READING INTERVENTIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE READING PERFORMANCES OF BILINGUAL AND BI-DIALECTAL CHILDREN

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Abstract

The purpose of this quasi-experimental study was to examine the effects of reading interventions for bi-lingual and bi-dialectal children using research-based strategies combined with metacognitive and metacomprehension frameworks. The experimental study reports findings on the effects of an eight week intervention providing daily 55 minute sessions to middle school students in Broward County Schools with reading difficulties (n=10) compared with similar students who did not receive the intervention (n=15). The study describes the outcomes of experimental intervention for at risk eighth graders in an urban setting where a majority of the students are Haitian second language learners with similar socioeconomic backgrounds. Results favored the causal (treatment) group and indicated a statistically significant difference between the mean posttest reading scores. Future needs for educational supplemental programs for at risk students are discussed.
Chapter One

Introduction

The ability to read means everything in school because it is the foundation for all future learning in all subjects. Reading – the fundamental ability to decode and interpret language for meaning – is at the core of a student’s ability to grasp subjects (Jacobs, 2008). Reading is not just a school-level skill but a life skill that will ultimately determine the caliber of life and the level of equality one experiences as a citizen in the United States (Páez, 2008). According to Dieker and Little (2005, p.276), “. . . reading is typically used to master content at the secondary level and using the skill of reading to learn content is critical as more and more states implement subject area tests of high school graduates.” Moreover, a deficit in reading skills between white and monitory populations in public education has been at the nexus of the achievement gap, one of the most intractable problems in education over the past four or five decades (Comber & Nixon, 2011; Benner, Nelson, Stage & Ralson, 2011; Lindo, 2006).

Among adolescent learners, reading is a particularly acute problem (Jacobs, 2008). There is a national concern that adolescents are progressing through school with critically deficient skills in reading, according to Vicki Jacobs (2008), who claims that functional illiteracy may be as high as 13% in the general population as but as high as 40% among minority youth in America. This is alarming. Laurice Joseph (2008, p.42) states that “Only 28% of students in grade 8 and 34% of students in grade 12 achieve proficient reading standards . . . .” Moreover, many of the secondary instructors who encounter these students are unprepared – to be interpreted by her as untrained – to deal with students who come into their classes reading as much as two to three grade levels below where they should (Joseph, 2008; Páez, 2008).
If reading has endured as a problem for native born speakers of English, it poses even more complex problems for students who are not native speakers of English and whose primary home language is that of their immigrant parents (Luke, Dooley, & Woods, 2011; Páez, 2008). For immigrant children, the transition into American culture is a multifaceted experience that includes social, emotional, cultural and academic adjustments that sometimes leads to success, but more often than not to spiraling failure (Nassaji, 2011). Why? A significant problem in reading is that children making the transition to the American education system are learning English, which is the basis of our educational model, as a second language while learning subject matter (McNamara, 2011).

**Statement of the Problem**

There is an increasing number of students within the school-aged population in America who are black and, sometimes, bilingual/bi-dialectal. Comber and Nixon (2011) argue that these students are failing to master reading and standardized tests, exhibiting high underachievement as compared to their non-minority counterparts. The problem examined in this research is one that has existed for more than two decades in South Florida prior to the FCAT testing era. The high number of students in middle school failing reading mastery has several components contributing to its existence over the years: semantic knowledge (i.e., knowing the meaning of words) syntactic knowledge (i.e., the structure of sentences), paragraphing (i.e., the proper sequence of sentences), phonemic awareness and the pronunciation of words (Comber & Nixon, 2011). In essence this population lacks foundational language skills dating back to elementary school (Comber & Nixon, 2011).

Other components of the problem are socio-economic, lack of parental support structures in English in many of the homes, the lack of cultural sensitivity and practices of teachers in public school settings with this particular population of students (Berman, 2006). The research was intended to analyze why underachievement in middle school occurs and should determine which
interventions are most effective to counteract underachievement and low success rates in reading for black students, both African-American and those who are black and bilingual/bi-dialectal.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this Project Demonstrating Excellence is to conduct a quasi-experimental design and quantitative study of a convenience sample of at risk, adolescent, bilingual and bi-dialectal students in the black communities of South Florida, a significant part of which is also of Haitian descent (Vilme & Butler, 2004; Bonenfant, 2001). In a quasi-experimental design, participants are chosen in two groups but not randomly assigned, one is the control group which receives no treatment and the other is the experimental (causal) group which receives the intervention. Both groups receive pre-tests and posttests of the same material.

At risk bilingual and bi-dialectal students’ higher achievement potentials are contingent upon integrated components of educational settings, linguistic theory and effective pedagogy (Lovett, De Palma, Fritters, Steinbach, Temple, Benson & Lacerenza, 2008). This information was used to begin the process of developing a reading intervention program that successfully served their needs and led to improved academic student performance. Again, the purpose of the study was to develop a successful reading intervention curriculum to improve the at risk bilingual or bi-dialectal students academic reading performances (Luke, et al., 2011; Páez, 2008; Lenters, 2006).

**Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study is addressing the needs of the bilingual and bi-dialectal children and examined the reasons why these students did not demonstrate mastery of reading on a level commensurate with their peers of other racial and ethnic groups in the classroom on standardized tests (Mancilla, Kiefer, Biancarosa, Christodoulou, & Snow, 2011; Lindo, 2006).
The objective of this research is to develop a successful reading intervention curriculum to improve the academic performances of black middle school children in the classroom setting and on standardized testing scores (Allington, 2007; Lindo, 2006). The project is expected to explore metacomprehension theory (DeBruin, Thiede, Camp, & Redford, 2011), and the goal of the project is to develop an intervention program that will serve the unique needs of these culturally diverse learners (Fisher & Ivey, 2006).

The research project examined the deficiencies of these students in reading in order to develop a successful reading intervention curriculum to improve their academic performance. Mastery of the English language is essential to academic success; a child’s ability to learn all other subjects hinges on his or her ability to read, be fluent and comprehend in English (Vilme & Butler, 2004; Lenters, 2006; Páez, 2008; Nassaji, 2011). As a result being second language learners, black children (Haitian children included) in this population demographic of South Florida’s public schools are lagging in their academic performances (Páez, 2008; Vilme & Butler, 2004). In a country where academic preparation may mean the difference between access to a better quality of life or poverty, it is imperative for this type research to be conducted on this particular population because successful academic performance is a life-determinative issue (Lindo, 2006; Tam, Heward, & Heng, 2006).

The researcher sought to determine reasons and conditions of why black students continue to lag in reading while even minority groups born outside the country like Asians manage to excel despite learning a second language (Paez, 2008; Lindo, 2006). The crux of this research project is to determine the status of these minority learners and develop a developmental reading intervention curriculum tailored to their cultural and academic needs.
Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined as they are used in this study:

**Achievement Gap** - distinctions in student performance as analyzed by data from state and national tests in order to determine whether minority children, limited English speakers of other languages and children in poverty who attend public schools are performing as well as white students (Reutzel & Cooter, 2000).

**Acoustic**- relating to sound, the sense of hearing or science of sound (Boulenger et al., 2011).

**Age/Skill Appropriate Materials** - materials used in classroom settings that are appropriate to the age of the child (Reutzel & Cooter, 2000).

**At-risk** - students performing below grade level due to social, economic, or academic deficiencies. Also, the terms refers to a student who is reading two or more grade levels below current grade level (Allington, 2007).

**Authentic Assessment** - a student’s ability to perform and decisions made about the student’s progress in mastery of operations or subject matter. Authentic assessment is a term that refers to the kinds of tasks children are asked to perform. Inauthentic assessments are sometimes used in classroom situations assessing task such as spelling tests, but do not measure what a child can actually do through performance and mastery of subject matter (Reutzel & Cooter, 2000).

**Automaticity** - a parallel function of the mind at which a child is able to exhibit and fluency and decoding skills at the same time comprehending the contexts of the reading material (Durkin, 1993).

**Bi-dialectal** - speakers of one or more dialects or a language and dialect depending on conditions (Whitmore, 2006).

**Bi-lingual** - speakers of two languages (Whitmore, 2006).
Cognitive Development - the mental ability of a child when certain behaviors are exhibited. These cognitive behaviors are exhibited by prediction, recalling, producing inferences, drawing conclusions or personal opinions of experiences, using prior background knowledge, drawing comparisons, expressing enjoyment during the reading activity and responding critically to literary elements (Giroux, 2009).

Curriculum Design - the design of a curriculum that meets the needs of the target population or students in the classroom (Reutzel & Cooter, 2000).

Decoding - a series of strategies used selectively by readers to recognize and read written words. The process of converting the printed word into its spoken form and this process involves looking at a word in connecting the latest of to sounds, segments of the word with the sounds implementing that sounds together to form the spoken word (Reutzel & Cooter, 2000).

Deficiencies - inadequacy in the child's grade level knowledge or performance (Baker, 2002).

Developmentally Appropriate - materials and instructions that are appropriate for the mental state of the individual and are within the zone of proximal development regardless of the age (Reutzel & Cooter, 2000).

Diagnostic Tools - tests and additional materials that reveal the current stage of development and indications for future instruction (Reutzel & Cooter, 2000).

Dialect - a variety of a language whose grammar differs in systematic ways from other varieties. Differences may be lexical, phonological, syntactic, and semantic. Dialects may be regional, social dialects, and prestige dialects (Whitmore, 2006).

Digraph - two letters used to represent a single sound (Reutzel & Cooter, 2000).

Discourse - spoken or written expression (Huang, 2010).
Ebonics - an alternative term, first used in 1997 for the various dialects of African American English (Kunjufu, 2011b).

Emergent Literacy - the early stages of reading and writing and the ability to associate symbols with words and meaning. Emergent literacy is the first concepts the child possesses and is exhibiting the ability to connect the sounds to print (Reutzel & Cooter, 2000).

Emergent Reader - is a reader that exhibits a basic understanding of the alphabetic principle and phonemic awareness process and realizes that words are made up of one or more letters. Emergent readers eventually understand that he or she can create small sentences of three to four words (Reutzel & Cooter, 2000).

English Speakers of Other Languages - known as ESOL students (DeBruin, et al., 2011).

Fluency - reading fluency, understood as accuracy and rate with which students read text. It significantly affects the ability to comprehend and it is the mark of a proficient reader. Fluency involves recognizing words automatically, and understanding the phrasing used in the texts (Reutzel & Cooter, 2000).

Formative Assessment - the formal assessment procedures and protocols for testing reading and comprehension (Mariotti & Homan, 2001).

Graphemes - the symbols of an alphabetic writing system; the letters of the alphabet (Reutzel & Cooter, 2000).

Grapho-phonemic - the awareness of the written representation of phonemes (Reutzel & Cooter, 2000).

Haitian - a person who was born in a country of Haiti (Magny, 2004).

Individualized Reading Inventory - is an assessment tool for diagnosing reading processes, deficiencies, word recognition, fluency, and comprehension (Mariotti & Homan, 2001).
**Interface** - a point at which independent systems interact (Lecus, 2011).

**Interventions** - a program for methods and strategies to eliminate reading deficiencies (Lovett et al., 2008).

**Language Acquisition** - the act of acquiring an understanding how languages spoken read and understood (Mariotti & Homan, 2001).

**Language Arts** - a program of understanding the language of English, conventions, usage and practices of speaking, reading and writing (Reutzel & Cooter, 2000).

**Lexicon** - a vocabulary, as of an individual or group,

**lexical**, adj. (Mariotti & Homan, 2001).

**Limited English Proficiency (LEP)** - persons who are in with limited proficiency when speaking English (Black, 2005).

**Linguistic** - the study of the nature and structure of human speech (Mariotti & Homan, 2001).

**Literacy** - the ability to read and write the English language (Reutzel & Cooter, 2000).

**Metacognitive** - the mental process or faculty/act of knowing (DeBruin et al., 2011).

**Metacomprehension** - the cognitive thinking process of understanding what is being read, and the reader is aware of comprehension occurring (DeBruin et al., 2011).

**Middle School** - secondary education of students from grades six through eight.

**Morpheme** - the smallest meaningful unit in the English language identified as an affix or base (Reutzel & Cooter, 2000).

**Morphology** - is the study of the English forms and structure as in linguistics (Reutzel & Cooter, 2000).

**Pedagogy** - the art of instruction and teaching (Reutzel & Cooter, 2000).
**Phoneme** - is the smallest and most basic unit of speech in the English language (Reutzel & Cooter, 2000).

**Phonemic Awareness** - is the understanding that every spoken word is made up of two or more phonemes, or speech sounds. Phonemic awareness involves the ability to hear, blend and segment phonemes in spoken words. It is an auditory skill that does not involve the use of print (Reutzel & Cooter, 2000).

**Phonetic** - the study of the sounds of the spoken language (Reutzel & Cooter, 2000).

**Public Schools** - state operated free schools all children may attend regardless of race or religion or disability.

**Prescriptive Assessment** - is an individualized assessment to determine remediation for a particular deficiency (Biondi, 2001).

**Reading** - the understanding of written a print material for particular interpretation (Reutzel & Cooter, 2000).

**Reading Comprehension** - is an active, engaged cognitive process of weaving words into phrases, clauses, sentences, and paragraphs. In the reading process one thinks about what the author is saying and connects it to prior knowledge and arrives at an understanding of the text. Readers construct meaning to the recognition of words and phrases (Liang, 2006).

**Reading Gap** - is a term used to describe the difference between the target level of reading proficiency, which should be possible for all students to achieve, and the actual level of reading proficiency (Reutzel & Cooter, 2000).

**Reading Program** - is a program involving the teaching of reading and understanding of its basic components (Reutzel & Cooter, 2000).
Remediation - is individualized instruction based upon academic deficiencies this instruction and may be given in small groups or one on one (Lindo, 2006).

Research-Based Instruction - is the pedagogy an (Reutzel & Cooter, 2000).

Strategies - the methods and techniques used to ensure understanding of the process or subject area (Lindo, 2006).

Syntax - is the grammar or the word order of language (Reutzel & Cooter, 2000).

Tutorial Program - a program that is designed to assist students outside the normal school setting (Lindo, 2006).

Technology - applications of hardware use and the understanding of software in the operation of computer programs.

Visual-graphophonic - (phonemes) which is the visual letter symbol-speech sound system (Reutzel & Cooter, 2000).

Word recognition - the act of applying recognition for words that are known through sight and familiarity (Reutzel & Cooter, 2000).

Research Question and Hypotheses cueing system - is composed of 26 letters (graphemes) and 44 sounds

What are the specially selected specific reading interventions that will increase the reading performances of bilingual or bi-dialectal middle school children?

H1 The specially selected specific reading interventions will have a significant effects and increases of the reading performances of bilingual or bi-dialectal middle school children.

Null- H01 - The specially selected specific reading interventions will have no significant effects and no increases of the reading performances of bilingual or bi-dialectal middle school children.
H2 A significant relationship of higher reading performances will exist in the evaluation of the pre and posttest scores between the students in the eighth grade who participated in the study.

Null- H02 - A significant relationship of higher reading performances will not exist in the evaluation of the pre and posttest scores between the students in the eighth grade who participated in the study.

H3 Students who received specially selected specific reading interventions will score significantly higher on reading placement post-testing than those students who did not receive specially selected specific reading interventions.

Null- H03 - Students who received specially selected specific reading interventions will not score significantly higher on reading placement post-testing than those students who did not receive specially selected specific reading interventions.

Limitations of the Study

According to Gay & Airasian (2003), a limitation is some aspect of the study that the researcher knows may negatively affect the study but over which he or she has no control. One limitation of this study was that Haitians represent a very small part of the total immigrant population (Mancilla, et al., 2011). A second limitation was that there is a dearth of literature about the matriculation of Haitian-American students in American schools (Obiakor, 2007). The third limitation of this study was the researcher was dependent upon the permission of the participating students and their parents. The fourth limitation was the unavailability of post-testing scores due to absences from school, unavailable parental consent forms or student failure to identify answer sheets with signatures at post testing. Still, these limitations did not lessen the value of this research for at-risk minority populations.
Intended Audience

This research will benefit ESOL training programs for teachers at public schools, community colleges, university TESOL programs, policy makers who formulate curriculum for immigrant students, Haitian studies programs and community-based programs that seek to serve the needs of children that may be bilingual or speak linguistic forms of dialect (Bonenfant, 2001). The data developed here will help educators to understand that reading has both cultural and academic components which must be included in the development of curriculum (Brigman, Webb, & Campbell, 2007). The curriculum is designed for first and second generation American born students, considering a majority of these students are of Haitian decent.

Overview of study

The study used a quantitative sampling of convenience. A sampling of convenience is based upon using subjects because of their ready availability (Gay & Airasian, 2003). This study allowed the researcher to use a group of students who were already identified, though not randomly chosen, because they are voluntary student participants in the Broward County School District. The researcher conducted a formative assessment of the students’ current reading skills and determined their deficiencies. This data was used to develop intervention strategies for the improvement of reading skills and metacomprehension processes (DeBruin et al., 2011; Denton, Barth, Fletcher, Wexler, Vaughn, & Cirino, 2011; Baker, 2002).

Participants

Participants are the subjects that a researcher chooses to participate in a study (Gay & Airasian, 2003; Creswell, 2003). The target group for this study was a group of adolescent, at-risk black students in middle school students who were enrolled in the Broward County School District. These students were a convenience sampling. These students performed and scored below their
present eighth grade level in reading skills and comprehension on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (See Appendix F, FCAT scores). The students were residents of Southern Florida and resided in a community with a significant Haitian presence and were generally first or second generation students in America. These students were classified within at risk categories such as immigrant, black and impoverished (Maxwell, 2010; Brooks, 2006).

The students were given a diagnostic reading test to determine their reading levels by grade. The purpose was to conduct a formative assessment that identified their deficiencies and helped the researcher identify areas where interventions were to be applied. The researcher analyzed the grade level placement test and student work rubrics produced during the intervention process to determine student performance levels and mastery of reading skills such as phonemic awareness, comprehension, inference, main idea, sequencing of event, supporting facts and details, literary elements, etc. Patterns emerged that shed light on a program of successful pedagogy and instructional remediation of middle school reading problems using a repertoire of intervention strategies.

In Chapter Two, the review of literature reveals the “crisis in American schools” and how multifaceted this problem is throughout the country (Kunjufu, 2011a). The U.S. Department of Education maintains and monitors United States laws, state policies and initiatives in the advent of Title III, No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001). The discussion explores reasons for the achievement gap, correlating the relationship of the students’ inability to effectively read (reading gap) directly impacting students’ under-achievement rates and low standardized testing scores (Luke, et al., 2011). The study will examine the deficiencies of at-risk students in reading in order to develop a successful reading intervention curriculum to improve their academic performance. The discussion continues with an historical perspective of Haitian migrations to the U.S. and why there has been a need for
required remedial instruction and/or special services for this particular group. Special reading
services must be provided to catch up students (ESOL) in academic content areas (Girard, 2002;
California Legislative Analyst’s Office, 2004). Chapter Three explains the methodology selected for
the study participants, identifies target group numbers and limitation criteria of the target group.
Chapter Four details the intervention processes and inferential statistical analysis results of the pre/
post-testing findings. Chapter Five discusses the conclusions and reasons for future research.

There is a dearth of information available on Haitian immigrants in public education;
however, the status of the crisis and academic growth for minority students with particular focus on
students who are English learners and identified as sub-groups shows very little measurable
improvement. This is especially true for Title I school children in low income areas with high
numbers of transitioning immigrant families (Nieto, 2004; Helman, 2005) young children of Haitian
descent (Magny, 2004; Zephir, 2001). My knowledge and experience working in the study’s site
location/school for nine years as a reading teacher in a predominately Black-Haitian neighborhood
has shown though evidence of the demographics and scores on standardized tests, the need for
intervention strategies and services that meet the particular cultural linguistic diversity (Benner, et
al., 2011) for this group of students. Nieto, (2004) also states in her book that “linguistic diversity is
an asset and good education helps students use their experiences as a basis for further learning.” This
problem merited investigation because widespread student underachievement in multiple academic
content areas was primarily due to lack of reading comprehension skills.

Future research will be required for this particular sub-group considering the influx of
Haitian children migrating now and will continue to migrate to the U.S. due to the regions
earthquake catastrophe in the spring of 2010. The study has focuses on the need for the development
of reading intervention techniques unique to this immigrant group. This project sought to understand
what problems were prevalent for first and second generation Black/Haitian-American born students primarily, and other participating students who may be categorized as bilingual or bi-dialectal.
Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

Introduction

American schools are facing a national crisis that has a direct effect on our children’s future and the future generations to come (Giroux, 2009; Jacobs, 2008). The failure of American students to learn to read well is having a devastating effect on the quality of public education. Illiteracy, the scourge of a first class society, is becoming more prevalent (Jacobs, 2008; Joseph, 2008). The United States has implemented a number of nationwide efforts such as the 2004, $200 million Striving Readers Program through the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education which targeted students with persistent difficulty in reading (Jacobs, 2008). Additionally, for more than a decade, the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) has compelled states to institute standardized testing, to monitor school level progress and to disaggregate data to look at subpopulations which have traditionally gone neglected or underserved – especially minority children (Woodard & Johnson, 2009).

At the very core of America’s challenge to improve its education standards is the problem and crisis in reading and literacy (Snow, Lawrence, & White, 2009). Anstey and Bull (2004) define a multi-literal student as being cognitively and socially literate with hard copy paper text, live visuals, and electronic texts (Henry, 2006). It also means being strategic, being able to recognize what is required in a given text, examine what is already known, and modify that knowledge to develop a strategy that suits the context and situation (Hough, 2010). A multi-literate person must therefore be a problem solver and strategic thinker. Teachers must adapt their practices in classroom applications (Jenkins & Terjeson, 2011), as well as expectations to the dimensions of multi-literacy.
The ability of our nation to have a literate, economically viable society is impacted by our capability to produce literate citizens through our educational system. Education is one of the pillars of our society (Woodard & Johnson, 2009; Lester, 2006; Santa, 2006).

As in many states throughout our country, many schools face the challenge of educating disadvantaged or low performing youth (Lindo, 2006). In the era of the No Child left Behind (NCLB) Act (2001), there are increasing numbers of students performing below grade level in reading and writing. There are growing calls for alarm and national sentiments that students’ deficiencies in reading are becoming more glaring problems (Giroux, H. (2009; Jacobs, 2008). For example, 26% of students in the eighth grade, according to the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition & Language Instruction Educational Programs (NCELA, 2002; Mancilla, et al., 2011), read below nationally recognized standards. Then, there is the persistent problem of underachievement by minority students as compared to their white counterparts known as the “achievement gap” (Fisher & Ivey, 2006).

Long-time researchers of public education have identified some intractable problems. For example, Jawanza Kunjufu (2011a) says that students of color fall behind progressively in their primary and secondary educational experience and has argued that by 4th grade they are 2 years behind; by 8th grade they are 3 years behind; and by 12th grade, they are a full four years behind their grade level and graduate with the equivalent of an 8th grade education. Noguera (2003) has provided the laundry list of public education ills: low test scores, low grades, ineffective or exhausted teachers, attendance problems, students with little drive to learn and low self-esteem and high dropout rates. The number of students who lack literacy skills is not negligible: there are eight million struggling readers in grades 4-12 in schools across our nation (NCES, 2004). This is the context in which children who struggle with reading must learn new reading skills. Moreover, these
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students must learn in large classes where their individual needs cannot possibly be met (Bacon, 2005).

Reading is a complex web of skills under any circumstances. Learning to read for any student requires mastery of reading sub-skills like: comprehension, fluency, phonemic awareness, semantics, and syntax (Nassaji, 2011; Allington, 2007). There are also cognitive components to reading (i.e., how one processes and interprets information based on intellectual development (Wilson & Semtana, 2011; Páez, 2008). For example, reading comprehension which on its face seems apparent requires that a reader be able to process both “explicit” information which is stated in the text and “implicit” information that may be inferred from the text (Kelly, Gomez-Bellenge, Chen, & Schulz, 2008). The reading process relies heavily upon the brains own cognitive growth and the readers ability to interpret information as it receives and builds meaning (McNamera, 2011).

There are also cultural factors that impact a student’s ability to read, such as the speech development patterns and literacy experiences with parents prior to attending school that have affected emergent reading skills long before students are formally taught to read (Knoester, 2010). In another instance, reading requires fluency and automaticity (Durkin, 1993), the ability to read without having to pause and decode words for meaning (Mancilla et al., 2011). The ability to read is essential to the academic experience of all immigrants (Páez, 2008). Smith (2002) concluded in his research factors that could lead to underachievement may be grouped into these four areas:

1) physical- any persistent or chronic illness including sight or hearing problems can affect reading negatively,

2) environmental- at least three environments which are school, home, society and culture can affect learning,
(3) emotional- self-esteem concerning poor past performances, feeling out of place for a variety of reasons, being teased or ignored can lead to stress and a child may not be able to readily learn.

(4) intellectual- all children can learn given the right kinds of help. (p.2)

A major concern for culturally diverse students are the language patterns used in home and school-peer interactions which may cause linguistic isolations (Whitmore & Crowell, 2006; Black, 2005). These linguistic isolations are compounded by the student’s lack of understanding the structural analyses and semantics (Mocombe, 2005) of the English language. The lack of a student’s understanding in these key areas directly influences low academic performances, and may prevent English language acquisition, reading comprehension and fluency. Teachers and administrators must recognize cultural differences to create effective curriculum because conditions such as peer influences within the school's culture, socio-structural conditions, additional reading programs, and after-school and support programs for parents speaking limited English in the homes have a direct impact on language acquisition skills (Newton, 2011; Lindo, 2006; Nieto, 2004).

Teaching students to read in a middle school setting is challenging for the best instructors under the best of circumstances (DeBruin et al., 2011). In addition to all of the technical aspects to learning to read, teachers must be able to foster a sense of safety and positive influence so that learning can take place for all students – especially those who are non-native speakers (Newton, 2011). Teachers have to employ a number of strategies to help students learn to read well that include, research-based interventions, pullouts, individualized and group instruction, and reading specialists who either work with individual students or lead groups of instructors in improving reading practices school-wide (Woodard & Johnson, 2009).
The study examined the reading deficiencies of at risk bilingual/bi-dialectal students in a predominantly black middle school in order to develop a successful reading intervention curriculum to improve their academic performances. The review of literature revealed how multifaceted this problem is for immigrant students, or those students who are experiencing linguistic misunderstandings (Tam et al., 2006). Immigrant learners face a difficult path in acquiring proper reading skills that include their own cultural barriers as well as all those inherent in learning in public school settings (Nassaji, 2011; Páez, 2008; Brigman et al., 2007).

The literature review demonstrated the need for the development of reading intervention techniques unique to this particular minority group. The following discussion chronicles and examines the reading crisis in American schools, the achievement gap, the reading gap, English speakers of other languages, Haitian immigrants in public education and intervention strategies with immigrant students (Obiakor, 2007; Pace, 2006).

Broward County’s first generation Haitian children generally lack English support structures within their home environments and as in many cases here in Broward County, poor proficiency of the spoken home language only complicates this problem (Bonenfant, 2001). Due to the lack of these socio-structural inadequacies such as parental support structures in the schools, role models, academic motivation and self-esteem, converged with the economic disadvantage in the home environment (Nassaji, 2011; Páez, 2008; Vilme & Butler, 2004) these conditions usually create frustration, depression, and little or no faith in the life expected here in America (Magny, 2004).

Again, the research question: What are the specially selected specific reading interventions that will increase the reading performances of bilingual or bi-dialectal middle school children? This question brings us to the core of our problem. For immigrant children, especially minority children who become students in American schools, data indicates that the traditional achievement gap in
reading have become wider and more intimidating (NCELA, 2002). What must be done to combat this growing reading problem? This crisis is further complicated by the fact that our U.S. population is changing. Some 14 million illegal immigrants have joined the nearly twenty percent of our population for whom our native tongue, English, is a second language (Martelly, 2001). Immigrant students have become a significant presence in school populations across the country (Lenters, 2006; Vilme & Butler, 2004). As these students enter schools, reading programs simply try to use the same approach for improving literacy to all these groups, assuming that the same intervention strategies that worked for Hispanics, for example, will work for Haitians (Nassaji, 2011; Lenters, 2006; Vilme & Butler, 2004; Bonenfant, 2001). This assumption ignores cultural differences and learning styles (Páez, 2008).

Reading Difficulty for Adolescent Learners

Adolescent readers in middle school are neglected because the majority of attention goes to teaching elementary level readers (Jacobs, 2008). In the mid-1960s public school educators began to try to combat the problems of reading in elementary and middle schools. Reports as far back as the 1983 alerted the public to “calls for alarm” in reading and literacy failure. Our nation’s youth has remained at risk and the NCES, (2004) report showed that adolescent learners were reading drastically below grade level and showing no signs of improving over time. However, scholars began to point out that middle school students who read poorly were the products of having not been properly prepared in the many primary school programs (Woodard & Johnson, 2009; Jacobs, 2008; Lenters, 2006; Bacon, 2005; Dieker & Little, 2005). Nationally, the focus has been aimed at the primary grades but a shift began to occur in the 1990s because reports began to emerge demonstrating that reading instruction was needed just as well in the middle grades (Jacobs, 2008).
No Child Left Behind (2001) imposed several state level mandates which heightened the national understanding of the depth of the problem. Adolescent readers became a major concern because NCLB, (2001) required annual testing from grades three to eight and brought to light neglected populations of students, including minority groups, who had been allowed to languish in failing schools which gave poor attention to improving their abilities (Woodard & Johnson, 2009).

What kinds of problems do adolescent readers have? Many are simply functionally illiterate; and the rates of illiteracy are as high as 40% among minorities (Nassaji, 2011; Páez, 2008; Tam et al., 2006). Students exhibit cognitive delays and problems simply reading their textbooks, analyzing text and interpreting meaning or gaining comprehension of the printed text. Because they have dysfunction processing printed materials, they cannot master the context of other core subject areas, and exhibit little short term memory recalling sequences of events or expository facts and details (Dieker & Little, 2005). Due to high levels of frustration, their minds drift away from the subject matter.

The majority of these students lack high order thinking skills and cannot draw inferences from materials; neither can they write effectively in a persuasive fashion (Jacobs, 2008). Perhaps just as important, these students are then placed in large classroom settings where instructors have neither time nor occasion to address their individual deficiencies, causing them to fall even further into the realms of functional illiteracy in the classroom (Giroux, 2009; Bacon, 2008). These deficiencies are critical, again, because reading is used to learn content at the middle and high school levels. At the middle school level, “. . . teachers expect students to use this skill [i.e., reading] to learn; and if they cannot, it will impact the student across all courses taken (Lester et al., 2006). Schools with adolescent learners must develop and incorporate reading programs that seek to address their reading problems and these programs must be given priority in the context of their school’s overall plan for success (Chapman, 2010; Woodard & Johnson, 2009). Without these
programs, adolescent students become resistant to learning how to read well because at a very formative point in their own cognitive development they are left adrift and their self-esteem is injured and may, in some cases never recover (Allington, 2007; Lenters, 2006).

The needs of adolescent readers are different from those of elementary learners (Jacobs, 2008). For elementary readers, the problem may be more one of decoding words but for adolescent readers, the crux of the problems are his or her abilities to reason and understand what they have read (Jacobs, 2008; Berman, 2006). The root of the adolescents’ struggle to read well is the inability to construct meaning apply that meaning to create new knowledge (Woodard & Johnson, 2009; Bacon, 2005; Dieker & Little, 2005). Students at the adolescent level must be able to meld his or hers personal experiences with the knowledge acquired in the students’ educational experiences in order to gain understanding and relevance to new knowledge (Jacobs, 2008; Lindo, 2006).

**African-American and Black Immigrant Second Language Learners**

There is an old saying among African-Americans that “when an American catches a cold, African-Americans get pneumonia.” So, it is no surprise that is reading creates difficulty among at a rate of 13% among the general population that the same problem exists at a rate of 40% among minorities (Jacobs, 2008; Lenters, 2005). First identified in the 1960s, the achievement gap between black and white students (Fisher & Ivey, 2006) has been an intractable problem which only showed small signs of shrinking during the 1970s and 1980s but reverted back to widening in the 1990s (Lindo, 2006).

At one point the National Center Educational Statistics, (2004) data showed that 61% of African-American students were reading below grade level and 27% at the lowest “basic” level. This pattern of reading difficulty shows up as early as fourth grade (Kunjufu, 2011b). This pattern is prospectively a large growing problem because reading is more than academic exercise; it is a life
skill; and not knowing how to read well will impact adolescent students for the rest of matriculation through school and well into their lives and careers (Liang & Dole, 2006). Lindo (2006) concluded this perspective in her research, “It has been argued that these deficits have lifelong consequences, such as restricting access to higher education and limiting employment and earning opportunities”. A part of the problem with minority underperformance is that despite the great attention given to desegregating schools in the 1970s, students of color remain mired in segregated, poorly operated and technologically deficient schools with teachers who expect little from them and many of whom are uncertified in the subjects they taught (Kunjufu, 2011b; Noguera, 2004; Swain, 2004).

In a study of whether African-Americans were even being given real consideration in studies about reading, Endia Lindo (2006), reviewed 971 journal articles purporting to provide data about reading intervention programs, none (0%) separated their findings by race and only two of the studies had populations where blacks constituted 85% or more of the participants. The focus of that study was the “presence of the African-American presence in intervention studies” but to the researcher’s dismay, she found that the data left a great need for studies which focused solely on the problems of these students apart from their peers (Lindo, 2006). The point is that more research, like the present study, is needed on intervention strategies that work for minority students (Wanzak, Vaughn, Roberts & Fletcher, 2011).

In considering the plight of African-American students; it is imperative the educators begin to recognize that black communities are not homogenous, no more than any other majority or minority community (Lester, 2006; Williams, 2006; Whitmore & Crowell, 2006). There are significant Caribbean influences in these communities throughout the country and an ever-growing Haitian presence that deserves attention (Páez 2008; Vilme & Butler, 2004; Bonenfant, 2001). In other words, we must begin to recognize diversity within minority communities (Kelly et al., 2008;
The standardized approaches to teaching reading to African-Americans will not necessarily apply to Haitian students who have a plethora of cultural, historical and language issues all of their own. Working with second-language learners requires recognition that teaching reading to this group is a “cross language” process, not just an attempt to get a native speaker to embrace standardized language in his native tongue (Tam, et al., 2006; Nassaji, 2011).

Therefore, when Haitian students are taught within the context of schools where African-Americans dominate the population, there is the possibility that teachers may treat them as just another group of black students when in reality, in many cases their parents migrated to the U.S. and they are second language learner who require different teaching strategies (Páez, 2008; Vilme & Butler, 2004; Bonenfant, 2001).

**Haitian Immigrants in Public Education**

Haitian migration to American has happened recently in three successive waves: in the 1950s, the well-educated and politically connected fled the regime of Francois “Papa Doc” Duvalier of 1957; the second wave – mainly skilled laborers came in the 1960s through the 1980s; and the last group (Girard, 2002) – the lower class laborers – followed. This immigration matter is important because it suggests that the Haitian children that we see in schools are a part of this latter laborer, less-educated class (Vilme & Butler, 2004; Bonenfant, 2001). This group, unlike their predecessors was met with ostracism because of their pre-American status as an underclass. Given this dilemma, the ability to learn and acquire English represents a chance to elevate themselves socially out of the realm of being outsiders (Girard, 2002). This is the American dream.

In the last decade, the academic success rates for at risk bilingual/bi-dialectal children have plummeted to an all-time low in our American public schools. Our schools are experiencing an increase in low achievement rates and a decrease in reading proficiency within our bilingual/bi-
dialectal populations (Obiakor, 2007; Lindo, 2006; Nieto, 2004). Our bilingual/bi-dialectal populations are exhibiting multifaceted problems such as English-language deficiencies, low income per household, levels low of social capital in their communities, and the lack of formal education or proficiency in their home languages and the English language (Spencer & Guillaume, 2006; Black, 2005; Adamson, 2005).

Success in America is relative to one’s level of education. “Formal schooling is an important social institution in the cultural and political absorption of immigrants into the American mainstream” (Vilme & Butler, 2004). Education requires the ability to master the language. Immigrants face a daunting task in this regard. “About one in every six 5-17 year old person speaks a language other than English at home. There are nearly 2.7 million households where no person above 14 years of age speaks English well; these are called “linguistically isolated” households” (Nassaji, 2011; Paez, 2008; Mocombe, 2005; Black, 2005). For Haitian students, the ability to integrate, adapt to school and build success is tied to their ability to learn to read. Some 42% of children in America are minority students (Chapman, 2010; Swain, 2004; Bonenfant, 2001).

A significant portion of these students are also immigrants who are learning the language formally for the first time. The question presents itself: how can they survive in the American educational system that relies solely on the students’ ability to read and understand in English? Additionally, there are a number of transitional issues—such as culture, poverty, parent educational levels, peer pressures, cultural sensitivity for teachers, and learning styles that affect teaching and learning for this portion of the student population (Kunjufu, 2011b; Nieto, 2004; Magny, 2004).

The population of Haitian immigrants and—by extension Haitian students—is growing. Haitian students are considered at-risk and affected by a number of conditions: poverty, learning ability, disadvantage, immigrant status and race/ethnicity (Kelly, et al., 2008). As their numbers
increase, considering the increases of students after the major earthquake in Haiti, we must address social issues, cultural issues, low achievement issues, and have the resources within our educational system and be prepared to teach them effectively (Alverman & Reinking, 2007; Black, 2005; Bonenfant, 2001).

Diverse Populations

When developing the ability to read and understand the English language we must immediately consider the diverse population of English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) learners that attend our schools and their families that exist within our society. U.S culture is a mixture of many different people and their groups’ cultures. Within our culture, we have many subcultures. Many Americans who have come to this country originated from various countries and backgrounds where English was not the primary language (Bonenfant, 2001). Many children are considered to possess the linguistic characteristics termed as bi-lingual and bi-dialectal speaking abilities. These languages are generally spoken in the home environment. Thus, their children must experience transitions, learn English in school and are expected to succeed in subject content areas as well. Education represents success.

Bonenfant, (2001) concludes in his study of educating the bi-lingual student populations that cultural considerations must be given to patterns, behaviors, attitudes, and values such as freedom, honor, competition, honesty, and individualism. In the classroom environment, we as teachers inadvertently develop attitudes within ourselves in relationship to the physical environment and others within the environment (2001). Within the realms of education in the classrooms, teachers must become sensitive to cultural backgrounds and experiences of diverse students (Jenkins, & Terjeson, 2011). Experienced educators suggest that teachers need to first acknowledge these
differences and then act as a bridge between their students’ differences and the culture of the dominant society (Adamson, 2005).

Statistics of population trends were reported in April, 2004 by the Education Policy Research Unit (EPRU) of Arizona State University. The EPRU states that the Federal Census reports 23.1% of Florida residents over the age of five speaks a language other than English. One out of every 5 students in Florida’s K-12 public schools is an English Language Learner (ELL). Spanish speakers representing 71.3% are the most common among Florida’s English Language Learners, followed by Haitian-Creole speakers representing 11.4%. Overall, ELL students represent 25% of worldwide countries and these student populations speak more than 200 different languages. The Education Policy Studies Laboratory reported that currently 75% of the immigrants in Florida are from Caribbean and Latin American nations (EPRU, 2004). These populations are expected to speak, read, and write the English language so that they may experience success within society. Reading and literacy are interchangeable processes interrelated with writing and speaking the English language (Joseph, 2008). Becoming literate in American society is an individual task. It involves learning the language and being able to function within the educational system, workforce, and community.

The Broward School District requires teachers to use the Broward School District ESOL Training Manual (2004) and schools to implement ESOL strategies in lesson plans, classroom instruction and evaluate annual yearly progress (AYP) of all ESOL students attending school. This is a mandatory program to assist students in acquiring English as their second language. Educators must allow time for ESOL students to experience their assimilation individually. These processes differ depending on the individual. Hundreds of students assimilate fully and become “Americanized”, and others partially assimilate persevering their groups’ cultural ways, never
forgetting their original cultural identities and value systems (Broward ESOL Manual, 2004). To integrate multimodal curriculum and accomplish educational goals, teachers must understand what ESOL students bring to the school experience. Their experiences generally include their family, cultural, home experience backgrounds (Meloy, 2010; Martelly, 2001; Powell, Cantrell & Adams, 2001).

Language is a mutually and socially agreed upon system, representing the full range of human knowledge, experience, and emotions. Human beings use language as a tool for speaking, reading, writing, for thinking, solving problems, sharing ideas and emotions (Broward School District ESOL Training Manual 2004). Reutzel & Cooter (2000) stated that “language can be perceived as being receptive or expressive. Receptive language is used when the receiver of the message decodes the symbol system of the language into meaning. Expressive language is used when the sender of a message encodes his/her thoughts into the symbol system of the language”. Reutzel & Cooter (2000) identifies the study of language in four basic fields:

Linguistics is the study of language structure and its use when communicating.

Psycholinguistics is the study of how language is used to organize the mind and how language relates to thinking and learning.

Sociolinguistics is the study of how language relates to the human and societal behaviors with a concern for the social and cultural settings in which the languages are used.

Language acquisition is a study of how infants learn to use language to meet their needs and to express their ideas (p.51).

The researchers state that the process of reading the English language is divided into three language cueing systems:

1. Semantics is the study of the meaning of language.
2. Syntax is the grammar or the word order of language.

3. Visual-graphophonic cueing system is composed of 26 letters (graphemes) and 44 sounds (phonemes) which are the visual letter symbol-speech sound systems (p.52).

Reutzel & Cooter (2000) further propose that the understanding and meaning of written or spoken language is the act of comprehending. Reading Education, literacy, and diverse populations are interconnected areas when we look at the educational needs of our society. Examining educational processes from a different perspective and respecting the learners’ different cultural backgrounds and viewpoints, curriculum and literacy instructional practices must adapt and change to meet the needs of our diverse population of learners. Educators must also consider the intrinsic needs of these students, considering the close link between pride and self esteem and its effects on a student’s ability to cognitively learn (Denton, Cirino et al., 2011).

*The Achievement Gap*

The achievement gap is a term that describes the inability of minority children to perform at a level equal to their peers in the majority group (Kunjufu, 2011a; Noguera, 2004; Swain, 2004). It is a term that refers to minority or immigrant students being left behind white or majority group students of equal age, gender and grade level (Lester, 2006). To examine the gap further, (Alvermann & Reinking, 2007) surmised that the achievement gap is really not a single, identifiable characteristic; rather, is it a confluence of problems that lead to performance deficiencies for certain segments of the student population. There is neither a sole cause for this persistent gap in achievement nor is there a sole solution (McDougal & Littell, 2002). Multiple factors create a major achievement disadvantage for Afro-immigrant groups of students, and there are many factors of causality for their failures and deficiencies in their academic performances (Paez, 2008; Bonenfant, 2001). It is our
responsibility to facilitate learning environments that are conducive for this group of students’
academic success.

The educational dilemma is further complicated for the children who are bilingual and bi-
dialectal here in Fort Lauderdale and Miami-Dade because these particular groups of children are
experiencing major gaps in reading proficiencies. As a consequence, at risk children are
demonstrating a host of classroom dysfunctions such as low test scores on standardized reading and
comprehension tests sponsored by the State of Florida School Boards. This is especially true for the
Broward County Schools who are experiencing a growing population of Haitian immigrants. Are
these children defective; are their abilities deficient; or is their problem really a matter of teachers
using ineffective intervention techniques to help them make the language transition and develop a
solid foundation for reading and comprehension? No, the children are not academically defective,
the educators must use multimodal pedagogy in the classroom.

*Reading Education*

Educator/researcher Delores Durkin (1993) stated that when experiencing comprehension,
the meaning of a word as it is used by an author must be known by a reader at the level of
automaticity. This concept of automaticity is understood and separated into two distinct processes.
The reading process model hypothesizes that the human mind functions much like a computer, and
that visual input is serially and sequentially entered into the mind of the reader (DeBruin, et al.,
2011; Perkins, 1992; Durkin, 1993). Human beings have always possessed the ability to perform
more than one task at a time. However, we must always consider that the mind of the reader has
limited attention capacity for doing parallel mental processing jobs. Student readers are usually
bogged down in decoding, so the ability to shift attention and focus on comprehending breaks down
(McLaren, 2003). If students, young adults and older adults do not understand what they read,
comprehension has not taken place. To become a literate person, that person should be able to read, write, speak, listen, interpret information and understand the content of the material he or she has read.

_Literacy_

The definition of literacy is changing and shaping the practices of literacy along with socio-cultural factors that influence literate behaviors. Jacobs (2008) demonstrates that literacy is a crisis and should be understood in the context of the developmental stages of reading. For adolescent learners this is particularly important since their ability to understand the subject matter of their classes depends upon their fluency with literacy (DeBruin, et al., 2011; Jacobs, 2002). Luke & Freebody (1997) developed four roles of the reader as an approach to the teaching of reading focusing on the question, “What are the kinds of reading practices and positions schools should value, encourage, and propagate?” The roles are: code breaker, meaning maker, text user, and text analyst.

Anstey and Bull (2006) described significant aspects of change that affected literacy and literacy practices. When readers and viewers can see and understand the facts, major aspects of these events can influence their day-to-day literate practices in a variety of different settings. This new trend that is emerging from the impact of globalization and technology on social behaviors demands that today’s middle school minority students acquire a greater range of technological applications, knowledge, skills and audio-visual practices. Literacy is still viewed today as the ability to read and write thus having ability function in today’s society. Many people who are not illiterate by the older definition or criteria are not truly literate either. The intermediate status by definition is called semi-literacy. Many Americans experience multiple educational failures in the cycle of semi-literacy repeats itself (Berman, 2006).
Second language learners are often being classified as semi-literate individuals as evidenced by assessment testing (Henry, 2006) in South Florida schools. The bilingual population has exploded in South Florida and we are facing major literacy problems in our schools. Problems of literacy are affecting young and older student’s abilities to pass entrance reading examinations in the Junior Community Colleges. South Florida’s literacy problem extends well beyond age groups, race and economic conditions. The problems are systemic and solutions are needed throughout the United States. The value of literacy is reflected in the expansion of post- high school remedial curriculum in Reading being offered and taught at several area community colleges in South Florida.

Reading and writing are important skills to possess as colleges test students that have graduated from high school. In the past academic year 2010-2011, the Coconut Creek Community College in South Florida has offered semester enrollment to students for remedial reading courses. These are non-matriculated students who have failed to pass the entrance exam(s) at least one time. Remedial courses offered in 2011-2012 semesters continue to increase due to open enrollment policies. Donna Willington (2009) confirms the numerous obstacles new community college students face in developmental education courses throughout the country. Considering that higher education requires sufficient reading and writing skills (Kruidenier, MacArthur & Wrigley, 2010) a deficiency Donna Willington (2009) noted and specified that a major student need was “remediation” for inadequate vocabularies, reading and comprehension strategies. The literacy dilemma has affected school age children, post high school students and people affected by the current economic conditions who are seeking higher education (Willington, 2009). Adequate literacy practices apparently have not embedded its deep roots within our society’s educational processes and the crisis is still growing.
Intervention Strategies

Struggling readers do not get enough instruction in the context of a normal school day (Allington, 2007). These students presently get 20 to 30 minutes of reading instruction while they spend the majority of their day (up to six class periods) mired in a struggle to understand what they read without adequate intervention (Allington, 2007). Additionally, they are generally placed in a classroom where the student teacher ratio is above 20:1, making it nearly impossible for even a competent instructor to meet their needs (Bacon, 2008). In order for struggling students to learn to read well, they need a combination of “behavioral tools” and reading techniques or strategies to function well in school (Bacon, 2005, p. 416). So, it is apparent that these students start in a position of disadvantage (Bacon, 2005; Allington, 2007; Woodard & Johnson, 2009).

First, what constitutes reading intervention? “A reading intervention [is] a study designed to test a method or instructional program in an effort to determine its effects on participants” (Lindo, 2006). In other words, for a period of time, struggling readers are exposed to a change in teaching strategy or a change in learning environment and the change is expected to yield a measurable result, hopefully in improved reading skills (Lindo, 2006). Intervention strategies can consists of individualized instruction, small groups, daily reading instruction in 15-20 minute segments, or the intervention can be aimed at the components of reading like metacognition, fluency, comprehension or decoding (DeBruin et al., 2011; Bacon, 2005; Woodard & Johnson, 2009). Intervention can include decoding exercises, meta-cognitive development skills, read alouds, syntactic and semantic recognition instruction, and phonological awareness (Lawrence, White & Snow, 2010). Bacon (2005) describes intervention as follows:

Reading intervention is necessarily intense because most students in such a program are performing significantly below grade level. Ideally, the instruction occurs in a one-to-one
setting for about one hour each school day and for at least six weeks. Students and their instructors follow a lesson-plan format that works at the student’s instructional level and incorporates word work, rereading, guided reading, comprehension activities, and a connection to writing . . . In addition, one or more strategies may be taught to the student with the goal being that these strategies take advantage of the student’s unique strengths and then allows him or her to increase in reading skill and ability (p.418).

Thus, a reading intervention program has the components of targeted instruction, skills development, daily intercession and this all happens over a time span (Bacon, 2005; Woodard & Johnson, 2009). Assessment performances must be evaluated consistently for durations of time because there must be determinations, or examinations at the very least, that the intervention has produced change (Woodard & Johnson, 2009; Bacon, 2005). Usually, this is accomplished through pre-testing and post-testing students with a standardized measure of some kind. It is important to recognize that no single approach works for every student in every school (Allington, 2007). Researchers must also keep in mind that intervention alone is not enough (Woodard & Johnson, 2009; Lindo, 2007; Allington, 2007; Bacon, 2005).

There are other important factors to consider when implementing a reading intervention program such as, its priority within the overall curriculum, the strengths of the teachers involved and their preparation through professional development or more formal training, the goals for the students and a need to shy away from a one-way works for everyone model (Lawrence, et al., 2010; Allington, 2007; Lindo, 2006; Bacon, 2005.) The implementation of this reading intervention study and its research design is meant to measure cause and effect (Creswell, 2003). The target groups’ placement is a convenience sampling of children attending the site location of the research study,
and quasi-experimental designs of this nature usually depend upon pre-testing and post-testing individual participants (Creswell, 2003).

In educational research, quasi-experimental designs are used to compare the performance of a control group to which no intervention or “treatment” is given and to an experimental (causal) group to which intervention is applied. These experiments are commonly used in reading intervention programs (Creswell, 2003). For example, Wanzak, et al., (2011) conducted a reading intervention program study for disabled learners using two groups, 65 did not receive intervention and 55 did. The researchers conducted a one year long student with middle school student and focused on phonemic awareness, sight word fluency, decoding and comprehension. In the end, they found that their study did not create significant gains for the experimental group (Wanzak, et al., 2011). Denton, Cirino, et al., (2011) conducted a 16-week intervention with elementary students, using a four-session per week construct. The students focused on fluency, and a pre-test and post-test was administered; however, after examination and controlling for other factors, their study showed only low rates of improvement (Denton, Cirino et al., 2011).

In another study, Kim, et al., (2010), conducted a comparison of the computer assisted program READ 180 and compared their results to a district after-school program. The components of their 23 week, 4 days per week design included computer-assisted instruction, videos and learning-appropriate or leveled texts, independent reading and teacher-led lessons. Their results showed no significant difference on norm-referenced tests between their group and the students who participated in the districts standard tutoring program (Kim, et al., 2010). The point here is that these models are common used in educational research – especially for reading. A similar construct of comparing a control versus experimental group served as the basis for the current research study.
The Reading Gap

The reading gap is a significant but poorly understood issue within the achievement gap. “The reading gap is a term used to describe the differences between the target level of reading proficiency which should be possible for students to achieve and the actual level of reading proficiency” (McDougal & Littell, 2002). With adequate instruction most children should be able to read on grade level. The quintessential thing of note here is that failure in reading is preventable (2002). There is a reading crisis here in America’s education system. The crisis stems from the inability of so many students to read printed material he or she may encounter in today’s highly technical world (NCES, 2004). It is a systemic problem, meaning that it is present throughout our country. “Reading is the cornerstone of all school-based learning; yet, reading failure is pervasive. There are several factors that put students at-risk of failure in reading: poverty, phonological processing, language barriers, parents’ low reading abilities and or biological-psychological learning deficits” (McDougal & Littell, 2002). An example of this reading crisis exists in Florida, a state with a large immigrant population, among which Haitians are the second largest group. In the impoverished areas of Southern Florida, data collected from the most recent Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT, 2009) reveals several differences in reading performances (See Appendix F).

The FCAT test is designed to evaluate and assess mastery of competencies, standards and benchmarks of Florida’s schools. Broward County School District’s educational objectives are measured by this test. As indicated below, the state’s middle school population of Black, Hispanic, Asian and White students, and perhaps a few cases not reported have high percentages of level 1 and 2 scores. Black and Hispanic groups scored 30% and 22% respectively. Of all the students scoring below the 25th percentile (Level 1) in Reading on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test
(FCAT) of 2009, the most problematic group are those students who speak English as a second language within the Black group.

**Florida Department of Education Achievement Level Definitions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 5</th>
<th>This student has success with the most challenging content of the <em>Sunshine State Standards</em>. A student scoring in Level 5 answers most of the test questions correctly, including the most challenging questions.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>This student has success with the challenging content of the <em>Sunshine State Standards</em>. A student scoring in Level 4 answers most of the test questions correctly, but may have only some success with questions that reflect the most challenging content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>This student has partial success with the challenging content of the <em>Sunshine State Standards</em>, but performance is inconsistent. A student scoring in Level 3 answers many of the test questions correctly but is generally less successful with questions that are the most challenging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>This student has limited success with the challenging content of the <em>Sunshine State Standards</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>This student has little success with the challenging content of the <em>Sunshine State Standards</em>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scale scores are reported for all FCAT SSS subjects and range from 100 (lowest) to 500 (highest). Developmental Scale Scores (DSS) are only reported for FCAT SSS Reading and Mathematics and range from 0 to about 3000 across grades 3 through 10. DSS link two years of student FCAT data that track student progress over time. Students should receive higher scores as they move from grade-to-grade according to their increased achievement. DSS cannot be determined for FCAT Science and Writing because students are not tested in these subjects at each grade level (See Appendix F, Florida FCAT State Performance Results, 2009).

**Table 1**

**FCAT 2009 8th Grade Student Performance Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Level 4</th>
<th>Level 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After analyzing the data, it is sufficient to say that the black group of students are the highest level 1 and level 2 scores. The Hispanic groups of students score slightly lower in percentile ranks than the Blacks in their level 1 and level 2 scores. The White and Asian students have the lowest number of students with percentiles of level 1 and 2 scores, noting that the Asian group has the lowest amount of students scoring and levels 1 and 2 scores of all the groups. The Asian group has the highest amount of students scoring level 5 followed by the Whites, and then the Hispanics, and the Blacks with the lowest amount of students scoring and level 5 percentile. Asian students have scored 10 % in the highest level 5 percentile. Below are the research site school scores.

**FCAT: Parkway Middle School Grade Eight FCAT 2009**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8th grade Students</th>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Level 4</th>
<th>Level 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>351</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The FCAT, (2009) report above indicates that Parkway Middle school students remained problematic because students scored below his or her counterpart vis-à-vis the Hispanics, Whites and Asian students in the Broward County School District.

Reading is a fundamental tool that every child must have in order to function in school and acquire a cumulative education. This is necessary to be prepared to have a future vocation and place in society. Reading failure is preventable, however we must ask ourselves why are at-risk Haitian bilingual student's underachieving their peer's such as Hispanics, Asians, and the white students? What must we do to decrease the achievement gap in reading and literacy for the at-risk bilingual population of students that do not perform well?

Cunningham (2001) warned the public in his National Reading Panel Report (2001) of the alarming increasing numbers of students in grades 4-12 who are struggling readers. A high degree of
literacy and reading skills are needed in all grade levels. Policymakers argue that programs are needed to improve the comprehension of students; however, many programs are neither research-based nor provide empirical evidence and they lack adequate evaluation procedures (Rand Group, 2002). More attention is needed statewide to promote reading and literacy skills. Findings from the Rand (2002) research concluded that little direct attention has been provided, thus increasing the need for student centered reading, and more research is necessary. Literacy training and should be geared toward student success and based upon educational issues that educators are facing in current classrooms (Rand, 2002).

*English Speakers of Other Languages*

English speakers of other languages must have sound reading fundamentals and programs that introduce them to their new language. According to Douglass H. Adamson (2005), there are 3.5 million students in American public schools who do not speak English as their first language. To teach these students, we must take into account the social, psychological and cultural influences that affect our ability to teach these students effectively (Adamson, 2005). ESOL at risk children are experiencing language difficulties in areas of reading and testing. The most problematic area is language development and acquisition Bilingual education programs here in South Florida schools were designed to address theories that support second language acquisition.

The methods used were intended to support the effectiveness of the program. An in-depth understanding of why we are experiencing a continuous dysfunction of achievement, only suggests an examination of alternatives that are necessary to improve reading scores and bilingual education. The research question is “What are the specially selected specific reading interventions that will increase the reading performances of bilingual or bi-dialectal middle school children?” Are there
reading intervention strategies for first born -American students that will facilitate their transition as English learners and improve their reading performance?

There are some related questions: (1) What are the glaring skill deficiencies preventing adequate student language fluency? (2) What types of programs are available to assist immigrant students who show problems in reading? (3) Can programs designed for Non-Creole speakers successfully help Haitian-American students? (4) What reading strategies for bilingual, at risk students work and can they be adapted to Haitian students?

Bi-lingual, ESOL student issues have researchers asking “What are the relative powers of various instructional delivery systems available to teachers that are designed to help the problems that America's teachers having in the classrooms?” We need to ask ourselves through thorough investigations, what are the contributing factors of low versus high achievement in our bilingual contributions here in the U.S.? Socio-cultural and structural components have to be considered, and culturally sensitive attitudes must be promoted to effectively improve children’s reading performances. Sociolinguistic researcher Mocombe (2005) concludes that black children perform poorly or fail because they lack inherent ability or integrate cognitively “a mismatch of linguistic structures”. He believes that black children develop or are socialized in a sociolinguistic peer group. Smith (1998) concluded in his case study that new arrivals of Haitian children of school age have little education and knowledge of English. The student’s perception teachers and the school as a “community of support”, in his opinion became questionable.

Research has shown if a student’s shows proficiency in two or more languages from non-English speaking backgrounds, that student will attain greater success in English proficiency in other domains if the appropriate levels of the first language development, especially literacy, are achieved (Tharp, 1997). Many ESOL students in South Florida’s schools lack proficiencies in the first
language and experience “language isolations” when learning English while attending public schools. Further research is essential to address the above mentioned issues and embrace the plethora of problems that our populations of bilingual, bi-dialectal students are experiencing in South Florida’s public schools.

Theoretical Framework and Metacognition of Event-based Sentence Comprehension

Intervention reading activities were introduced with explicit instructions, modeled reading strategies and guided practice (Liang, & Dole, 2006) using an audio book/grade level text. The theory of acoustic/phonetic variations occurring as brain signatures combined with visual images send multiple signals to the student’s brain (Huang & Gordon, 2011). In the context of brain functioning, these cognitive processes promoted real-time event language comprehension of the audio/book context (Boulenger, Hoen, Jacquier & Meunier, 2011). According to Florit, E., Roch, M., & Levorato, C.M. (2011), listening to the text promoted metacognitive processing of the student’s brain signatures interfacing with acoustic/phonetic variations and semantic knowledge of the language in the book.

This particular technique utilizes neuro-physiological mechanisms that act as receptors to visual images of print, semantics, phonetic and sentence interpretations of verbal language (Boulenger et al., 2011; Florit et al., 2011; Amsel, 2011; Huang & Gordon, 2011). When using eye-tracking Amsel, (2011) while listening and pointing to the words read by the audio tape simultaneously, this task creates sound to sight immediate word recognition linguistically relevant. The language experience that develops in the student’s mind follows the taxonomy (DeBruin, et al., 2011) of higher order thinking processes (Comber & Nixon, 2011). Kinesthetic applications using audio/book experience activates the metacognitive language experience using the student’s mental processing and motor activity. The experimental (causal group) interacted with the audio/book to
promote physiological mechanisms (visual, motor etc.) allowing the students to respond simultaneously to syntactic directed speech from the audio tape (Denton, et al., 2011; Rogalsky & Hickok, 2011).

The theoretical implication of this particular procedure supports the cognitive mental processes of the brain connecting to the semantic knowledge in the sentence by sentence comprehension (Rogalsky & Hickok, 2011) of the context in the paragraphs in the book. A systematic series of real-time exposures (Amsel, 2011), varying from 10-15 min, were used to apply the visual (Lecas, Mazaud, Reibel & Rey, 2011) and phonological connections to the student’s lexical and linguistic understandings of the English language pronunciations. As the student points to each word (mandatory) as it is heard from the tape, (Boyle, Washburn, Rosenberg, Connelly, Brinkerhoff & Banerjee, 2002) event time-frame sentence by sentence integrations occur that are identified as audio/phonetic/visual/metacognitive processes in the student’s brain (Boulenger, Hoen, Jacquier & Meunier, 2011). As the sessions progressed, the causal group continued to improve in the cognitive processes of lexical access and semantic integrations facilitated by the oral language listening experience. When the causal group listened to the audio book/text read aloud, ideas, concepts and events within the story, the complete activity (visual, auditory, motor, meta-cognition) reinforced student’s ability to comprehend beyond boundaries of their immediate spatial context (Woodard & Johnson, 2009; Berman, 2006). The metacognitive approach was based upon the theory of using researched-based reading applications designed to improve comprehension. Additional research applications used are identified as metacomprehension, acoustic/phonetic interfacing, and kinesthetic-based sound to text correspondences (Boulenger, et al., 2011).

The metacomprehension process is the explanation of the thinking or cognitive processes in the realm of understanding the comprehension process (DeBruin, et al., 2011). A schematic chart is
used with direct explicit instruction. The kinesthetic application is motor activity/word pointing and using the hand with a pointer is mandatory to activate the acoustic/phonetic interface with lexical and semantic cognitive processing in the brain (Huang & Gordon, 2011). All of these factors had an intricate role in the numeric results of the intervention processes. This theoretical approach applied the multimodal, metacomprehension and cognitive approaches I used with the experimental (causal) group that is supported by current research paradigms. This experimental design has indicated the research study’s intervention’s theoretical applications and implementations significantly effective.

Metacognitive knowledge is an awareness of the thinking process and promotes the supportive frameworks for understanding comprehension processes during reading and listening (Newton, 2011) to text or stories read aloud. These supportive processes assist young children to develop a sense of how stories are constructed and expand the student’s cognitive understanding of story content (Wright, Capilouto, Srinivasan, & Fergadiotis, 2011). When visual images are created in the reader’s mind, questioning and clarifications are necessary to reinforce understanding. Perkins (1992) defines four levels of metacognition knowledge that are helpful to readers when asked to understand the different learning styles of readers. These four levels illustrate how learners move to more sophisticated ways of monitoring their own thinking.

Perkins identifies four kinds of learners/readers:

1. Tacit learners/readers. These are readers who lack awareness of how they think when they read.
2. Aware learners/readers. These are readers who realize when meaning has broken down or confusion has set in but who may not have sufficient strategies for fixing the problem.
3. Strategic learners/readers. These are readers who use the thinking and comprehension strategies are described to enhance understanding and acquire knowledge. They are able to monitor and repair meaning when it is disrupted.
4. Reflective learners/readers. These are readers who are strategic about the thinking and are able to apply strategies flexibly depending on their goals the purposes for reading.

According to Perkins (1992), learners in the classroom also “reflect on the thinking, ponder and revise the use of strategies.” Students must know when, why, and how to use metacognition during the reading process. This multidimensional individualized approach allows equal access to all subject content areas challenging students to the highest level of academic enrichment and achievement while learning the language during the reading process (Willingham & Price, 2009).

**Research–Based strategies**

The strategies used are identified as sentence by sentence monitoring, concept mapping, SQ3R and QAR’s and self-monitoring (Mesner & Huchins, 2002) which are centered upon improving reading achievement and comprehension processes. The sentence by sentence monitoring requires that each sentence is examined one by one (Butner, 2002). The structural and semantic components are explained and the student’s understanding of the paragraph context is assessed. Surveying, questioning, reading, reciting, and reviewing (SQ3R) strategy is used to promote an understanding of printed text after reading and listening to the audio tape or reviewing the hard copy of the book. Question/answer relationship (QAR) is applied for whole group/small group discussion of the materials (Wilson, & Semtana, 2011). Self-monitoring allows the student to assess his/her individual progress and understanding of key concepts (See Appendix G). Audio books with hard copies are used for this particular intervention and challenge the student’s intellectual development, but generally do not exceed the emotional maturity giving the students ample opportunity to enjoy the experience. Audio books should be those that exceed independent reading levels of the students (Reutzel & Cooter, 2000).
The critical question of this study was how to counteract these truisms with effective classroom strategies in reading that would lead to success for the students. The principle focus here was on the pedagogy of teaching reading (Dieker & Little, 2005). For reading educators, classroom instruction has evolved into the practice of identifying multiple literacies and multiple literate practices, as well as an understanding of the literacy in socio-cultural dimensions. Teachers must inspire children to learn and at the same time create an enthusiasm for reading. Readers must read at the independent level that they are comfortable with if they want to be successful at improving reading skill and comprehension (Dieker & Little, 2005; Lindo, 2006). At the same time learning to have conversations about books, a certain theme or curricular topic is a strong motivating factor. There is no better way to get a child to participate than by asking the child to contribute their opinions or selections of reading material (Montelongo, Herter, Ansaldo & Hatter, 2010).

The one great importance of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) is that is forced schools to highlight achievement levels of underserved learning communities and placed the onus for correcting their deficiencies squarely on the shoulders of educators (Jacobs, 2008). Many students with two or more years below the current grade level which signals importance to applying strategies that reach everyone present in the classroom (Kunjufu, 2011b). They arrive at that point, often via the overt neglect of the people most entrusted to teach them (Noguera, 2004; Swain, 2004; Kunjufu, 2011b; Lindo, 2006). For years, Kunjufu (2011b) has argued that minority children progressive fall behind (e.g., 2 years behind by fourth grade; 3 years behind by eight grade and 4 years behind by 12th grade) so that the graduate with only the equivalent of an eighth grade education.

Considering the magnitude of the reading crisis and statistics of many students in urban schools, experiencing reading failure constitutes a need for reading research studies and intervention models that address the crisis in public schools.
Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction

Experimental research is a quantitative research model (Gay & Airasian, 2003; Creswell, 2003). Quantitative research differs from qualitative counterpart in that it attempts to measure change, based upon the application of a treatment or intervention (Gay & Airasian, 2003; Creswell, 2003). “Quantitative research is a type of educational research in which the researcher decides what to study, asks specific, narrow questions, collects numeric data from participants, analyzes these numbers and conducts inquiry in an unbiased, objective manner” (Creswell, 2003). While quantitative research had its roots in the physical sciences, its rigor have been adopted and applied to the social sciences; hence, it is now used widely educational research.

Design and Methodology for Experimental Research

Experimental research employs the technique of controlling variables in order to preserve the validity and reliability of findings (Gay & Airasian, 2003; Creswell, 2003). An experimental research project is carefully designed to control and influence all variables except for those whose specific relationship is being explored (Gay & Airasian, 2003; Creswell, 2003). A quasi-experimental research model where the research assigns participants to groups, sometimes as a matter of convenience, because the groups are not generally artificially created (Gay & Airasian, 2003; Creswell, 2003). The quasi-experimental structure allows the researcher to create two groups for comparisons: one being the control group which does not receive a treatment or intervention and the other being the experimental (causal) group to which some intervention or treatment is applied (Gay & Airasian, 2003; Creswell, 2003; Kim, et al., 2010; Denton, Cirino, et al., 2011; Wanzak, et al., 2011). Additionally, the quasi-experimental design for educational research usually employs a
pre-test and post-test model as a means of data collection (Gay & Airasian, 2003; Creswell, 2003; Kim, et al., 2010).

The group targeted for this study was approximately 25 middle school students of African descent (i.e., African-American and Haitian American) whose reading skill levels were one to two grades below his or her actual grade level. These particular students had scored below the 25th percentile on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test, meaning he or she failed to meet the minimum score of level 3 in reading. These students, all living in the same community and attending the same school, exhibited the achievement gap characteristics of sub-par academic performance, low self-esteem and low teacher expectations that leads either to dropping out or non-graduation (Noguera, 2003). The target group had a sense of entitlement toward failure rather than success and many simply did not believe that they could improve or perform well (Kunjufu, 2011a). These are the children Lisa Delpit (1995) identified years ago as “other people’s children,” the ones for whom no one wants to expend a great deal of energy trying to save.

Assessment

The mode of assessment was the use of the McDougal and Littell (2002) reading comprehension test as a pre-test and post-test experience. The McDougal and Littell (2002) assessment instrument which was specifically designed to evaluate mastery of reading sub-skills like phonemic awareness, comprehension, inference main idea, sequencing of events, supporting facts and details, etc. These rudiments of reading are essential to a student’s ability to translate words into meaning and are at the core of the metacognitive nexus that makes reading a specialized learning skill (Kelly, et al., 2008; Jacobs, 2008).
Research Subjects (Participants)

Subject to enrollment with the Broward County School District and the subject school, the researcher was able to identify at a total of 25 participants. The participants were selected as a convenience sampling from the middle school where the researcher is a reading instructor (Creswell, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) in a Broward County public school where the population student population was 81.6% African-American (includes Haitian students); 13.9% White; 2.5% Multiracial; and 1.6% Other. The students were specifically chosen because they met the criteria of performing one to two levels below grade level. The total student population was 1160 students. As eighth graders, this meant that they were reading, in some cases at a level equal to that of sixth grade students. They had a history of problems in reading as demonstrated on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) and had been placed in classes for remediation to strengthen their reading comprehension skills.

All of the students were enrolled in intensive reading classes due to having performed below Level 3 on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). The majority of the participants, 23 of 25, were reading at least two levels or more below grade level. These students were available based upon their enrollment in these courses, not as a matter of purposive sampling (Gay & Airasian, 2003; Creswell, 2003). They were, in fact, a convenience sampling of the population of readers in their school. Convenience sampling consists of “whoever happens to be available” (Gay & Airasian, 2003; Creswell, 2003). It should be noted that small samples can be used in quantitative research (Gay & Airasian, 2003; Creswell, 2003; Kim, et al., 2010; Wanzak, et al., 2011; Vaughn, Roberts & Fletcher, 2011). While this limits the generalizability of the results, it does not negate the potential usefulness of the data (Gay & Airasian, 2003; Creswell, 2003).
The subjects were middle school students and residents of Southern Florida, living in a community with an African-American community with significant Haitian presence. Members of this collective group also fit into other at-risk categories such as immigrant, black and impoverished (Bonenfant, 2001). Black communities with these types of characteristics exhibit communications that are diverse and students may be categorized as bilingual or bi-dialectal when identifying languages and speech patterns (Bonenfant, 2001; Páez, 2008).

Consent

The subjects of the study were minors; therefore, they, alone, could not give consent to participate in the research. The researcher, as a matter of honoring the practical process of the Union Institute & University IRB process had to contact their parents to gain formal consent. After receiving formal permission to conduct the study from Broward County Public Schools and the permission of the site administrator, the researcher contacted the parents of each participant via a letter and received a Summary of the Study (See Appendices A and B). The letter identified the researcher and the purpose of the study. The Summary of the Study provided a detailed depiction of how the researcher would interact with the participants and explained that potential harm was minimal. Only after parents gave written consent were students allowed to formally participate in the study.

Data Collection Instrumentation

The principal data in the study consisted of the pre-test and post-test scores of the participants. The participants were administered the McDougal and Littell (2002) grade level placement tests. In keeping with traditional educational research, the researcher used a well-known research based tool that is widely used in public schools; Kim, et al., 2010; Wanzak, et al. 2011). Students were administered the pre-test within the first month of the school year. All students in the
school took the same test and the researcher was given permission to use their scores as the baseline for comparison. The scores were obtained from the Broward County Public Schools data base. The McDougal and Littell (2002) instrument was designed to evaluate the student’s mastery of reading skills such as phonemic awareness, comprehension, inference, main idea, sequencing of event, supporting facts and details, literary elements, etc. The pre-test results were a formative assessment that provided the researcher with data about the individuals reading skills, grade level, comprehension and fundamental comprehension skills of the participants.

Each student participating in the research project was expected to work at his respective reading level and improve based upon direct instruction administered by the teaching staff, in this case the researcher. This grade level placement test developed by McDougal and Littell (2002), a Houghton-Mifflin Company was administered to all participants. It was designed specifically to evaluate the grade level readiness of middle school students. The placement text evaluated fluency, main idea, vocabulary, consonant blends and digraphs, vowel awareness, syllabication and other elements of reading. A McDougal and Littell (2002) pre/post test was required for all participants in the Broward County School District. These tests were conducted at the direction of the principal for purposes measurability and validity. However, the results were made available to the researcher for comparison and determinations of significant gains in reading abilities of the participating students.

Data Collection Procedures

Data gathering took place with the permission of the Broward County Public School system and the site administrator. With both and pre-test and post-test, the data was downloaded from the district’s database and provided to the researcher by the site administrator. The researcher has followed protocols set by the school district – namely, seeking approval to access student test results – in order to conduct data analysis.
The process for data collection was as follows: (1) the Broward County School Public School system issued a letter requesting participation; (2) participants were provided with information concerning the scope and nature of the research project; (3) parents and participants received a list of students-parents rights and responsibilities; (4) parents were provided with a calendar of the expected dates of the study; (5) and parents were provided with informed consents and other data related to the Protection of Human Subjects in accordance with Union Institute & University’s IRB procedures.

Data collection consisted of pre-test and post-test scores so that the researcher was able to simply compare the results and determine whether the intervention yielded measurable change (Creswell, 2003). The researcher followed the proper protocols to meet the tests of the Union institute & University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) processes as well those of Broward County Public Schools. The researcher did not have contact with students until Union Institute & University IRB approval was obtained from the university and subsequent permission was granted through application and approval by Broward County Public Schools. Parents/guardians and student were provided information about the nature of the study, written consent and student assent were obtained and the process of data collection began in earnest.

Data Analysis Procedures

This analysis technique is called the t test and analyzes the difference between the means of the two groups. (Gay & Airasian, 2003; Creswell, 2003). The entire target group testing will yield numerical scores that can be analyzed statistically (Gay & Airasian, 2003; Creswell, 2003). The difference between means of the control group and the experimental group are stated in terms of a group mean scores (Gay & Airasian, 2003; Creswell, 2003). The two group’s pre and post-testing t test inferential analysis will determine whether the differences are significant (Gay & Airasian,
A significant difference indicated in this analysis will render a successful intervention interpretation and result (Gay & Airasian, 2003; Creswell, 2003; Charles & Mertler, 2002). Data was analyzed over a period of six months. Mainly, the analysis involved examining pre/post-test data to determine whether students demonstrated degrees of gain in reading performance. The researcher organized the data to determine what patterns emerged that demonstrated whether the interventions were successful or ineffective. The inferential statistical evaluation using the T-Test was used to determine points of significant gains. The test was also used to determine learning progress of students from the pre and post-tests.

Prior to tests, each student was assigned a number for purposes of anonymity. The control was numbered 501-515 and the experimental group was numbers 301-310. The crux of the analysis was to compare the pre-test and post-test results to determine if the administration of the treatment yielded any positive improvement in the reading scores of the experimental group. Additionally, the researcher used the t-test, inferential statistical analysis of raw scores of the control and experimental groups (Gay & Airasian, 2003; Creswell, 2003). In the present research, “t” represents the total number of student tested. The T-test establishes a mean score out of the raw scores of the total number of students and the students’ individual scores are assessed as variations (+/-) of the mean. These operations were conducted through the use of IBM Predictive Analytic Software (formerly known as Statistical Packages for Social Sciences [SPSS]) and the results were integrated into the findings detailed in Chapter Four.

**Human Subjects Protection**

The researcher obtained permission to conduct her research from the Union Institute & University, Institutional Review Board and followed the Union Institute & University protocols for proper notification of the objectives for a quantitative study, anonymity for the participants when
needed and for confidentiality when needed. Students were assigned a number to maintain anonymity. The researcher has not collected personal data on the participants. The researchers prepared a letter explaining the nature of the study and the objectives of the research. All participating student’s parents read and signed a Consent Form, verifying that they were aware that they were participating in a study, to ensure that all procedures in keeping with the Office of Human Research Protection of the United States Department of Health and Human Services were followed.
Chapter Four

Results

Introduction

The ability to read well is essential to learning in school (Jacobs, 2008). By far, it is one academic skill that every student needs to be successful (Joseph, 2008; Gregg, & Sekeres, 2006) It is farce to believe that any child can successfully matriculate through school with no command of how to decipher words into coherent meaning and transform that meaning into new knowledge (Woodard & Johnson, 2009). This challenge is even more difficult for children who are first generation immigrants who must overcome the two-fold struggle of learning a new culture and learning the nuances of a new way of speaking (i.e., a new language) and their adopted home (Nassaji, 2010). Both of these have vicissitudes of meaning and variations in color and inflection that make academic adjustment difficult (Páez, 2008). So, if learning to read well is generally difficult for native speakers of English; one can only imagine the struggles bi-dialectal or bi-lingual students face in a classroom in America where their teachers, more than likely, only speak English (Páez, 2008; Nassaji, 2011).

Bi-dialectal students are African-American students who speak versions of English that are not the standard (Bonenfant, 2001). Their language – incorrectly and pejoratively so, is often referred to as black English or Ebonics, term that have become synonymous with “bad English” (Brooks, 2006; Katz, 2003; Kunjufu, 2011b). When in reality, their language development within the American context is really the natural progression of the blending of African dialects with English that originally led to a function form of English that allowed them to perform their tasks as an oppressed people within first a slave-driven and then a segregated society (Giroux, 2009). Their language is not a lesser language but one that was useful within their social context, just as Spanglish is useful Latino or Hispanic immigrant who merges his home language with the new language of his adopted country (Páez, 2008).
Bilingual students of color hail from a number of countries; however, in this study, the focus was on Haitian-American students because in South Florida where this study took place, as in many cities around the country, they tend to attend the same schools as African-American students in large numbers. As bilingual students, Haitian-American students have the same core problem as any immigrant working its way through the America public education system (Bonenfant, 2001). They are learning their lessons in a language that is not their home language (Vilme & Butler, 2004; Lenters, 2006; Páez, 2008; Nassaji, 2011). For generations, ESOL students — regardless of their skin color — have had to overcome this same barrier in public education settings (Vilme & Butler, 2004; Lenters, 2006; Páez, 2008; Nassaji, 2011).

The unique problem with Haitian-American students is that people do not distinguish them from African American students as having different needs (Bonenfant, 2001; Páez, 2008; Santa, 2006). While African-Americans are generally acculturated into American society, first generation Haitian students are in the process of adapting socially while simultaneously trying to overcome trying to learn subject matter (Knoester, 2010; Páez, 2008; Bonenfant, 2001). Yet, African-American and Haitian children find themselves in the same classrooms struggling to read well. These are the students most noted in literacy and achievement gap studies, the ones whose scores over time have shown little or no signs of improvement despite the intervention applied (Kunjufu, 2011a). This is point at which this quasi-experimental study brought the intervention of the McDougal and Littell (2002) grade level placement test for reading to bear on this complex problem.

Now, the question presented itself: what was the best way to develop reading skills in African-American students who are bi-dialectal and/or bilingual in middle school? This study was designed as a quasi-experimental on inquiry the effects of implementing a reading instruction program that will improve the test scores of the aforementioned students. The crux of the study was
to identify a reading intervention model and determine if it were applied properly, could that model lead to improvement in the reading habits of students whose home language skills represented a barrier to classroom instruction in Standard English. The commonality is that both students’ home language was an impediment to their ability to read well in the formal language setting of an American public school.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process whereby a researcher examines data collected over time to see if patterns emerge of whether the results demonstrate evidence of measurable change (Creswell, 2003). The data analysis of the pre-test and post-test data was conducted in two phases. First, the raw scores for the twenty-five participants were charted and compared to examine whether students demonstrated any measure of improved performance. Then those same scores were converted to grade level improvement measures to determine how whether students made gains in their actual ability to read on their expected eighth grade level.

Reading grade level scores for participants in the experimental and comparison groups at both pre-test and post-test were analyzed using PASW (formerly SPSS) version 18 software. T-tests revealed no significant difference between the groups at pre-test: t (25) = -.816, p> .05. However, there was a significant difference between the groups at post-test: t (25) = 2.22, p< .05. The same analysis was conducted using raw scores to verify the findings, with similar results.

In Table 1 below, the raw score percentages are provided. The score demonstrate measurable improvement in the experimental (causal) group. Of the ten participants in the experimental group, only one showed a negative result, a decrease in score from pre-test to post-test of -0.2 while the remaining nine other participants increased their scores ranging from +0.2 to as much as +4.3. These
scores suggest that the intervention had a positive impact on these participants in terms of raw score numbers.

The mean average for improvement for all participants in the experimental group for raw scores in Chart 1 was +1.6. The comparison group, consisting of 15 members had much less favorable results. Of the 15 participants in the comparison group, nine saw a decrease in their scores from pre-test to post-test and the highest rate of positive increase was only 2.0, a full 2.3 points below the highest improved score in the experimental group. Additionally, the average score actually decreased for the comparison group by -0.23 points per participant. Clearly, in the raw scores, the experimental group appears to have benefited from the additional intervention.
Table 1 on the following page provides an analysis of reading grade levels from pre-test to post-test. Again, the total number of students in the study was 25, 10 in the experimental group and 15 in the comparison group.

Table 1

*Reading Level Grade Scores by Group*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID Number</th>
<th>Pre-test Scores</th>
<th>Post-test Scores</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experimental (N=10)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>501</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>+2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>502</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>+1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>503</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>+0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>504</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>+0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>505</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>506</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>+0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>507</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>+2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>508</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>&gt;9.0</td>
<td>+1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>509</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>+3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>510</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>+4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.75</strong></td>
<td><strong>7.37</strong></td>
<td><strong>+1.6</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comparison (N=15)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>-1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>302</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>-1.2</td>
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<td>6.3</td>
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<td>-1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>304</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>-3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>305</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>-2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>306</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>307</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>+0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>308</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>+0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>309</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>+0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>310</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>311</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>-2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>312</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>-1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>313</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>+2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>314</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>+0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>315</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>+0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>6.29</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.87</strong></td>
<td><strong>-0.25</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 below demonstrates that the mean score of the experimental group had a +1.62 point increase in their mean score and a +.10 increase in the standard deviation among all participants. While among the comparison groups there was decline in the mean score of -.42 and a decrease in the mean of -.03. Again, the experimental group appears to have made gains based on the application of the intervention. So, in terms of grade level, the experimental group draw closer to its rightful eighth grade reading level while the comparison groups results in the post-test continued show that that those readers were more than two grade levels behind in their abilities. So by every measure, it appears that the experimental group, as a result of the intervention scored closer to their rightful grade level. This intervention appeared to have a positive impact for these bi-dialectal and bilingual learners in a predominantly African-American school with a significant Haitian-American presence. (See also Figures 1 and 2 below.)

Table 2

*Analysis of Reading Grade Level Scores*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N=25</th>
<th>Pre-test Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Post-Test Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>N=10</td>
<td>5.75</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>7.37</td>
<td>1.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>N=15</td>
<td>6.29</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>5.87</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>p = .42</td>
<td></td>
<td>P = .036</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1

*Change in Reading Grade Level Scores by Group*

Note: Time 1 = Pre-test; Time 2 = Post-test

Figure 2

*Grouped Data, Plotted by Case*

Experimental Group (top box only)
Table 3 represents raw scores converted into grade level scores. The raw score is converted to the reading grade levels using a conversion sheet. For example, a raw score of 89% is fifty (50) questions answered correctly = 9.0 (9th grade level) while .1 to .9 indicates the months of the school year (one – nine months).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experimental Group ID#</th>
<th>Pre test Score (4th grade, 9mo.)</th>
<th>Post-test Score</th>
<th>Final +/- grade level(s)deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>501</td>
<td>4.9=raw score of 66</td>
<td>7.5=raw score 84</td>
<td>+2.6 (up 2yrs 6 mo.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>502</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>503</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>504</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>505</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>506</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>507</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>508</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>&gt;9.0</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>509</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>510</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>&gt;9.0</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Group ID#</td>
<td>PRE SCORES</td>
<td>POST SCORES</td>
<td>(+-)grade deviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301</td>
<td>6.5= raw score of 79</td>
<td>5.5= raw score 71</td>
<td>-1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>302</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>303</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>304</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>305</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>306</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>-3.0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>307</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>70</td>
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<tr>
<td>308</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>309</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>310</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
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<td>8.5</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>312</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>313</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>314</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>315</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These scores again demonstrate improvement among the Experimental Group versus the Comparison Group. For example, Experimental Group showed average increase of +2.6 years of growth in reading skills with a least two students showing an average of 4 years of progress. Only one student a single student in the Experimental Group showed a loss of academic progress and then at a rate of only -.2. Nine out of ten participants in the Experimental Group showed gains with three showing a positive but less than one grade level of development, two showing a year or more of improvement and three showing two or more grade levels increase in their reading ability. In other words, 90% of the participants in the Experimental group showed improvement in their grade level ability in reading.

Conversely, in the Comparison Group, 9 of 15 showed a loss of growth, meaning the group fell in their scores farther below his or her eighth grade reading level, meaning 60% of the Comparison participants lost ground in his or her reading ability. Meanwhile, only six showed any positive grade level gain and only one of the six improve by more than two grade levels. The striking aspect of their performance was both the loss in grade level reading ability from normal instruction.
as well as the minimum gains. This appears to demonstrate that African-American and Haitian-American students need more intervention not only to progress in their reading skills but to also prevent them from retrogressing during the year. Interestingly, the students in both groups are in schools where state-mandated standardized testing has occurred during their entire academic careers. So, for them to be exposed to that much standardized testing preparation over the years and still be losing ground is difficult to explain. At this rate, the Comparison Group cannot meet the state-mandated reading benchmark. Some 25% of black students (which includes African-Americans and Haitians) in the subject school scored below the 25th percentile in reading, meaning they failed.

It is somewhat unusual that the scores of the comparison group would actually decrease between pre-test and post-test. If members of this group are, on average, younger than members of the experimental group, it may be that they find reading at the Grade 8 level to be more challenging. Since no demographic data was collected on the participants, any attempt to reason about this effect beyond what happened in the classroom might better be left to a subsequent future study. An examination of the average age of each group might rule out the possibility of an age difference between the groups. There may also be a difference between the groups because of the inability to make random assignments to groups. Broward County’s mandated reading curriculum mapping for middle school children differs from the kinesthetic interventions used in this study for the experimental Group and the results differed significantly between the control and experimental groups during the post-testing.

*Summary of Data Analysis*

There is no panacea for reading deficiencies; however, we do know that students must unequivocally be challenged to learn new comprehension skills (Jacob, 2008). Bilingual and bi-dialectal students struggle with the mechanics of reading and spend so much of their energy trying to
decipher text that comprehension is usually lost or at the very least, it goes lacking. Therefore, instructors must be innovative in reducing these barriers to comprehension by taking their reading deficiencies at the metacognitive level. Thus, the less time spent struggling with reading, the greater the chance of improved comprehension and better performance on reading tests.

The students here were far below the desired state standard. By scoring below the 25th percentile, they were in jeopardy of not only not passing reading, but being held back, another ignominious result of their reading difficulty. Those students who participated in the causal or experimental Group appear to have overcome their metacognitive struggles for the most part. Ninety percent showed improvement and 50% showed a grade level increase of one year. These results were not achieved magically; rather, they were the result of an intervention that placed the emphasis for learning in the right place. These results seem to suggest that for black students, the intervention must target their struggle with the mechanics of reading that exhaust their energy for understanding what they have read. Those students who did not have the intervention applied to their reading class (i.e., the control or comparison Group) for whatever reason retrogressed more than they progressed. Again, 60% showed a decline in grade level reading ability over the same eight-week period as their peer in the Experimental Group. One student declined as much as three grade levels in the comparison group which suggests that rather than learning, that child appeared to be disconnected and losing ground. From all indications of the results from the experimental group, the intervention had a positive impact.

Research Hypotheses Results

H1-The specially selected specific reading interventions will have a significant effects and increases of the reading performances of bilingual or bi-dialectal middle school children.
H1-Accept-Results are true and the causal exhibited significant higher performances and scores on the posttest.

Null– H01 – The specially selected specific reading interventions will have no significant effects and no increases of the reading performances of bilingual or bi-dialectal middle school children.

Reject Null-H01-Results are false because the causal group exhibited significant higher scores on the posttest.

H2-A significant relationship of higher reading performances will exist in the evaluation of the pre and post-test scores between the students in the eighth grade who participated in the study.

H2-Accept-Results revealed the high percentage causal group students experiencing significant increases of posttest scores as compared to pre-test scores.

Null– H02 – A significant relationship of higher reading performances will not exist in the evaluation of the pre and post-test scores between the students in the eighth grade who participated in the study.

Reject Null– H02 – The scores indicated that a significant relationship did exist with the causal group only and the control group participants revealed a lower mean score and lower posttest score results. H3-Students who received specially selected specific reading interventions will score significantly higher on reading placement post-testing than those students who did not receive specially selected specific reading interventions.

H3-Accept-Results are true and the causal exhibited significant higher scores on the posttest.

Null– H03 – Students who received specially selected specific reading interventions will not score significantly higher on reading placement post-testing than those students who did not receive specially selected specific reading interventions.
Reject Null– H03 – results are false and the causal exhibited significant higher performance scores on the post-test those students who did not receive specially selected specific reading interventions.

The intervention study paradigm did improve the experimental group’s academic expectations, and the hypotheses are accepted and correct. The study contributed in the development in the experimental group’s self-awareness of multi-literacy, engaged students with activities designed for modification of literacy and literate practices. Researchers such as myself, are examining what occurs within the processes of theoretic strategic reading and new methods of instruction that will combat underachievement in our public schools in South Florida.
Chapter Five

Conclusions, Discussion and Recommendations for Future Research

Educators are a community of lifelong learners. The community stakeholders and businesses have committed partnerships that nourish and redefine curriculum in schools participating in the Accelerated Schools Organization. Participating schools benefit through collaborations with major companies, donated equipment and instructional support. Improving the schools, developing teachers’ knowledge, and implementing successful roads towards student achievement are foreseeable goals. The concept of the teacher pedagogy explores the application of learning to linguistic content and determines the effectiveness of student understanding.

The review of literature has concluded that students of Haitian descent are but one segment of a large problem that affects the ability of students to learn and read effectively. The discussion demonstrates that reading is, in fact, a fundamental learning tool because it impacts a student’s ability to comprehend every other subject. The project examined the deficiencies identified in reading processes of bilingual and bi-dialectal students in which the majority are first born Haitian-American students. The intervention classroom expectations and instruction developed self-awareness of multi-literacy and engaged students with activities designed for modification or addition to student’s knowledge of literacy and literate practices. The project’s primary objective of the project was met exceeding 50% causal group improvement on the post-test results. The intervention goal was achieved at 90% causal group improvement and the researcher applied effective research-based intervention curriculum to improve the group’s overall academic performances. These students exhibited successful reading comprehension processes and post-testing results.
Reading and literacy educators are taking a closer look at what encourages a student’s love for books as well as what occurs within the processes of theoretic strategic reading and instruction. McNamera, (2011) proposes that metacognition when reading refers to thinking about reading in ways that enhance learning and understanding processes. It isn’t enough for students to simply understand a given strategy. I believe that a plethora of instructional strategies using audio books and metacognition processes must be incorporated and become an integral of the Broward County’s curriculum mapping taught and reinforced in our reading classroom settings.

New implementations for pedagogical practices and the use of audio book, as well as other forms of the electronic media within the reading curriculum are essential changes that affect children’s academic progress in the classroom (Hough, 2010). Students must know and understand how literacy works. The multi-literate student-centered reading classes must be aware that change has occurred from ‘old-fashioned” printed texts because of the advancement of technology. These technological advancements have changed practices of the classroom, subject content and the world that we live in. The new definition of literacy reflects a person that is responsive to changes, possesses enough knowledge to learn new literate practices, possesses skills, reading strategies, proper usage of writing conventions, and is able to use digital and electronic technology. Because of the new definitions of literacy practices, critical literacy is more important than ever (Boyle et al, 2002).

Recalling the Literature

First, the literature revealed that black students are not a homogenous group. They consist of African-Americans and other immigrant groups whose needs are different. While African-Americans’ reading problems are related to their ability to move from family versions of English learning and reading in standardized, Haitians, a relatively new subgroup of African-Americans,
struggle to learn to read amidst the chaos adjusting culturally while speaking Creole at home and learning their lesson in formal English. The literature reminded us that African-Americans have struggled to gain a quality education in a system that has perpetually undersold them and given them less than perfect learning conditions.

Second, the literature also revealed that those teaching reading to adolescent learners are often not prepared because the national emphasis for how to teach reading has focused on the primary rather than the middle school years. Middle school students who are struggling readers are often in schools that do not have adequate programs to address their reading deficiencies. Reading in the middle schools is a limited experience in spite of the fact that adolescent learners need their reading skills, more than their elementary counterparts, to excel in other subjects.

Third, there are numerous strategies that are employed to teach students to read. Reading requires mastery of metacognitive skills, phonemic awareness, comprehension, decoding, and fluency. In order to read well, adolescent learners must somehow master these skills while trying to learn their lessons which are compartmentalized into subject areas that they pursue six hours of the school day. Conversely, teachers of reading must use, pullouts, individualized and direct instruction, read aloud exercises, fluency, comprehension and syntactic and semantic lessons. Teaching students to read is a specialized skill – so, special in fact that reading specialists are now employed throughout the nation. This process become more complex when the learners are non-native speakers of other languages and immigrants who have to overcome both the complexity of their cultural transition but also their transition into an education system that is not always prepared to serve them well (Hough, 2003). If minority children graduate with the equivalent of an eighth grade education, then the odds are weighted against ESOL students.
Fourth, the literature revealed the reading intervention programs are commonly used to improve students’ ability to read. Used supplementally or in tandem with traditional tutoring programs, interventions seek to administer some form of treatment (i.e., a daily dose of intensive reading assistance aimed at developing a student’s weakness) in order to bolster reading ability (Dorr, 2006). Intervention programs often relay on research based programs and use structured learning settings with pre and post-testing to measure whether students get better as a result of the application of the treatment.

The focus is on high achievement in all areas of reading and language arts. This academic approach to the concepts of multi-literacies will always be influenced by society, changes in technology, and global communications (Berman, 2006; Anstey, & Bull, 2006). Teacher’s pedagogical repertoire must explore the changes and nature of changing literate practices. Students must be prepared for the social futures and a diverse linguistic world. Pedagogy permeates multidimensional curriculum and must provide students with opportunities to explore, discover and participate in literate practices. Focuses on curriculum re-structuring should provide opportunities for project based electronic research, live text, visual and audio applications accompanied with hard copy text.

*Summarizing the Findings*

This particular experimental research study appeared to show cause and effect relationships directly related to the interventions implemented with the experimental group, however, there are external variables to take into consideration. These variables may be classified as social relationships with peers and family, socio-economic status in the community, and effects of the individual student’s self esteem during the intervention period. This quantitative study addressed an in-depth evaluation of demographic components in a Florida Title 1 middle school and the reading
intervention that effectuates student achievement. What did the findings reveal? The findings showed that African-American and Haitian students who are given an intensive reading intervention can improve their scores. While every student in the experimental group improved, some of their counterparts in the control group declined in their performance. African-American students are still lagging behind and the achievement gap remains very real but there is no saying, based on the findings of this study, that improvement is beyond these students; nor is the achievement gap an intractable problem. At the core of correction is that very real notion that these students need more intense instruction in reading and more time on task.

Educational institutions must continue to recognize that black students are not a homogenous group and that there is no single panacea that helps them read better. However, the students did reveal that minority second language learners can learn to read better. Again, the experimental group showed an average improvement of 2.6 years of growth in reading, making up for the 2 year deficit they showed in their pre-test. At least two students in the experimental group showed as much as four years of improvement. Ninety percent of the experimental group showed improvement. So, what is there to conclude? It is reasonably safe to conclude that specially selected specific interventions can work. They may not always but they did in this case.

Limitations of the Study

This study, like most others, has its limitations. It was conducted with 25 participants in a single middle school with a single teacher and a single intervention program. Each of these factors in its own way affected the researcher’s ability to draw wide ranging conclusions. First, the participant group was small and chosen as a matter of convenience. Perhaps a larger study involving more students would increase our ability to test the results for validity and reliability. Small samples are convenient but are inherently a limitation. As the literature indicated, reading deficiencies among
adolescents are common and intervention efforts are high; yet, those interventions experiments which involve large numbers of African-American students is low (Lindo, 2006).

Second, the study was limited to a single school. Given the large number of schools we have in America and the large number school districts (i.e., 15,000 according to Swain, 2004), there is a largely untapped possibility for study of the problems of minority groups of adolescent readers. One school can hardly mirror the breadth and scope of the problems adolescent learners face nor does it mirror the effects of intervention programs on these students.

Third, one has to consider that whenever studies are done using human subjects, there may be some subtle act performed by the teacher or the student that is not accounted for in the findings. Human behavior is unpredictable and no one can underestimate the value of a good instructor. In this study, the researcher served as instructor to one of the groups. In future studies, it might be necessary to separate the participants and the researcher-participant to get a more accurate understanding of what transpires. The teachers and the students themselves are variables that may have impacted the final results.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies on how to intervene with adolescents who struggle with reading is necessary and urgent on a number of levels. First, it is needed because there are not enough studies about the reading skills of students in the middle grades. While we know a great deal about teaching children to read in elementary schools, we do not know enough about how to improve the reading skills of students in secondary schools, so that they can master content. There is a difference at the two levels. In elementary school, children are taught reading as a learning skill. In middle school, where reading is generally not taught, reading is a skill used for understanding the content of core subjects. Therefore, when an adolescent cannot read well, he or she is immediately disadvantaged.
Second, further study is needed in the area of how reading impacts African-American students and their chances for academic success. Again, according to Lindo (2006), after examining 971 articles about research in reading, 0% distinguished their results by race, and only 2 of 147 articles (i.e., .21%) were studies where the majority of the participants were African-American. This study targeted African-Americans as well as the Haitian-American subgroup. Rarely is the diversity within the African-American community recognized and acknowledged in distinguishing issues regarding the achievement gap (Lindo, 2006). Lindo’s study reviewed articles over a ten year period and found that despite disaggregation of data in other studies, those involving reading experiments with intervention strategies had a poor record of documenting the impact of intervention studies on African-American children (Lindo, 2006). Further research is also needed with larger groups and more schools. The limitations and generalizability of the data mandates the need and demand for additional comprehensive studies. Improving the schools, developing teachers’ knowledge, and implementing successful roads towards student achievement are foreseeable goals. The concept of teacher pedagogy explores the application of learning to linguistic content and determines the effectiveness of student understanding.

The review of literature has concluded that students of Haitian descent are but one segment of a large problem that affects the ability of students to learn to read effectively. The study demonstrated that with proper intervention black minority students – native English speakers and immigrants who are bi-dialectic or bilingual – can be helped. These students are often found in the same schools but may have differing needs due to cultural differences. Unfortunately, their reading problems are the same, the simple ability to comprehend what they read as adolescent readers in order to advance their knowledge in class. The intervention implemented here did yield markedly
improve results for the experimental group, leading the researcher to conclude that structured
reading intervention strategies can work for middle school students.

The discussion demonstrates that reading is, in fact, a fundamental learning tool because it impacts a
student’s ability to comprehend every other subject. The project examined the deficiencies identified
in reading processes of bilingual and bi-dialectal students in which the majority are first born
Haitian-American students. Supplemental programs similar to this study of intensive remedial
reading curriculum and implementation are recommended to become an addition to the Reading
Curriculum Mapping mandated in Broward County Public Schools.
References


APPENDICES
Appendix A

Letter of Introduction for the Control Group  
(An interpreter will be used if necessary)

Dear Students and Parents:

My name is Afra Johnson. I am a Ph.D. candidate. I am conducting research concerning reading intervention strategies for minority children between the ages of 11-15 enrolled at Parkway Middle School for the Performing Arts in Broward County.

The nature of the research is to explore the reading performances of students. I am asking you to allow your child to participate in this study. I am also asking for your permission to access your child’s scores on two standard assessments that are given to all students. No names will be attached to the scores; so no one will know which score belongs to which student.

Please take a few minutes to read the attached study summary to learn more about my research project and to consider allowing your child to participate in it. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have about the study at any time at 754-322-4000, ext. 3058.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Afra Johnson, Learner/Researcher  
Union Institute & University
Study Summary for Control Group Participants
and Parents/Guardians
(An interpreter will be used if necessary)

Institutional Approval

The Institutional Review Board of the Union Institute & University of Cincinnati, Ohio has granted approval for Afra Johnson, a Ph.D. candidate, to conduct a study in preparation for completion of her Project Demonstrating Excellence, traditionally, a Ph.D. dissertation. Approval for the overall study has been granted for a period of one year from March 2009 – March 2010.

Research Problem

This problem requires the use of reading intervention strategies to improve basic reading skill techniques.

Methodology

Students will be asked to participate in a class where reading practices and skills are taught. No personal information is required.

Nature of Proposed Study

The Learner hopes to identify reading intervention practices that may be taught in school educational settings and hopes that the results of this study will contribute to the research literature on improving reading on the middle school level.

Dates of the Study

The researcher proposes to conduct the full study from February 2009 – February 2010.

Subjects (Participants), Risks, Confidentiality

The participants: (1) be a student at Parkway Middle School for the Performing Arts, (2) each student will have a history of low performance on reading assessments. Student names are not required; only their scores on two standard assessment tools will be used. No one will know which score belongs to which student, and no names will be used in my dissertation, future journal articles, or future professional presentations. Participants and Parents/Guardians must give written, informed consent.

Participants, Activity, Payment

Participants in the full study will be participating in a one hour reading class for eight weeks. Informed Consent will be obtained prior to enrollment. Participants may decline to participate or may withdraw at any time. Confidentiality will be maintained. No recordings of any kind will be made. No payments will be made to participants.
Informed Consent Forms for the Control Group
An interpreter will be used if necessary

Project Title: Reading Interventions for the Improvement of the Reading Performances of Bilingual and Bi-Dialectal Children

Principal Researcher: Ms. Afra Johnson
Telephone: 954-486-2284
E-mail: Afra@comcast.net

Organization: The School Board of Broward County, Florida

Location of Study: Parkway Middle School of the Performing Arts

Purpose of This Research Study
The purpose of this study is to examine reading deficiencies of middle school students. The study will examine what reading interventions will improve the reading performances children between 11-15 years of age. The learner is researching the various reasons and conditions of why these populations of students are underachieving and offers strategies of intervention.

This research study will be conducted as a design with an experimental and control group as partial requirement of the researcher’s doctoral degree program at the Union Institute & University in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Procedures
You will be asked for consent for the researcher to access data of pre and post assessment testing only. The expected time of the study will be eight-ten weeks.

Possible Risks
The researcher anticipates that there is a minimal risk toward the participants. No attempt will be made to identify participants in any way in the school itself. Again, both participants and their parents, via the Informed Consent and the Study Summary will be told that it is voluntary participation. Students, having volunteered, can choose to leave the study at any time.

Possible Benefits
The researcher anticipates that this research will add new knowledge to the field of teaching reading in the Broward County Public Schools.

Financial Considerations
You will not receive any financial compensation for your participation nor will you incur any costs as a result of your participation in this research.

Confidentiality
Your identity in this study will be treated as confidential. Any identifiable references to you will not be included.
After the Study is Completed

A summary of the results of the study will be provided to participants via the school or the United States Postal Service direct mailing to all participants’ addresses.

Resources

In case of a research-related emergency or any questions you may have about this study will be answered by calling the following persons:

Researcher, Ms. Afra Johnson, Parkway Middle School, 3600 NW 5th Court Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33317; email- afra.johnson@browardschools.com Telephone # 754-322-4000 ext. 3058

Advisor, Dr. Jacques Bonenfant, 4312 SW 133rd Lane Miramar, FL 33307; email- bjacques@nova.edu Telephone # 954-588-7497.

Principal, Mr. Bradford Mattair, Parkway Middle School, 3600 NW 5th Court Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33317; email- bradford.mattair@browardschools.com Telephone # 754-322-4000.

Any questions you may have about your rights as a research subject will be answered by the IRB Coordinator, Union Institute & University, 800-486-3116, ext 1153, irb@tui.edu.
Control Group Student’s Informed Consent Form
An interpreter will be used if necessary

Signatures

Student Name (printed): ____________________________________________________

Principal Researcher's Name (printed): ____Ms. Afra Johnson____________________

Principal Researcher's Signature: _____________________________________________

Date: ______________________

Person Obtaining Consent, if other than principal investigator (printed):

Name: ________________________________________________________________

Signature: ________________________________________________________________

Date: ______________________

I have read and understand this consent form, and I understand that I will receive a copy of this
form. I voluntarily choose to participate in this research study.

Student’s Signature: ________________________________________________________

Date: ______________________

Witness Statement

My signature attests that I was present during the informed consent discussion of this research for the
above named participant and that the information in the consent form and any other written information
was accurately explained to, and apparently understood by the prospective participant, or his/her
representative, and that the informed consent decision was made freely by the participant or the
participant's representative.

Witness Signature: _________________________________________________________

Date: ______________________
Appendix B

Control Group Parent’s Informed Consent Form
(An interpreter will be used if necessary)

Signatures

Student Name (printed): _____________________________________________________

Principal Researcher's Name (printed): ___Ms. Afra Johnson_____________________

Principal Researcher's Signature: _____________________________________________

Date: __________________________

Person Obtaining Consent, if other than principal investigator (printed):

Name: ________________________________________________________________

Signature: ________________________________________________________________

Date: __________________________

Consent

I consent to only Pre and Post-Testing Reading Assessment scores to be used for data analysis.

I have read and understand this consent form, and I understand that I will receive a copy of this form. I voluntarily choose to participate in this research study.

Parent’s Signature: ________________________________________________________

Date: __________________________

Witness Statement

My signature attests that I was present during the informed consent discussion of this research for the above named participant and that the information in the consent form and any other written information was accurately explained to, and apparently understood by the prospective participant, or his/her representative, and that the informed consent decision was made freely by the participant or the participant's representative.

Witness Signature: ________________________________________________________

Date: __________________________
Letter of Introduction for the Experimental Group
(An interpreter will be used if necessary)

Dear Students and Parents:

My name is Afra Johnson. I am a Ph.D. candidate. I am conducting research concerning reading intervention strategies for minority children between the ages of 11-15 enrolled at Parkway Middle School for the Performing Arts in Broward County.

The nature of the research is to explore reading intervention strategies that have the potential to improve the reading performances of students.

I am asking you to allow your child to participate in this study, which may help your child to improve his/her reading ability. In order to participate in this reading project, your child needs (1) to be a student at Parkway Middle School for the Performing Arts, (2) to have a history of low performance on reading assignments, and (3) to be interested in improving his/her reading skills for future success in school.

I am also asking for your permission to access the data of your child’s scores on two standard assessments that are given to all students and examine rubrics done in class as data analysis. No names will be attached to the scores; so, no one will know which score belongs to which student. These scores will help me to determine whether the reading activities used in the study were effective in improving reading levels of participants.

Please take a few minutes to read the attached study summary to learn more about my research project and to consider allowing your child to participate in it. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have about the study at any time at 754-322-4000, ext. 3058.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Afra Johnson, Learner/Researcher
Union Institute & University
Study Summary for Experimental Participants and Parents/Guardians
(An interpreter will be used if necessary)

**Institutional Approval**

The Institutional Review Board of the Union Institute & University of Cincinnati, Ohio has granted approval for Afra Johnson, a Ph.D. candidate, to conduct a study in preparation for completion of her Project Demonstrating Excellence, traditionally, a Ph.D. dissertation. Approval for the overall study has been granted for a period of one year from February 2009 – February 2010.

**Research Problem**

This problem requires the use of reading intervention strategies to improve basic reading skill and techniques.

**Methodology**

Students will be asked to participate in a class where intervention practices are taught. No personal information is required.

**Nature of Proposed Study**

The Learner hopes to identify reading intervention practices that may help students perform better in school educational settings and hopes that the results of this study will contribute to the research literature on improving reading on the middle school level.

**Dates of the Study**

The researcher proposes to conduct the full study from February 2009 – February 2010.

**Subjects (Participants), Risks, Confidentiality**

The participants: (1) be a student at Parkway Middle School for the Performing Arts, (2) have a history of low performance on reading assessments and (3) be interested in improving reading skills for future success in school.

Anticipated risk to participants is minimal because their names are not required; only their classroom rubrics and scores on two standard assessment tools will be used. No one will know which score belongs to which student, and no names will be used in my dissertation, future journal articles, or future professional presentations. **Participants and Parents/Guardians must give written, informed consent.**

**Participants, Activity, Payment**

Participants in the full study will be invited to participate in a one hour class for eight weeks. Informed Consent will be obtained prior to enrollment. Participants may decline to participate or may withdraw at any time. Confidentiality will be maintained. No recordings of any kind will be made. **No payments will be made to participants.**
Informed Consent Forms for the Experimental Group
(An interpreter will be used if necessary)

Project Title: Reading Interventions for the Improvement of the Reading Performances of Bilingual and Bi-Dialectal Children

Principal Researcher: Ms. Afra Johnson
Telephone: 954-486-2284
E-mail: Afra@comcast.net
Organization: The School Board of Broward County, Florida.
Location of Study: Parkway Middle School of the Performing Arts

Purpose of This Research Study
The purpose of this study is to examine the factors for reading deficiencies of at-risk middle school students and develop a successful reading intervention curriculum for the improvement of academic performances. The study will examine what reading interventions will improve the reading performances of children between 11-15 years of age. The learner is researching the various reasons and conditions of why these students are underachieving and offers strategies of intervention to counteract this problem.

This research study will be conducted with an experimental and control group as partial requirement of the Researcher’s doctoral degree program at Union Institute & University in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Procedures
You will be asked to participate in classroom pre and post testing and reading intervention activities such as phonemic awareness, comprehension, inferences, main idea, sequencing of event, supporting facts and details, literary elements, etc. The expected time of the duration of the study will be one hour of classroom time for period of eight–ten weeks.

Possible Risks
The researcher anticipates that there is a minimal risk toward the participants. No attempt will be made to identify participants in any way in the school itself. Students will be enrolled in the class voluntarily and will be told that it is not required that their participation be shared with anyone else. Students, having volunteered, can choose to leave the study at any time.

Possible Benefits
The researcher anticipates higher reading performances and this research will add new knowledge to the field of teaching Reading in the Broward County Public Schools.

Financial Considerations
You will not receive any financial compensation for your participation nor will you incur any costs as a result of your participation in this research.

Confidentiality
Your identity in this study will be treated as confidential. Results of the study, including all collected data, may be published in my dissertation and in possible future journal articles and professional
presentations, but your name or any identifiable references to you will not be included. However, any records or data obtained as a result of your participation in this study may be inspected by the persons conducting this study and/or Union Institute & University’s Institutional Review Board. These records will be kept private in so far as permitted by law. Participants in the study will be protected confidentially for the use of classroom rubrics and pre and post-testing scores that will be used for analysis purposes. All study data will be retained for a minimum of three years as required by the IRB.

**Termination of Study**
You are free to choose whether to participate in this study. You may also choose to withdraw from the study at any time. In the event you decide to discontinue your participation in the study, please notify the Researcher of your decision so that your participation can be terminated in an orderly fashion.

In case of an event such as a participant’s withdrawal from the study, collected by the Researcher is not used in the data analysis or writing of the findings. Your participation in the study may be terminated by the Researcher without your consent under the following circumstances: disruption of educational activities in the classroom or the transfer to another school. This study may need to be terminated without prior notice to, or consent of, participants in the event of circumstances such as illness experienced by the Researcher.

**After the Study is Completed**
A summary of the results of the study will be provided to participants via the school or United States Postal Service direct mailing to all participants’ addresses.

**Resources**
In case of a research-related emergency or any questions you may have about this study will be answered by calling the following persons:

Researcher, Ms. Afra Johnson, Parkway Middle School, 3600 NW 5th Court, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33317; email - afra.johnson@browardschools.com; 754-322-4000 ext. 3058

Advisor, Dr. Jacques Bonenfant, 4312 SW 133rd Lane, Miramar, FL 33307; email - bjacques@nova.edu; # 954-588-7497.

Principal, Mr. Bradford Mattair, Parkway Middle School, 3600 NW 5th Court Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33317; email - bradford.mattair@browardschools.com; 754-322-4000.

Any questions you may have about your rights as a research subject will be answered by the IRB Coordinator, Union Institute & University, 800-486-3116, ext. 1153, irb@tui.edu
Experimental Group Parent’s Informed Consent Form
(An interpreter will be used if necessary)

Signatures

Student Name (printed): __________________________________________________

Principal Researcher’s Name (printed): ___Ms. Afra Johnson____________________

Principal Researcher’s Signature: _____________________________________________

Date: ___________________________________________________________________

Person Obtaining Consent, if other than principal investigator (printed):

Name:        ________________________________________________________________

Signature:   ________________________________________________________________

Date:          ________________________________________________________________

Consent

I have read and understand this consent form, and I voluntarily consent to my child’s participation in
this research study. I understand that my consent does not take away any legal rights in the case of
negligence or other legal fault of anyone who is involved in this study. I further understand that
nothing in this consent form is intended to replace any applicable federal, state, or local laws.

Parent Signature: ___________________________________________________________

Date: ___________________________________________________________________

Witness Statement

My signature attests that I was present during the informed consent discussion of this research for the
above named participant and that the information in the consent form and any other written information
was accurately explained to, and apparently understood by the prospective participant, or his/her
representative, and that the informed consent decision was made freely by the participant or the
participant's representative.

Witness Signature: ___________________________________________________________

Date: ___________________________________________________________________
Experimental Group Student’s Informed Consent Form
(An interpreter will be used if necessary)

Signatures

Student Name (printed): ____________________________________________________

Principal Researcher's Name (printed): Ms. Afra Johnson

Principal Researcher's Signature: _____________________________________________

Date: _____________________________________________________________________

Person Obtaining Consent, if other than principal investigator (printed):

Name:        ________________________________________________________________

Signature:   ________________________________________________________________

Date:          ________________________________________________________________

I have read and understand this consent form, and I understand that I will receive a copy of this form. I voluntarily choose to participate in this research study.

Student’s Signature: _________________________________________________________

Date: _____________________________________________________________________

Witness Statement

My signature attests that I was present during the informed consent discussion of this research for the above named participant and that the information in the consent form and any other written information was accurately explained to, and apparently understood by the prospective participant, or his/her representative, and that the informed consent decision was made freely by the participant or the participant's representative.

Witness Signature: _________________________________________________________

Date: _____________________________________________________________________
Announcement to Conduct Research

“One Team, One School, One Family”
The School Board of Broward County, Florida is proud to announce
Upcoming Reading Intervention Research

When: February 2010
Where: The Parkway Middle School of the Performing Arts
3600 NW 5th Court, FT. Lauderdale, FL 33311

For more information Contact, Ms. Afra Johnson, Researcher/Educator
or Mr. Mattair, Parkway Middle School Principal at 754-322-4000

Free to Students

Student and Parental Permission Required
Appendix D

Letter of Approval and Support from the Principal

To: Broward County School District

From: Principal, Bradford Mattair

Parkway Middle School of the Performing Arts proudly endorses and welcomes educational research in the content area of reading education. I, as principal of Parkway Middle School of the Performing Arts, am giving my permission for Afra Johnson, Researcher/Educator to conduct her research study.

I am aware that she will utilize beginning of the year assessment data of enrolled students participating in the project from the Broward County School District database and arrange for pre and post-testing, thus utilizing results of the participating students in her research study. I will provide for her an administrative staff person to assist in the post-testing and additional support in the event of any possible problem or situation that may occur during the research study time frame.

All participating students and parents/guardians will be provided with consent forms and a research study summary for informational purposes.

Principal of Record, Bradford Mattair

________________________________________  __________________________
Signature  Date
Appendix E

Letter of Approval from the Cooperating Teacher of the Quasi-experimental Control Group

To: Broward County School District and Principal, Bradford Mattair

I am the cooperating teacher at Parkway Middle School of the Performing Arts and I am giving my permission for Afra Johnson, researcher/educator, to use one of my classes as her control group in the research study.

I am aware that she will utilize beginning of the year assessment data of my students from the Broward County School District database and arrange for pre and post-testing, utilizing assessment results of the participating students in her research study. Parkway Middle School of the Performing Arts will provide participating students and parents/guardians with consent forms and a research study summary for informational purposes.

Educator of Record, Parkway Middle School of the Performing Arts

_________________________________________  ________________________________
Signature                                      Date
Florida Department of Education

Student Performance Results:
State Reading Demographic Report

FCAT Achievement Levels

The Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test® (FCAT) measures student performance on selected benchmarks in reading, mathematics, writing, and science that are defined by the Florida Sunshine State Standards (SSS). Developed by Florida educators, the SSS outline challenging content students are expected to know and be able to do. All public schools are expected to teach students the content found in the SSS. Achievement levels describe the success a student has achieved on the SSS tested on the FCAT Reading, Mathematics, Science, and Writing+ assessments. Achievement levels were first reported for FCAT Science in spring 2009 and FCAT Writing+ in spring 2009. Achievement levels, based on both scale scores and developmental scale scores, range from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). Achievement Level definitions apply to all FCAT subjects.

Achievement Level Definitions

**Level 5** This student has success with the most challenging content of the *Sunshine State Standards*. A student scoring in Level 5 answers most of the test questions correctly, including the most challenging questions.

**Level 4** This student has success with the challenging content of the *Sunshine State Standards*. A student scoring in Level 4 answers most of the test questions correctly, but may have only some success with questions that reflect the most challenging content.

**Level 3** This student has partial success with the challenging content of the *Sunshine State Standards*, but performance is inconsistent. A student scoring in Level 3 answers many of the test questions correctly but is generally less successful with questions that are the most challenging.

**Level 2** This student has limited success with the challenging content of the *Sunshine State Standards*.

**Level 1** This student has little success with the challenging content of the *Sunshine State Standards*.

Scale scores are reported for all FCAT SSS subjects and range from 100 (lowest) to 500 (highest). Developmental Scale Scores (DSS) are only reported for FCAT SSS Reading and Mathematics and range from 0 to about 3000 across grades 3 through 10. DSS link two years of student FCAT data that track student progress over time. Students should receive higher scores as they move from grade-to-grade according to their increased achievement. DSS cannot be determined for FCAT Science and Writing+ because students are not tested in these subjects at each grade level.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Group Name</th>
<th>No. of Students</th>
<th>Total Test Scores</th>
<th>Mean Dev. Scale Score</th>
<th>Mean Scale Score</th>
<th>% in Achievement Level**</th>
<th>Reporting Categories*</th>
<th>Words/Phrases</th>
<th>Main Idea/Purp.</th>
<th>Comp.</th>
<th>Ref./Res.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Maximum Points Possible pe grade</td>
<td>Total Students</td>
<td>194,649</td>
<td>1895</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRADE 08</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>89,99</td>
<td>959</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRADE 08</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>43,638</td>
<td>1794</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRADE 08</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>48,864</td>
<td>1853</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRADE 08</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>4,807</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRADE 08</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>American Indian/Alaskan</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>1906</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRADE 08</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Multiracial/Ethnic</td>
<td>6,656</td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRADE 08</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Unreported Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>1775</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRADE 08</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>95,466</td>
<td>1921</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRADE 08</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>99,065</td>
<td>1871</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRADE 08</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Unreported Gender</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>1770</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRADE 08</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Standard Curriculum</td>
<td>166,496</td>
<td>1933</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*No data are reported when fewer than 10 students were tested or when all students are in the same score category.  
** Adding the percents in levels 3 - 5 may not result in the percent reported under "Level 3 and above" due to rounding.

- Not Applicable

*Reporting Categories:  
Words/Phrases = Words/Phrases  
Main Idea/Purp. = Main Idea/Purpose  
Comp. = Comparisons  
Ref./Res. = Reference/Research

(original FCAT report is below, this table is at the bottom of the report)
FCAT: Parkway Middle School Grade Eight FCAT 2009 Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8th grade Students</th>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Level 4</th>
<th>Level 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>351</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table below provides the percent of students in the School scoring 3 and above on the FCAT Reading. Students that score in FCAT Achievement Levels 3, 4, and 5 in Reading or Mathematics are considered on grade level, proficient, or advanced. The Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test® (FCAT) is based on Florida's curriculum frameworks, the Sunshine State Standards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Reading 2009</th>
<th>Broward</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>PARKWAY MIDDLE SCHOOL (701)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>PARKWAY MIDDLE SCHOOL (701)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+Indicates data is not available at this time.

The table below provides the School mean Scale Scores in Reading. The Scale Score is a score used to report test results on the entire test. Scale Scores on the FCAT Sunshine State Standards tests range from 100 through 500 for each grade level and content area. A computer program is used to analyze student responses and to compute the Scale Score.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Reading 2009</th>
<th>Broward</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>PARKWAY MIDDLE SCHOOL (701)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>PARKWAY MIDDLE SCHOOL (701)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+Indicates data is not available at this time.
Note: FCAT Writing+ was administered from 2006 – 2008. In 2009, the multiple-choice items were removed from the statewide writing assessment; therefore, the test name was changed back to FCAT Writing, and Scale Scores are no longer reported for the statewide writing assessment.

The table below provides the School average Developmental Scale Score (DSS) in Reading for FCAT and the change in DSS score since last year. The DSS is a score used to determine a student's annual progress from grade to grade. The FCAT Developmental Scales for Reading and Mathematics range from 86 through 3008 across grades 4 through 10.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School - Mean Developmental Scale Score (DSS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Students Matched to 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARKWAY MIDDLE SCHOOL (701)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>% of Students Matched to 2008</th>
<th>Mean DSS (Matched Students 2009)</th>
<th>Mean DSS (Matched Students 2008)</th>
<th>Mean DSS Change for Matched Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>1715</td>
<td>1637</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>1814</td>
<td>1719</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Matched DSS data cannot be generated for grade 3 because it is the first year that students take the FCAT.

The tables below provide a School summary of FCAT Reading, including the percent scoring in each Achievement Level. For FCAT Reading and Mathematics, the data includes the number of students tested, mean Scale Scores, mean Developmental Scale Scores, and the percentage of students scoring in each achievement level. There are five categories of achievement that describe the success students have with the content tested on the FCAT Reading and Mathematics. Level 5 is the highest, and level 1 is the lowest. Levels 3 and above are considered on or above grade level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Summary of Students Tested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Students by Achievement Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARKWAY MIDDLE SCHOOL (701)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Students Tested</th>
<th>Mean DSS</th>
<th>Mean Scale Score</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Level 3 &amp; above**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>1712</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* No data is reported when fewer than ten students were tested.

** Adding the percents in levels 3 – 5 may not result in the percent reported under "Level 3 and above" due to rounding.

Note: FCAT Writing+ was administered from 2006 – 2008. In 2009, the multiple-choice items were removed from the statewide writing assessment; therefore, the test name was changed back to FCAT Writing, and Scale Scores are no longer reported for the statewide writing assessment.
### Percentage of Students by Achievement Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Students Tested</th>
<th>Mean DSS</th>
<th>Mean Scale Score</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Level 3 &amp; above**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>1819</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

† Combined essay averages include students with overall scores only. Individual essay averages include all students who completed the essay.

* No data is reported when fewer than ten students were tested.

** Adding the percents in levels 3 – 5 may not result in the percent reported under "Level 3 and above" due to rounding.

Note: FCAT Writing+ was administered from 2006 – 2008. In 2009, the multiple-choice items were removed from the statewide writing assessment; therefore, the test name was changed back to FCAT Writing, and Scale Scores are no longer reported for the statewide writing assessment.
Appendix G

After intervention - Post testing- Test Administer will administer the grade level post-test the entire target group.

Student Monitoring Checklist during Interventions

Instructions:

Place a check mark to indicate your answers below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
1. Identifies the main idea.     |     |
2. Recalls facts and details.    |     |
3. Recalls sequence of events.   |     |
4. Recalls cause/effect relationships. |     |
5. Identifies some literary elements of a story. |     |
6. Recalls comparisons and contrasts. |     |
7. Retells the story with accuracy of details. |     |
8. Describes main characters.    |     |
9. Identifies the setting and plot of the story. |     |
10. Draws conclusions.           |     |
11. Interprets inferences in the story lines. |     |
12. Predicts and hypothesizes the story. |     |
13. Interprets the outcome of conflicts. |     |
14. Identifies character traits of other characters |     |
15. Recognizes the lesson of the story |     |