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# Close Reading As A Means For Increasing Self-Perception In Struggling Middle School Readers

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CLOSE READING AS A MEANS FOR INCREASING SELF-PERCEPTION IN STRUGGLING  
MIDDLE SCHOOL READERS

By

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A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a degree of Masters in Literacy  
Education.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

#### Overview

I cannot think of a time that I did not love to read. Growing up, I spent many nights in the “big bed” listening to my parents read to me. Going to the bookstore was a special treat, and I began to curate a personal library of favorite books. In late elementary, I opened up my first Harry Potter book and was forever hooked. As I developed relationships with the characters in my books, I also grew academically as a reader. In school I started to learn that I would need to use a variety of skills and strategies to approach different kinds of texts. As I got older, the texts and assignments associated with them became more complex. While I watched some of my peers’ love of reading taper off, mine only grew stronger. Why? Because I knew that I was a good reader, and as I learned more and more skills, that identity strengthened. My positive identity as a reader continued to sustain me through the difficult tasks of high school and college, and it’s an integral part of who I am today.

Unfortunately, this experience is a rare one. Looking around my middle school classroom, I see a wide variety of students with an even wider variety of self-perceptions about themselves as readers. There are students who, like myself, view themselves as good readers. These are the students who are always looking for book recommendations; the students who jump up first to answer questions in class. Then there are the students who see themselves as okay readers. They know they have the basic skills down, but might need additional support with complex texts. These are the students who read what they’re assigned; the students who will grow throughout the year academically, but won’t leave sixth grade saying that they love to read. Finally, there are the students who view themselves as poor readers. For a variety of reasons, they struggle to understand and analyze the texts they encounter in class. Getting



them to choose a book for independent reading is often difficult, and they have no desire to read outside of the classroom. These students rarely volunteer to answer in class and their missing assignments often pile up. If these students were asked if they are a reader, the majority would emphatically answer, “no!”

It is this final group of readers that led me to this research. In my classroom, I’ve found that students enter the school year with a perception of who they are as a reader. These perceptions have been formed by a variety of experiences throughout their elementary years. Yet, in sixth grade, teachers still have a chance to shift these perceptions before they become cemented in students’ identities. This led to the research question: *How does explicit instruction in close reading skills impact self-perception as a reader in struggling middle school students?* I want to see if giving struggling readers a toolkit of skills that can be applied to any text will help improve their perception of themselves as readers.

### Background of the Researcher

My journey as a close reader began in tenth grade when, for the first time, I realized that texts could be analyzed at a deeper level than what they were about. That year in Ms. Holle’s class, immersed in such great novels as *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Ethan Frome*, and *To Kill a Mockingbird*, a whole new world of close reading was unlocked to me. Under Ms. Holle’s expert instruction, I came to love analyzing texts, finding the deeper meaning beyond the words on the page. I was also entranced by the idea that texts could allude to one another, that mere objects or ideas could symbolize something bigger, and that texts could make a statement beyond their plot.

Later, college English classes pushed my analytical skills even further. For example, I learned about the different periods of literature and the varying schools of theory and analysis. These analytical skills were honed through repeated readings of the classics -- including a time

that I had to re-read *The Great Gatsby* ten times and apply a different critical lens to each reading. It was through these experiences that I began to notice the patterns and archetypes present in literature. Analyzing while reading became an automatic skill, and it increased my positive self-perception as a reader. Even now, when reading for pleasure, I cannot help but notice allusions, symbols, and foreshadowing. Close reading skills deepened my personal love of reading because noticing the intricacies of the author's craft lead to an even greater appreciation of the text. Is it possible to create experiences like this for students where close reading positively builds not only their analytical skills but also their self-perception as a reader?

Since the fall of 2012, I have taught sixth grade reading and language arts. I always imagined myself being a high school English teacher, teaching students how to analyze books like Ms. Holle taught me. However, the first job I got out of college was in sixth grade. Unfortunately, I did not remember much about my reading life at that age. Middle school brought back lots of memories of independent reading time; none of any analytical work as a reader. I did not plan to teach middle school for very long, but after one year I found myself in love with this level and the students. However, as much as I loved my students, I did not feel prepared to teach them. I quickly realized that these sixth-graders were tasked with much more difficult work as readers than I was at their age. In fact, the standards required them to read and analyze at a much higher level than they were able because many of them still struggled with core reading skills. What was causing this difficulty and what could be done to help students become more thoughtful, successful readers?

Upon reflection, one major factor causing this difficulty was the rigor imposed by the Common Core State Standards, which were implemented in Minnesota around the time I started teaching. In college, I started to unpack the standards; however, as I saw them in action every day at school, I realized there was a lot of learning to do. As I learned more about the

standards, close reading, specifically analyzing the text for patterns like I did in high school and college, was a skill that moved to the forefront of my mind. I began to see that teaching students to be close readers could help them become more successful in mastering the standards. As a sixth-grade team, my colleagues and I rewrote our entire reading curriculum, with close reading in mind, to better support our students. As a result, I started to see gains in students' ability to read texts closely. Yet, I still felt like there was more I could do to help students deeply understand the texts they were reading.

Another factor I noticed was that many students did not see themselves as successful readers. A third of my classroom population were special education students, and majority of them had very negative self-perceptions of themselves as readers. There were also a number of students who had the skills but did not see themselves as readers, which subsequently led to low motivation and participation. As these students encountered the increasing rigor of the sixth grade curriculum, many of them struggled because they did not have the grit or motivation to complete more difficult tasks. I started to wonder if I could help them grow in their self-perception as a reader by improving their analytical skills.

### Intention

This desire to help students grow in both their identity and skills as readers led to the pursuit of my Master's Degree in Literacy Education at Hamline. I also decided to work on getting a reading license as part of my electives to learn how to be a better reading teacher. In the summer of 2016, I took the Advancing Secondary Readers course and read Lehman and Roberts' (2014) *Falling in Love with Close Reading*, which absolutely rocked my world. This book caused me to realize I had taught students the close reading process completely backwards. Originally, I asked them to read, stop, think deeply, develop a theory, and then go back in the book to support their answer. Instead, the authors argue that students need to

closely read and gather evidence and use that evidence to develop new understandings while they read. I began the school year with a new determination to learn how to better teach students to become close readers. While starting to teach some of Lehman and Roberts' strategies, I quickly found that my students had never been asked to do this deep kind of reading before. They would say, "How do I find the answers that aren't right there in the text?" "I can't seem to think while I read, I just get caught up in the story." As I started to work with students on these close reading skills, I saw their confidence begin to grow. For some students, it skyrocketed, while for others it grew gradually. Seeing this relationship further increased my desire to explore the research question: *How does explicit instruction in close reading skills impact self-perception as a reader in struggling middle school students?*

### Close Reading

Specifically, I want to understand how I can help students become better close readers so that they can comprehend and analyze the complex texts they will encounter in the future. I also want to see if building close reading skills will positively impact students' self-perceptions as readers. Struggling readers need to believe that they have the tools and ability to complete a task, even if it will be difficult.

Close reading is a crucial skill for many reasons. First, middle school students need to build close reading strategies that will help them be successful in high school and college. The text difficulty is only going to ramp up throughout those years, and students need to be prepared to meet the challenges ahead. Close reading is also important because students need to learn to be active readers across disciplines. Many students lack the close reading skills that help them to successfully navigate the varied nonfiction texts they will encounter in other disciplines. Middle school students also need explicit instruction in close reading skills to help them make the leap from the focus on surface comprehension in elementary school to the deeper, more

inferential thinking that is required from them at the secondary level. Finally, close reading is a key skill to success in achieving the Common Core State Standards, which have become the basis for many standardized tests. If educators are to create successful, lifelong, critically-minded readers, close reading must be a skill students have in their toolbox.

### Summary

My lifelong love of reading began at a young age as I built relationships with the characters I loved. As the years went on, with experts to guide me, I grew as an analytical reader. I was taught and practiced close reading skills until they became natural to me. Now, I seek to do the same for my students. I want them to see themselves as good readers because they have the skills to be close readers of any text they encounter. This led to the research question: *How does explicit instruction in close reading skills impact self-perception as a reader in struggling middle school students?*

In chapter two, the research question will be broken down. First, there will be a review of what the research says about reader-self perception. One group that often has a negative reader self-perception is struggling readers, so next will come an examination of what the literature says about their needs. Explicit instruction is one need that will be highlighted. It and its elements will be defined, along with the benefits researchers have identified. Finally, close reading will be examined. While reviewing the literature on this topic, it will be defined, the importance of studying it will be discussed, its benefits will be listed, and an explanation of how teachers can teach close reading will be provided. Finally, the three close reading practices used with research participants will be identified.

In chapter three, an overview of the research methods will be provided. First, the participants and setting of the study will be described. Then the two methods of data collection,

the Reader Self-Perception Scale 2 and student interviews, will be highlighted. Finally, an overview of the data analysis methods will be provided.

In chapter four, the data collected during the study will be reported and discussed. Specifically, the data from the initial and final survey completed by participants will be shared, along with the anecdotal evidence collected during student interviews.

Chapter five will contain a reflection on the research experience. Connections between the literature review and research findings will be shared first. Then, implications and limitations of the study will be discussed. Finally, future areas for research and communication of findings will be noted.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Literature Review

#### Introduction

Teachers want their students to become confident, successful readers. One way for students to gain confidence is to see themselves as readers, and to realize that they have a toolkit of skills they can use to analyze any text. My desire to help students gain positive self-perceptions of themselves as readers has led to the research question: *How does explicit instruction in close reading skills impact self-perception as a reader in struggling middle school students?* In this section, I will dig deeper into this question and review the literature that exists on these topics.

First, reader-self perception and its roots in self-efficacy will be defined. The research about the relationship between readers' self-perception and their motivation and achievement will also be explained. Next, there will be an examination of the literature on the needs of struggling readers. While reviewing the literature, the needs of struggling readers in terms of motivation and instruction will be of particular focus. Then, the focus will be narrowed to one particular type of instruction that benefits struggling readers: explicit instruction. After reviewing the literature on the elements and benefits of explicit instruction, close reading will be examined. First the literature on the elements of close reading, its benefits and the importance of studying it will be reviewed. Then, there will be a more in-depth explanation of the strategies to teach close reading and the identification of three types of close reading: annotation, questioning, and developing a reading ritual. It is important to review the literature in regards to each of these sections to understand how they are related and their importance in the research question.

### Reader Self-Perception: Roots and Implications

Reader self-perception is rooted in Bandura's (1982) theory of perceived self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is defined as how well someone thinks they will perform a task. A person's perceived level of self-efficacy affects how much effort and perseverance he or she will put into the task ahead. Borrowing from Bandura's (1982) self-efficacy model, Henk and Melnick (2014) articulate four factors that influence a reader's self-perception. The first of the four factors is Progress, where students compare their previous performance in reading with their current ability. Observational Comparison, which refers to when students compare their ability with that of their peers, is the second factor. The third factor is the Social Feedback that students receive on their reading progress and ability from peers and teachers. The final factor, Physiological States, refers to the inner feelings students experience in relation to reading.

A reader's self-perception can significantly influence motivation and engagement (Gaskins, 2005). Henk and Melnick (1995) found that children who believe they are good readers will be highly engaged in the act of reading and experience positive interactions with texts in the future. However, they found that children who do not see themselves as good readers became less motivated to read. This is also supported by Alderman's (2004) findings that students are more likely to be successful in a task when they believe they can do it. In a later study, Henk and Melnick (1998) also reported that students' perceptions of their reading ability affected how often they engaged with a text, how they interacted with teachers, and the amount of effort they put into reading tasks.

Self-perception and self-efficacy are especially important when considering struggling readers. Gaskins (2005) found that many struggling readers have skewed perceptions of their own ability, and that these skewed perceptions become a major component of their motivation. However, when struggling readers were taught specific strategies, their self-efficacy improved



(Gaskins, 2005). This is important because the more confident readers are in their ability, the more they are willing to persist when challenged as readers (Hall, Burns, & Edwards, 2011).

### Needs of Struggling Readers

To bring students from struggling to proficient readers, it is important to acknowledge that they have unique needs. One such need is to be motivated. Lewis and Dahbany (2008) point out that struggling readers often lack the intrinsic motivation to read due to their previous struggles. Therefore, it's important for teachers to know what will motivate struggling readers. Dweck (1986) found that struggling readers were motivated by learning goals (as cited in Lewis & Dahbany, 2008), which is also supported by Ivey's (1999) finding that struggling middle school readers need real purposes for reading. She writes that when teachers help struggling readers set a purpose for reading a text and provide explicit instruction, it helps struggling readers to become more motivated towards the task before them. Ivey also adds that teachers need to create "instructional environments that foster optimism for improvement" (p. 64), so that struggling readers know that they can improve.

Guthrie (2008) identifies three types of struggling readers and what can be done to motivate them. The first group, which includes students who are resistant to reading, need opportunities where they can build connections to texts. This can be done through providing choice to increase student ownership of reading. Students who are only extrinsically motivated to read are the second group. Giving these students choice and opportunities for self-direction in learning tasks can help them to become more intrinsically motivated. The final group is made up of students who are low-achieving and reading at a third grade level or lower. To motivate these students, Guthrie suggests that they need instruction in decoding and other word-level skills. He writes that this will also improve self-efficacy, because struggling readers need to experience success in reading tasks.

Struggling readers are often not motivated because they have low self-esteem (Lewis & Dahbany, 2008). Therefore, another need of struggling readers is the opportunity to develop a positive self-perception as a reader. One way that teachers can work to build positive self-perception in struggling readers is by emphasizing that success is tied to effort more than ability (Lewis & Dahbany, 2008). One way this can be done is by teaching students about growth vs. fixed mindset. Dweck (2006) defined a fixed mindset as “believing your qualities are carved in stone” (p. 6), while a “growth mindset is based on the belief that your basic qualities are things you can cultivate through your efforts” (p. 7). Research has shown that teaching struggling students to have a growth mindset leads to gains in their achievement (Dweck, 2015).

Teachers can also build positive self-perception through providing instruction that meets struggling readers’ needs. Allington and Gabriel (2012) defined six elements of reading instruction that every child, especially struggling readers, need. First, students need choice in what they read. This both improves motivation and builds the skill of self-selecting texts. Reading with accuracy is the next element defined by Allington and Gabriel. When students read with accuracy, they understand what they read, which positively increases their view towards reading. Struggling readers especially need to be paired with at-level texts so that they can have positive reading experiences. Along with accuracy comes the third recommendation that students need to read texts that they understand and spend a lot of time reading those texts. Citing brain research done over the past 50 years, Allington and Gabriel argue that struggling readers need to spend a majority of their intervention time reading. The fourth element identified by the authors is writing about personally meaningful topics, which helps support struggling readers because they must produce “a comprehensible text that the student can read, reread, and analyze” (p. 14). Talking with peers about a text is the fifth element of reading instruction identified by Allington and Gabriel. This is important for struggling readers

because they need opportunities to discuss more than literal comprehension with their peers. Finally, Allington and Gabriel argue that the sixth element essential for struggling readers is the opportunity to hear a fluent adult read aloud. This helps to build struggling readers' fluency and other reading skills such as comprehension and vocabulary and background knowledge.

Guthrie (2008) also identified three instructional strategies that boost students' self-efficacy. First, struggling readers need to set goals when completing a task. These goals can be both short and long term, and teachers should help students set these goals. Next, students need specific feedback from teachers on the progress that they are making. This helps to increase self-efficacy because students can specifically point to gains they are making. Finally, Guthrie writes that struggling readers need to observe another reader perform difficult reading tasks well. This leads to increased motivation and self-efficacy because students believe that if they use the skills modeled for them, they will also be successful in the task. One such way these strategies can be accomplished is through explicit instruction.

#### Explicit Instruction: Definition and Elements

Explicit instruction, also referred to as direct instruction, has its roots in behavioral psychology, social learning theory, and cognitive learning theory (Gunter, Estes, & Mintz, 2007). Archer and Hughes (2011) define explicit instruction as a teaching methodology characterized by "clear explanations and demonstrations of the instructional target, and supported practice with feedback until independent mastery has been achieved" (p. 1). Tileston (2004) writes that the goal of explicit instruction is to "teach new declarative knowledge in the most direct manner possible" (p. 93).

Authors have identified many elements of explicit instruction, which can be synthesized into six core elements. The first part is activating students' schemata on a topic. Gunter, Estes, & Mintz (2007) write that this helps the teacher to understand what students already know about

a topic and determine the course and pace the learning should take. Once background knowledge has been activated, it's important for teachers to clearly state the goals and expectations of the lesson. Archer and Hughes (2011) point out that students perform better when they understand what's expected of them and how the skills will benefit them. Next, teachers present the new material by modeling the skill. While modeling, teachers should demonstrate the skill by using step-by-step demonstrations, clear language, and a variety of examples (Archer and Hughes, 2011). Once the teacher has demonstrated the lesson, guided practice is used to shift responsibility further towards the students. In this element, teachers lead students through exercises where they can practice the skill. Specific, constructive feedback from the teacher is essential during this stage (Tileston, 2004) as students are growing in independence. As students begin to get closer to mastery, teachers can transition into the fifth element of explicit instruction: independent practice. During this time, students are given more opportunities to practice a skill on their own. Now the teacher functions as a coach, checking in with students to make sure that they are on track and not repeating mistakes. Before moving on to the final element of direct instruction, Tileston (2004) recommends that student mastery of a skill should be at least 90 percent. This final element is distributed practice, in which the teacher helps students to maintain the new skill by reviewing it periodically and providing opportunities to practice. Archer and Hughes (2011) write that this final step is essential in helping students with retention of a new skill, while also promoting automacy.

### Benefits of Explicit Instruction

Research has demonstrated that explicit instruction benefits all students. Hattie (2012) found that direct instruction was one of the more successful methods of teaching. Students who receive explicit instruction learn material more efficiently when their lessons are systematically modeled with evaluative feedback (Brophy and Good, 1986). In addition, research by Bransford

et. al., (2000); Joyce and Weil (2004); Pressley (1995); and Shephard (2000) found explicit instruction positively impacts that academic achievement of struggling readers (as cited in Gaskins, 2005). Baumann (1984) reports that students who received direct instruction in a particular reading skill significantly outperformed those who did not.

Explicit instruction is especially powerful for struggling readers. In fact, Swanson and Vaughn (2011) found that explicit instruction lead to greater academic gains for struggling readers than other types of instruction. Zemelman, Daniels, & Hyde (2005) write that it helps struggling readers to see the cognitive strategies that expert readers use automatically. This was also supported by Gaskins (2005) who found that explicit instruction helped struggling readers to learn the same self-teaching strategies that proficient readers used automatically. Nokes and Dole (2004) write that explicit strategy instruction increases motivation in struggling readers because it helps them to see that success is a product of the use of strategies and effort instead of ability. This is also supported by Schunk and Rice's (1993) finding that explicit instruction lead to an increase in self-efficacy for struggling readers (as cited in Hall, Burns, & Edwards, 2011).

Overall, explicit instruction has many benefits for all students, but especially struggling readers. Another more specific strategy that supports all readers, especially readers who need to gain confidence in their skills, is close reading.

#### Close Reading: Origin and Definitions

Close reading has its origins in the New Criticism school of thought where meaning is found through looking at the patterns in the text (Hinchman & Moore, 2013). New Criticism argues that the analysis should be focused on the text itself; the reader's response and historical influences should not be considered (Serafini, 2013).

Close reading can be defined in many ways. Some define close reading as a process. Boyles (2012) defines close reading as the process in which students deliberately acknowledge and engage with the depth of a text. She argues that close reading helps students focus on the ideas inherent in the text, and it pushes them to look at the author's craft, which leads them to a greater understanding of the text. Hinchman & Moore (2013) define close reading as a systematic process of interpreting a text, which involves interacting with a text over multiple readings while developing theories that are text-dependent. Another process-oriented definition comes from Brown and Kappes (2012) who view close reading as a multi-lesson process in which students investigate a short text through discussion and text-based questions.

Others define close reading as an isolated way of looking at the text. Two of the lead writers of the Common Core State Standards suggest that "such reading focuses on what lies within the four corners of the text" (Coleman & Pimentel, 2012, p. 4). This is also echoed by Shanahan (2014) who defined close reading as a skill that asks students to focus almost solely on the information inherent in the text.

Another view of close reading comes from Elder & Paul (2004a), who define close reading in terms of what good readers do. They identify that good readers see reading as a way of dialoguing with the author's ideas in the text, and that good readers are reflective in their thinking. When they read, these readers are able to distinguish between the ideas of the text and their own. They have a goal in mind and adjust their strategies as needed. They integrate new ideas into their schema and are constantly assessing what they read (Elder & Paul, 2004a).

Close reading can also be defined as a set of instructional practices. Fisher & Frey (2014c) articulate five elements that must be present in a close reading: use of a short text, repeated readings, text-dependent questions, interactive discussion, and a high level of academic rigor.

With so many ways to define close reading in the research, it is essential to establish clarity for the purposes of this literature review. The three elements outlined by Lehman and Roberts (2014) seem to encapsulate the ideas in a useful way moving forward. They tell us close reading consists of an exchange between reader and text, which stems from the observations and interpretations the reader makes about the text as a result of purposeful rereading.

### Importance of Studying Close Reading

There are many reasons why close reading is a topic worth studying. First of all, it is a foundational part of the Common Core State Standards. In their introduction to the standards, the authors define successful readers as “students who...readily undertake the close, attentive reading that is at the heart of understanding and enjoying complex works of literature. They habitually perform the critical reading necessary to pick carefully through the staggering amount of information available today in print and digitally” (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010, p. 3). Therefore, it’s no surprise that the first anchor standard for reading is that students must “Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text” (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010, p. 35). The writers believe that all students should have the opportunity to engage with complex texts. Close reading strategies provide students, especially those who struggle, with the tools to engage with such texts and find success (Brown & Kappes, 2012).

Close reading is a skill that supports reading in all content areas. It teaches students to “read like an expert in all academic disciplines” (Brown & Kappes, 2012, p. 4). When students close read, they build background knowledge and learn skills that they can transfer to a variety of texts (Brown & Kappes, 2012).

In reality, close reading is a difficult skill for students. Elder & Paul (2004a) found that many students struggle with close reading because they've never been taught what good reading looks like. Students need to learn close reading skills so that they can learn to make meaning of the author's words, an act of translation that Paul & Elder (2003) call analytic, evaluative, and creative.

Close reading is also an important skill students need to learn because they need to build the skills to read the variety of text structures and text lengths (Paul & Elder, 2004b) that they will encounter throughout their reading careers. Ultimately, close reading is important because it will give students the skills to explore the depths of a text independently (Shanahan 2014). If students are to become lifelong readers, they must be equipped to do so.

### Benefits of Close Reading

Close reading builds critical thinking skills. Nolte & Singer (1985) observe that when students receive direct instruction in active reading strategies, like close reading, they are able to think about what strategies they will need to use while reading. This keeps students more focused while they read and causes them to be more active readers throughout the entire reading process. Shanahan (2014) also noted that when students read closely, it causes them to think critically about the author's choices, especially when it comes to word choice and structure. Close reading also builds critical thinking skills because it asks students to evaluate texts, while identifying arguments and providing evidence (Brown & Kappes, 2012).

Core reading and writing skills are improved by close reading practice. One way students benefit, Porter-O'Donnell (2004) found, is that close reading strategies like annotation helped make the reading process more visible for students. Fisher & Frey (2014b) also noted that close reading and annotating the text improved students' writing about their reading. Furthermore, when students close read, they discover the deeper meaning of the text, which



leads to greater comprehension (Boyles, 2012). This was also supported by Nolte & Singer (1985) who found that active reading instruction increases performance in comprehension assessments. Finally, struggling readers especially benefit when they receive specific instruction in close reading skills using a grade-level text (Fisher & Frey, 2014a). It's important for struggling readers to receive explicit instruction using a grade-level text as opposed to a text at their current reading level. When teachers model using an at grade level text, struggling readers observe the skills that they will need to be successful with such texts. Using a grade-level text within explicit instruction also gives struggling readers a safe environment in which to practice close reading skills.

Close reading teaches students to take ownership of their reading and the author's ideas inherent in the text (Paul & Elder, 2003). Nolte & Singer (1985) found that when students learn active comprehension skills, it puts the power of the learning in their hands. They also observed that students are more aware of their own thinking when they are asked to think while they read. This was supported by Fisher & Frey's (2014c) finding that student responsibility and stamina increased during close reading lessons. When students read closely, they are required to slow down and re-read a text multiple times with a specific purpose. In the re-reading process, students are asked to gather observations which lead them to create theories about the text (Hinchman & Moore 2013). When students are asked to read a text critically in this way, it causes them to take an active role as readers instead of a passive one (Molden, 2007). Students often do not take the time to stop and think while they're reading. So when teachers can create opportunities to pause and think about their reading, students can discover the benefits of this process (Porter-O'Donnell, 2004). Elder & Paul (2004a) note that ultimately, close readers unlock the ability to learn from an infinite amount of teachers through the works

they have written. Learning the core ideas of those works can lead to productive use of those ideas in readers' lives.

Close reading motivates students. When Fisher & Frey (2014c) interviewed students who took part in close reading lessons, they discovered that students find these lessons more engaging than regular reading lessons. Teachers have also seen that students are working harder and thinking deeper when they are confronted with a complex text to close read (Brown & Kappes, 2012). Guthrie, Lutz Klauda, & Ho (2013) found that using CORI (Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction), an instructional program that incorporates close reading strategies, led to an increase in motivation, engagement, and achievement.

### Strategies to Teach Close Reading

A number of close reading strategies have been identified. Before they are reviewed, it's important to note some considerations for teachers. To become independent close readers students need to learn the specific skills to analyze the multiple layers of a text (Boyles, 2012). This is supported by Serafini (2013) who asserts that teachers need to demonstrate explicit close reading skills to students, otherwise they will not be able to close read successfully on their own. Struggling readers especially need to be taught specific skills and strategies so that they can have successful close reading experiences (Hinchman & Moore, 2013). It's important to note that these skills should be taught in context with the reading instead of separate lessons apart from the close reading process (Coleman & Pimentel, 2012).

Close reading strategies should be practiced frequently so that they become an automatic process in which students engage in while reading (Balajthy, 1984). Fisher & Frey (2014b) recommend that teachers should use a variety of scaffolding techniques throughout the course of instruction. For example, sentence frames like "I noticed \_\_\_\_\_ and it made me think about \_\_\_\_\_" (p.281) can be an effective support for students in promoting close

reading conversations (Fisher & Frey 2014b). Another successful strategy Fisher & Frey (2014b) identify is modeling thinking about a text. Teachers can use a variety of modeling techniques to help students in close reading, including problem solving techniques and showing them how to engage with the text. When these effective scaffolding techniques are aligned with the standards, it gives students the skills to encounter the text “on its own terms” (Coleman & Pimentel, p. 9). Overall, teachers need to have a variety of strategies ready to go when teaching close reading so that they can meet students’ unique needs (Fisher & Frey, 2014b).

Many researchers agree that close reading is best modeled with a short text (Serafini, 2013). This gives students of all reading levels the opportunity to engage in a close reading of a complex text (Coleman & Pimentel, 2012). Using a short text also allows for repeated reading of a text, which research has found is an effective strategy for supporting students in close reading (Fisher & Frey, 2014b). In a close reading lesson, students should reread the text for different reasons and at different speeds (Hinchman & Moore, 2013). This gives them the opportunity to explore the text on many levels by looking at word choice, sentence structure, and the development of ideas throughout the text (Coleman & Pimentel, 2012). Students should also be asked to reread for multiple purposes, such as responding to new questions or purposes and finding evidence to support their thinking (Fisher & Frey, 2014b). These examples of repeated reading give students the opportunity to practice the close reading skills they are learning multiple times (Brown & Kappes, 2012). If a short text is not available, Fisher & Frey (2014b) recommend that students can also do a close reading of a portion of a text, which they found helps support students’ understanding of the entire text.

Once the text has been selected, Brown & Kappes (2012) advocate for an individual reading of the text first, followed by a group read aloud. However, before this can begin, the debate of whether or not to use pre-reading strategies must be discussed. Fisher & Frey

(2014b) point out that some researchers argue that students should go into a close reading with as little front-loading as possible. For example, Coleman & Pimentel (2012) in their Publisher's Criteria for the Common Core State Standards, write that "student background knowledge and experiences can illuminate the reading but should not replace attention to the text itself" (p. 7). This is in line with the New Criticism school of thought that "emphasized structural and textual analysis by focusing on the work of literature itself and excluded a reader's responses, the author's intentions, and the historical and cultural contexts from their analyses" (Serafini, 2013, p. 299).

Despite this view, many have recommended that teachers use some form of background knowledge building with students in the pre-reading stage (Hinchman & Moore, 2013). Elder & Paul (2004a) argue that readers always approach a task with a specific purpose. They recognize that they bring their own point of view to each task, and that they will integrate their schema with the information they read to complete a variety of tasks. Teachers also need to know their students and provide background knowledge if it will be essential for students to know to comprehend the text (Brown & Kappes, 2012). As the text is being read, there are a number of text-dependent strategies teachers can employ to help support a close reading of the text.

Annotation Annotation is a close reading strategy where students mark important ideas, unknown words, and their thoughts on the text. It can be applied to a variety of genres and formats (Fisher & Frey, 2014a), and can also include students' questions, summaries, or inferences. Annotations should be updated each time students re-read the text and form new ideas or questions (Fisher & Frey, 2014b). Porter-O'Donnell (2004) found that annotating benefits students because they become active readers when they slow down and respond to the ideas in the text that emerge. Writing about the text while reading also engages students in

an active process where they create a visual representation of their thinking by using marks such as an exclamation point to note something surprising or a question mark to denote something confusing. Annotating the text helps students to see that reading is a process that requires thinking throughout (Porter-O'Donnell, 2004). McEwan (2007) notes that annotation is especially helpful for struggling readers because it helps them to “stay focused on text, cognitively process it, and retain what they have read” (p. 55).

Questioning Questioning is a strategy that can be used both during and after a close reading. Balajthy (1984) found that questioning while reading gives readers a chance to take an active role in the reading process. Questioning is a technique that helps students to think about the elements of a text that they might not be aware of if they're just asked to read to comprehend. When students are allowed to come up with their own questions while reading, they are engaged in the reading process independently. They are able to make meaning on their own instead of looking to the teacher to impart meaning. Questioning gets students thinking about their thinking, and helps them to see a connection between the strategies they've learned and the task they are asked to complete (Balajthy, 1984). To encourage close reading, Boyles (2012) believes students should ask four questions of any text: “What is the author telling me here? Are there any hard or important words? What does the author want me to understand? How does the author play with language to add to meaning?” (p. 40).

Text-dependent questions is a term that is often included in the literature on close reading. These types of questions can only be answered when students return to the text, drawing inferences and providing evidence. This causes students to slow down and reflect on the text instead of rushing to get the gist of it (Brown & Kappes, 2012). Coleman and Pimentel (2012) write that text dependent questions “engage students to attend to the particular dimensions, ideas, and specifics that illuminate each text” (p. 8). They also contend that when

teachers develop text-dependent questions, they should seek to be as specific to the text as possible. This rewards students' hard work when their examination of a text reveals "deeper understanding and insight" (Coleman & Pimentel, 2012, p. 7).

Fisher, Frey, Anderson, & Thayre (2015) articulate phases of close reading that rely on four core questions: "What does the text say? How does the text work? What does the text mean? What does the text inspire you to do?" (p. 5) The first question focuses on the text's literal meaning. The authors write that "general understanding...[and] key detail" (p.13) questions will help students to identify the main points of the text and the details that support them. The second question asks students to examine the text's structure, vocabulary, and author's craft by asking text-dependent questions about those topics. The third question pushes students to look beyond the literal meaning to the deeper layers present in a text that are influenced by factors such as the author's point of view. This can be facilitated through asking text-dependent questions about "author's purpose...ethos...pathos...[and] intertextual connections" (p. 15). Finally, the fourth question gets students to think about how they will continue their learning after reading the text by pushing them to develop an opinion and support it with evidence. This encourages them to re-read the text with a particular focus.

Close Reading Rituals Explicit instruction of a process of analysis that can be applied to any text is another way to facilitate close reading. One such ritual defined by Lehman and Roberts (2014) is broken down into three parts. In the first part, students use different lenses with which to read the text. This helps them know what to pay attention to while they read and what details they should look to collect. Students then examine the evidence they have collected to see what patterns and relationships they notice. Finally, students use those patterns and relationships to develop theories and interpretations about the text. Lehman and Roberts (2014) write that the benefit to using such a structure is that "by giving students a structure--or a

ritual--to follow, they quickly become more independent” (p. 7). Another benefit of teaching students a close reading ritual is that the process can be applied to any text. For example, Lehman and Roberts (2014) use the basic structure of their ritual to teach students to read closely for text evidence, word choice, structure, point of view, and connections between texts. In this ritual, students “gather evidence, then develop an idea” (p. 12). First, students read through the specific lenses of: “what characters/people: say/think/do; relationships; setting descriptions; time period” (p. 12). After gathering this evidence, students look for patterns to think about: “character’s/people’s: feelings, traits, relationships; whole text: themes, lessons” (p. 12).

#### When students struggle with close reading

Finally, it’s important to consider some ways that teachers can intervene when students struggle with close reading. Fisher & Frey (2014a) identify a number of steps teachers can take to help. One way teachers can help support students when they struggle with close reading is by bringing students back to the purpose of the lesson. Then teachers can intervene by “re-establishing purpose, analyzing questions to identify likely answer locations, prompting and cueing, modeling, and analyzing annotations” (p 282). Sometimes when students are struggling, teachers need to pause the lesson and either move on to a new topic or come back to the same one later (Fisher & Frey, 2104a). Coleman & Pimentel (2012) also recommend that questioning can help redirect students’ attention to a particular key phrase or statement in the text. Sometimes teachers need to pull back and make sure that students have a basic understanding of words and concepts in the text that they might not be able to determine in context (Coleman & Pimentel, 2012).

#### Conclusion

This chapter focused on the research surrounding reader self-perception, struggling

readers, explicit instruction, and close reading. First, a reader's self-perception often affects whether or not they are motivated to read and complete difficult analytical tasks. Self-perception is important because many struggling readers have a negative self-perception that needs to be addressed as they work towards successful reading habits. Next, the needs of struggling readers were examined. In particular, students need to be motivated and provided with specific instruction to give them the skills that they need to have successful literacy experiences. Explicit instruction is one such type of instruction reviewed next. It benefits struggling readers by guiding them step-by-step through the reading processes of expert readers. Explicit instruction can be used to teach a variety of concepts to students. One such concept is close reading. After acknowledging that there are many different definitions of close reading, its benefits for struggling readers were focused on. Finally, three types of close reading--annotation, questioning, and having a close reading ritual-- that teachers can use with students to help them become successful, confident readers were explained.

In chapter three, building off of the literature review, the research methods will be explained. First, there will be an outline of the participants and setting for the research. Next, the instruments used to measure readers' self-perceptions will be described. Finally, data collection from struggling readers will be detailed, along with an overview of the data analysis.



## CHAPTER THREE

### Methods

#### Introduction

This action research is guided by the question: *How does explicit instruction in close reading skills impact self-perception as a reader in struggling middle school students?* In doing the research, I sought to provide insight to this question by working with a small group of struggling readers. Through a variety of approaches over four weeks, both observational and anecdotal data was gathered on students' view of self as a reader.

#### Participants

The participants of this study were eleven students in a seventh grade English summer school class. These students ranged from 12-13 years old and just finished seventh grade. The group of participants contained six boys and five girls. Of these eleven students, three were on an IEP and receiving special education services. These students were selected for summer school for a variety of reasons. Some did not reach proficiency on their Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments. Others failed a semester of English 7. Participation was voluntary, and all participants were required to have a parent/guardian complete a consent form (see Appendix A).

#### Setting

The setting for this study was a five week summer school program. The program was located in a large district in a southwestern suburb of the Twin Cities. Demographically, as of 2017, this district contained 8,304 students. The ethnic breakdown of this district according to its Minnesota Report Card (2016) via the Minnesota Department of Education can be observed in Figure 1 below.

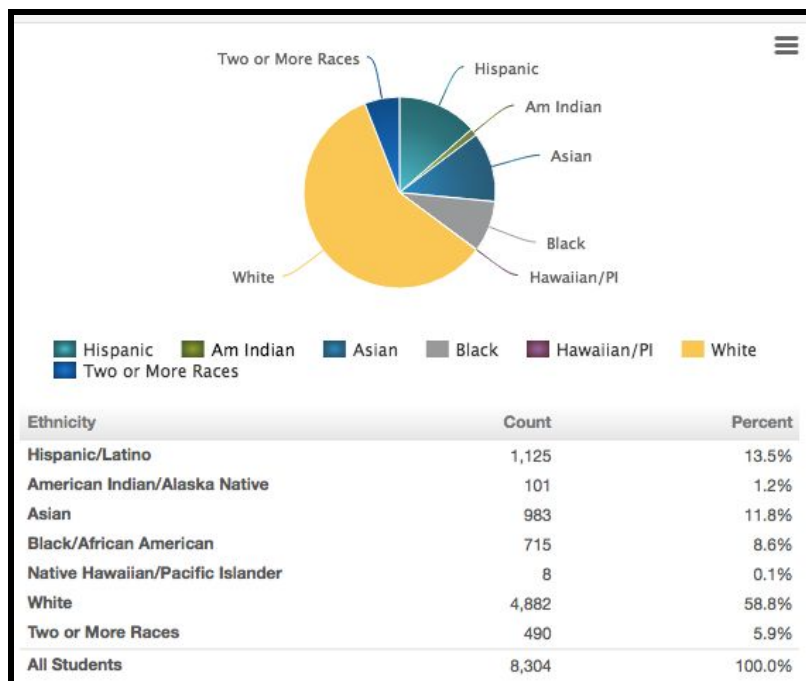


Figure 1

Students chosen for summer school attended for five weeks. Summer school ran Monday-Thursday from 8:00-11:30 AM each day, and students attended three one hour classes during the day. Students received an hour of instruction each in reading, math, and a chosen elective. The research participants for this study were a part of the seventh grade English class, which met for an hour at the beginning of each day.

### Instruments

The first instrument used was Henk, Marinak, & Melnick's (2012) The Reader Self-Perception Scale 2 (RSPS2), which can be found in Appendix B. This scale is a second version of their original Reader Self-Perception Scale created in 1992. The researchers write that the purpose of this scale is to measure "how adolescents in grades 7 through 10 feel about themselves as readers of print-based texts" (p. 312). The scale measures four sources of self-perception: observational comparison (OC), social feedback (SF), physiological states (PS), and students' perceptions of progress (PR). The researchers believe that, "understanding how

the four sources of information for reader self-perceptions work can help teachers to shape learning environments for literacy that are more conducive for their students” (p. 313).

The RSPS2 contains 47 statements that relate to the four scales. These statements also draw on other reading skills such as “word recognition, word analysis, fluency, and comprehension as well as some new elements that were not part of the original RSPS” (p. 314). Students are instructed to read each statement and rate if they agree or disagree with it using a five point Likert Scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree). To score the RSPS2, the administrator finds the sum of the raw scores for each of the four scales. Administrators can then find the percentile rankings for scores by using the table provided by the researchers.

The RSPS2 was chosen because it specifically measures self-perception. Using this survey best helped answer the research question: *How does explicit instruction in close reading skills impact self-perception as a reader in struggling middle school students?* Two other benefits of this study were that it is specifically geared towards students in middle and high school, and it could be distributed to the whole class at once.

The second instrument used to gather qualitative data on the research question was one-on-one interviews with students. Over the course of four weeks, I planned to meet with each student once a week. The purpose of interviewing students one-on-one was to talk to each student about how they were applying the close reading strategies taught in class to their independent reading text. Each week, students were asked the same three questions:

- Question One: What skills/strategies are you using that are helping you understand this text?
- Question Two: What are you noticing about yourself as a reader?
- Question Three: What do you feel good about as you're reading? What is challenging?

These three questions were chosen because they focused on self-perception as a reader, and pushed students to think about how they were using what they had learned during explicit instruction. After taking notes on students' responses throughout the weeks, I planed to see if any patterns emerged, and if that data was related to their responses on the RSPS2.

### Data Collection

Data was collected from research participants throughout the study. First, a letter of consent (Appendix A) was sent home with students for their parent/guardian to sign. Those who returned signed forms had their data included in this study. All students participated in the research regardless of signed consent forms; however, only the data of those with parent permission will be discussed in this paper.

Students took the RSPS2 at both the beginning and the end of the study. The survey was administered to all students on paper, and they had as much time in class as needed to complete it. The survey was scored using the protocol developed by Henk, Marinak, & Melnick and results are recorded in Chapter Four.

Student interviews occurred once a week for four weeks. Students were pulled during their daily independent reading time. I spoke one-on-one with students at a small conferring table in the back of the classroom. During the interview, students were asked the three questions and notes from the interview were written down on a note taking sheet (see Appendix D). Notes from week to week were kept track of in a binder to observe any patterns or changes that occurred over the four weeks.

### Data Analysis

Reader Self-Perception Scale Once students completed their first RSPS2, it was scored using the scoring sheet (see Appendix C) developed by Henk, Marinak, & Melnick. Each answer has a numerical value, and once the scoring was finished all of the values in a column were

totalled to find the raw score for that scale. Once raw scores were obtained, they were interpreted by comparing them to the norming data provided by the researchers.

At the end of four weeks, students took a second RSPS2. These surveys were scored using the same methods mentioned above. Then those scored were compared to the initial scores recorded. While comparing scores, I looked to see if scores changed from the beginning to the end and if any patterns emerged, especially in terms of self-perception.

Interviews To analyze students' responses to the interview questions asked of them, I looked at their answers over the four weeks they were interviewed. By comparing responses, I hoped to see if any patterns emerged from students' answers. I specifically looked within the responses for words or phrases that showed a shift in students' views of themselves as readers, and/or if their attitude towards reading was affected by their use of the strategies we learned in class.

### Timeline

Below is a timeline of the instructional activities and data collection that took place during the four week study period:

Date	Explicit Instruction	Independent Practice
Monday, June 12th	Hand out consent forms Fill out reader interest survey	MAP test
Tuesday, June 13th	Take the Reader Self-Perception Scale 2  Introduction to close reading using pictures and video	Confer with students to help choose independent practice texts Choose independent practice texts and begin reading
Wednesday, June 14	Close Reading Skill: Annotation Day 1 - Introduce symbols	Read self-selected texts Practice annotation (purposefully set timer to

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Annotate practice paragraph from <i>Ghost</i> by Jason Reynolds</li> </ul>	remind students to stop and write notes)
Thursday, June 15	<p>Close Reading Skill: Annotation Day 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review symbols</li> <li>- Annotate practice paragraph from <i>Ghost</i> by Jason Reynolds</li> <li>- Group jigsaw of lenses with <i>Ghost</i> excerpt</li> </ul>	<p>Read self-selected texts</p> <p>Practice annotation (purposefully set timer to remind students to stop and write notes)</p>
Monday, June 19th	<p>Close Reading Skill: Lenses</p> <p>Short story: "What Do Fish Have to Do With Anything?"</p> <p>Lens: What the character says/thinks/does</p>	<p>Read self-selected texts</p> <p>Gather notes</p> <p>Confer with students using interview questions</p>
Tuesday, June 20th	<p>Close Reading Skill: Lenses</p> <p>Short story: "What Do Fish Have to Do With Anything?"</p> <p>Lens: What the character says/thinks/does</p>	<p>Read self-selected texts</p> <p>Gather notes</p> <p>Confer with students using interview questions</p>
Wednesday, June 21st	<p>Close Reading Skill: Lenses</p> <p>Short story: "What Do Fish Have to Do With Anything?"</p> <p>Lens: MC relationship with self/others/society</p>	<p>Read self-selected texts</p> <p>Gather notes</p> <p>Confer with students using interview questions</p>
Thursday, June 22	<p>Close Reading Skill: Lenses</p> <p>Short story: "What Do Fish Have to Do With Anything?"</p> <p>Lens: MC relationship with self/others/society</p>	<p>Read self-selected texts</p> <p>Gather notes</p> <p>Confer with students using interview questions</p>
Monday, June 26	<p>Close Reading Skill: Lenses</p> <p>Short story: "What Do Fish Have to Do With Anything?"</p> <p>Lens: Setting/time period</p>	<p>Read self-selected texts</p> <p>Gather notes</p> <p>Confer with students using interview questions</p>
Tuesday, June 27	<p>Close Reading Skill: Lenses</p> <p>Short story: "What Do Fish Have to Do With Anything?"</p> <p>Lens: What patterns do you notice?</p>	<p>Read self-selected texts</p> <p>Gather notes</p> <p>Confer with students using interview questions</p>
Wednesday,	Close Reading Skill: Text Dependent	Read self-selected texts

June 28	<p>Questions  Article: "You have five seconds to eat that chip that fell to the floor, right?"</p> <p>Question: What does the text say?</p>	<p>Gather notes  Confer with students using interview questions</p>
Thursday, June 29	<p>Close Reading Skill: Text Dependent Questions  Article: "You have five seconds to eat that chip that fell to the floor, right?"</p> <p>Question: What does the text say?</p>	<p>Read self-selected texts  Gather notes  Confer with students using interview questions</p>
Monday, July 10th	<p>Close Reading Skill: Text Dependent Questions  Article: "The scoop on how ice cream became an important part of America"</p> <p>Question: How does the text work?</p>	<p>Read self-selected texts  Gather notes  Confer with students using interview questions</p>
Tuesday, July 11th	<p>Close Reading Skill: Text Dependent Questions  Article: "The scoop on how ice cream became an important part of America"</p> <p>Question: How does the text work?</p>	<p>Read self-selected texts  Gather notes  Confer with students using interview questions</p>
Wednesday, July 12th	<p>Close Reading Skill: Text Dependent Questions  Article: "The power to stop fake online news lies with advertising networks"</p> <p>Question: What does the text mean?</p>	<p>Read self-selected texts  Gather notes  Confer with students using interview questions</p>
Thursday, July 13th	<p>Close Reading Skill: Text Dependent Questions  Article: "NASA, JPL turning to nature for ways to safely collect space trash"</p> <p>Question: What does the text inspire you to do?</p> <p>Take Reader Self-Perception Scale 2 survey</p>	<p>Read self-selected texts  Gather notes  Confer with students using interview questions  Take survey</p>

## Conclusion

In conclusion, data was gathered in a variety of ways to answer the research question: *How does explicit instruction in close reading skills impact self-perception as a reader in struggling middle school students?* The Reader Self-Perception Scale 2 was administered to participants at the beginning and the end of the study. Participants were also interviewed weekly for four weeks about their perception of self as a reader. This data will be analyzed in Chapter Four, with the goal of discovering patterns or changes in view of self as a reader.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### Results

#### Introduction

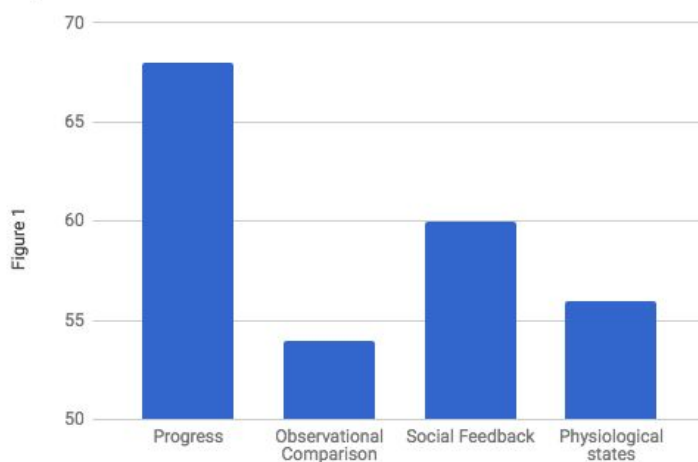
*How does explicit instruction in close reading skills impact self-perception as a reader in struggling middle school students?* is the question that drove the research over the past four weeks. In this chapter, the results will be explored. First, the results and findings from the initial administration of the Reader Self-Perception Scale 2 will be discussed. This will provide an understanding of the research participants' self perception at the beginning of the study. Next will come an examination of the findings from four weeks of student interviews. Reviewing these interviews will highlight any anecdotal evidence of changes in self-perception. Finally, there will be an analysis of the results of the final administration of the Reader Self-Perception Scale 2. These results will be compared to the initial results obtained to see if there were any changes in student self-perception.

#### Initial Reader Self-Perception Scale 2

Participants completed the Reader Self-Perception Scale 2 on the second day of the study. Students were asked to read and respond to forty seven questions that asked them about their self perception as a reader. Their responses were sorted into four categories, which Henk, Marinak, & Melnick (2012) refer to as the four sources of self-perception.

Progress Students were asked sixteen questions about their progress as readers. Of the four categories, students had the highest raw scores in this category according to percent favorable data in Figure 1. In their

Figure 1



■ Figure 1

responses, students felt that they were making progress as readers. 63% of students rated statements such as “I’m getting better at reading,” “I read faster than I could before,” and “I can analyze what I read better than

before” at either “undecided,”

“agree,” or “strongly agree.”

The pie chart in Figure 2

shows a breakdown of

students’ raw scores into the

categories determined by

Henk, Marinak, & Melnick.

63.6% of students’ raw scores fell into the researcher’s “low” range, while 27.3% were in the “above average” range, and 9.1% landed in the “high” range. Despite having the highest raw scores of the four categories, the data shows that overall, the majority of readers surveyed had a low self-perception of their progress as a reader, while a smaller portion had an above average self-perception of their progress.

Observational Comparison In the survey, students were asked nine questions about how they viewed themselves as readers in comparison to others. Figure 1 shows that, according to average percentile favorable data, this was the source for which students gave themselves the lowest raw score. In response to statements such as “I need less help than other students when I read,” “My reading comprehension level is higher than other students,” and “I seem to know the meaning of more words than other students when I read,” Figure 3 shows that 63.6% of

Figure 2: Progress - Initial

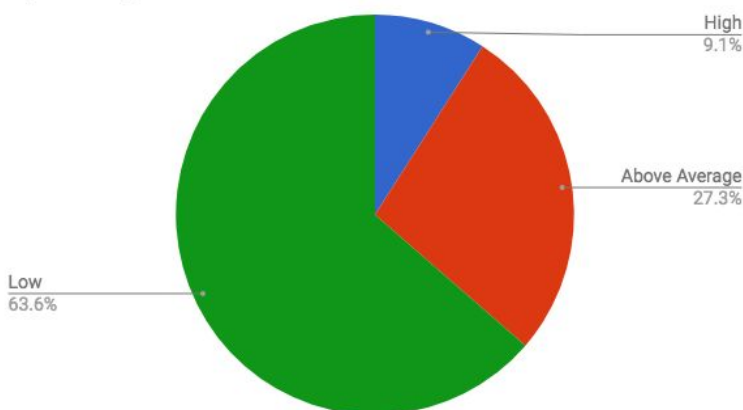
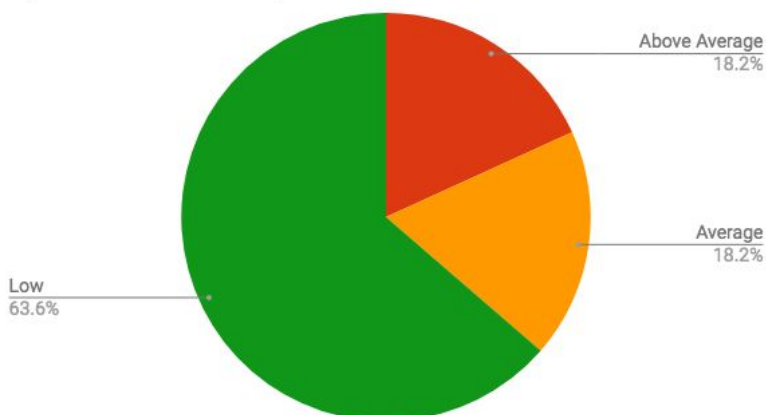


Figure 3: Observational Comparison - Initial



students' raw scores fell within the "low" range. 18.2% of raw scores landed in the "average" range, while an equal amount fell in the "above average" range. These results show that when they compare themselves to others, the majority of students surveyed feel that they are not as good of a reader as their classmates.

Social Feedback In this portion of the survey, students were asked nine questions about the feedback they have received from their teachers, classmates, and families about their reading. As seen in Figure 4, students' raw scores were more evenly dispersed. When asked to respond to statements

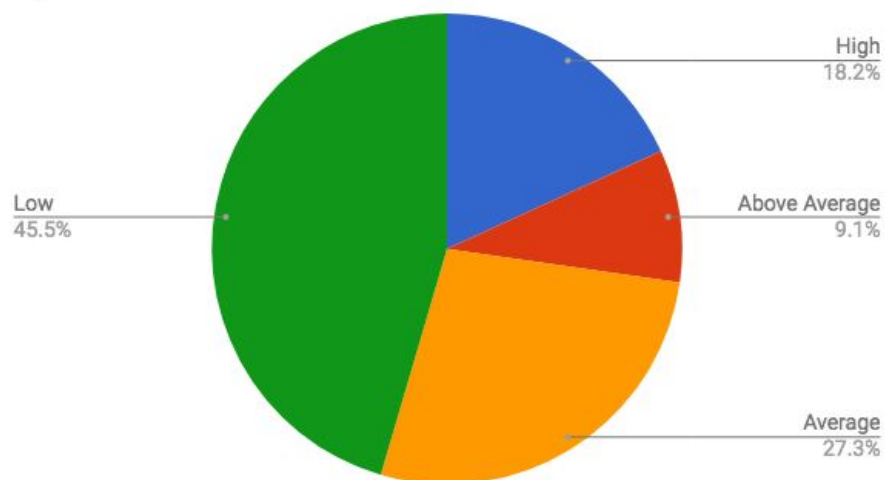
such as, "Other students think I'm a good reader," "People in my family like to listen to me read," and "My teachers think my reading is fine," 45.5% of student raw scores fell into the

"low" range. This was

followed by 27.3% in the "average" range, 9.1% in the "above average" range, and 18.2% in the "high" range. These scores show that slightly under half of the readers surveyed do not view themselves as someone who receives positive feedback about their reading, while the majority see themselves as someone who has received positive feedback from others about their reading at some point.

Physiological States In this final category, students answered twelve questions about their inner feelings in regards to reading. In response to statements such as "I feel good about my ability to read," "I feel good inside when I read," and "I feel comfortable when I read," Figure 5

Figure 4: Social Feedback - Initial



shows that 63.6% of students surveyed had raw scores that fell into the “low” range. In addition,

18.2% of students’ raw

scores fell into the

“average” range, while

9.1% of raw scores fell into

the “above average” range

and 9.1% of raw scores

landed in the “high” range.

This data shows that a

majority of the students

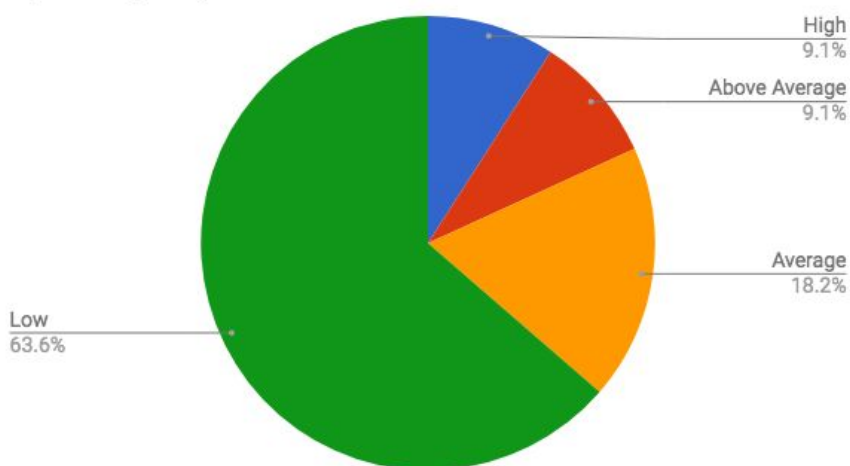
surveyed have negative inner thoughts about reading that are affecting their self-perception.

Summary In summary, the initial results of the Reader Self-Perception Scale 2 showed that the majority of students surveyed have what Henk, Marinak, & Melnick would call a low reader self-perception. In particular the data showed that in relation to their peers, students viewed themselves as slower to make progress and as less successful readers. The survey results also revealed that the students inner thoughts towards reading are mostly negative, which could contribute to a low sense of self-efficacy observed during the first week of the research period.

### Student Interviews

Over the course of the four-week study, each student was interviewed at least two times. The purpose of these interviews was to gather anecdotal evidence on how the explicit teaching of close reading strategies was affecting students’ self perceptions. Each time students were asked three questions about the independent texts they were reading:

Figure 5: Physiological States - Initial



- Question One: What skills/strategies are you using that are helping you understand the text?
- Question Two: What are you noticing about yourself as a reader?
- Question Three: What do you feel good about as you're reading? What is challenging?

Student responses were recorded using the note taking sheet found in Appendix D.

Question One The first question students answered was: "What skills and strategies are you using that are helping you understand the text?" This question was asked to see if students were applying any of the strategies learned in class to their independent reading. During the first two weeks of interviews, half of the students interviewed responded to this question with "re-reading." For example, one student said, "I go back and re-read so that I don't forget what is happening." Another student replied, "When I don't understand something, I go back and re-read it." For many students, re-reading seemed to be the only reading strategy that they could remember. In addition, initially many students responded to this question by saying that they weren't using any reading strategies or they couldn't think of any strategies they had learned in the past. As Lehman and Robert's (2014) close reading protocol was introduced, the strategy started to work its way into students' responses to the first question. During the second week of interviews, one student responded that she was "starting to pay more attention to what people are saying and doing." Another student noted that "the lenses are helping me to see different things. They give me a better understanding of separate parts." A third student remarked, "I use the lenses to go back and find important information to memorize."

During the last two weeks of interviews, a shift in student answers to question one occurred. Slightly over a fourth of the students were still mentioning re-reading as a strategy; however, many more spoke about how they were using the lenses to help understand their

independent reading novel. One student remarked, "It's been helpful to look at the relationships in the story. I've noticed that all of Harry's relationships at Hogwarts are positive and all of his relationships outside of Hogwarts are negative." Another responded, "When I read, I've been stopping to think about self, others, and society. I usually stop every page and look back." Students were also starting to become more comfortable using annotation as a reading strategy. One student stated, "I take notes if I think there's something important and then I put it on a sticky note."

Question Two The second question students were asked in their interviews was: "What are you noticing about yourself as a reader?" The purpose of this question was to see the inner thoughts students had about themselves as readers. During the first two weeks of interviews, many students were initially taken aback by this question. They would respond with "nothing" or "I don't know." To help students start to think about themselves, a follow up question such as, "what has your experience reading this book been like?" or "what are you thinking about yourself while you're reading this book?" was often posed. Once students had a better understanding of the question, they started to share their inner thoughts. Many students focused on the progress they were making. For example, one student responded, "I'm noticing that I'm reading harder books than I used to. I've been pushing hard to improve and I think I've improved." Another said, "I've been paying more attention and not skimming, going back when I don't understand." A third student remarked, "I have more stamina. I want to go on to another page." A number of students also made remarks about fluency, saying: "I've improved my pace, and I'm reading faster than last year" and "I'm getting better. I can read faster."

In the final two weeks of interviews, students were able to much more clearly articulate what they were noticing about themselves as readers. Once again, the majority of their comments were focused on the progress they were making as a reader. "I haven't been

skipping any words or pages,” one student remarked. Another noted, “My stamina has grown because I’ve been reading every day.” A third student said, “I’ve gotten better. I can read faster and understand.” Students were also able to think about and notice when they weren’t making progress. One student who was struggling with his book in verse explained, “I think I’d like to switch to a book with more words on the page. This will help my thinking improve because there will be more words to analyze.”

Question Three The third and final question contained two parts. First, students were asked, “What do you feel good about as you are reading?” The goal of this question was to find out what experiences or thinking contribute to a positive reader self-perception. When students were initially interviewed during the first two weeks, they were all beginning a new independent reading text. A word that came up over and over again in interviews was “understand.” If students were understanding the book they were reading, they felt good about themselves as readers. One student said, “I like that I’m understanding the story more and more.” “I feel good that I’m understanding more and taking my time,” remarked another student. A third student noted, “I can understand this book better than other books, and I like that. I also like what it’s about.” A number of students also remarked how liking their book made them feel good. Students noted that liking things like the length, layout, characters, and action helped them to enjoy their reading experience.

In the final two weeks of interviews, when asked about what they felt good about during their reading, making progress emerged as a frequent answer. Many of the students were proud of the progress they had made over four weeks in their book. “I haven’t read a lot of books, and I want to finish this one,” one student noted. Another was proud of reading a longer text, saying: “I’m feeling really good that I’m actually reading a Harry Potter book.” One student summarized

his experience by saying, “I’m proud that I can actually read a book. The last book I read was in third grade.”

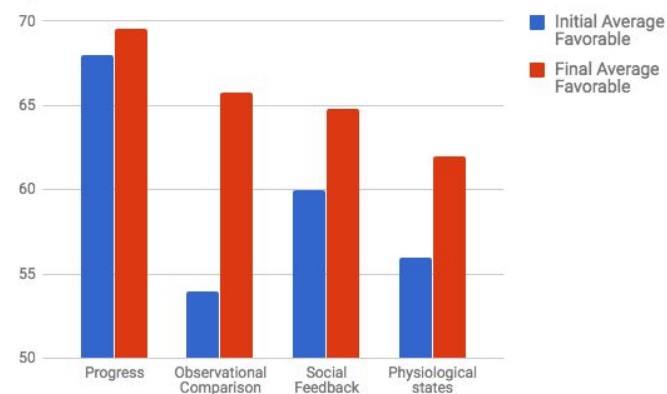
For the second part of question three, students were asked: “What has been challenging as you’ve been reading?” to see what experiences or thinking might contribute to a negative reader self-perception. During the first two weeks of interviews, many students could not articulate anything that was challenging for them. A few students noted that there were some “confusing words” in their books, and one student pointed out that he was overwhelmed by the length of his book. In the second half of interviews, students began to articulate challenges that were very specific to their text. For example, the student reading Harry Potter remarked, “I’m having a hard time with the made up and Latin words.” Another pointed out, “It’s harder to find stuff to analyze in a graphic novel.” Overall, though, students had a difficult time saying what was challenging about their text and/or reading experience.

### Final Reader Self-Perception Scale 2

After a month of explicit instruction in close reading strategies, participants completed a second Reader Self-Perception Scale 2. Nine of the eleven original students surveyed completed the scale; the other two did not complete the survey because they were exited from summer school. Responses were scored using the same scale developed by Henk, Marinak, & Melnick (2012).

Progress When initially surveyed, students had the highest levels of confidence in their progress as a reader. In the final survey these levels of confidence continued to increase. In the initial survey the average raw score for progress was 54.09, and in the

Figure 6





final survey this number increased by 5.35 points to 59.44. Figure 6 shows that overall, students' average self-perception scores rose. For example, when initially surveyed, the majority (63.6%) of students'

self-perception scores fell into the

"low" category (see Figure 2).

However, when surveyed at the

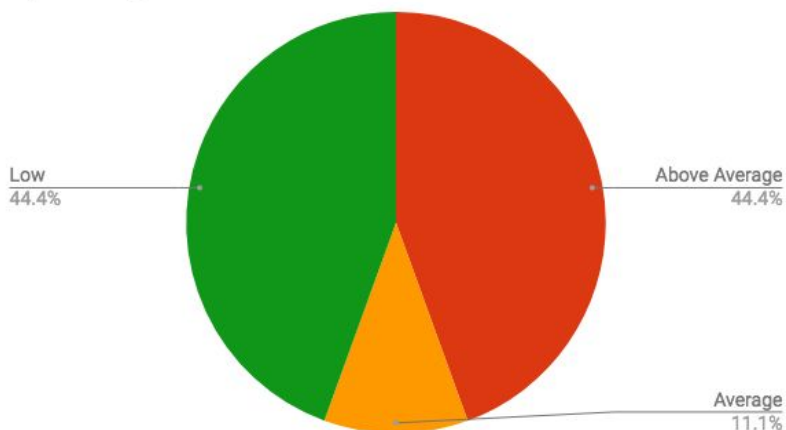
end of the study, Figure 7 shows

only 44.4% of students'

self-perception scores were

considered "low."

Figure 7: Progress - Final



Observational Comparison When asked questions about how they compare themselves to other readers, students initially rated their self-perception in this category lower than any other category. However, when surveyed at the end of the study, this was the category that actually saw the largest growth in raw scores. Initially, 63.6% of students' raw scores fell into the "low" category and the average raw score was 24.45. In the final survey these scores rose with only 44.4% in the "low"

category, and the average

raw score rose by 5.32 points

to 29.77. (See Figure 8)

When looking at these scores

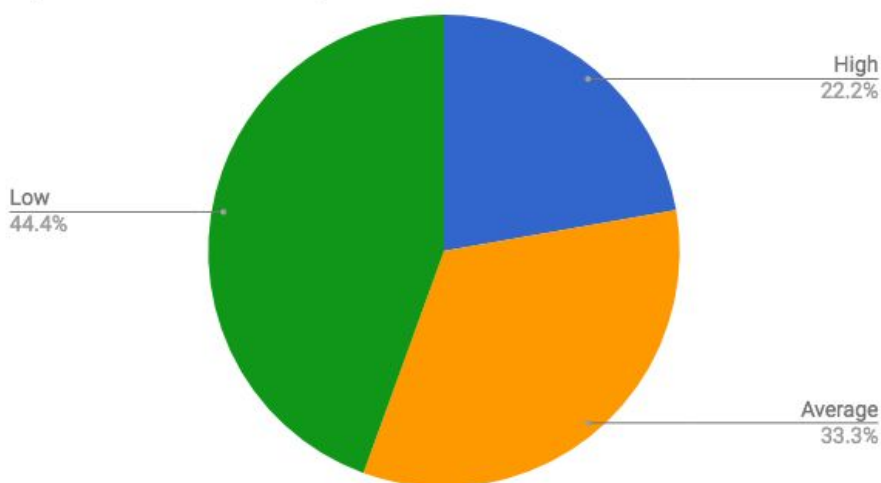
in greater detail, I noticed

that a few students' raw

scores grew significantly in

this category. Based on

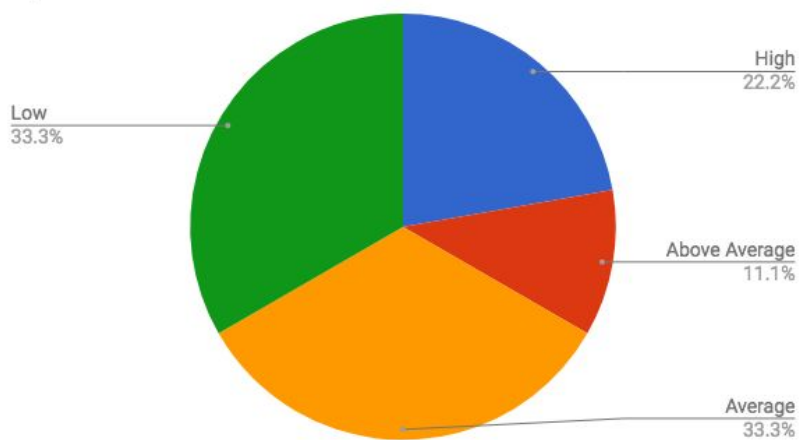
Figure 8: Observational Comparison - Final



observations during class, these were the students who participated the most in classroom discussions and small group activities. It's interesting to note that while these students may not necessarily feel successful compared to their peers during the regular school year, they found themselves feeling successful compared to their summer school classmates.

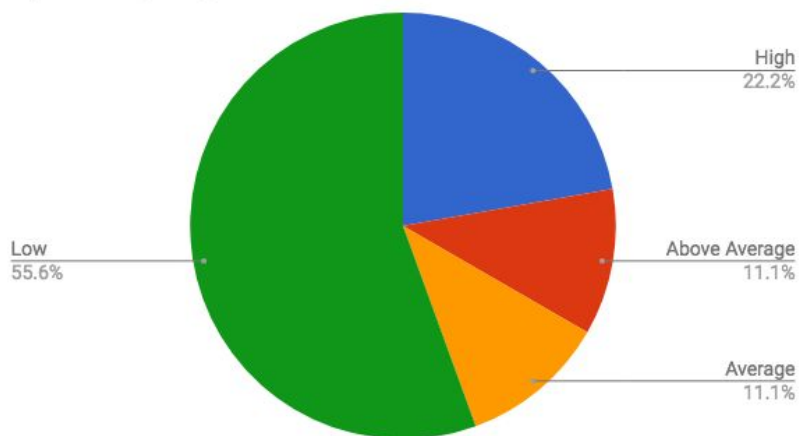
Social Feedback In the initial survey, participants' raw scores were more evenly distributed in this category than others. This trend continued in the final survey, with gains being made in the "average," "above average," and "high" categories. Initially, 44.4% of students' raw scores were in the "low" category; however, this dropped to 33.3% in the final survey (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Social Feedback - Final



Physiological States This final category showed the smallest amount of growth. When initially surveyed, 63.6% of raw scores fell into the "low" category. When surveyed again 55.6% of scores were in the "low" category, the highest percentage of any of the four categories (see Figure 10). Questions in this category focus specifically on students' inner thoughts about their reading ability. This smaller gain in raw scores shows that for many of these students, their inner thoughts towards reading were still fairly

Figure 10: Physiological States - Final



negative, and it would take a much longer period of time for those thoughts to change.

Summary In summary, the final results of the Reader Self-Perception Scale 2 show that after four weeks of explicit instruction in close reading strategies gains were made in all four categories of self-perception as evidenced by students' responses.

### Conclusion

In this chapter, the results of the initial Reader Self-Perception Scale 2 completed by participants were first reviewed. Student raw scores in four categories: progress, observational comparison, social feedback, and physiological states, overwhelmingly showed that the students surveyed had a low reader self-perception. Next, the anecdotal evidence received from four weeks of student interviews was reported. One observation made was that as students learned close reading strategies through explicit instruction, they were able to better articulate the thinking processes they used to understand their independent reading text. It was also found that over time, students started to take note of the progress they were making as a reader. One theme that emerged from the interviews was that students felt most successful when they saw they were making progress and understanding what they were reading.

Finally, the results of the second and final Reader Self-Perception Scale 2 survey taken by participants were examined. When comparing the data from the second set of surveys to the first set, it was found that overall student self-perception scores rose. After four weeks of explicit close reading instruction, students noticed they were making progress and felt better about themselves as readers. Noticing this trend significantly helped the process of answering the research question: *How does explicit instruction in close reading skills impact self-perception as a reader in struggling middle school students?*

Looking ahead, chapter Five will contain reflections on this experience. There will be a discussion of learnings as a researcher and teacher. The literature review will also be revisited

and limitations and implications of the study will be discussed. Finally, the communication of results and any future study will be considered.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Conclusion

#### Introduction

Two years ago, I began the journey to obtain my Master's Degree in Literacy Education because I wanted to be a better reading teacher. I saw that my classroom was full of students of varying levels of needs, and I wanted to learn how to best serve them. The more I looked at my student population, the more I noticed that some students clearly viewed themselves as successful readers while others did not. I started to wonder: how could I help all students to become successful readers, but especially those struggling readers who did not have a positive reader self-perception. This led to the research question: *How does explicit instruction in close reading skills impact self-perception as a reader in struggling middle school students?*

Throughout this process I have learned a lot about myself and grown as a researcher and teacher. Initially, I had a limited view of the resources available to teach close reading. Now, I feel confident in my knowledge of influential researchers and their work in the field of close reading. Completing this capstone also gave me the opportunity to read and learn from a wider scope of researchers on such topics as struggling readers and motivating students. Learning from these authors will help me become a better teacher to all of the readers in my classroom.

In this chapter, I will seek to summarize my learning over the past few months as I completed this capstone. First, the literature review will be revisited with reflection on key findings. Then, possible implications of the research will be discussed. Next, limitations of the study will be pointed out. After noting future study opportunities, there will be a final discussion of the plan for communication of the results.

### Revisiting the Literature Review

While implementing the research, I noticed many experiences directly connected to research explored in the literature review.

Self-Perception Much of my research on reader self-perception was focused on the work of Henk and Melnick. They found that students' perceptions of their reading ability affected how often they engaged with a text, how they interacted with teachers, and the amount of effort they put into reading tasks (Henk and Melnick, 1998). This was found to be true with the research participants. When most of them entered summer school, they were extremely unmotivated and lacked confidence in their reading abilities. Over four weeks, students grew in their use of close reading strategies through multiple opportunities to practice these skills in a supported, safe environment. I observed that as students had successful reading experiences, their reader self-perception grew, which led to higher motivation and better relationships with me, the teacher.

Needs of Struggling Readers In the literature review, the work of Guthrie (2008) on motivating struggling readers was frequently cited. He notes three instructional strategies that struggling readers need: goal setting, feedback from teachers, and modeling. While implementing the research, it was observed that each of these strategies helped struggling readers. At the beginning of each lesson, a goal or purpose was set so that students understood what they were learning and why they were learning it. This helped students to focus, and it helped redirect them back to the task when they got off topic. During whole group lessons, frequent feedback was given, especially when students performed a task correctly or fixed an answer. The goal was to give students positive feedback on what they were doing well to build their positive self-perception. I was careful to praise not only correct answers but also effort, supporting Dweck's (2006) work on mindset. When students received positive feedback, they

were more motivated to share in class and more willing to take risks in the daily lessons. Modeling was a key part of the explicit instruction, which benefitted the students. When introducing a close reading strategy, think alouds were used with students so they could see how an expert reader performs the task. This helped students because it showed them the steps that they would need to take to complete the task independently. During student interviews, when prompted, students were able to use some of the language incorporated in the instruction. This leads me to believe that with more modeling and practice, students will develop greater independence in using the language and processes associated with close reading.

Explicit Instruction Multiple researchers referenced in the literature review point to explicit instruction as a means for increasing motivation and self-efficacy in struggling readers. Nokes and Dole (2004) write that explicit strategy instruction increases motivation in struggling readers because it helps them to see that success is a product of the use of strategies and effort instead of ability. In the later weeks of the study, this became true for a few students. At the beginning of the class, they participated very little in whole group discussions and shared very little in their interviews. However, by the end of the study, as students gained more strategies and had multiple successful reading experiences, their motivation to participate in class and engage with the teacher grew. Schunk and Rice's (1993) finding that explicit instruction lead to an increase in self-efficacy for struggling readers (as cited in Hall, Burns, & Edwards, 2011), was echoed in the researching findings as evidenced by an increase in students' reader self-perceptions according to their answers to the Reader Self-Perception Scale 2.

Close Reading This capstone was originally inspired by the work of Lehman and Roberts (2014), in particular their close reading ritual. In this ritual, students first read the text with a lens. Then they look for patterns and use those patterns to develop new understandings about the

text. Implementing this ritual with students led to success because it gave students something in particular to look for while reading. For many students, analyzing a text is a frightening task because they have no idea where to start. Giving students a lens to focus on while they read gives them a purpose for reading, which especially helped the research participants.

### Possible Implications

Time One implication that emerged from the study is that struggling readers need a significant amount of time for both explicit instruction and practice in close reading strategies. Because it is important for struggling readers to see expert readers demonstrate their thinking process many times, a typical lesson takes longer. Therefore, struggling readers need to be supported through more instructional time in reading strategies. Districts and schools can support this by maintaining intervention classes for struggling readers and supporting a longer literacy block within the school day.

Independent Reading Another implication of this study is that struggling readers need a specified chunk of time each day for independent reading. This is something that teachers, schools, and districts need to provide the space and time for so that students can get additional time to apply the skills they are learning in class to and independent text.

### Limitations

Time The biggest limitation experienced while completing this study was time. I only had four weeks with the students. Because summer school did not meet on Fridays, this meant that there were only 16 days to investigate the research question. While some gains in student self-perception were seen over these 16 days, I believe that the gains would be greater if students had more time to practice the skills. Another limitation on time was that in between the third and fourth week of instruction, there was a week-long break for the Fourth of July.



Students struggled to get back into routine upon returning, which decreased some of the time spent on instruction.

Student Attendance Another limitation that occurred during the study related to student attendance. It is the summer school policy that if students miss two or more days, they are exited from summer school. This resulted in the loss of two research participants. A number of students also missed a day or two during the 16 days or were tardy to class, which resulted in a loss of instructional time.

Student Work Completion Getting students to turn in work and forms was a challenge. Of the 20 students in the summer school class, only 11 returned completed parent consent forms. This significantly limited the number of students I was able to study. Students also struggled to complete assignments when they were not done in a whole group setting. Because of this, I was able to obtain less observational data from independent student work time than I would have liked.

Interviews Initially, the plan was to interview each student four times over the four week study. I quickly realized that there was not enough time to do this. During our daily 20-25 minute independent reading time, I was able to interview anywhere from 2-3 students. Completing a quality interview took much longer than anticipated, and I often found myself distracted by students who needed to be reminded to stay on task during independent work time. Another thing that delayed the start of interviews was that students needed a few days to get into their independent reading novels so that they would have something to talk about. Therefore, I was only able to interview each student twice during the course of the four week research period instead of the four times planned.

Disproportionate Literature Review In the initial stages of completing this capstone, the primary focus was on close reading. As the research question developed, the focus of the study

shifted from close reading to self-perception. The extra few months spent researching close reading accounts for the disproportionate amount of information on this topic in comparison to self-perception and explicit instruction.

### Future Study

Close Reading Completing this capstone opened my eyes to the much larger world of research around the topic of close reading. I would like to continue to grow in my learning on this topic. In particular, I would like to learn more about teaching students close reading skills with nonfiction texts. Learning more about these skills will help me equip students to use their literacy skills in their other content area classes.

Self-Perception Before beginning this study, I knew very little about self-efficacy and self-perception. Throughout the research, I learned that it is crucial for students to feel good about themselves as readers, and so I'd like to learn more about how this applies to other subject areas. How can I help to increase students' self-perceptions as a mathematicians, scientists, writers, and historians? I'd like to learn more about how to build student identities so that every child sees him or herself as a successful student.

Special Education Students One of my reading classes during the regular school year is a co-taught class, which means that one-third of the students in the classroom are on an IEP. Many of these students have a low reader self-perception, falling into a similar category with the research participants. I would like to apply the research completed this summer with these students in the fall. During the school day, each team has a 25 minute block called WIN time where students can receive enrichments and interventions. I would like to continue this research by implementing an adapted form of the study completed this summer with special ed students. I would like to see if giving them extra explicit instruction in close reading strategies helps them to grow in their reader self perception.

### Communication of Results

The results of this study will be communicated and used in a variety of ways. One way that I plan to use the study is by implementing some of its practices into my regular year classroom. I would like to embed the explicit instruction of close reading strategies into my curriculum throughout the year. Using my learnings in explicit instruction, I plan to embed a lot more modeling of these strategies at the beginning of the year to set students up for success. I also plan to take a longer time of going through the process of gradually releasing responsibility of using close reading strategies independently to students.

Two people that I plan to communicate my results with immediately are my co-teacher as well as my teammate who also teaches reading/language arts. My co-teacher is a special education teacher who teaches one reading class a day with me. I will communicate the results of the study with her because the results will help us to be more successful in teaching the students on her caseload. As I seek to implement some of the work from the study into my classroom, I will also want her input on how we can use the findings to best drive our instruction. Another person I will communicate results to is the other reading/language arts teacher on my team. We share the students on our team and teach the same curriculum, so it will be valuable to share my findings with her. Both of us have struggling readers and readers with low self-perceptions in our classrooms, so discussing the research will help us to think about how we can meet the needs of all of our students. I also plan to share a short summary of my findings with my interdisciplinary teammates and PLC, many of whom knew I was working on my Master's degree. My hope is that by sharing, those who are interested will approach me so that I can share my findings with them more in depth.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, first the literature that most influenced the research was reviewed, including reader self-perception, needs of struggling readers, explicit instruction, and close reading rituals. For each of these, findings were discussed and connected to the data observed and collected during the research. Next, implications of the research were pointed out, in particular struggling readers' need for additional instructional and practice time during the school day. The limitations of the study, including time, attendance, and work completion, were also noted. Finally, recommendations for future areas of study were made, and there was a discussion of how results would be shared with colleagues.

This study began with the purpose of answering the research question: *How does explicit instruction in close reading skills impact self-perception as a reader in struggling middle school students?* Over the past four weeks, I have found that explicit instruction in close reading strategies does have a positive impact on reader self-perception. I have learned that all struggling readers want the opportunity to be successful. They need dedicated and willing teachers who are willing to show them how to be successful and will give them positive feedback and support along the way.

Throughout my journey as a reader, I've always seen myself as successful and confident. This is not the case for many students. Many of them do not see themselves as successful readers, which impedes their journey to becoming a lifelong reader. However, the story does not have to end this way. If teachers believe that all students can be successful, give all students the skills to be successful, and support all students along the way, we can help students redefine their perceptions of themselves as readers.



## Appendix A: Parent Consent Form

Dear Parent/Guardian,

My name is Megan Slinger and I am your student's reading teacher for Summer School. I am currently pursuing my Master's Degree in Literacy Education at Hamline University. As part of my graduate work, I will be conducting research from June 12th, 2017 - July 13th, 2017. The purpose of this letter is to ask permission for your student to take part in this research study. The abstract and the final capstone will be published in the Hamline Bush Library Digital Commons. In all cases, your child's identity will remain confidential.

The purpose of my research is to study explicit skills instruction of close reading strategies and its effect on students' perceptions of themselves as readers. During this study, students will take a survey at the beginning and end of the study. Students will also be interviewed one on one weekly during independent work time. The study will take place during our regularly scheduled Summer School reading class. Students will not be required to do any work outside of school, and their participation in the study will have no effect on their summer school grade.

Student responses to surveys and interviews may be published as part of my research, but all names will be kept confidential. The location of this study will also be kept confidential to protect student anonymity. Participation in this study is voluntary, and your student is free to withdraw from the research at any time without penalty. There is little to no risk that might occur during the study. Possible discomfort may occur due to students having to answer questions about their view of self as a reader in the survey and during interviews. Possible benefits of this study include: explicit instruction in close reading strategies and small group and one on one instruction with a teacher in reading skills.

I have received permission from Hamline University as well as the school district to complete this research. To give permission for your student to participate in my research, please sign and return the parent/guardian consent form on the next page by June 15th, 2017.

If you have any questions, feel free to email me at [mshlinger@shakopee.k12.mn.us](mailto:mshlinger@shakopee.k12.mn.us) You may also contact Matthew Olson, the chair of the Hamline University Institutional Review Board at [mholson@hamline.edu](mailto:mholson@hamline.edu)

Thank you,

Megan Slinger

**Please return this form to Ms. Slinger by June 15th, 2017**

I have read the letter describing the proposed research. I understand that student responses may be published in the final capstone paper, but that all identities will be kept confidential. I understand that there is little to no risk for my student, and that I may withdraw them from the research at any time.

I give permission for my student \_\_\_\_\_ to participate in your research that is part of your graduate program.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix B: Reader Self-Perception Scale 2

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### The Reader Self-Perception Scale 2

Listed below are statements about reading. Please read each statement carefully. Then circle the letters that show how much you agree or disagree with the statement. Use the following key:

SA = Strongly Agree  
 A = Agree  
 U = Undecided  
 D = Disagree  
 SD = Strongly Disagree

Example: **I think pizza with pepperoni is the best kind.**

If you are *really positive* that pepperoni pizza is the best, circle SA (Strongly Agree).

If you *think* that it's good, but maybe not best, circle A (Agree).

If you *can't decide* whether or not it's best, circle U (Undecided).

If you *think* that pepperoni pizza is not all that good, circle D (Disagree).

If you are *really positive* that pepperoni pizza is not very good, circle SD (Strongly Disagree).

---

(PS)	1.	Reading is a pleasant activity for me.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(PR)	2.	I read better now than I could before.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(PR)	3.	I can handle more challenging reading materials than I could before.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(SF)	4.	Other students think I'm a good reader.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(OC)	5.	I need less help than other students when I read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(PS)	6.	I feel comfortable when I read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(PR)	7.	When I read, I don't have to try as hard to understand as I used to.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(SF)	8.	My classmates like to listen to the way I read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(PR)	9.	I am getting better at reading.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(OC)	10.	When I read, I can figure out words better than other students.	SA	A	U	D	SD

(SF)	11.	My teachers think I'm a good reader.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(OC)	12.	I read better than other students in my classes.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(OC)	13.	My reading comprehension level is higher than other students.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(PS)	14.	I feel calm when I read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(OC)	15.	I read faster than other students.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(SF)	16.	My teachers think that I try my best when I read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(PS)	17.	Reading tends to make me feel calm.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(PR)	18.	I understand what I read better than I could before.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(PR)	19.	I can understand difficult reading materials better than before.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(OC)	20.	When I read, I can handle difficult ideas better than my classmates.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(PR)	21.	When I read, I recognize more words than before	SA	A	U	D	SD
(PS)	22.	I enjoy how I feel when I read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(PS)	23.	I feel proud inside when I think about how well I read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(PR)	24.	I have improved on assignments and tests that involve reading.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(GN)	25.	I think I'm a good reader.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(PS)	26.	I feel good inside when I read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(OC)	27.	When I read, my understanding of important vocabulary words is better than other students.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(SF)	28.	People in my family like to listen to me read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(SF)	29.	My classmates think that I read pretty well.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(PS)	30.	Reading makes me feel good.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(PR)	31.	I can figure out hard words better than I could before.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(PS)	32.	I think reading can be relaxing.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(PR)	33.	I can concentrate more when I read than I could	SA	A	U	D	SD

before.

(PS)	34.	Reading makes me feel happy inside.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(PR)	35.	When I read, I need less help than I used to.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(SF)	36.	I can tell that my teachers like to listen to me read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(OC)	37.	I seem to know the meaning of more words than other students when I read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(PR)	38.	I read faster than I could before.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(PR)	39.	Reading is easier for me than it used to be.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(OC)	40.	My teacher think that I do a good job of interpreting what I read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(PR)	41.	My understanding of difficult reading materials has improved.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(PS)	42.	I feel good about my ability to read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(OC)	43.	I am more confident in my reading than other students.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(PS)	44.	Deep down, I like to read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(PR)	45.	I can analyze what I read better than before.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(SF)	46.	My teachers think that my reading is fine.	SA	A	U	D	SD
(PR)	47.	Vocabulary words are easier for me to understand when I read now.	SA	A	U	D	SD

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## Appendix C: Reader Self-Perception Scale 2 Scoring Sheet

### FIGURE 3 The Reader Self-Perception Scale 2 Scoring Sheet

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Scoring Key: 5 = Strongly Agree (SA)  
 4 = Agree (A)  
 3 = Undecided (U)  
 2 = Disagree (D)  
 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD)

PROGRESS	OBSERVATIONAL COMPARISON	SOCIAL FEEDBACK	PHYSIOLOGICAL STATES
2. _____	5. _____	4. _____	1. _____
3. _____	10. _____	8. _____	6. _____
7. _____	12. _____	11. _____	14. _____
9. _____	13. _____	16. _____	17. _____
18. _____	15. _____	28. _____	22. _____
19. _____	20. _____	29. _____	23. _____
21. _____	27. _____	36. _____	26. _____
24. _____	37. _____	40. _____	30. _____
31. _____	43. _____	46. _____	32. _____
33. _____			34. _____
35. _____			42. _____
38. _____			44. _____
39. _____			
41. _____			
45. _____			
47. _____			

Raw Score \_\_\_\_\_ of 80      \_\_\_\_\_ of 45      \_\_\_\_\_ of 45      \_\_\_\_\_ of 60

Percentile \_\_\_\_\_

<b>High</b>	74+	39+	35+	50+
<b>Above Average</b>	66–73	34–38	31–34	44–49
<b>Average</b>	60–65	28–33	28–30	35–43
<b>Low</b>	48–	28–	27–	34

## Appendix D: Interview Note Taking Sheet

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Text:**

What skills/strategies are you using that are helping you understand this text?

What are you noticing about yourself as a reader?

What do you feel good about as you're reading?

What is challenging?



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