Lenz, 2006, p. 64). When the majority of a population of students is below grade level in reading, their course work in other secondary classes is greatly affected. The lack of reading skills leads to failing grades and being at risk of not graduating from high school.

The complexity of secondary literacy education lies in the fact that many students who are behind in reading skills have not had the proper interventions to bring them to grade level (Morrow & Gambrell, 2011). The inclusion of young adult literature and reading lessons should be present in not only reading intervention courses, but in English content classes. Reading education cannot be left just to teachers or reading or English, nor can it be left only for students below grade level. Reading education is complex and needs direct attention. “The complexity of helping middle and secondary students develop the reading and thinking skills and strategies they needs are significant and multifaceted. Reading permeates the curriculum; however, content-focused teachers generally don’t feel responsible for developing the sophisticated reading strategies that students need to be successful.” (Morrow & Gambrell, 2011, p. 138). Increasing literacy and reading strategies in the classroom must be done in a way that is easy and transparent. Teachers must be given clear and direct instructional strategies for their content. These strategies however must be accessible to students of all reading levels.

Entering high school with low literacy skills. According to Gold, Edmunds, Maluk, & Reumann-Moore (2011), many students enter into high school with low reading levels

because of educational barriers such as personal and living situations, underdeveloped reading and writing skills, and previous unproductive school experiences. Gold et. al also state that students entering into high school with low reading levels present a serious challenge due to the individual content learning that is expected of them. Many of these learners have become disengaged with learning. In particular, many of these students have been in intervention courses for reading for at least one or two years. Shumaker et. al. (2006) stated that students who were labeled as at risk with reading achievement showed plateaus after seventh grade. According to Brozo (2010) two thirds of 9th-12th grade students read at less than the “proficient level” on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (Rampey, Dion, & Donahue, 2009) and 40% of high school students graduates lack the literacy skills employers seek (National Education Summit on High Schools, 2005, p.277).

As students become at risk in terms of reading, Shumaker et. al (2006) describe that students often find themselves failing classes and falling behind peers that they were once able to stay on pace with. The students who are falling behind are also not successfully completing high school. “Their resulting failure leads to discouragement and disengagement from school, and, for too many, this disengagement manifests itself in dropping out of school altogether” (Shumaker et. al, 2006, p. 64). The disengagement of secondary students and their subsequent failure in high school courses from an inability to understand the complex materials often leads to educators equating disengagement and failure in reading with disabilities. In doing relating disengagement to a disability it only reinforces stereotypes that the students have already encountered about the nature of reading (Brozo, 2010, p. 278).

Two thirds of students in high school are below the proficient level in reading skills (Brozo, 2010, p. 277). This research shows that reading interventions at the high school level must be offered to all students at varying levels. As a result of this all high school teachers must become a part of the reading and literacy interventions. If this does not occur, dropout rates will continue to rise. The lack of literacy skills developed in secondary learners has led to 1.2 million students dropping out annually with literacy skills lower than most other industrialized nations (Brozo, 2010, p. 277). A focus on literacy engagement strategies in all content classrooms needs to occur on a regular basis at the secondary level.

Engagement and Motivation as a Part of Secondary Reading Instruction

Engagement and motivation within reading needs to be a crucial part of teaching reading across the content areas. This can be achieved through a variety of techniques. Motivation is defined as the value, beliefs, and behaviors surrounding reading for an individual student (Cambria and Guthrie, 2010). Engagement on the other hand builds upon motivation because it becomes the intersection of that motivation and thoughtfulness (Guthrie, 2001). The motivation of striving readers is multifaceted as it is a behavioral concept that is based upon both the intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Engagement in reading is also complex due to the sociocultural perspective that it embraces. The following section focuses on motivation, engagement, and choice as a model for integrating these concepts into curriculum.

Motivating striving secondary readers. One of the most crucial components of secondary literacy instruction across the content areas is helping students to find the motivation to begin to read and to continue reading. All students must receive some form

of reading education that helps to support motivation and engagement to further their reading skills. The definition of motivation as encompassing beliefs, values, and behaviors is added to when it becomes reading motivation. This concept includes a student's interest, dedication, and confidence (Cambria and Guthrie, 2010, p.16). According to Guthrie (2001), there are two types of motivation that can occur with reading: task mastery orientation and performance orientation. A task mastery oriented reader will read to improve their skills and want to comprehend the content (Guthrie, 2001). According to Guthrie (2011) these readers also want to learn new skills as they become more complex readers. On the other hand, a performance oriented reader will read to finish the assigned pages or chapter and use the easiest strategies to complete their reading (Guthrie, 2001). Guthrie (2001) also proposes that in addition to these self-efficacy in reading and social motivation are highly important to readers. Readers who feel confident (self-efficacy) and enjoy sharing what they have read with their peers or family will be more likely to have high levels of motivation. These higher levels of reading motivation are what lead to students feeling success as a reader.

Successful readers are motivated to read and identify themselves as readers (Gambrell, Morrow, & Pressley, 2007, p.272). In order for teachers to assist in the development of motivated readers it is important for teachers to understand what defines a motivated reader. There are three main behaviors that support motivating student to read. According to Cambria and Guthrie (2010) there are three behaviors that come with dedication to reading: interest, confidence, and dedication. The first behavior, interest, is defined in reading research as intrinsic motivation (Cambria and Guthrie, 2010). This interest must also be situational and enduring, meaning a student must be fascinated what

they are reading, this fascination can then become enduring with the support of teachers in assisting students in finding new materials (Cambria and Guthrie, 2010).

The second behavior that supports motivation is confidence. One of the biggest factors of building confidence is a student having the ability to believe in their own reading skills. “Belief in yourself is more closely linked to achievement than any other motivation throughout school. The reason is that confidence, which refers to belief in your capacity, is tied intimately to success” (Cambria and Guthrie, p.17, 2010). According to Cambria and Guthrie achieving confidence can be done in simple activities such have a student find success in a small daily reading task. They also state that another factor in finding confidence is building a strong and trusting relationship with the teacher.

Finally, the third behavior associated with motivation is dedication. This is a trait that cannot always be developed in school, but results in having the interest and confidence in their reading skills (Cambria and Guthrie, 2010). Students who are dedicated will show the following three skills: persisting in reading tasks, valuing the importance of reading (knowing that the skill of reading is important in order to be successful in many life skills, and valuing knowledge gained from reading (Cambria and Guthrie, 2010). Through becoming interested, confident, and dedicated readers students will continue to develop the skills which are essential to their future success in life.

Struggling readers are often disengaged readers or avoidant readers (Cambria and Guthrie, 2010). These students often do not value reading and have poor perceptions of themselves as readers. “The real dilemma is that lower-achieving students often exaggerate their limitations. Believing they are worse than they really are, they stop

trying completely” (Cambria and Guthrie, 17, 2010). These readers will not try, they will refuse to participate, and will often be reluctant to engage in activities that help grow them as readers. Behaviors often exhibited by avoidant readers can often manifest in students making up excuses, not making eye contact, and lacking in organizational skills (Cambria and Guthrie, 2010). These students will often completely refuse to interact with the text. Avoidant readers will often identify with the following attributes (Cambria and Guthrie, 2010): I am not reliable, I cannot keep to a schedule, I am not good at resisting temptation, and I am easily discouraged. These same students also believe that in order to be successful they just be nice to teachers, being lucky, or find others to help (Cambria and Guthrie, 2010). In order to help avoidant readers become successful readers, teachers must find strategies in the reading classroom to engage these students.

Engaging striving secondary readers. Engagement in reading will help students to develop an authentic interest in reading and foster a lifetime interest in reading. If students are motivated to read a text students will be more likely to be engaged in the reading. There is a difference between motivation, wanting to read the text, and engagement, actually reading the text and seeking out meaning in the text (Guthrie, Klauda, and Ho, 2013). According to the National Endowment for the Arts Study (2007), half of 18-24 year olds do not read for pleasure, less than one third of 13 year olds read daily, and teens and young adults spend 60 percent less time on voluntary reading than the average adult. A motivated reader will show signs of positive behavioral engagement such as dedication of time to reading, effort, and persistence in reading (Guthrie, Klauda, and Ho, 2013). In addition to this, students must be able to begin to deconstruct and socially interact with the books they are reading (Ivey and Johnston, 2013). This means

that engaged and motivated secondary readers will spend more time willingly reading and choosing texts.

Engagement has an even more expansive meaning, too. Reading engagement is not only the behavioral engagement, it is also the cultural and social engagement that can occur with reading (Ivey and Johnston, 2013). Engagement in reading has a socio-cultural perspective that shows that when a reader is engaged in the reading it will help become a part of their moral development, personal identity, and cultural identity (Ivey and Johnston, 2013). This is where young adult literature and choice in texts become highly important in fostering reading growth in the striving secondary learner.

Reading opportunities in the classroom. Reading and literacy research specialists assume that when a reading intervention plan is in place that giving students time to read is one of the key focuses of the program. It is also assumed that schools are already allowing students authentic time to read. “First, we assume that schools looking for intervention programs to supplement their efforts already provide students with significant opportunities for wide reading” (Fisher & Ivey, 2006, p.181). Secondly, as stated by Fisher and Ivey (2006) the assumption is made that students are given the opportunity to simply read a book of their choosing (p. 181). This means that secondary students can choose a book, read it on their own terms, and are not expected to complete quizzes, worksheets, or other assignments for the text. In addition to these assumptions research supports that reading instruction should be provided to students of all reading levels (Fisher & Ivey, 2006).

Another factor in student motivation is text choice and teaching. Allowing students to choose their own texts will foster dedication behaviors and allow students to

feel in control of their own learning. Activities such as sustained silent reading (SSR) that in the past may have involved students being forced to read a book chosen by their teacher and do a book report or some other type of response can be changed into a reading activity that fosters dedication and engagement in reading. However, the concept of SSR can lead to one of the most valuable components of fostering literacy in striving young adult readers: choice texts. Choice text SSR allows students to choose their own text and simply read with no other expectations (Gallagher, 2009). By allowing students to choose their own text and read with no expectations students can begin to develop positive reading behaviors in order to continue becoming successful reader.

Fisher and Ivey (2006) state that in a 45- minute intervention course at least 30 minutes. In this reading time choice should be given to students as to what they want to read. Many students have reached a point in their academic careers where they are very capable of figuring out just how many pages they need to skim or where they can find summaries on Sparknotes or Wikipedia (Morgan and Wagner, 2013). Giving students this choice leads to students feeling in control and therefore feeling more highly motivated to take control over their reading and learning (Morgan and Wagner, 2013). When students feel more in control and have belief in themselves they will read more. “Students read more, understand more, and are more likely to continue reading when they have the opportunity to choose what they read” (Allington and Gabriel, 2012,p. 10). This shows that given a choice of what to read students will become more engaged, motivated, and will be more likely to show positive behaviors. Recent studies also show that by providing high interest materials that students want to read, time for them to read, and authentic opportunities to engage with the text will allow them to be

more engaged, have a deeper sense of identity, and will help to raise test scores (Morgan and Wagner, 2013).

Strategies for engagement. Kelly Gallagher (2003) states that there is not a single strategy or tool that can be used to build reading motivation. Instead, Gallagher states that educators must sell students on a wide range of reasons why they should read. The reasons why a student should read and the ability to sell these to a student becomes increasingly complex when dealing with striving high school readers. To increase the not only the scores and reading abilities of striving readers, but also to increase their true reading skills and intrinsic abilities to read a variety of elements must be present. Gallagher is saying that in order for students to find high interest in reading and become motivated and engaged they must be given relevant, high interest, and engaging texts.

However, Gallagher (2004) has proposed a model for engaging students in deep reading strategies while reading difficult texts. The figure below shows Gallagher's model:

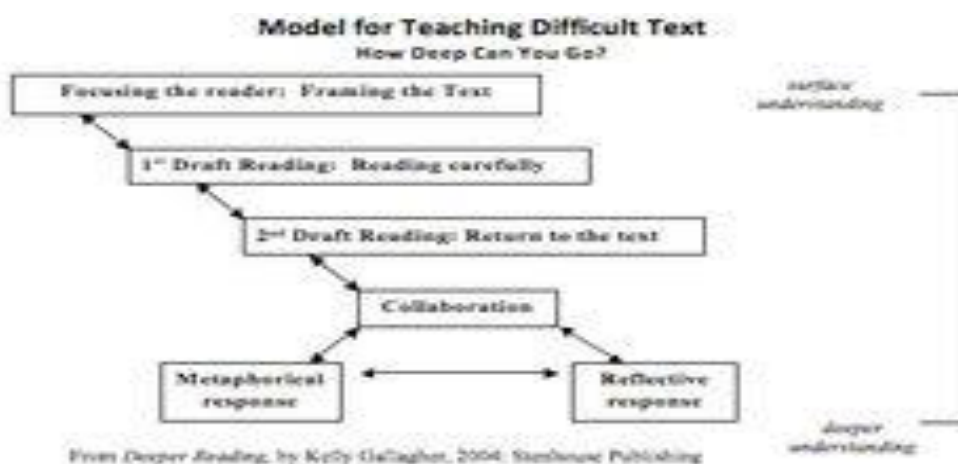


FIGURE 1: Model for Teaching Difficult Texts (Gallagher, 2004)

While this model (Gallagher, 2004) focuses on reading difficult texts and a multi-layer process. This model can be used as a way to frame an entire unit created to enhance the engagement and literacy skills of striving secondary readers. In Gallagher's text, strategies for learning on every level of this model are introduced. Strategies that increase comprehension and engagement in striving readers are:

1. Daily reflections asking readers to focus on previous reading (Gallagher, 2004)
2. 10 Point Text Frame (Gallagher, 2004)
3. Meaningful gestures or positive reinforcements (Gallagher, 2009)
4. Say, Mean, Matter Text Analysis (Gallagher, 2004)
5. Silent Sustained Reading (Gallagher, 2009)
6. What I liked, hated, connected to (Gallagher, 2004)
7. Post It Note Connections (Gallagher, 2004)

Each of these strategies allow students to exhibit positive reading engagement behaviors. These strategies will also allow for teachers to monitor and identify reading engagement behaviors.

In addition, including high interest texts and allowing students authentic time to read teachers can provide different examples of choice in everyday activities. According to Guthrie (cited in Morrow and Gambrel, 2011), teachers can foster motivation through choice everyday through the following:

1. Select a story
2. Select a page to read
3. Select sentences to explain

4. Identify a goal for the day
5. Choose three to five questions to answer
6. Write questions for a partner exchange

This allow students to still have choices while focusing on larger literacy units. Giving students the opportunity for choice will also allow students to feel success in their learning. Gambrell and Morrow (2011) state that it is crucial for each reading lesson to contain one of the following:

1. Text matched to students' reading levels.
2. Frequent feedback for reading.
3. Authentic reading merged with skills.
4. Multiple opportunities for reading.
5. Sharing competency with peers.
6. Student goal setting.
7. Rewarding effort.

High interest choice texts combined with ways for students to feel success are crucial components of any reading intervention plan. Through engaging readers avoidant readers can begin the transition to becoming successful readers.

Young Adult Literature as a Part of Secondary Curriculums

Young adult literature (YAL) literature covers a wide variety of topics and includes topics that are often seen as taboo. Young adult literature was coined as a term in the early 1960's and mainly included realistic fiction as the genre (Cart, 2008). Today YAL is a genre that is expansive and is growing on average by 23% per year (Cart, 2008). The

Young Adult Library Association believes that YAL should be a vital part of both required school reading and school library collections (Cart, 2008). Today, YAL can be seen in a variety of ways. Some see it as too dark, covering topics such as rape, suicide, murder, and incest. Others see YAL as a way for students to safely learn about the world and relate to issue they may be going through. YAL literature in the classroom can help students to feel engaged and motivated in the classroom through the use of multiple opportunities for reading in the classroom.

The argument for YAL. Teenagers are complex in nature. They are facing a wide variety of issues and problems in the world. Teenagers face complex problems as they become young adults entering into the world. Some educators and community groups have argued that YAL is too dark and dangerous for young adults. This notion is currently being challenged by educators and authors around the world (Johnson, 2008). For example, young adult fiction novelist Ellen Hopkins (Johnson, 2008) responds by saying: “My books speak to hard subject matter. Addiction. Cutting. Thoughts of suicide. Abuse. Sexual abuse. All these issues affect children. Look at the statistics. Closing your eyes won't make these things go away. Why not talk about them with your kids, to arm them with knowledge. Open the books with them. Listen to the author speak with them”.

YAL is a high interest text that can help avoidant readers to engage in difficult texts. These texts are often filled with events and themes that are relevant to the changing lives of students (Johnson, 2008). Avoidant readers that find connections with YAL also often need to find texts in which they can create meaningful connections: “In addition to acknowledging questions and issues many adolescents are likely to face in their own

lives, tough texts offer many other benefits for adolescent readers. They stretch students intellectually and teach them to forge empathic connections” (O’Donell-Allen, p.19, 2011). Allowing students to explore these topics in the safety of the classroom can allow them to find personal connections and have the ability to go from engaged to disengaged.

According to Bucher and Manning (2006) YAL serves multiple purposes including showing students the realities of life, teaching about the world outside of their community, shows the functions of institutions of society, allows readers to escape, shows readers the range of human emotions and experiences in a safe space, and also allows young adult readers to increase their literacy skills. Bucher and Manning (2006) provide the following guidelines on how to evaluate YAL:

- Should be reflective of age and development by addressing thinking and reading abilities as well as interest.
- Should deal with relevant and issues and problems, and that the experiences of the characters are relatable to student experiences.
- Should consider changing world perspectives such as: cultural, social, and gender diversity; environmental issues; global politics; and international interdependence.

These guidelines can be used when choosing YAL literature for teachers to use in the classroom.

In addition, it can be said that YAL makes teens feel as if though they are not alone (Johnson, 2011). It can help them relate and find guidance while going through the “tough stuff” that life throws at them. Students can often find comfort in reading texts that portray similar life experiences to their own. “If a teen has been abused, the logic

follows, reading about another teen in the same straits will be comforting” (Gurdon, 2011). YAL allows the most disengaged learners to find a topic that they are interested in or can connect to. Spanning from historical fiction to murder mysteries set in dystopian future societies, YAL has something for every striving literacy learner.

YAL will allow students to be motivated and engaged in reading. Ivey (2011) points out that for the most inexperienced and disengaged readers the *right* book must be chosen. Also, Ivey states that the text (according to multiple research studies) is the biggest factor in whether a student will be motivated and engaged while reading. Ivey set five rules for choosing texts for students:

- Step into this decade
- Try on something you normally would not have selected
- You might have to try on lots of things before finding a good fit
- When something good doesn't quite fit, try tailoring
- It doesn't have to match, it only has to go with (meaning that the text doesn't have to go perfectly with your units, only have a connection)

Ivey's metaphorical rules for choosing texts outline the importance for choosing high interest, relevant young adult literature to use in the secondary reading intervention classroom. According to the best seller list on amazon.com for young adult fiction of the 100 top selling books the three top genres for YAL are: dystopian, fantasy, and romance/coming of age novels. The New York Times best seller lists for YAL also show that these genres are the bestselling. This shows that in the classroom the most high interest/in this decade novels would be from these three separate genres.

Having an understanding of the definitions of the three types of genres is also very important. A YAL dystopian novel according to Read, Write, Think (2006) is a futuristic and imaginary world or universe that are highly exaggerated and are often the worst case scenarios about a political or societal system. A YAL fantasy novel is defined as one that has one or more of the following characteristics: a talking animal, magical powers, mythical beings, and is often set in medieval times (Read, Write, Think, 2006). Finally, a coming of age novel is one that involves an adolescent's progress toward becoming adult and having a new awakening or understanding of themselves and the world they live in (Read, Write, Think, 2006).

YAL will allow students to become engaged readers. It will also allow students the safety to discuss tough topics in the safety of the classroom (O'Donnell-Allen, 2011). YAL literature will provide teachers with the choice literature and will allow teachers the space to allow students independent reading time will still increasing literacy skills. Educators can follow the rules put in place by Ivey as they select YAL literature. Finally, by following bestselling lists teachers will be able to have guides as to what books to choose to use in their classroom This YAL will allow striving readers to become immersed in worlds that are relevant to their own.

Summary

This chapter focused on the importance of using highly motivating and engaging texts such as Young Adult Literature as a component of secondary reading interventions. In response to my capstone question: *How can young adult literature foster reading engagement in the striving secondary reader?* I researched previous research and texts about how to best engage striving secondary readers. The literature

review examined and analyzed the current research behind the striving secondary reader and the many reasons for the reluctance of readers. The literature also showed how the teachers may also need to “relearn” how to teach literature to avoid under or over teaching. Many of these resources focused on the complexities of both teaching secondary literacy interventions and the complexities how secondary students learn and improve literacy skills. Furthermore, the literature review examined the importance of choice as a component in secondary literacy interventions. The literature review also focused on the current research dealing with motivation and engagement of the secondary learner. Finally, the literature review examined young adult literature and how it can be used to motivate and engage striving secondary learners.

In chapter three, I focus on the demographics and background used to gather a variety of young adult literature texts that can be used for secondary interventions. This chapter outlines my curriculum design for the annotated text set as well as my lesson plan template. I evaluate my curriculum design for the lesson plans and the annotated text set and the lesson plans. This whole chapter focuses on answering my capstone question: *How can young adult literature foster reading engagement in the striving secondary reader?* In chapter four I share my results and evaluation. I provide more information about my curriculum and the YAL texts chosen and strategies I have developed. Finally, in chapter five, I share my conclusions about my research and discoveries.

Chapter Three

Methods

Introduction

In chapter one I shared my own journey with literacy and my love for reading. I explained how I fell in love with teaching reading and the importance of teaching reading and the love for reading at the secondary level. My experiences as a teacher have pushed me on this journey to continue to explore best practices in the classroom for striving secondary readers. In chapter two, I explored literature that supports the definition of a striving secondary reader (Zimmerman and Tomasello, 2014) and the complexity of teaching a striving secondary reader (Harvey, 2013) (Fischer and Ivey, 2006). In chapter two I addressed the engagement and motivation of readers (Morrow & Gambrell, 2011), particularly secondary readers. Finally, I explored the research on best practices which showed that using choice texts, choice strategies, and YAL literatures supports fostering reading engagement in the striving secondary reader (Gallagher 2004, 2009) (Johnson, 2008).

In this chapter, I provide information about my research paradigm for this project, the school setting I designed the curriculum for, and my data collection methods. I provide information on the YAL texts sets that I choose and the lesson plans that I developed.

Project Design

For this curriculum development project, I developed three annotated text sets based on the YAL suggestions from best seller lists. These books follow the rules set forth by Ivey (2011) and allow students to have multiple choices in the classroom. In addition the books will help students foster the socio-cultural aspect of engagement as well (Ivey and Johnston, 2013). I have also designed curricular activities that can be used to foster reading engagement for striving secondary readers in the classroom based on Gambrell and Morrow's (2009) guidelines for reading engagement for striving secondary readers. The text set gives the citation for the book, a summary, a rationale of how it fosters literacy growth, and a short list of curricular activities that could accompany the text.

Secondly, I developed three mini lesson plans that could be used to teach YAL novels in the classroom. These lessons allow for the books to be taught in a manner that does not over-teach or under-teach (Gallagher, 2010). The lesson plans are designed to work with any YAL book and allow for interaction among students to foster the social engagement needed for a student to become fully engaged in a text (Ivey and Johnston, 2013). The lesson plans also follow Gambrell and Morrow's (2009) crucial components for reading opportunities in the classroom. See appendix A for lesson plan template.

Both the annotated text set and the lesson plans are designed to be used in either a reading interventions course or an English/Language Arts course. The purpose of the text set and the lesson plans is to foster reading growth through the use of relevant and interesting texts in order to develop high levels of reading engagement and motivation. The lesson plan format is as follows:

<p>Lesson Plan Template</p> <p>YAL Reading Novel For use during <i>a specific section of each choice text</i> while students are reading YAL choice novels.</p> <p>Purpose: To engage striving secondary readers in reading activities and to enhance their literacy skills.</p> <p>II. Objective:</p> <p>III. Instructional Strategies</p> <p>IV. Assessment</p> <p>V. Self Reflection <i>This section is provided for teachers to spend time reflecting on reading behaviors and engagement of students. Teacher will write down what they noticed about disengagement and engagement behaviors in order to help students progress (Guthrie, Klauda, and Ho, 2013) (Gallagher, 2004) (Gallagher, 2009).</i></p>
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FIGURE 2: Lesson Plan Template

Settings and Participants

This curriculum project has been designed for the school that I currently work in. The texts, curricular activities, and lesson plans can be easily incorporated into my current teaching practice. In addition, this curriculum project is designed to work for multiple secondary setting with striving secondary readers.

The school this curriculum is designed for is an International Baccalaureate (IB) high school. In the high school the Middle Years Programme (MYP) for grades 9 and 10 and Diploma Programme (DP) for grades 11 and 12 are embedded in the curriculum. The school is also in the fourth year of AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination)

implementation. This mission of this program is to close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society (AVID, 2014). This is the only high school in the district. The district also contains two elementary schools, one middle school, and an Alternative Learning Center. In the 2012-2013 school year there were 909 students enrolled at the high school. The demographic information for the county the school is in are very similar to the demographics of the school itself. However, due to the fact that this school is an integration district about 1/3 of the district are from other communities. Students from seven different districts can attend this school and receive transportation.

The school has a diverse population of students. In the 2011-2012 school year 56% of the students were White, 25% of students were Black, 8% were Hispanic, 7% were Asian, and 2% were American Indian. Of these students 15.8% qualified for EL services and 15.5% qualified for Special Education services. In addition to this data 58.8% of the students enrolled in the 2011-2012 school year qualified for free and reduced lunch. These demographics have remained very similar for the past three years. However, each year the district has seen an increase in the number of students who qualify for free and reduced lunch.

In the 2012-2013 school year the graduation rate was 74%. In the 2012-2013 school year 224 students were tested for reading proficiency using the MCA II Reading exam. Of these students 69.2% met proficiency in reading. This was a three percent increase from the previous year. 67.8% of male students were proficient; while 70.6 % of female students reached proficiency. The demographic breakdown of reading proficiency is as follows:

American Indian: 50%

Asian Pacific Islander: 65.2%

Hispanic: 71.4%

Black: 56.5%

White: 76.9%

Special populations of students further add to the breakdown of data. Of the students tested who receive special services within the district such as English Learners (EL) and Special Education 26.9% reached reading proficiency. While 28.6% of all EL students and 47.2% of SPED students reached proficiency in reading.

The above data shows that the student population that is in the greatest need of support is EL students. In addition to EL students, Black and American Indian students need the greatest amount of literacy support within the school. These areas of need have all been the greatest areas of need within the school for the past five years.

The faculty within the school district is overwhelmingly Caucasian. At the high school there are two Asian educators and the rest are Caucasian. Fifty-nine percent of the teachers have a master's degree and forty-one percent have a bachelor's degree. All teachers are highly qualified.

There are two reading interventions courses that I teach at the school. One for grade 9 and one for grade 10. Each class has between 20 and 22 students. Students in these classes do not qualify for Special Education (SPED) or English Language (EL) classes. The students are placed based on a combination of data points such as MAP,

MCA, and PLAN scores. Students are monitored using a QRI-5 three times per year, MAZE testing monthly, and MAP tests three times per year also. For students to progress out of the reading intervention class they must have two grade level scores on two interventions. If students are not meeting goals and benchmarks, other interventions are put in place such as SPED testing. The text set and lesson plans that are designed in this project can be used in these classes as well as in mainstream English classes to support striving secondary readers.

Curriculum Development Overview

In this section I focus on how I used my capstone question: *How can young adult literature foster reading engagement in the striving secondary reader?* For this process I refer back to my literature review in Chapter Two to help me find YAL texts that foster reading engagement and help to engage avoidant readers. The guidelines that I have chosen to follow are based on Ivey (2009) and bestseller lists such as New York Times and Amazon. I also consider the importance of socio-cultural engagement with the texts chosen (Ivey and Johnston, 2013).

As stated in Chapter Two, engagement in reading has a socio-cultural perspective that shows that when a reader is engaged in the reading it will help become a part of their moral development, personal identity, and cultural identity (Ivey and Johnston, 2013). It is important for these texts to be highly engaging and relevant for students as these texts will be used to increase reading engagement and motivation in already struggling readers. These text sets will also allow for students to have choice within in the classroom as discussed in chapter two in reference to Gallagher, 2009.

Evaluating Curriculum

The development of this text set for choice reading and increasing engagement in reading will allow for readers of all levels to feel success. Low achieving readers need multiple opportunities and interventions that allow them to become students who actually want to read (Fisher and Ivey, 2006). I have created a rubric based on the guidelines of both Bucher and Manning (2006) and Ivey (2009). The rubric is to be used with evaluating YAL texts. Appendix A is the rubric that that I have developed to evaluate YAL choices for my text sets. This can also be used for teachers to evaluate YAL in their own classrooms. When choosing a text in a classroom it is highly important to make sure that the text is chosen appropriately and fits your classroom (Gallagher, 2009).

The first strand in the rubric allows teachers to explore this by making sure the teacher is checking the Lexile and assuring that the text is within a readable range for the students in the classroom (Ivey, 2011). One of the more difficult tasks for teachers can be making sure that the material in the books is relevant for the students. Strand two on the rubric asks the teacher to evaluate whether the content is relevant (Johnson, 2008). This strand makes sure that teachers are cognizant of the issues presented in the novel (Johnson, 2008). Strand three focuses on making sure that there are multiple perspectives presented in the novels chosen (Bucher and Manning, 2006). The fourth strand asks teachers to make sure the text is not outdated, Ivey (2006) suggests choosing a novel that is written within the last 10 years. Also, choosing texts that are nontraditional is a very important aspect of engaging striving secondary readers (Bucher and Manning, 2006). Finally, strand six focuses on making sure that there is a socio-

cultural perspective that students can connect to (Ivey, 2011) (Bucher and Manning, 2006). By following these guidelines teachers can evaluate texts that will help to engage striving secondary reader.

After evaluating the texts and choosing the texts for engaging striving secondary readers, teachers will be able to use these lesson plans. The lesson plans are designed to be implemented with a variety of texts, not just the text sets chosen for this curriculum development project. Each lesson plan will model choice activities and allow students to feel success in the classroom based on the activities suggested by Guthrie (2011) and Gambrell and Morrow (2009) that foster reading engagement through choice in the classroom. Appendix B shows the rubric I created for evaluating the lesson plans. This rubric can be used to evaluate any lesson used to increase engagement and reading ability in striving secondary readers

Summary

In this chapter I explained the goals and overview of my curriculum development project. I discussed in detail the participants, settings, and demographics used to as a basis for the development of this curriculum project. I also discussed how I evaluate my outcomes for this curriculum development project and what my goals are. I provided examples of evaluation rubrics for both texts sets and lesson plans. Throughout this chapter I also discussed how my evaluation tools can be used. In chapter four I present my annotated text set and lesson plans. I also evaluate my curriculum design and process and explain its importance as an integral piece of fostering reading growth in striving secondary readers. Finally, in chapter five, I present my conclusions, review my

capstone question, and revisit my literature review. I also present my limitations and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results and Reflections

Introduction

In chapter one I shared my journey with reading and my personal experiences as a reading educator. I also discussed the reasons that I think literacy education for adolescents is so important. Over the last six years of my teaching career I have become immersed in secondary literacy and have struggled with how to help striving readers become engaged and motivated to increase their literacy skills. This has led me to my capstone questions of: *How can young adult literature foster reading engagement in the striving secondary reader?*

In chapter two I focused on the research that explains the background of striving secondary readers and defines what a striving secondary reader is (Zimmerman and Tomasello, 2014). I focused on information that supports motivation and engagement of secondary readers and what behaviors engaged students will show (Morrow & Gambrell, 2011). In addition, I explained what YAL is and the importance of using YAL as a text choice for curriculum with striving secondary readers (Johnson, 2008). The literature I read supports my question that YAL can help to foster engagement in striving secondary readers.

In chapter three, I used the information from my research in the literature review and discussed the methods used in creating my curriculum. I also presented the demographic information that I used as a basis for my curriculum. In this chapter I discussed how I created my annotated text set and the reasoning behind it. In addition, I discussed why I created mini lessons and the research I used to create these. Finally, in this chapter I discussed the rubrics and evaluation tools I created for use with analyzing the text sets and lesson plans.

Young Adult Literature Texts

For my curriculum project I wanted to find texts that were highly engaging and were relevant to adolescent readers (Johnson, 2008). I choose to create three different texts sets according to genres that could be used (Ivey, 2011) (Gallagher, 2004, 2009). I choose three texts from the following genres: dystopian, fantasy, and coming of age. The texts that I chose for the dystopian genre are: *Uglies* by Scott Westerfeld, *Divergent* by Veronica Roth, and *The Maze Runner* by James Dashner. The novels I chose for the fantasy genre are: *Inheritance* by Christopher Paolini, *Clockwork Angel* by Cassandra Clare, and *Graceling* by Kristin Cashore. Finally, the novels I chose for the coming of age genre are: *Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie, *Copper Sun* by Sharon Draper, and *The Fault in our Stars* by John Green. Appendix C includes the annotation for each book.

Each text that I have chosen to include is in the YAL genre. In addition, I chose the texts based on their sub-genre. Each book is from the bestseller lists on The New York Times lists. The books were chosen based on Ivey's (2009) and Bucher and Manning's (2011) suggestions for how to choose a YAL text. Each book is lexically

appropriate for secondary readers, deals with relevant teen issues, the problems of the world, is from the past ten years, is a “nontraditional” text, and also provides a sociocultural perspective. In addition to fulfilling the requirements of the rubric I also found that by finding books that were on best seller lists it showed that these are books that young adults are currently reading and purchasing.

The books in the dystopian category fit well into the rubric that I designed. First, *Uglies* by Scott Westerfeld presents students with problems of society and the views of teens about beauty. In addition, *Divergent* by Veronica Roth adds to these limitations of society by presenting striving readers with an entirely new world again (Johnson, 2008) (Gallagher, 2004). However, in both of these novels the characters are facing problems that many teens face in real life. They deal with issues of poverty, race, sexual orientation, and growing up to name a few. *Maze Runner* introduces another interest choice by having a male character as the main character. This novel gives readers an analytical dystopian world for them to become immersed in. These novels are engaging, high interest, and new (in the last 10 years).

The second text set I created and evaluated were YAL fantasy novels. These novels fit the characteristics of a fantasy novel (Read, Write, Think 2006) and provide students with an alternative text to that of the traditional canon choices. All three novels feature magic, talking animals, or clockwork beings in *Clockwork Angel*, and mythical creatures. However, only one of these books, *Graceling*, by Kristin Cashore, is set in medieval times. All of these books are between 770L and 790L for Lexile which fits the grade level for many striving secondary readers particularly in a high school such as the one that this curriculum was developed for.

Finally, the third set of texts I chose and evaluated were those in the coming of age genre. These books fit well into the rubric because they deal a great deal with parallel issues to those of teenagers today. In addition, they deal with the changing perspectives of the world. The first novel in this set, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian*, tells the story of a 14 year old Native American boy who is trying to discover himself in a world that he feels as if though he doesn't fit into. Although the second novel, *Copper Sun* by Sharon Draper, is set in the 1700's the novel teaches striving readers lessons about becoming an adult and facing adversity as a young girl finds her freedom and her voice. Finally, *The Fault in Our Stars* by John Green tells the tale of two teenagers who are sick with cancer and fall in love. All of these novels allow for engagement by providing students with relevant, high interest texts that support allow choice in the classroom.

Each of these three sets of books provides striving secondary readers with choice in what they read within a genre and with books that are high interest. These books will allow students to read something for an extended period of time and will expose them to new concepts and worlds. I feel that these books strongly support my capstone question of: *How can young adult literature foster reading engagement in the striving secondary reader?* In addition, to the annotated text that I have created, I also created mini lessons that provide teachers with simple lesson plans to allow for reading engagement in the classroom.

Mini Lessons

I created three separate mini lessons that can be applied to any and all of the texts that I chose for the text set. The lessons can be used in a variety of manners. Teachers

could use the annotated text sets to do a genre study and provide choice in the classroom that way. Teachers could use all of the texts list or just a few and use the lessons to support literature circles. These lesson plans could also be applied to other high interest texts being used in the classroom. All of the mini lessons can be found in Appendix D. The mini lessons were created by following the rubric created in Appendix B.

Each lesson was designed for a 45 minute class period. Each mini lesson could be used for multiple days or split apart. These lessons could also be used as supplements to a larger curriculum. Each lesson allows for choice with reading, gives the opportunity for multiple reading, sharing with peers, a chance for the teacher to provide authentic feedback, and will allow for the students to share their reading and/or learning with a peer. The lessons are based on the research in Chapter Two. In addition, the lesson plans were created for the demographics introduced in Chapter Three. Lessons were planned with the two questions that Gallagher (2004) proposes teachers should ask before teaching reading:

1. Without my assistance, what will my students take from this reading?
2. With my assistance, what do I want my students to take from this reading?

In each of the mini lessons there are a variety of strategies that can be applied to allow choice in the classroom that will facilitate the engagement of striving secondary readers. Many of the strategies are from Gallagher's *Deeper Reading Strategies* (2004). These strategies focus on engagement in the text, collaboration, and allow students multiple opportunities to read in one time period. At the end of each of lesson there is a space for reflection (Gallagher 2004, 2009). The teacher will reflect on two questions modified from Gallagher:

1. Without my assistance, what *did* my students take from this reading?
2. With my assistance, what *did* want my students to take from this reading?

Evaluation of Curriculum:

The curriculum created was evaluated using the rubrics from Appendix A and Appendix B to make sure my capstone question: *How can young adult literature foster reading engagement in the striving secondary reader?* The curriculum was evaluated in two parts: annotated text sets and lesson plans. Each of these parts was evaluated using the rubrics in Appendix A and Appendix B that were created based on my research in chapter two.

First, I evaluated the annotated text set using the rubric that is in Appendix A. The rubric was created in order to make sure that each of the texts allowed for engagement of readers based on the six strands below. Each strand was based on the research of on Ivey (2011) and Bucher and Manning (2006). To evaluate the annotated text set I followed the rubric from Appendix A. Each of the texts was evaluated using the six strands of the rubric. FIGURE 3 below shows that each of the texts meets each of the six strands:

Young Adult Literature Text Set Rubric								
Created based on Ivey 2011 and Bucher and Manning 2006								
<i>Texts should fit all of the following criterion</i>								
Characteristics	Text #1	Text #2	Text #3	Text #4	Text #5	Text #6	Text #7	Text #9
1. Lexile/Reading Level is appropriate for secondary readers	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2. Deals with relevant issues, problems, life experiences to those of teens	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3. Deals with changing world perspectives	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4. Is from the past ten years	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
5. Is not a “traditional text” choice	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
6. Provides a socio-cultural connection/perspective	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

FIGURE 3: EVALUATED TEXT SET

Each text in the text set is at a Lexile that is accessible for striving secondary readers of all levels. Each text also deals with issues that are relevant to teens in today’s society. In addition to this, each of the texts was written in the past ten years. The texts in the text set are also not “traditional” texts as they branch out in different genres and provide a variety of perspectives. Finally, each of the texts provides a unique socio-cultural perspective or connection. After evaluating my text set with the rubric above I feel confident that the texts chosen will foster reading engagement in striving secondary readers.

The lesson plans were created to answer my capstone question of: *How can young adult literature foster reading engagement in the striving secondary reader?* The lesson plans were evaluated using the rubric in Appendix B.

Lesson Plan Evaluation Rubric			
Based on Gambrell and Morrow, 2009 and Guthrie, 2011			
<i>Did the lesson plan allow for the following:</i>	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3
1. Reading activities that are matched to a student's level?	yes	yes	yes
2. Frequent feedback for reading?	yes	yes	yes
3. Authentic reading opportunity?	yes	yes	yes
4. Multiple reading opportunities?	yes	yes	yes
5. Sharing with peers about reading?	yes	yes	yes
6. Rewards for student effort?	yes	yes	yes

FIGURE 4: EVALUATED LESSON PLANS

FIGURE 4 shows that each of the elements of the rubric were fulfilled. Each lesson plan allowed for differentiation with texts sets that allowed for the students to read texts at their level. Each lesson plan also allows for the students to have frequent feedback while

reading from either the teacher or peers. Next, each lesson plan allows for an authentic reading opportunity where the student is reading on their own with guidance. Also, each lesson plan allows for multiple reading opportunities, meaning that there is more than one time and way for students to engage in reading. Finally, each lesson plan allows for the students to share with their peers and to be rewarded for their efforts in that class period. By following the guidelines of Gambrell and Morrow (2009) and Guthrie (2011) that are in the rubric, striving secondary readers will be able to foster reading engagement skills.

Summary

I have worked with a variety of texts, novels, and genres throughout my time as an education student and an educator. Secondary reading interventions are complex in nature. There are many different programs that are aligned with prechosen texts, I have had the opportunity to teach reading in a variety of settings over my career. I have learned through being given the opportunity to research and create that, in my opinion, there is no perfect solution. Helping striving secondary learners to achieve success is a multi-tiered process, but I believe it starts with allowing these readers the opportunity to read texts that are engaging, relevant, at their level lexically, and present them with age appropriate topics and content. Students need to be provided with a safe space to read, learn about reading, and share their reading with peers and other stakeholders.

I believe that using text sets such as the ones I have outlined in this curriculum development project and using strategies and mini lessons like the ones I have designed will allow students the opportunity to become successful. Striving secondary readers need to be given the opportunity to read and to read what they want. In this chapter I

have discussed the text, the mini lessons, and the rubrics created to evaluate those components. In Chapter Five, I share my personal thoughts throughout this curriculum design project and what my next steps are in regard to future research and ideas surrounding my learnings from this project.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

Introduction

In chapter one I began my capstone project by sharing my personal experiences with literacy, reading, and being a teacher. I shared my feelings about the importance of allowing striving secondary readers the opportunity to become proficient, confident, and engaged readers. I also discussed my own personal love and journey with YAL. In chapter two I shared the research and literature that supports the development of my curriculum design project. In chapter three I focused on my methods and reasoning for creating my annotated text set and lessons to design the curriculum. Next, in chapter four, I shared my findings and evaluation of the curriculum that I designed for this capstone. Finally, in this chapter I discuss my journey, limitations in the project, major takeaways, and how all of this effects the implications and future research for this project.

My Journey with Young Adult Literature

I love Young Adult Literature. It opens up a world that is inviting, exciting, and allows for me to explore the world from perspectives that I never dreamed of. I can get lost for hours deciding which books to buy, checkout, and more recently, which books to teach. The world of YAL has opened windows into literacy that I never dreamed of. When I began looking at my capstone and curriculum project I knew from my studies how important it was for striving secondary readers to be given a chance at improving their literacy skills. So often, secondary reading is viewed as a lost cause by budget

strapped school administration. Students are subjected to boring, boxed programs that do not allow for a student's perspective or for them to find something that they want to read for their own personal enjoyment. This curriculum project has allowed me to see the absolute importance of this. When I began the project I wanted to learn and create something in regards to a comprehensive literacy program for high school specifically. Through this project I have realized that creating a literacy intervention program for striving secondary readers is truly answering my capstone question of: *How can young adult literature foster reading engagement in the striving secondary reader?*

Throughout the creation of this curriculum I worked with my students everyday on their reading skills and I was able to integrate my learning in small pieces. I know now the importance of including literature that allows for a student to become engaged in the literature, choose their own materials, and to be given positive support for their efforts.

Limitations in Project

There is a great deal of information on reading interventions at the elementary and middle school level there is not much information on how to implement successful secondary interventions specifically at the high school level. Students walking into 9th and 10th grade with reading levels between 4th and 7th grade and do not qualify for EL or SPED services are at a significant disadvantage. Without support and intervention students are not set up to graduate from high school successfully or enter their postsecondary careers and choices. While, I still believe strongly that it is highly important to intervene as early as possible, there are often times many things that are out of our control as educators.

Another limitation of this project is that the world of YAL as an intervention tool is fairly new to the reading education community. While research has started on these topic, there are not many tried and true research studies that give definitive information. In addition, as YAL is so broad it is important to begin research on the many different areas that exist within teaching YAL in an intervention program.

The next limitation of this project is in being able to measure and define engagement in striving secondary readers. It is highly important to be able to decide what engagement is in readers. However, measuring engagement is more qualitative than quantitative. This is juxtaposed with the measurements that can be done in elementary reading interventions where you can rely on phonics and fluency assessments, as well as comprehension assessment to begin to gather a larger picture of how to help striving readers.

Finally, the most major limitation is that this project has not been put into the classroom. These lesson plans have not yet been put into my classroom. As a result their actual results cannot be measured. One thing that limits this project would be the response of the feedback from both students and teachers after actual implementation. The ultimate effect of this curriculum will not be known until it is actually implemented in the classroom.

Major Learnings

My initial plan for this project changed greatly over the course of my research. I am very happy with how my research focus changed though. I am very proud of my work within literacy interventions at the secondary level and I feel that through my

learning I can help my students to reach their highest potential. Having a better understanding of the importance of engagement (Gambrell and Morrow, 2011) and the use high interest texts when helping striving secondary readers is crucial to my work as an educator (Ivey, 2011) (Bucher and Manning, 2006).

Overall the biggest takeaway I have from this project is the importance of advocating for the use of YAL and choice texts to engage striving secondary readers (Gallagher, 2004, 2009) (Johnson, 2008). It is highly important to allow students to have choice in their education and in their choices as a young adult (Ivey, 2011) (Gallagher, 2004, 2009). At the secondary level a student will most likely have been a striving reader for much of their educational career. As a result many striving secondary readers have become excellent at making their reading look engaged, when they are truly avoidant and disengaged (Cambria and Guthrie, 2010). By allowing students to choose their literature and by using literature that they can relate to. Another thing that I have learned is highly important is to allow students to collaborate with these texts (Gallagher, 2004).

My final major takeaway from this project is importance of following the guidelines that I created in Appendix B on the lesson plan evaluation rubric (Gambrell and Morrow, 2009) (Guthrie, 2011). Through allowing students access to appropriate materials that they can relate to, allowing students authentic time to read and providing them with positive feedback teachers can help striving secondary readers to become engaged readers. It is important for teachers to also allow students to learn and read without their assistance through the strategies that I have outlined throughout my curriculum design project.

Ultimately, I have learned that using YAL is crucial to engaging not only striving secondary readers, but all secondary readers (Johnson, 2008). Providing choice, and using strategies that lead to empowerment rather than pointing out every mistake is integral to their success (Ivey, 2011). There is no reason for striving secondary literacy learners to not have the option of intervention just because they are in high school. All striving readers deserve a chance to become engaged proficient readers.

Implications

I believe that all schools should provide learning opportunities for ALL students regardless of whether they qualify for special services. Students at the secondary level who are still striving readers are often becoming very aware of their impending adulthood. As a result of this it is important for districts to allot the appropriate amount of resources for these students. Students should have access to a variety of texts, most importantly YAL that allows students to achieve the goals of the rubric in Appendix A. In addition, students need to be given the opportunity to learn to become engaged readers who want to read. Striving secondary readers not only need to be given access to intervention reading courses, but they need to be given the opportunity to foster their reading engagement in all subject areas.

School districts need to provide the proper resources for secondary teachers to assess all students and to implement a successful secondary reading program. Teachers and literacy coordinators need to be licensed in reading and have an educational background in literacy education. Students need to be invested in and given materials that are relevant to their socio-cultural backgrounds and experiences. I have learned that through engaging striving secondary learners through the use of critical reading strategies

and YAL high interest fiction students can feel success. In addition to feeling successful in reading, students will also become more proficient in all of their other coursework and will be better prepared for their post-secondary choices.

Future Research Plans

I plan on continuing this research in both my professional and educational career. I believe that literacy interventions are key to the success of high school students. I believe strongly that in order to close the achievement gap students need to be engaged in high quality reading curriculum that is more expansive than just a reading interventions course. In order to do this I would like to do more research with my own classroom in terms of engagement with striving readers.

In addition, I would like to look at how to create a reading intervention program within the International Baccalaureate Program (IB) that exists within the school I currently teach in. I would like to work with my professional connections within this community as we discuss how to make the IB curriculum equitable for all students. I want to make sure that academic interventions have a place at the table when implementing the IB curriculum to the fullest extent.

Sharing Research Project

At this time I plan on sharing my research and findings within the school community I currently teach in. I would like to see YAL and reading specific strategies implemented school wide. I would like to start this in the Language and Literature (English) department that I currently teach in. I will voice my concerns and suggestions

as we develop new curriculum and implement and integrate new texts into our yearly curriculum.

In addition, I would like to share this information within the MN Secondary Reading groups. I will share the information with the peers and colleagues that I have met throughout my time in the Hamline Literacy Program. I feel that if this conversation can be continued with the right people that we can begin to influence change in secondary literacy interventions.

Conclusion

Through completing this project I feel as if though I have learned an immense amount about literacy education and how to engage striving secondary readers. I realize that there are limitations to this work; however, I feel confident that through creating educated, passionate educators, students can also become more educated and passionate about reading. I hope that through this project I can continue to contribute to my school community and other communities that I belong to in order to help develop educated young people. I feel that I am prepared to answer the questions that districts may have about the need for reading education and about how to help engage striving readers.

As I think about the importance of my question: *How can young adult literature foster reading engagement in the striving secondary reader?* I feel that through the use of choice texts, YAL, choice strategies, and reflection that young adult literature has a great effect on reading engagement. By allowing students the room to grow as readers independently with facilitation from their teacher, they can become engaged proficient readers. My personal views are that all students regardless of whether they are striving

secondary readers or proficient readers need to be given opportunities of choice and YAL in their curriculum. In addition, I believe that it is our responsibility as educators to help all students to become successful. I believe that literacy education is the key to success. Through allowing all students to become engaged readers, our students will flourish in their own lives.

Appendix A:

Text Evaluation Rubric

Young Adult Literature Text Set Rubric

Created based on Ivey 2011 and Bucher and Manning 2006

Texts should fit all of the following criterion

Characteristics	Text #1	Text #2	Text #3
1. Lexile/Reading Level is appropriate for secondary readers			
2. Deals with relevant issues, problems, life experiences to those of teens			
3. Deals with changing world perspectives			
4. Is from the past ten years			
5. Is not a “traditional text” choice			
6. Provides a socio-cultural connection/perspective			

Appendix B:

Lesson Plan Evaluation Rubric

Lesson Plan Evaluation Rubric

Based on Gambrell and Morrow, 2009 and Guthrie, 2011

<i>Did the lesson plan allow for the following:</i>	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3
1. Reading activities that are matched to a student's level?			
2. Frequent feedback for reading?			
3. Authentic reading opportunity?			
4. Multiple reading opportunities?			
5. Sharing with peers about reading?			
6. Rewards for student effort?			

Appendix C

Annotated Text Set

Annotated Text Set

Genre: Dystopian

1. *Uglies* by Scott Westerfeld

Westerfeld, S. (2012). *Uglies*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Lexile: HL770

This dystopian novel was published in 2005 and is part of the *Uglies* series. In this novel the main character, Tally Youngblood, faces a surgery when she turns 16 to turn her “pretty”. This novel fits the characteristics of the rubric based on the fact that it is at an appropriate reading level for striving secondary readers. The book bring up the social issue of body image and perfection that teens face on a daily basis. In addition, it bring up the ever changing perspectives that the world has on beauty. This novel challenges readers to learn not only about themselves, but to think about the world that they are entering into.

2. *Divergent* by Veronica Roth

Roth, V. (2011). *Divergent*. New York: Katherine Tegen Books.

Lexile: HL700

This novel is also a part of a series, The *Divergent* Trilogy. It is set in post-apocalyptic Chicago and tells the story of a girl named, Beatrice (Tris), as she finds her true identity. In addition to exploring the roles of society, independence, government,

Tris also encounters her first experiences with love. This novel brings up the same issues that teens face as they navigate their families, friends, and romantic relationships. In addition, the novel is also at an appropriate reading level for striving secondary readers.

3. *The Maze Runner* by James Dashner

Dashner, J. (2011). *The maze runner*. New York: Delacorte Press.

Lexile: HL770

The Maze Runner is the first novel in the pentalogy created about a post-apocalyptic dystopian society by James Dashner. Dashner published the novel based on the character, Glade, in 2009. Glade wakes up in a metal box unaware of how he got there and with no memories of who he is. He is challenged to face new obstacles each day in order to survive. The novel relates to students as it challenges society, identity, and love. It is a fast paced novel and makes the reader rethink their own views on what happens in the world and the politics that are changing daily.

Genre: Fantasy

1. *Inheritance* by Christopher Paolini

Paolini, C., & Paolini, C. (2011). *Inheritance*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Lexile: 770L

The YAL fantasy novel *Inheritance* was published in 2011 and is the third book in the trilogy *The Inheritance Cycle*. This book's main characters are dragons and

humans, specifically Eragon (human) and Saphira, his dragon. This novel fits into the rubric based on the fact that it is not a traditional school book and it also teaches the readers about how to interpret the world. The struggle of good versus evil and the struggle of identifying personal identities. This novel was also chosen because many students have read the first two in the series at this point in time. This allows students to perhaps read a novel that they haven't had a chance to or haven't been exposed to yet.

2. *Clockwork Angel* by Cassandra Clare

Clare, C. (2011). *Clockwork angel*. New York: Margaret K. McElderry Books

Lexile: HL790

Clockwork Angel is a fantasy novel in the *Infernal Devices* series. This series is the prequel to another series, *The Mortal Instruments*. The main character, Tessa Gray, is 16 and doesn't know her true identity until she is kidnapped as she crosses the ocean to find her older brother. She soon becomes immersed in a world of vampires, witches, and other supernatural beings. This novel was published in 2011. It provides readers with views on different societies also and shows the juxtaposition of American culture and British cultures.

3. *Graceling* by Kristin Cashore

Cashore, K. (2008). *Graceling*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt.

Lexile: 730L

In 2009 this fantasy novel about a young girl who was given the grace, or gift, of being a killer. She ends up working for the King and doing his bidding. Along the way Katsa shows the reader the difficulties of being a teenager and dealing with issues such as identity, love, and teen angst. All the while she is dealing with mystical powers and trying to find her way in the world. This book is also a nontraditional text. It adds to the nontraditional text by and allowing the readers to see a female protagonist in a fantasy novel.

Genre: Coming of Age

1. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie

Alexie, S., & Forney, E. (2009). *The absolutely true diary of a part-time Indian*. New York: Little, Brown.

Lexile: 600 L

Part comic book, mostly novel this story takes the reader in on page one. Sherman Alexie published this book in 2009 and featured the main character, Junior, as he navigates his life on the Spokane Indian Reservation. Junior's life is difficult. His family has a history of poverty and drug and alcohol abuse. Junior finds himself trying to find out who he truly is and leaves the reservation to attend an all-white school. The themes of this book are highly relevant and teach students about the uncertainties of life. This is definitely a novel that allows students to explore the "tough stuff" in life while remaining behind the safety of the book itself.

2. *Copper Sun* by Sharon Draper

Draper, S. M. (2009). *Copper sun*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers.

Lexile: 820 L

Although this novel can also be classified as historical fiction, *Copper Sun* chronicles the life of a young girl being taken from her family in Africa and sold into slavery. Throughout the novel, Ashanti a fifteen year old girl, faces not only the struggle of slavery but also that of good versus evil and finding her true identity. The language used in this novel draws readers in and teaches them about how to be empathetic humans. In addition, the novel can allow readers to learn about slavery and racism from the perspective of a teenage girl. Published in 2009, this YAL fits perfectly into the rubric.

3. *The Fault in our Stars* by John Green

Green, J. (2014). *The fault in our stars*. Penguin Books.

Lexile: 850 L

Published in 2012 this YAL novel tells the story of 16 year old Hazel, Hazel is a cancer patient that is forced to attend a support group by her parents and meets another teen with cancer, Augustus, whom she falls in love with. The book shows their journey of friendship, love, and Augustus' death. This novel allows students to learn about parental issues, sickness, death, love, and friendship. It allows readers to learn about

different perspectives and also allows them to learn about life's tragedies in the safe form of a novel.

Appendix D

Mini Lessons

Lesson Plan Template #1

YAL Reading Novel

For use during *day one* of choice text reading.

I. Purpose:

To engage striving secondary readers in reading activities and to enhance their literacy skills.

II. Objective:

Students will engage in choice reading activities and have the opportunity to collaborate with peers, engage in reading strategies, receive feedback, and read for an extended period of time.

III. Instructional Strategies

1. Teacher will introduce the novels and students will LISTEN to READING as teacher reads back cover/description of book. Students will follow along either with book or on a projection.
2. Teacher will group students based on their interests in reading books chosen from the texts provide.
3. In groups students will quietly read the first page or two pages depending on the length of the novel.
4. Next, without talking students will each take a post it note and write down one question, one comment, or one connection that they have to the text selection they just read. (Gallagher, 2004)

5. Next, students will pass their post it notes to the person next to them. That person will have 15 seconds to respond to the comment on the post it.
6. Students will repeat this until all students have responded. Students can add to the post it note by adding another to make it a post it chain.
7. After this students will spend the remainder of class, until there is five minutes left, silently reading with no assignment (This follows the SSR model by Gallagher, 2009).
8. As students are leaving class they will give teacher a verbal exit ticket by telling the teacher one thing they learned, liked, or connected to from the text (Gallagher, 2004).

IV. Assessment

The assessments for this lesson is formative. Teacher will assess students informally on reading engagement by observing behaviors as suggested by Guthrie, Klauda, and Ho, 2013. Students will also be formatively assessed on exit tickets.

V. Self-Reflection

This section is provided for teachers to spend time reflecting on reading behaviors and engagement of students. Teacher will write down what they noticed about disengagement and engagement behaviors in order to help students progress (Guthrie, Klauda, and Ho, 2013) (Gallagher, 2004, 2009).

In addition, teacher will respond to the following questions:

1. Without my assistance, what *did* my students take from this reading?
2. With my assistance, what *did* want my students to take from this reading?

Lesson Plan Template #2

YAL Reading Novel

For use during *anytime* while students are reading YAL choice novels.

Purpose:

To engage striving secondary readers in reading activities and to enhance their literacy skills.

II. Objective:

Students will engage in choice reading activities and have the opportunity to collaborate with peers, engage in reading strategies, receive feedback, and read for an extended period of time.

III. Instructional Strategies

1. Teacher will begin class with students being prompted with a Quick Write.
Students will be asked to reflect on what they read the day before during their SSR (Gallagher, 2009). Students will be asked to write about what they are enjoying about the text. If they don't feel like they are enjoying it students can write about why they don't like it (Gallagher, 2009).
2. Students will then be given twenty minutes to read silently, SSR (Gallagher, 2009).
3. After silent reading students will collaborate with peers. They will do this by working in small groups of "reading alike groups".

4. Students will write down one quote from the section that they read. They will then write down what the quote *says* (what it literally means, what the quote *means* (what the quote stands for or represents in relation to the rest of the novel, and why it *matters* (what is important about the quote in either connection to the text, the world, or their own personal experiences) (Gallagher, 2004).
5. Students will then share their Say, Mean, Matter with all members of their group.
6. Students will turn in their original Say, Mean, Matter and Quote sheets to the teacher.
7. Teacher will give students feedback in the form of positive comments ONLY as they are participating in groups (Guthrie, Klauda, and Ho, 2013).
8. As students are leaving the room they will be asked to tell the teacher one highlight from the day. Teacher will give students a high five or other meaningful, positive, small gesture to connect (Gallagher, 2009).

IV. Assessment

Students will be assessed formatively on reading behaviors for engagement and disengagement (Guthrie, Klauda, and Ho, 2013). Students will also be assessed formatively on Say, Mean, Matter, Quote sheets that they turn in. In addition, teacher will formatively assess group participation using the same behavior observations of engaged and disengaged readers (Guthrie, Klauda, and Ho, 2013).

V. Self-Reflection

This section is provided for teachers to spend time reflecting on reading behaviors and engagement of students. Teacher will write down what they noticed about

disengagement and engagement behaviors in order to help students progress (Guthrie, Klauda, and Ho, 2013) (Gallagher, 2004) (Gallagher, 2009).

Lesson Plan Template #3

YAL Reading Novel

For use during *a specific section of each choice text* while students are reading YAL choice novels.

Purpose:

To engage striving secondary readers in reading activities and to enhance their literacy skills.

II. Objective:

Students will engage in choice reading activities and have the opportunity to collaborate with peers, engage in reading strategies, receive feedback, and read for an extended period of time. Students will focus on comprehension.

III. Instructional Strategies

1. Before the lesson teacher will assess the previous day(s) where students are at in their novel. Teacher will identify the next chapter or section of required reading for each text.
2. Before the lesson teacher will draw a large triangle on poster board or large paper. Each paper will have group members' names that have been assigned and the name of the book.
3. As students enter the room they will go to spot in the room that has been assigned to their choice text and broken up into groups of three.

4. After they have entered the room and sat down teacher will assign a chapter/section to independently read. They will be instructed that during that time they will be thinking about the novel as a whole.
5. During their reading teacher will give students a 10 Point Text Frame (Gallagher, 2004) to complete as they are reading.
6. Students will be given 15 minutes to read independently and quietly.
7. After reading, teacher will instruct each group to gather around the poster boards. Each member will take a different “side” of the triangle.
8. Students will be instructed to write down single words that convey the meaning of what they just read. They will use their text frames as a guide.
9. Students will be given two minutes to write.
10. After this, students will discuss the intersections of their words and will collaborate to come up with the themes that they found in the section of reading.
11. At the end of the hour students will be given a post it note to write down one fact, comment, or concern about the reading. They will place these on a shared space as they exit.
12. Teacher will stand by door as students exit and tell each student one positive comment about what was observed with that student's reading behaviors that day (Guthrie, Klauda, and Ho, 2013)

IV. Assessment

Students will be formatively assessed on text frame, collaboration, and engagement behaviors during reading time. Students will also be formatively assessed on Triangle Theme creations and contributions.

V. Self-Reflection

This section is provided for teachers to spend time reflecting on reading behaviors and engagement of students. Teacher will write down what they noticed about disengagement and engagement behaviors in order to help students progress (Guthrie, Klauda, and Ho, 2013) (Gallagher, 2004, 2009).

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