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An Examination of Self-concept and Literacy in High School Black Males:

Midwest School District

by

Antwan Harris

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

St. Cloud State University

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

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Abstract

A supplemental reading program that was offered in a Minnesota school district with a diverse student population was analyzed. The needs of the adolescent learner, building relationships, improving self-concept, individualized instruction for identified reading skills gaps, and aid with homework were the focal points of the discussion. Changes in reading scores in the Supplemental reading program, as well as program teacher surveys, program teacher interviews, and student satisfaction surveys, were used to evaluate the progress made in improving academic performance. Previous research found a correlation between self-beliefs, motivation, and achievement. These elements were incorporated in this program evaluation. The results of this evaluation showed that the program had promising results in terms of narrowing the achievement gap and improving academic self-confidence.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

The American governmental and educational leaders have publicly recognized the existence of a substantial achievement gap between Caucasian students and students of color, most notably African American students; according to former United States Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, “the persistence, and even the recent expansion, of the opportunity gap, should be an urgent wake-up call that America is still not a color-blind society that provides equal educational opportunity” (Duncan, 2012, p. 1). There has been a demand to address and fix the achievement disparity and do so in a hurry (Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, 2011). Public Law PL107-110, more commonly known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), has asserted that addressing and closing the achievement gap among all students is and will continue to be a national priority for all public schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2001, 2008). Specifically, NCLB legislation aimed to have states and local school districts create high levels of achievement for all students regardless of race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. There has been evidence to suggest that NCLB created systems of accountability while never addressing the real issue as to why historically marginalized students have never fared well in American education systems (Sanderson, 2008).

To address this accountability, in December 2015, Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA, was signed into law. This bill was an effort to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which had been in place for 5 decades. This law establishes national educational standards for American children, demonstrating the government's long-standing commitment to

providing equal opportunities to students from all backgrounds (Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)U.S. Department of Education).

Every Student Succeeds Act's goal is to ensure that students graduate from high school, progress in their education, and are better identified as gifted and talented. In exchange for comprehensive ideas that would increase equity and improve instruction quality, the Obama administration allowed more flexibility in educational plans. The Student Succeeds Act worked to maintain the important safeguards in place for students from low-income families. The goal was to provide equal access to the systems that could help the next generation learn to read and write after the US government made every child a priority. (Darling-Hammond et al., 2016, pp. 2-3)

According to Matthew et al., (2016) and W. K. Kellogg Foundation (Network C. T. S., 2014), The achievement gap is caused by bad economic and social conditions from the past and the present. Society hasn't done enough to help African Americans get over the bad effects of prejudice and discrimination. There are still inequalities in every area of life, including education.

The overall academic achievement of African American males was appallingly low, not only in cities, but nationwide, said Michael Casserly, the executive director of the Council of the Great City Schools. According to a study by the Council of the Great City Schools, by fourth grade only 12 percent of Black male students read at or above grade level, while 38 percent of white males do. By eighth grade it falls to just 9 percent for Black males, 33 percent for whites. Black male students are almost twice as likely as white males to drop out of school. Black males now make

up only 5 percent of college enrollment nationally, but 36 percent of the prison population, Casserly said. Researchers say this isn't just a crisis affecting African Americans - this crisis affects all Americans. We ought to be concerned about the fact that so much talent, so much potential is being wasted and squandered, Casserly said. Researchers call these dismal numbers a call to action for scholars across the country to study this problem and come up with real solutions.

(Whitaker, 2010, p. 2)

Black males may require a more intrinsic method of acquiring literacy skills. It may be possible to reduce the achievement gap and raise more students to proficient levels by providing educators with programs and strategies to assist struggling high school readers.

Review of Literature

The consequences of students and schools failing to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) highlights the importance of assisting underachieving students. "To meet required standards, students require both a rich learning experience and solid preparation" (McCullough et al., 2003, p. 71). To accomplish this, the standards need to be combined with a flexible and differentiated curriculum approach. The AYP requirements for each of the specific subgroups identified by race, socioeconomic level, English proficiency, and special needs are one of the most difficult challenges for schools (Kober, 2005).

Some districts have reduced class sizes, extended the school day, or extended the school year in response to accountability measures to provide more time for curriculum delivery and understanding (Olson, 2001). The pressure to improve standardized test scores is putting a strain

on many educators' primary goals of nurturing students and assisting them in learning for the sake of learning (Armstrong, 2006).

Kunjufu (2011) reported that only 12% of African American males are proficient in reading, 80% of African American male students are in special education, and 53% of African American males drop out of high school (pp. 143-144). The Schott Foundation for Public Education (Aarons, 2010) report revealed that the overall 2007/2008 graduation rate for African American males in the United States was only 47%. Less than 8% of African American males between the ages of 15 and 29 years were college graduates (p. 5). Research has shown a static achievement gap among Black students and other races. “Underachievement, lack of inclusion, and backward progression of African American men within American society, and particularly within the educational arena, has once again surfaced as a trend that demands immediate attention” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 127). African American males are disproportionately represented among students who are forced to withdraw, have low academic performance, and report negative college experiences (Noguera, 1997). Noguera also states 1996 high school drop-out rate for Black males is high with 20% to 30% of urban Black male youth leaving school prior to graduation (p. 147). Nationwide, at every level of education, there are disparities in academic achievement for Black boys (Moore & Lewis, 2014; Schott Foundation for public education, 2015; Toldson et al., 2008). The research shows African American men are not being adequately served in the classrooms of our nation.

Statement of the Problem

Test scores improve test-taking skills, but not always student learning, according to research (Brooks & Brooks, 2005). Educational practices designed to meet testing accountability

measures ignore instructional methodology, student motivation, and student development (Brooks & Brooks, 2005). In a review of the literature few studies have been found regarding the impact on reading achievement in African American males who participate in additional reading instruction with emphasis placed on reading skills and increasing student self-concept.

Purpose of the Study

Students' self-beliefs have a significant impact on how hard they work and how well they do (Lawrence, 2006; Levine, 2002). According to research, students' perceptions of themselves as learners have an impact on their self-esteem, motivation, and achievement (Dweck et al., 2004). Self-belief is a crucial component of education and success. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of an additional reading program with instruction focused on skill building and student academic self-confidence related to the literacy achievement of Black males in high school. The attempt to evaluate success through changes in self-beliefs in addition to traditional measures, such as test scores, is a unique feature of this study.

Research Questions

The research conducted in this study will answer three questions regarding self-concept and academic indicators in an anonymous survey. The questions are:

1. What impact does one additional period of reading instruction for one trimester per school year on Black male academic self-concept as reported by teachers participating in the reading instruction program?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses that teachers identified about implementation of the additional reading program?

3. What did the implementation of the additional reading program reveal in relation to student achievement as gathered by district data?

Conceptual Framework

Self-Concept Theory

Achievement influences self-concept, and achievement shapes perceptions of competence, which influences self-concept (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). Self-concept is influenced by related self-beliefs such as self-esteem, confidence, and self-efficacy. The educational significance is that students' self-perceptions are greatly influenced by their experiences in public schools, where they spend more than 1,000 hours per year in the classroom (Novak & Purkey, 1996). Pintrich and Schunk (2002) claim that self-concept theory research is like expectancy-value theory research, but it differs in that it focuses on the development of self-identity rather than motivation.

Overview of Research Methods

The data for this study will be collected using two instruments:

1. Teacher Survey instrument (see Appendix A)
2. Teacher Interview instrument (see Appendix B)

Reading test data did not necessitate the use of any specific instrument. For each survey item (Appendix A), a 4-point Likert-type scale will be provided to prevent respondents from overusing the neutral position, which could skew results (Patten, 2001).

There will be three subgroups within the 13 Likert-type items. The questions will range in size from 3-6 and will address different aspects of the three affective elements in the research questions. Subgroups with multiple survey items will provide a more comprehensive picture of

student feelings than a single broad question about each attitude (Patten). Questions 1-3 and 13 form a motivation subgroup, questions 4-9 form a subgroup about academic confidence in reading, and questions 10-12 form a third subgroup about perception of success.

Assumptions of the Study

1. The supplemental reading class will improve student self-beliefs
2. Improved self-concept will lead to improved literacy achievement in Black males.
3. Changes in student self- beliefs can be identified by their reading program teachers

Objectives of the Study

The findings of this study will be used by educators and policymakers in a large upper Midwest school district to make future programming decisions. The need to help Black males pass MCA reading tests is currently a top priority, and it will likely remain so in the future. Understanding the effectiveness of this supplemental program can guide instructional curricular choices for underachieving students as the district develops annual building improvement plans that focus on student achievement.

According to Hlawaty (2001), achievement is measured not only by how well a student has met our stated objectives, but also by that student's sense of empowerment and perception of success (p. 1). Student success can be measured by improved perceptions of competence, which can be a motivator for participation and persistence as well as a predictor of future academic effort and improvement. Too many students, according to Meece (2002), “do not develop their academic abilities or talents because they lack the desire to do so. Poor motivation is one of the major contributors to the problem of student underachievement by adolescence” (p. 415). Any

program or strategy that can assist educators in shifting this paradigm is beneficial to the field of education.

The implementation and evaluation of this program will contribute to the body of knowledge in academic interventions for students. There is currently little evidence in the body of knowledge that evaluates the use of such a programming option (Olson, 2001).

The evaluation should reveal the effectiveness of a second period of reading improves academic achievement or academic self-confidence over the course of participation. This study's findings can inform the instructional programming decisions of other schools with a similar demographic composition that are interested in closing the achievement gap and improving AYP outcomes.

Delimitations

Each quarter, the strategies and curriculum of the supplemental program will be modified based on the needs of the participants, so the findings may not be applicable to every similar group. In any future replication of this study, it would be necessary to employ strategies and academic goals tailored to the student population.

Definitions

Adequate Yearly Progress. Progress required by ESSA legislation at each age level in Reading and Mathematics (Porter et al., 2005).

African American Boys. In the context of this study, the phrases African American and Black Boys are interchangeable.

Development Discourse. Communications that see education's goal as supporting, encouraging, and facilitating students' overall development in cognitive, emotional, social, ethical, spiritual, and creative realms (Armstrong, 2006).

Self-concept. An individual's self-description based on the various roles and characteristics he or she possesses (Beane et al., 1990).

Self-efficacy. The beliefs that an individual has about their own ability to plan, act, and complete tasks (Schunk, 1989).

Self-esteem. The emotional component of self-concept. Through self-evaluation and the evaluation of others, an individual assigns a level of satisfaction and acceptance to various aspects of self (Jussim, 1990).

Success. An improved letter grade in reading class, or a more positive student attitude toward motivation, success, and confidence in one's own reading abilities.

Summary

As they strive for success in school and social settings, Black males are confronted with insurmountable obstacles, as is well-known and regrettable. Social injustices are one of the most potent and pervasive obstacles that undermine students' potential, self-perception, and capacity for academic success. Black males are overrepresented in special education, underrepresented in gifted education, overrepresented among dropouts, overrepresented among underachievers, and overrepresented among students who are unmotivated and choose to disengage academically compared to all other males and females. (Ferguson, 2002; Ferguson et al., 2001; Ford & Harris, 1996; U.S. Department of Education, 2000).

Dweck (1999) asserts that students' perceptions of themselves in academic settings—their academic self-confidence—play a crucial and fundamental role in their academic achievement. Her research demonstrates that students who perceive themselves as intelligent and capable in the classroom are more likely to persevere and persist than other students. Black men with academic confidence believe they are strong or excellent students. They enjoy learning, rigor, and challenges, and they value experimenting with new ideas. They do not experience feelings of inferiority or inadequacy in academic settings or challenging classes, nor do they feel compelled to conceal, negate, deny, or minimize their academic abilities and skills. Black males with high academic self-confidence recognize that effort is as important as, if not more important than, talent. This will be further examined in Chapter 2.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction

The American governmental and educational leaders have publicly recognized the existence of a substantial achievement gap between Caucasian students and students of color, most notably African American students; according to former United States Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, “the persistence, and even the recent expansion, of the opportunity gap, should be an urgent wake-up call that American is still not a color-blind society that provides equal educational opportunity” (Duncan, 2012, p. 1). It is not that the achievement gap had not previously existed; it is that it had not been given the public attention it is receiving today, and it was not apparently seen as a state or national imperative. That has changed since researchers have found that “the persistence of the educational achievement gap imposes on the United States the economic equivalent of a permanent national recession” (McKinsey & Company 2009, p. 6). There has been an outcry for immediate attention and correction of the achievement gap (Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, 2011).

Specifically, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation aimed to have states and local school districts materialize high levels of achievement for all students regardless of race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. There has been evidence to suggest that NCLB created systems of accountability while never addressing the real issue as to why historically marginalized students have never fared well in American education systems (Sanderson, 2008). To address this loophole, in December 2015, Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA, was signed into law. This bill was an effort to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which has been in place for 5 decades. This law establishes national educational standards for

American children, demonstrating the government's long-standing commitment to providing equal opportunities to students from all backgrounds (Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), U.S. Department of Education). There continue to be inequities in almost every aspect of life, including education, despite the efforts of society to eliminate the negative effects of prejudice and discrimination on African Americans (Matthew et al., 2016; Network C. T. S., 2014).

It may be necessary to take a different approach to building literacy skills among Black males in order to make learning a more intrinsic experience. Providing educators with programs and strategies that effectively aid low-achieving students in high school reading literacy may help to close the achievement gap and bring more students to proficient levels (Lachlan-Haché, 2012).

In order to achieve this goal, Black male student success can be fostered and measured in ways other than standardized test scores and academic letter grades. Self-belief has a significant impact on student motivation and achievement (Lawrence, 2006; Levine, 2002). According to research, students' perceptions of themselves as learners have an impact on their self-esteem, motivation, and achievement (Dweck et al., 2004). Self-belief is a crucial component of adolescent education and success. The following review of the literature will look at what has been studied about the relationships between self-concept, self-efficacy, self-esteem, confidence, achievement motivation, and academic success in adolescence, as well as the importance of these factors.

Achievement Gap

Based on data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a nationally representative and continuing assessor of academic achievement in the United States, African American students performed at unacceptable levels (U.S, Department of Education, 2007a). The achievement gap is typically exemplified as a numerical representation of the distance between two races on a specific performance indicator, such as a test score (Chambers et al., 2009). According to Toldson (2018) academic success is a social construction. Without their relationship to positive life outcomes, indicators of academic achievement are meaningless. In theory, academic achievement indicators (such as test scores and grades) should predict positive life outcomes. In practice, however, indicators of academic achievement predict favorable life outcomes. Indicators of the academic achievement gap are used to assist oppressors in establishing social inequalities (Toldson, 2020). The achievement gap narrative parallels the viewpoints of certain U.S. teachers who have negative attitudes regarding Black and Latino students, claiming that they are not as intelligent as their counterparts (Shockley, 2021)

According to the NAEP, specifically, only 12% of African American fourth graders could read at a proficient or advanced level. In mathematics, the NAEP reported that African American fourth graders also demonstrated less than stellar outcomes, Nationally, 37% of African American children performed at below basic level in mathematics. In states where there were high numbers of African American children, the scores were even worse; Mississippi students scored 45% below basic, Alabama 50% below basic, and in Louisiana 40% scored below basic (U.S, Department of Education, 2007b, p. 5). Research based on test results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress administered in the 1970s revealed a significant

achievement gap between Black and White students. It was observed that these disparities existed before children enter kindergarten, widened as they progressed through elementary and middle school, and persisted into adulthood (Phillips et al., 1998).

The achievement gap between Blacks and Whites is an extremely consequential social issue. School readiness and academic achievement are related to the types of jobs and salaries individuals can obtain (McKown, 2013). The achievement gap between Blacks and Whites has been a key problem in American educational policy and research for decades. Numerous federal initiatives have endeavored to close the accomplishment gap, while scholars have attempted to not only determine the extent of the gaps but also to explain their mechanisms. Government programs such as Head Start and regulations such as No Child Left Behind were intended to bridge the gaps in school preparation and accomplishment between low-income and Black children, but research has shown that these efforts have not been successful (Paschall et al., 2018). Achievement gaps that begin at school entry and persist through graduation can thus influence racial-ethnic socioeconomic status gaps throughout the lifespan (e.g., Levine, 2009; Reardon et al., 2008). The achievement gap may be directly affected by peer relationships and peer norms. Ethnographic research indicates that the stigma associated with academic ambition and its association with White culture may contribute to Black underachievement among youth (Austen-Smith & Fryer, 2005; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Majors & Billson, 1993). The research indicates that there has been little progress in the advancement of literacy among African American students. Additional research indicates that the disparities in standardized testing are even greater. During late childhood and adolescence, such circumstances are typically perceived as embarrassing (Nishina & Juvonen, 2005; Olthof et al., 2004; Reimer, 1996). The National

Assessment for Educational Progress (2002) reports the average reading proficiency score for African American 12th-grade students have declined over the past decade. Upon entering college, these students exhibit lower literacy proficiency as implied by their average verbal Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) score of 433, as compared to a score of 529 earned by average white students (Wirt & Livingston, 2001, p. 12). Contrary to these beliefs, students who take part in reading programs that place an excessive emphasis on fundamental skills tend to be less motivated to read than those who take part in programs that are centered around their individual and group interests and curiosities (Casbergue & Bedford, 2013).

Various studies have shown children's academic self-beliefs can be significantly associated with reading achievement, (Chapman et al., 2000; Coddington & Guthrie, 2009; Guthrie et al., 1999; Hansford & Hattie, 1982; Logan & Johnston, 2009; Marsh & Craven, 2006; Marsh & O'Mara, 2008; Mata, 2011; Mucherah & Yoder, 2008; Pullmann & Allik, 2008; Valentine et al., 2004). External factors include structural racism, community patterns, the level of parental education, and socioeconomic status. These adolescents must also contend with negative stereotypes in and out of school, a lack of culturally competent instruction and guidance, and a dearth of positive role models (Tatum, 2005). For instance, the collective efficacy of neighborhoods, may affect a variety of outcomes, including achievement (Sampson et al., 1997). Poor neighborhoods expose children to academically inhibiting behaviors and values more so than privileged neighborhoods (South et al., 2003). African Americans are subject to pervasive intellectual performance stereotypes in American society (Devine, 1989). Individual stereotypes based on group membership persist in part because they frequently apply to at least

some members of the group. It is true that, on average, African American students score lower than White students on standardized academic achievement tests (Steele, 1997).

Barr (1998) cites a host of factors affecting boys' literacy achievement including societal expectations; family influences; early experiences; peer group pressures and stereotyping; classroom contexts; parental expectations; behavioral issues and the range of literacy materials offered by schools. Similarly, Graham (2001) reported that some racial-ethnic minority students value low-performing peers more than high-performing peers. Other studies, however, find less support for the effects of peer culture on the achievement gap (Ainsworth-Darnell & Downey, 1998; Cook & Ludwig, 1998).

Less empirical research has been conducted on the impact of peers on the achievement gap than has been done on the impact of family and education factors. As a result, it is unclear what peer influences have the greatest impact on achievement at what ages, whether or not those influences are present in the same amounts among children from different racial and ethnic groups, and to what extent peer influences contribute to the achievement gap overall (McKown, 2013).

Black Boys

Underachievement, lack of inclusion, and backward progression of African American men within American society, and particularly within the educational arena, has once again surfaced as a trend that demands immediate attention (Jenkins, 2006, p. 127). African American males are disproportionately represented among students who are forced to withdraw, have low academic performance, and report negative college experiences (Noguera, 1997). Noguera also states 1996 high school drop-out rate for Black males is high with 20% to 30% of urban Black

male youth leaving school prior to graduation (p. 137). Nationwide, at every level of education, there are disparities in academic achievement for Black boys (Moore & Lewis, 2014; Schott Foundation for Public Education, 2015; Toldson et al., 2008). The research is showing African American boys are not being adequately served in the classrooms of our nation (Smedley et al., 2001).

“According to the U.S. Census of 1900, 57% of Black males were illiterate. One hundred years later, the literacy rate among Black men persists at a high level of 44%” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 144). The National Center for Education Statistics (2001) found that after high school only 17% of African American students were able to demonstrate effective literacy skills as characterized by the ability to find information and understand, summarize, or in moderately complex texts (Banks, 2005, p. 22). Researchers have concluded African American boys have more than classroom deficiencies that are preventing them from having success in school thus hindering literacy growth.

Seventy-eight percent of Black males at some points have had to repress their feelings, thoughts, and emotions for fear of being labeled the troublemaker or being punished for supposedly making trouble (Jenkins, 2006, p. 145). Jenkins also stated that too often socially and intellectually curious Black boys are labeled as troublemakers while their white peers are rewarded for the same behavior. Due to an internalized belief in racial stereotypes and the influence of the social label of Black man as the villain, White and Black teachers frequently fail to provide Black boys with superior educational service (Noguera, 1997). The intersectional race, gender, and sexuality stereotypes that frame Black boys as aggressive and volatile, and intellectually and emotionally stunted, have implications for how others interpret the nature of

Black boys (Davis, 2001; Majors & Billson, 1993; Spencer et al., 2004). These oppressive stereotypes, according to Delpit (2006), create a culturally clouded vision that prevents teachers from seeing students, especially those who are different from themselves, as they truly are. This problem has far-reaching and well-documented consequences for Black men and society as a whole, and its causes are multifaceted and rooted in structural inequalities (e.g., Howard, 2014; Jackson & Moore, 2006; Noguera, 2008). Focusing on the literacy development of African American male youth is important because reading and writing difficulties put these young men at risk for academic failure and maladaptive behavior (Swanson et al., 2003).

The need to consider socio-cultural issues in boys' achievement is defined by Younger et al. (2005) who noted that some boys go to considerable lengths to protect their macho images and sense of self-worth and that one mechanism for doing this is disruptive or non-conformist behavior. Black boys come from and their real experiences of being Black and male in United States public schools (Davis, 2003; Smith & Ananiadou, 2003; Bentall et al, 2011). Researchers have examined several factors that serve as barriers to achievement for African American males. Internal factors included self-concept and identity issues (Tatum, 2005).

Ferguson et al. (2008) reported survey results indicating that Black suburban high school students were more likely than their White counterparts to report withholding academic effort out of concern for how others might perceive them. Indeed, racial discrimination has been linked to a variety of school success outcomes for Black adolescents, including declines in grades, academic self-efficacy, and school utility values (Chavous et al.; 2008; Wong et al.; 2003).

Some researchers have determined that the poor performance of African American and low-income students is due to deficiencies in urban schools. For example, Oakes and Guiton

(1995) found that minority students are significantly under-enrolled in advanced placement courses, even when those courses are available; minority students are referred less frequently for advanced courses, despite meeting the necessary criteria; and minority students are likely to exclude themselves from advanced courses in order to maintain social relationships. This circumstance may impede the development of literacy skills through advanced texts, dialogues, and critical-thinking techniques (Anderson et al., 2007; Kirkland & Jackson, 2009; Tatum, 2008). Many critical academic, social, and environmental issues confront young Black male students in general, but especially those who grow up in major urban areas. These academic issues include, but are not limited to: (1) overrepresentation in special education programs that are frequently misdiagnosed; (2) under-referral and underrepresentation in gifted education, Advanced Placement (AP), and college-preparation programs; (3) low high school retention rates, suspension, and expulsion; and (4) stereotype threats that frequently inhibit their academic self-efficacy (Wright & Ford, 2019). The practice of disproportionately recommending Black males for special education assistance contributes greatly to their perceived dysfunction, reifying and reinforcing negative and frequently unquestioned narratives about their social and scholastic promise, potential, and possibilities (Wright & Ford, 2019). The present research shows the inability to get Black and brown students enrolled in advanced courses.

In addition, studies show teachers and other school officials often report experiencing difficulties engaging African American boys in reading (Anderson et al., 2007; Kirkland & Jackson, 2009; Tatum, 2008). This disengagement in reading has led to achievement disparities between African American boys and other student groups (Kutner et al., 2006, 2010; Noguera, 2003). Most teachers in schools throughout the United States are White, middle-class females

with limited experience in interacting with students from different social-cultural backgrounds (Chambers & Lavery, 2017). Compared to White students, Black students attend schools whose instructional quality and teacher skill are, on average, lower (Clotfelter et al., 2004). Allen (2013) found that although the parents of middle-class Black male students stressed the importance of education to their sons, both sons and fathers “spoke of microaggression events in their school, which included the negative and stereotypical views teachers and administrators held of Black men that resulted in racialized assumptions of intelligence, deviance, and differential treatment” (p. 179).

Black male students have frequently been disciplined for culturally expressive behavior, including rapping, strutting, using slang, and wearing hats, expressive clothing, and pants with loose belts. The majority of teachers view such conduct as "negative, impolite, arrogant, intimidating, and threatening; therefore, it is not conducive to learning" (Major & Billson, 1993, p. 14). Their bleak experiences result in negative teacher perceptions based on stereotypes, particularly among educators who lack cultural competence (Alexander, 2011; Ross & Stevenson, 2018; Steele, 1997). Some African American boys do not participate in reading activities (Husband, 2014). Choice is a possible factor that contributes to students' reading engagement (Husband, 2014). When Black male students are deprived of relevant, meaningful learning opportunities or lack content knowledge, they have a tendency to disengage from instruction and adopt a stoic demeanor in order to appear in control. This response is commonly perceived by teachers as uncaring, unmotivated, devaluing education, and having a poor disposition (Major & Billson, 1993; Obiakor & Beachum, 2005). Before entering the classroom, students of color, particularly boys, are already at a disadvantage, and many struggle with

interpersonal conflict that prevents them from thriving (Jenkins, 2006). Jenkins (2006) also states, “he brings with him... a life of poverty or some form of economic struggle... a generation enraged by inadequately educated parents and elders, and the beginnings of deep psychological and esteem issues that take root with his first engagement in society” (p. 144). Moreover, research shows that teachers overall have lower achievement expectations for their Black male students (Allen, 2013; Davis & Jordan, 1994; R.F. Ferguson, 2003; Gushue & Whitson, 2006; Howard, 2014; Toldson et al., 2008). Reduced expectations beget even lower results in Black student achievement (e.g., Delpit, 2006). Differences in the quality of relationships between teachers and students between Black and White students can also contribute to the achievement gap. Academic outcomes are influenced by the degree of closeness and care that children and adolescents experience with their teachers. White students have a closer and more caring relationship with their teachers on average than Black students. (Gregory & Weinstein, 2004; Hamre & Pianta, 2005; Weinstein, 2002).

Dumas and Nelson (2016) have urged educators to reimagine Black boys, arguing that addressing teachers' low expectations necessitates a profound shift in how educators perceive the humanity of Black boys. To reimagine Black boys in educational spaces, it is necessary to deconstruct the ideologies that shape them. (Goff et al., 2014). Throughout the primary and secondary grades, Black children are more often assigned to lower tracks than their White peers (Alexander et al., 1997; Lucas & Berends, 2002). The lack of culturally relevant pedagogy provided by culturally competent teachers, academic incongruence, and stereotypical labeling are responsible for the majority of Black males' negative self-image and poor academic performance (Brooms, 2019).

A core recommendation in Milner's (2007) principles for empowering male students is to change how Black males are construed. "If teachers believe Black males are destined for failure and apathy," Milner writes, "their pedagogies will be saturated with low expectations" (p. 244). Research on White teachers' racial identities has revealed the tendency of White teachers to adopt color-blind views of race or to center their own experiences in their conceptualizations of race (Crowley, 2016; Jupp & Lensmire, 2016; Picower, 2009). Connor et al.'s (2002) research with White teachers showed that color blindness was not only about the system but also about the self, as teachers subscribed to a color-blind ideology "as a way to avoid appearing to be racist" (p. 239).

Having teachers with limited cultural competence begets discipline disparities for boys of color (Alexander, 2015; Ross & Stevenson, 2018). In school settings, Black male students are frequently viewed as problematic and incompetent, rather than as curious and capable members of the learning community (A. A. Ferguson, 2000; Howard, 2014; Milner, 2007; Noguera, 2008). As a result, they are disciplined and demonized rather than engaged, loved, and instructed (Brooms, 2019; Davis, 2003; Dumas & Nelson, 2016). Black boys are constructed more as men than boys and are rarely afforded the freedom, exploration, and curiosity that otherwise characterizes childhood (Dumas & Nelson, 2016; Goff et al. 2014). Furthermore, a substantial body of psychological literature demonstrates empirically that teachers' beliefs exacerbate or reproduce achievement disparities, especially for marginalized students (Jussim & Harber, 2005; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968).

Students in the higher tracks are exposed to interesting and challenging material, whereas students in the lower tracks are exposed to work that is repetitive, uninteresting, and focused on

behavioral control (Boykin, 1986; Oakes, 2005; Weinstein, 2002). Jenkins (2006) asserts that reversing the negative circumstances facing African American men necessitates the transformation of a wide range of social, political, economic, psychological, and educational problems that are deeply rooted in the American power structure. African American boys are typically more engaged in classrooms that respond to and build on their cultural backgrounds, knowledge bases, and ways of being than in classrooms that do not incorporate these elements into the learning activities (Collins 2006; Kirkland & Jackson, 2009 Soracho, 2010). Engaged readers tend to gain a significant amount of personal enjoyment and satisfaction from reading (Wang & Guthrie, 2004). Husband (2014) concluded teachers and other school officials should consider creating more opportunities where African Americans can read texts with partners and/or small groups of students in the classroom and across the broader institutional context. Husband also suggested that schools could increase African American boys' interest in reading by creating learning communities in which African American boys read texts collaboratively with students from across the school.

More research has concluded that academic engagement is consistently associated with improved academic performance (Bandura, 1997, Pajares. 1996, 2005; Pintrich et al., 1994; Schunk, 2005). In addition, it has been discovered that teachers and other school officials can increase African American boys' reading engagement by creating more reading programs that provide African Americans with more options (e.g., Reading Recovery, Response to Intervention). Researchers point out teachers and other school officials must commit to finding solutions to the problem of reading disengagement in and among African American boys. Many reading programs implemented in schools in the U.S. that serve large numbers of African

American boys place an overemphasis on basic skills acquisition (Enriquez, 2013; Hughes-Hassel et al., 2011; Kirkland, 2011; Jenkins, 2009). Husband (2014) states that if teachers and other school officials embrace this primary commitment, they will accept that the problem of African American boys' disinterest in reading cannot be resolved.

African American students must see themselves as intellectually capable and culturally valued if they are to succeed in literacy tasks (Perry & Steele, 2004). Flowers (2007) stated, men seem to really matter tremendously in the lives of these boys and their educational pursuits. Flowers continued by stating that African American students must perceive and understand that their literacy education provides them with the essential skills that lead to limitless academic and professional opportunities. Accomplishing this goal may require uncomfortable dialogues between teachers and students to improve teacher expectation, selection of curricula, and classroom dialogues which enhance critical thinking (Tatum & Muhammad, 2012). Behavioral engagement is a significant predictor of reading achievement for African American students (Guthrie & McRae, 2011).

According to the research, schools must find new ways to engage African American boys. Several studies have demonstrated the importance of being taught by someone who resembles you.

Effective critical literacy instruction may be one way to move beyond standardized practices and improve African American boys' reading, according to researchers (Clarke, 2006; McLaughlin & DeVogd, 2004; Tatum, 2005). Black male students must be exposed to culturally relevant learning experiences that involve active inquiry, are relevant to their daily

lives, and provide opportunities for them to share their cultural knowledge in class in order to achieve academic success (Ladson-Billson, 1994; Lopez, 2011).

Kunjufu (2004) emphasized that if African American males are to be successful, they must rise above the status quo and overcome the everyday barriers of White privilege and the plethora of negative stereotypes espoused by society; they must strive to achieve a high level of success.

Aggression

When someone feels threatened or has had their pride, reputation, or self-esteem questioned, violence and aggression frequently result. The self-regard of perpetrators has been a theoretically significant but empirically debatable cause of youth aggression among the many other factors. (Thomaes et al., 2008). Hawkins-Jones and Reeves (2020) use an analogy that “negative view of Black males’ hover over their heads like crop dusters, spraying exclusion, oppression, and iniquitous discipline practices the very moment many enter the doors of American schools” (p. 45) The prevailing belief for a long time has been that aggressive youth have low self-esteem (Carr, 1999; Heide, 1997).

According to Tatum (2005), African American male students frequently display a variety of culturally specific coping mechanisms, such as acting tough, refusing to retreat from violence, avoiding self-disclosure, and dissociating from school. Tatum also states that teachers and administrators frequently misinterpret these behaviors as disrespectful and offensive, resulting in disproportionate grade retention and suspensions. Academic disparities are inextricably linked to negative life outcomes (social and environmental), such as economic hardships due to high rates of underemployment, unemployment, discrimination in various sectors of the job market,

adverse health conditions, substance abuse, negative media perceptions, racial hate-crime violence, and victimization due to police violence (Wright & Ford, 2019). External factors play a role in the behaviors that lead to school disengagement, according to researchers. Self-esteem may only lead to aggression in adolescents because they are more concerned than younger children with maintaining their desired self-images (Harter, 2006; Rosenberg, 1986). Shame-induced aggression may serve an ego-protective function (Tangney & Dearing, 2002).

Contrary to the findings of these studies, Baumeister et al. (1996) contested the notion that low self-esteem causes aggression. Instead, they proposed that violence occurs most frequently when inflated self-perceptions and unstable beliefs in personal superiority are threatened. Youth with low self-esteem will be especially aggressive when humiliated because humiliating events make them feel even less superior (Thomaes et al., 2008). This prediction is inconsistent with what we know about the motivations that surround self-esteem. (Thomaes et al.). Self-verification theory holds that people generally try to maintain consistent self-appraisals and dislike changing their views (Swann & Read, 1981).

Self-Esteem

Research on the relationship between self-beliefs and achievement has been hampered by reference to a confusing array of differing self-terms (Hattie, 1992; Wylie, 1979). Tying self-esteem and student achievement has been a preoccupation with educators for several decades (Auer & DiLuzio, 1992; Baumeister et al., 1996; Benham, 1993; Joseph, 1992; Keller, 2009; Klein, 2009; Lane et al., 2004; Rennie & Punch, 1991; Solley & Stagner, 1956; Wang, & Stiles, 1976). Different perspectives on the influence of self-beliefs on achievement frequently play a prominent role in arguments for or against investing in various types of school reform and

intervention programs (DuBois, 2001; Kahne, 1996). Other studies have shown that general or global self-esteem is not associated with academic attainment (Marsh & Q'Mara, 2008). Additional studies concluded that the relationship weakens over time. (Pullman & Allik, 2008). Researchers point out the possible effect literacy can have on self-esteem within African American students. When it comes to Black men in particular, the educational discourse has only marginally conveyed their good education achievements, such as high levels of academic engagement and accomplishment, strong performance in college, and attainment of advanced degrees. Academic achievement is influenced by a student's academic self-confidence (Adams et al., 2020).

A growing body of literature provides evidence that racial discrimination operates as a risk factor for negative academic outcomes among Black adolescents (e.g., Neblett et al., 2006). In addition to these findings, research has shown there is a long-standing view among many educators that the beliefs and feelings students have about themselves are a key determinant of academic success (Beane, 1994). According to Byrne (1993), the most common terms are self-concept, self-esteem, and self-efficacy. Bandura (1995) defines perceived self-efficacy as "beliefs in one's abilities to organize and execute the courses of action necessary to manage prospective situations" (p. 2). "Self-esteem is a psychological concept which refers to the evaluation an individual makes in relation to themselves and indicates the extent to which they see themselves as capable and worthy" (Coopersmith 1967, p. 4). Academic self-concept and academic self-efficacy refer to beliefs about one's academic self-concept and self-efficacy that are developed specifically for academic purposes (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003). Academic self-concept refers to individual knowledge and perceptions about themselves in achievement

situations (Byrne, 1994; Shavelson & Bolus, 1982; Wigfield & Karpathian, 1991). Academic self-efficacy refers to individuals' convictions that they can successfully perform given academic tasks at designated levels (Schunk, 1991).

Self-esteem is a subjective emotional response that an individual has towards themselves (Heatherton & Wyland 2003). Shir et al. (2003) demonstrate that low academic achievement and other social behaviors are associated with low self-esteem and that it is essential to address this relationship in order to improve children's overall performance.

Many high school dropouts and at-risk students lack self-esteem (Bridgeland et al., 2006). Moreover, according to Jerald (2006), students with a history of poor academic performance prior to entering high school are more likely to drop out.

Sandidge (2006) discovered a weak correlation between self-esteem and achievement, with ability and background being more likely to explain differences in achievement than self-esteem. According to attribution theory, self-efficacy theory, and self-worth theory, children's beliefs about self-competence are crucial, because if they believe they can complete a task, they will perform better and be more motivated to choose increasingly difficult tasks (Bandura & Wessels, 1994; Covington, 1984; Weiner, 1985). Children's attitudes toward reading, in the sense of liking or disliking reading, include a positive self-concept as a reader, a desire and tendency to read, and reported enjoyment or interest in reading (Sainsbury & Schagen, 2004).

Numerous studies have demonstrated that a positive self-concept or self-efficacy facilitates academic engagement, goal setting, task selection, persistence and effort, intrinsic motivation, strategy use, performance, and achievement, and even career choice (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003).

According to one perspective on the relationship between self-esteem and achievement, self-esteem influences accomplishment (Alpay, 2002). El-Anzi (2005) found a significant positive relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement, which is consistent with this finding.

Lane et al. (2004) found a correlation between self-esteem, self-efficacy, academic achievement, and performance in a related study. The relationship between self-esteem and self-efficacy was found to be positive. However, they found only a tenuous relationship between self-esteem and achievement, as only self-efficacy and academic performance were significantly related; thus, efficacy can predict achievement. In addition, contrary to what was stated previously, Fairclough (2005) offers a viewpoint that casts serious doubt on the existence of a relationship, as she discovered that the relationship between self-esteem and achievement does not exist.

This is consistent with Midgett et al. (2002) finding that the relationship between self-esteem and achievement disappears when family factors are considered. The existence of a causal relationship has neither been replicated nor consistently refuted by the available research. Consequently, programs designed to promote self-esteem or related self-constructs (e.g., self-efficacy beliefs) are frequently advocated on the assumption that self-beliefs are crucial to achievement.

Reeve (2001) hypothesized that a person's motivation to approach or avoid a task is determined by the perceived value of the task and the likelihood of success. In addition, Eccles et al. (1989) asserted that task value is a crucial factor in achievement motivation. Numerous studies indicate that boys and girls

engage in reading and are motivated to do so in different ways (Barr, 1993, 1998; Maynard, 2002; Millard, 1997a, 1997b). In contrast, students with positive reading attitudes seek out opportunities to read, are more motivated, and have a higher sense of self-esteem (Robinson & Weintraub, 1973). High levels of achievement are facilitated by instructional activities that positively affect attitudes toward reading (Barnett & Irwin, 1994).

Students who read more become more proficient in reading fluency, comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and cognitive development (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001). As students practice reading, they acquire fluency and reap the benefits of their efforts (Spiegel, 1992); however, many educators overlook the significance of reading attitudes (Gillespie, 1993). In general, research indicates that students with more positive attitudes have more positive reading experiences and read more frequently, resulting in higher reading achievement (Thames & Reeves, 1994).

According to Dombey (1999), children who enjoy reading in school are motivated to read more and across a variety of genres. Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) found that reading motivation predicted the amount and breadth of children's reading, suggesting that a variety of reading motivations could affect children's reading engagement and performance. Among these are intrinsic factors, extrinsic influences, and social motivations for reading.

Teachers and Administrators

In addition, documented racial differences in teacher/administrator disciplinary practices indicate that Black adolescents are likely to experience bias and discrimination at school (Sellers et al., 2003). Millard (1997a) asserts that while books are the primary focus for reading in school, boys are less interested in the narrative genre. In addition, boys and girls read for different

reasons, and these differences grow as they advance through school. Similarly, Lee and Burkam (2002) found that children from different racial-ethnic groups benefited from different levels of teacher experience at school entry, with African American children assigned to less experienced teachers than their White and Asian peers. Thus, systematic racial-ethnic differences in the availability of experienced teachers and high-quality instruction may have a direct effect on achievement.

For many Black youths, racial discrimination exposures at school are not uncommon, including reported experiences of negative treatment from teachers and from peers (Fisher et al., 2000). Interactions with teachers and peers at school influence how youth think about themselves as learners and, subsequently, motivation and engagement (Daniels, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Teachers' meaning making is key because teachers are frontline agents in (de)legitimizing racist achievement ideologies (Allen, 2015; Gibson & Brown, 2009), and what teachers believe about their Black students matters for student experience, engagement, and achievement (Diamond et al., 2004; Milner, 2007). Although students' attitudes towards reading are typically identified by teachers as being important (Quinn & Jadav, 1987), little time is spent developing positive reading attitudes in public schools (Heathington & Alexander, 1984).

Summary

Culturally responsive approaches have been recommended in research to create learning environments where ethnically and culturally diverse students can thrive (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1994); however, African American boys are still falling behind. Positive outcomes will result from engaging African American adolescent boys in appropriate literacy texts that address their academic, cultural, emotional, and social needs (Tatum, 2006). Providing African American

boys with texts that portrayed them in positive roles, dispelled racial and gender stereotypes, and encouraged engagement in discussions helped them grow socially and academically (Carver-Thomas, 2018). The next chapter will look at high school literacy among African American males.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

The American governmental and educational leaders have publicly recognized the existence of a substantial achievement gap between Caucasian students and students of color, most notably African American students; according to United States Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, “the persistence, and even the recent expansion, of the opportunity gap, should be an urgent wake-up call that America is still not a color-blind society that provides equal educational opportunity” (Duncan, 2012, p. 1). There has been an outcry to address and “fix” the achievement disparity and do so in a hurry (Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, 2011). Public Law PL107-110, more commonly known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), has asserted that addressing and closing the achievement gap among all students is and will continue to be a national priority for all public schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). Specifically, NCLB legislation aimed to have states and local school districts materialize high levels of achievement for all students regardless of race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. There has been evidence to suggest that NCLB created systems of accountability while never addressing the real issue as to why historically marginalized students have never fared well in American education systems (Sunderson, 2008).

To address this loophole, in December 2015, Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA, was signed into law. This bill was an effort to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which has been in place for five decades. This law establishes national educational standards for American children, demonstrating the government's long-standing commitment to

providing equal opportunities to students from all backgrounds (Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)U.S. Department of Education).

“Every Student Succeeds Act's goal is to ensure that students graduate from high school, progress in their education, and are better identified as gifted and talented. In exchange for comprehensive ideas that would increase equity and improve instruction quality, the Obama administration allowed more flexibility in educational plans. The Student Succeeds Act worked to maintain the important safeguards in place for students from low-income families. The goal was to provide equal access to the systems that could help the next generation learn to read and write after the US government made every child a priority” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2016, pp. 2-3).

According to Matthew et al. (2016) and W. K. Kellogg Foundation (Network C. T. S., 2014), the achievement gap is caused by bad economic and social conditions from the past and the present. Society hasn't done enough to help African Americans get over the bad effects of prejudice and discrimination. There are still inequalities in almost every area of life, including education.

The overall academic achievement of African American males was appallingly low, not only in cities, but nationwide, said Michael Casserly, the executive director of the Council of the Great City Schools. According to a study by the Council of the Great City Schools, by fourth grade only 12 percent of Black male students read at or above grade level, while 38 percent of white males do. By eighth grade it falls to just 9 percent for Black males, 33 percent for whites. Black male students are almost twice as likely as white males to drop out of school. Black males now make up only 5 percent of college

enrollment nationally, but 36 percent of the prison population, Casserly said. Researchers say this isn't just a crisis affecting African Americans - this crisis affects all Americans. We ought to be concerned about the fact that so much talent, so much potential is being wasted and squandered, Casserly said. Researchers call these dismal numbers a call to action for scholars across the country to study this problem and come up with real solutions. (Whitaker, 2010, p. 2)

Black males may require a more intrinsic method of acquiring literacy skills. It may be possible to reduce the achievement gap and raise more students to proficient levels by providing educators with programs and strategies to assist struggling high school readers.

Review of Literature

The consequences of students and schools failing to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) highlights the importance of assisting underachieving students. "To meet required standards, students require both a rich learning experience and solid preparation" (McCullough et al., 2003, p. 71). To accomplish this, the standards need to be combined with a flexible and differentiated curriculum approach. The AYP requirements for each of the specific subgroups identified by race, socioeconomic level, English proficiency, and special needs are one of the most difficult challenges for schools (Kober, 2005).

Some districts have reduced class sizes, extended the school day, or extended the school year in response to accountability measures to provide more time for curriculum delivery and understanding (Olson, 2001). The pressure to improve standardized test scores is putting a strain on many educators' primary goals of nurturing students and assisting them in learning for the sake of learning (Armstrong, 2006).

Kunjufu (2011) reported that only 12% of African American males are proficient in reading, 80% of African American male students are in special education, and 53% of African American males drop out of high school (pp. 143-144). The Schott Foundation for Public Education (Aarons, 2010, p. 5) report revealed that the overall 2007/2008 graduation rate for African American males in the United States was only 47%. Less than 8% of African American males between the ages of 15 and 29 years were college graduates. Research has shown a static achievement gap among Black students and other races. “Underachievement, lack of inclusion, and backward progression of African American men within American society, and particularly within the educational arena, has once again surfaced as a trend that demands immediate attention” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 127). African American males are disproportionately represented among students who are forced to withdraw, have low academic performance, and report negative college experiences (Noguera, 1997). Noguera also states 1996 high school drop-out rate for Black males is high with 20% to 30% of urban Black male youth leaving school prior to graduation (p.147). Nationwide, at every level of education, there are disparities in academic achievement for Black boys (Moore & Lewis, 2014; Schott Foundation for Public Education, 2015; Toldson et al., 2008). The research shows African American men are not being adequately served in the classrooms of our nation.

Statement of the Problem

Test scores improve test-taking skills, but not always student learning, according to research (Brooks & Brooks, 2005). Educational practices designed to meet testing accountability measures ignore instructional methodology, student motivation, and student development (Brooks & Brooks, 2005). In a review of the literature few studies have been found regarding the

impact on reading achievement in African American males who participate in additional reading instruction with emphasis placed on reading skills and increasing student self-concept.

Purpose of the Study

Students' self-beliefs have a big impact on how hard they work and how well they do (Lawrence, 2006; Levine, 2002). According to research, students' perceptions of themselves as learners have an impact on their self-esteem, motivation, and achievement (Dweck et al., 2004). Self-belief is a crucial component of education and success. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of an additional reading program with instruction focused on skill building and student academic self-confidence related to the literacy achievement of Black males in high school. The attempt to evaluate success through changes in self-beliefs in addition to traditional measures, such as test scores, is a unique feature of this study.

Research Questions

The research conducted in this study will answer three questions regarding self-concept and academic indicators in an anonymous survey. The questions are:

1. What impact does an additional period of reading instruction for one trimester per school year on Black male academic self-concept as reported by teachers participating in the reading instruction program?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses that teachers identified about implementation of the additional reading program?
3. What did the implementation of the additional reading program reveal in relation to student achievement as gathered by district data?

Conceptual Framework

Self-Concept Theory

Achievement influences self-concept, and achievement shapes perceptions of competence, which influences self-concept (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). Self-concept is influenced by related self-beliefs such as self-esteem, confidence, and self-efficacy. The educational significance is that students' self-perceptions are greatly influenced by their experiences in public schools, where they spend more than 1,000 hours per year in the classroom (Novak & Purkey, 1996). Pintrich and Schunk claim that Self-concept theory research is like expectancy-value theory research, but it differs in that it focuses on the development of self-identity rather than motivation.

Research Design

A mixed method case study examination of self-concept and literacy in high school Black males. The case study is used in many situations as a research strategy to contribute to our understanding of individual, group, organizational, social, political, and related phenomena (Yin 2003, p. 1). A case study or field experiment, according to Yin, should be considered when a study is trying to figure out how or why a program worked, when the investigator has little control over the events, and when the focus is on current rather than historical phenomena. A case study can also be used for exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory purposes (Yin). This study will use two types of data: archival quantitative data and focused interviews, which are both common in case studies (Yin). A practical way to achieve the ideal of triangulation in evaluation research is to plan a mixed method approach that incorporates multiple perspectives, a mix of qualitative and quantitative data, and multiple methods of analysis (Patton, 1990).

Triangulation is a powerful solution to the problem of relying too heavily on any single data source or method, thereby undermining the validity and credibility of findings due to the weaknesses of any single method, according to Patton (p. 193). The purpose of this study is to compare changes within the same group of subjects over time using an in-subjects approach (Cone & Foster, 1993). Before the study started, the program that is being evaluated was implemented.

The study will collect data from four different sources: teacher interviews, teacher survey, Fall and Winter Supplemental reading scores and district generated Student Satisfaction Survey. The teacher survey will be used to answer research question one regarding the program's possible impact on a student's academic self-concept. Teacher interviews will be used to answer research question two, regarding reading program effectiveness. In addition to this qualitative data, question three will be answered fall and winter Supplemental reading scores.

The five teachers participating in this study have the following qualifications: Teacher 1 has been a teacher for over 20 years and has a reading endorsement for grades K-12. Teacher 2 has been teaching for almost 15 years and has a reading endorsement for K-12 education. Teacher 3 has a reading endorsement and has over 20 years of experience teaching K-12 education. Teacher 4 holds a reading endorsement and has taught K-12 students for over 20 years. Teacher 5 has a literature endorsement and fewer than 10 years of experience.

The use of qualitative data can be seen to improve the study's reliability by adding a descriptive component that the quantitative data lacked, as well as incorporating teacher and student feedback and triangulating the study's findings (Patton, 1990). Focused interviews concentrate on a single event and its consequences (Miller & Salkind, 2002). Teacher interviews

in this study will include questions about how supplemental class time was used, as well as teacher perceptions of the program and its impact. Teachers will also be asked to identify any changes that they noticed in student self-concept.

Participants

The students in the study will be selected by the English and Reading Department at a midwestern high school based on their previous reading scores. The Independent School district is the 5th largest school district in its state. The 17 elementary schools, four middle schools, three high schools and one alternative site serves over 20,000 students. Of these students, 40.6% are white, 24.8% are Black or African American, 16.5% Asian, 9.6% Hispanic, 7.7% two or more races and 0.7% Native American. Secondary schools in the district have an average class size of 31.9, each high school has a reading enrichment program. Each year, approximately 2000 students in grades 9 through 12 attend the high school. The participating schools' student demographics are similar to that of the district, with a few minor differences.

Instruments for Data Collection and Analysis

Data for this study will be collected using two instruments: The Teacher Reading Survey regarding student progress and self-concept (see Appendix A) and the Teacher Interview regarding the implementation of the supplemental reading program (see Appendix B). The Supplemental reading test score data and Student Satisfaction Survey data, provided by the district, did not necessitate the use of any specific instrument.

Teacher Survey

Data from the teacher survey designed for the reading study will be analyzed in this study to aid in evaluating the affective component of student success and any impact from participation

in the supplemental reading class. Self-concept measurements are difficult to perfect and have limitations that vary depending on the instrument and the participants (Lawrence, 2006).

The goal of the teacher survey is to assess three elements that the program sees as critical to its success and that were also identified in the literature review. Academic motivation, confidence in reading ability, and perceived reading success. In the review of literature, each of these elements were identified as being related to academic achievement (Apter, 2006; Bong & Skaalvik, 2003).

Researchers can write their own survey questions or borrow questions from others who have done similar research, according to Czaja and Blair (2005). Although neither method is superior, using previously written questions allows you to compare your results to theirs (Czaja & Blair).

Because there were no studies that were sufficiently comparable to use a source for complete questions, I will generate questions to conduct an evaluation of this reading program based on the review of relevant literature. Since 1930, other item types for measuring attitudes have been developed. “Surprisingly, extensive research suggests that none of them are clearly superior to Likert-type items, which are simple to write and understand by respondents” (Patten, 2001, p. 34). As a result, the teacher survey in this study will have 13 questions, 12 of which are Likert-type items assessing self-beliefs, one multiple choice question, and one open-ended response question. The Likert-type items were written as declarative statements followed by options with varying levels of agreement for participants to choose from (Patten). Patten also advises against using negatives in survey statements. To remain neutral and avoid biasing respondents, the survey questions were written with positive phrasing but with caution in

wording choices (Barker, 2005; Rea, 2005). For each item, a 4-point Likert-type scale will be provided to prevent respondents from overusing the neutral position, which could skew results (Patten, 2001).

There are three subgroups within the 13 Likert-type items. The questions will range in size from 3-6 and will address different aspects of the three affective elements in the research questions. Subgroups with multiple survey items will provide a more comprehensive picture of teacher perception regarding student feelings, than a single broad question about each attitude (Patten, 2001). Questions 1-3 and 13 form a motivation subgroup, questions 4-9 form a subgroup about academic confidence in reading, and questions 10-12 form a third subgroup about perception of success.

Procedures and Timeline

The purpose of this study is to examine the link between self-concept and literacy in high school Black males. Following is a description of the reading program as well as the data collection procedures. Before beginning the interviews, I informed the teachers that their names would not be included in the materials. I would also use an audio recording device so that I could transcribe the material later. The interviews were performed in person according to each teacher's schedule. The interviews with teachers were concluded at the conclusion of the first trimester. At the end of the trimester, the student in the reading instruction class completed a two-question survey.

Supplemental Reading Class

The FastBridge system uses data from student assessments to suggest interventions tailored to each student's specific needs. The aReading screener is administered by English

teachers. aReading is a computer-based adaptive screener that assesses general reading ability and predicts overall reading success. Items targeting print, phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension were created for students in grades K-12. Orthography, morphology, vocabulary, and comprehension are all addressed in items designed for middle and high school students. The Lexile Framework for Reading, which provides a mechanism for matching each student's reading ability with text such as books or reading passages, is included in aReading. Educators, caregivers, and students can use this information to find texts that will appropriately challenge students and help them improve their reading skills.

Teachers can use aReading to screen students and estimate annual growth with tri-annual assessments (fall, winter, and spring), but it can also be used two to three times a year to assess annual growth. The system includes benchmark standards (also known as "cut scores" or "targets") to help determine which students are at risk of academic failure and which are on track to succeed. Educators can use this information to provide targeted interventions to students who are struggling, as well as inform instructional decisions for students who are on track and performing well. Students who fail to meet standards on the MCA Reading test in 2021 AND score between 12 and 29.99 percent on aReading for two or more consecutive years.

Administrators will assist in class placement decisions during assessment windows. Building administrators, the Supplemental interventionist, and the Supplemental Coordinator collaborate on student identification for Supplemental intervention. The progress of each student in his or her individual goal area is tracked weekly in the FastBridge system using AUTO reading or CBM. Interventions take place three times a week for 15 minutes each time.

The questions and response format are very similar to those used in many state-wide assessments (i.e., multiple choice, fill in the blank). For each question, there are both auditory and visual stimuli. aReading provides a reliable estimate of broad reading achievement in grades K-12, according to extensive research. It can help you predict how well you'll do on high-stakes tests (e.g., state tests). The National Center on Multi-Tiered System of Supports, formerly the National Center for Response to Intervention, gave aReading the highest possible rating for validity, reliability, and diagnostic accuracy.

aReading is a quick and easy procedure that is completely automated. It can be given to an individual or a group. For each child, browser-based software adapts and personalizes the assessment so that it works at the child's developmental and skill level. The test's adaptive nature makes it more efficient and precise than traditional paper-and-pencil assessments.

Reading Program

Each student who will be chosen to participate in the supplemental reading program will be enrolled in one period of general reading each quarter, as well as one class period of reading study, for only one quarter of the academic school year. To support, pre-teach, or re-teach concepts, the program's instructor will design a curriculum that aligns with material covered in students' general reading classes. Reading study teachers are expected to communicate with general reading teachers at each grade level to help with alignment and to select materials and activities for remediation. Throughout the quarter of participation, students will be taught concepts and basic skills that they will need to succeed on MCA tests. In addition to direct instruction, hands-on and group activities, and educational games, a homework assistance component will be incorporated daily. Regardless of the direction provided by the school (or

district), individual teachers still need to make decisions regarding curricular design at the classroom level given the unique characteristics of their students (Marzano, 2003).

Teacher Survey

The surveys will take about 10-15 minutes to complete. There are 13 Likert-type questions, one multiple-choice question, and two open-ended response items in the survey. The responses of participants will be directly recorded on the survey question form, and the same questions will be used in both the pre and post surveys. To ensure consistency, a short directional script will be given each time the survey is administered. The script will state the purpose of the survey and describe the confidential nature of the responses, as suggested by Lawrence (2006). Furthermore, the script will state that taking the survey is optional and that completing it will have no bearing on teaching in the program. Counselors will send the survey responses directly to the district office, where they will be scanned and tallied. The results will be obtained by the researcher via the district testing office personnel.

Supplemental Reading Test Scores

Test scores for participants' reading class will be collected twice during the trimester. The district technology department will provide the data by querying reading study sections. Prior to analysis, all scores will be copied into an Excel spreadsheet and names removed.

Interviews with Teachers

Teachers from the supplemental reading class will be interviewed. The goal of the interviews is to learn more about how the class was structured, how time was allocated, and teacher perceptions of the program's strengths, weaknesses, and impact on students. From the instructor's perspective, the interviews will provide general attitudes and program information.

The interview candidates will be given a list of questions to review one week prior to the interviews. Each interviewee will be asked to read and sign an informed consent document on the day of their scheduled interview, acknowledging that their identity will be kept anonymous, though there is still a significant risk of being identified by readers familiar with the school or program. The interviews will take place at the school, but not in the classroom. To reduce background noise and interruptions, the interviews were conducted in a quiet room (Patton, 1990). Each interview will be taped on an audio cassette. Recording interviews ensures greater accuracy than taking notes alone, allows the researcher to go back and find exact phrasing, and allows the researcher to focus more on the interviewees during the interview (Patton). The recording device will be tested before each interview, as suggested by Patton.

Chapter 4: Results

Overview of Literature

According to Kunjufu (2011), just 12% of African American boys are fluent in reading, 80% of Black American male pupils are enrolled in special education, and 53% of African American males drop out of high school (pp. 143-144). Self-confidence is essential to the development and education of adolescents. "Underachievement, lack of participation, and backward growth of African American men in American culture, particularly in the educational arena, have resurfaced and require prompt action" (Jenkins, 2006, p. 127). African American males are overrepresented among students who are compelled to withdraw from college, have poor academic performance, and report bad college experiences (Noguera, 1997). According to Noguera, between 20 and 30% of urban Black male adolescents dropped out of high school before graduating in 1996 (p. 147).

According to research, students' self-perceptions as learners influence their self-esteem, motivation, and achievement (Dweck et al., 2004). Many researchers have shown that a positive self-concept or self-efficacy promotes academic engagement, goal setting, task selection, perseverance and effort, intrinsic motivation, strategy utilization, performance, and achievement, and even career choice (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003). This study was conducted to examine an intervention program designed to address the issues of underperformance of Black male students in reading with an emphasis on reading skills and academic self-concept

Statement of the Problem

Test scores improve test-taking skills, but not always student learning, according to research (Brooks & Brooks, 2005). Educational practices designed to meet testing accountability

measures ignore instructional methodology, student motivation, and student development (Brooks & Brooks, 2005). In a review of the literature few studies have been found regarding the impact on reading achievement in African American males who participate in additional reading instruction with emphasis placed on reading skills and increasing student self-concept.

Purpose of the Study

Students' self-beliefs have a big impact on how hard they work and how well they do (Lawrence, 2006; Levine, 2002). According to research, students' perceptions of themselves as learners have an impact on their self-esteem, motivation, and achievement (Dweck et al., 2004). Self-belief is a crucial component of education and success. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of an additional reading program with instruction focused on skill building and student academic self-confidence related to the literacy achievement of Black males in high school. The attempt to evaluate success through changes in self-beliefs in addition to traditional measures, such as test scores, is a unique feature of this study. The following research questions guided this study.

1. What impact does one additional period of reading instruction for one trimester per school year on Black male academic self-concept as reported by teachers participating in the reading instruction program?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses that teachers identified about implementation of the additional reading program?
3. What did the implementation of the additional reading program reveal in relation to student achievement as gathered by district data?

Conducting the Study

The MCA scores of Black males attending schools in the midwestern school district being studied are depicted in the accompanying graph. This information was used to choose the students who would participate in the Supplemental Reading Program. Students that did not meet proficiency were considered for participation in the Supplemental program for the additional reading instruction. School counselors made student selections and scheduled them for one trimester of the course.

Table 1.1

Summary of Black Male Proficiency on MCA Reading Test for Study District

	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9
Does Not Meet	73.3%	78.6%	93.7%	91.9%
Partially Meets	26.7%	21.4%	6.3%	8.1%
Meets	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

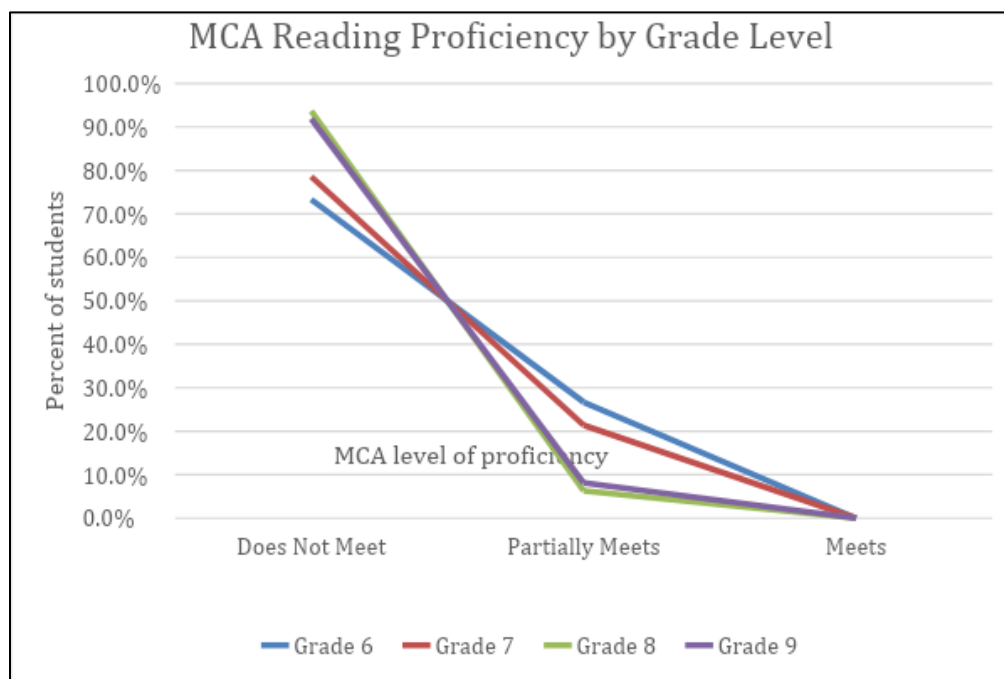


Table 1.1 shows that over 73% of Black males in 7th grade and 8th grade do not meet proficiency and greater than 91% of Black males in 8th and 9th grade do not meet proficiency on the MCA reading test based on the last reported MCA data.

An evaluation of the relationship between self-concept and literacy among high school Black boys will be completed using a mixed method case study. The case study is a method of research that is utilized in a wide variety of contexts to add to our comprehension of individual, group, organizational, social, political, and other phenomena that are relevant to these fields (Yin, 2003, p. 1). According to Yin, a case study or field experiment should be considered when a researcher is attempting to determine how or why a program succeeded, when the investigator has limited influence over the occurrences, and when the focus is on current phenomena rather than historical ones.

The research for this study involved collecting information from a variety of sources. Program teachers were interviewed and surveyed for this study. Research questions one and two related to student self-concept and Supplemental Reading Program strengths and weaknesses, will be addressed by reviewing teacher interview replies. Research questions one and three, addressing the program's potential impact on academic self-concept and students' reading achievement, will be answered by analyzing the teacher survey responses.

In addition, data gathered by the district will be used to answer research questions one and three related to student self-concept and reading achievement. Student satisfaction surveys and fall and winter Supplemental Reading Program test scores are included. After 15 weeks of the supplemental reading program, district-wide fall and winter Supplemental Reading Program test scores will show if students' reading skills improved. The first

trimester Supplemental Reading Program students completed a two-question confidence and skill survey at the end of the trimester. The study will review and compare student and teacher replies.

Research Findings

The Supplemental Reading Program teachers facilitated the taking of a pre and post aReading test to student participants for the trimester they were enrolled in the course. The district also provided the teachers with a Student Satisfaction Survey to administer to participants at the end of the trimester. The district gathered and recorded the data from these two sources. This archival data, including student Supplemental Reading Program test scores and student satisfaction survey data, were shared with the study researcher. In addition, teachers of the Supplemental reading program were interviewed and asked to complete a survey by the researcher to assist in answering the three research questions. For the teacher survey, a link to Google survey was emailed to each of the five Supplemental reading program teachers to complete. The survey contained 13 questions, 12 Likert -style and 1 short answer response. The responses were automatically recorded, and the researcher was notified when the participants completed the survey. Interviews with teachers were carried out in order to get knowledge about the Supplemental reading program that was being evaluated and to gain perspective that cannot be obtained from archived data. For the interview data collected for this study, each of the five Supplemental reading teachers was interviewed individually in person or via zoom call. The same set of questions was used for each interview. Teacher interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and evaluated for the purpose of this study in order to assist in addressing research questions one and two.

Research Question 1 Findings

The first research question was “What impact does one additional period of reading instruction for one trimester per school year have on Black male academic self-concept as reported by teachers participating in the reading instruction program?.” The teacher interview items that pertain to the first research question are 8-12, 16 and 18. Questions 8 and 10-13 from the teacher survey relate to this research question. In addition, question 1 of the Student Satisfaction Survey asks students about academic self-confidence.

The findings from the teacher interviews can be summarized within three self-concept themes. One theme that emerged is that many students were not happy about being enrolled in the class because it made them feel bad about themselves. For example, one teacher reported that the beginning of a trimester was difficult because Supplemental reading program children were taunted and ridiculed by their peers. There is a stigma associated with the class, particularly for Black boys. Another teacher stated, “I would say a lot of them come in with a pretty dismal attitude. Because they think they've been enrolled because they're dumb.” Three out of five teachers commented in some way that students thought being part of the class implied they were stupid. In fact, one teacher stated that the stigma remained even after the trimester ended, “I had a few students who had already graduated from the first trimester return to my classroom during passing time with a group of buddies I didn't even know because they wanted me to prove that they were no longer in my class.”

A second and third theme is students' reading skills improved and confidence were transferred to other classes. Four out of five teachers stated at the conclusion of the trimester,

they felt this class helped student growth. For example, teacher 2 stated “Definitely majority of them feel ready to go or are feeling better about work and other classes.” All five teachers reported that their students developed some level of reading confidence, and four teachers stated that it carried into their other classes, resulting in improved participation. For instance, teacher 2 stated “Ninety percent of my students feel this class helped their overall success”. Teacher 1 stated that “The students that complete reading assignments now, maybe wouldn't have before. That kind of makes them want to do it more once they believe in themselves.” It was shared by the teachers that in regular classes with approximately 36 students per classroom of various abilities, the low performing children often lack confidence. However, as shared by one teacher, when students enter the Supplemental reading class with approximately 16 students, performing at a similar level, “Most students are motivated to work”.

In conducting the teacher interviews, a common theme reported by the participants was that relationship building and sense of belonging were important factors in building student trust. Teacher 3 commented, "I'm going into my second trimester with some of the kids, and I'm beginning to see them take advantage of the chance. However, even as students have begun to embrace their own strengths, I believe providing them a sense of belonging is essential.” Teacher 4 said, "Once students began trusting, many began to attempt work and see success. In general, this led to more effort and increased academic self-confidence. In the interviews four of the five teachers reported that gaining students' trust is crucial to classroom performance.” As teacher 2 stated, “This is the biggest for them, that they can trust me. Over time, once I built that trust, then I think their motivation doubles or triples.” Teacher 5 explained that at first some students fight the process and doing the work, but once they start and get positive feedback their confidence

increases. Teacher 5 shared that students are able to complete a reading or task that they previously would not have been able to, their motivation increased because they now believe in themselves.

In contrast, teacher 5 shared that many students are overconfident in their reading ability when they start the class. Some students believe the class is unnecessary as noted by this teacher, “I think a lot of kids are overconfident in their reading abilities. So, they don't think they need any help.” According to this educator, after completing several exams and reflecting on their own work, students realized they did have room for improvement.

The findings from the teacher survey questions 8 and 10, 11 and 13 also relate to research question 1. Questions 8, 10, and 11 were Likert-type questions, whereas 13 was a short response question. Each of these questions asks the program teachers to select a response based on their observations of how their students were perceiving themselves throughout the Supplemental program.

The teacher survey included five participants. The survey questions specifically addressed Black males in the Supplemental reading program. The specific Likert-type survey questions will be summarized in the tables 1.2-1.5 below, by both number of responses and percentages, followed by a summary of the question 13 short responses.

Teacher survey question 8 asked the program teachers to consider their interactions with, and their observations of, their Black male students to rate students perceived increases in self-confidence on reading assignments. Question 8: My Black male students appear to be confident in their ability to complete reading assignments. Table 1.2 includes their responses.

Table 1.2

Teacher Responses that Students Show Confidence on Reading Assignments

Response	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	1	20%
Agree	2	40%
Strongly Agree	2	40%

Table 1.2 shows that 4 out of 5 teachers agree or strongly agree that they observed their Black male students showing more self-confidence as a reading student.

Teacher survey question 10 asked the program teachers to consider their observations of their Black male students to rate students perceived success in their regular English class. This information is helpful in understanding the transference of skills to other classes which can increase academic self-confidence. Question 10: My Black male students appear to feel good about their progress in their regular English class. Table 1.3 includes their responses.

Table 1.3

Teacher Responses that Students Feel Success in Their Regular English Class

Response	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	2	40%
Agree	3	60%
Strongly Agree	0	0%

Table 1.3 shows that two out of five program teachers disagree, and three out of five program teachers agree that students felt good about their progress in regular English class due to skills learned in the Supplemental reading program.

Teacher survey question 11 asked the program teachers to consider their observations of their Black male students to rate students' perceived confidence regarding themselves as good readers. Question 11: My Black male students appear to consider themselves to be good readers. Table 1.4 includes their responses.

Table 1.4

Teacher Responses on Student Perception that They are Good Readers

Response	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	2	40%
Agree	2	40%
Strongly Agree	1	20%

Table 1.4 shows that two out of five program teachers disagree, and three out of five program teachers agree or strongly agree that students feel they are becoming good readers.

Survey question 13 was a short response question asking teachers to describe what their Black male Supplemental reading students had communicated about taking both a regular English class and the Supplemental reading class at the same time. Survey question 13: What have your Black male students expressed regarding how they feel about having both an English and Reading class?

After reviewing the survey responses for this question several themes emerged, including the value of supporting students with other class work, building trust and students' initial dislike of being enrolled in the reading class. Assistance with reading skills and transference to work for other classes was noted as helpful to the Black male students in these survey responses, as it was in the teacher interview responses described previously. For instance, teacher 3 commented “They can also receive assistance and support with their English assignments. Because students have more time to finish English assignments, having the time and help in their day is appreciated.”

Teachers in this study noted that some of the Black male participants developed a more optimistic perspective regarding school and reading. According to program teachers, after initially feeling ashamed about being placed in the Supplemental Reading class, many Black boys eventually built trust with their respective classroom instructors while participating in the program. For example, teacher 1 stated “Many Black male students initially dislike having ELA and reading classes, but as the trimester progresses, the majority of Black males experience success and their attitudes become more positive.” Teacher 3 explained that “Initially, they express wrath and irritation, but this typically transforms to ‘this is my favorite or second-favorite class.’”

The third data source that relates to research question 1 is the student satisfaction survey given by the district. The survey consisted of two prompts that both relate to students' academic self-confidence. One prompt directly asked about gaining confidence and the other prompt asked about gaining reading skills through participation in the Supplemental Reading Program. Response choices for both prompts included Disagree, Somewhat disagree, Somewhat agree, or

Agree. The Student Satisfaction Survey prompts were; I gained confidence from being in the Supplemental Reading Program, and I gained skills from being in the Supplemental Reading Program. Tables 1.5 and 1.6 below summarize these survey results.

Table 1.5

Level of Student Agreement Regarding Gaining Academic Confidence (n = 37)

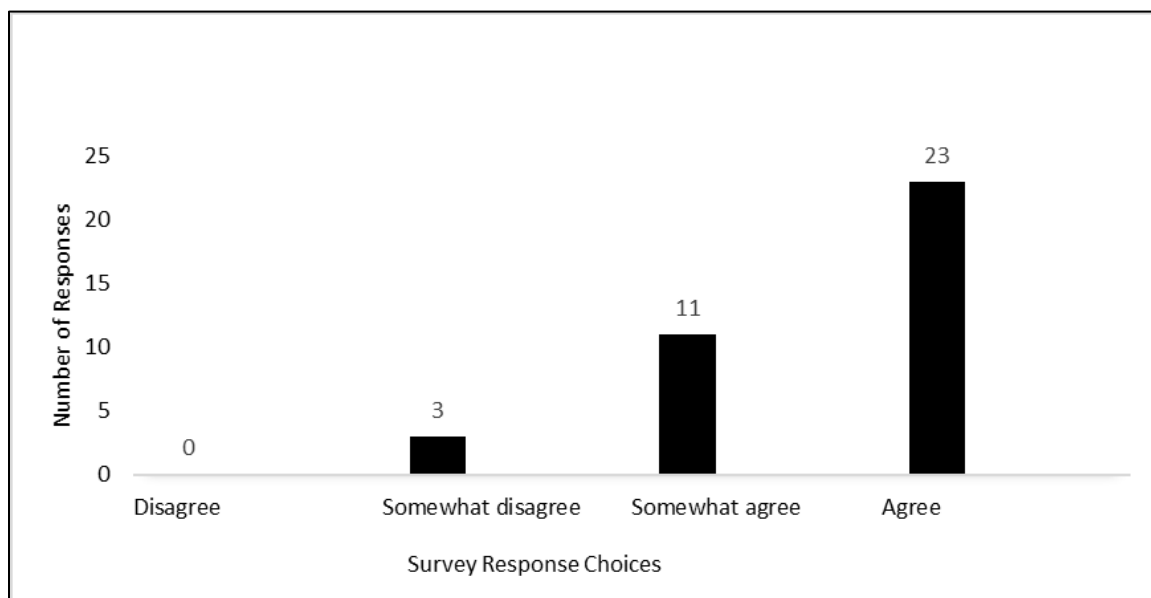


Table 1.5 indicates that 34 out of 37 program participants, or 98.1%, agreed or somewhat agreed that they gained academic confidence by the end of the trimester, while three students somewhat disagreed. This finding is similar to what the teachers reported earlier in their interview and survey responses. As described earlier, all five teachers agreed that students gained confidence during their interviews. According to teacher 5 “I would say from the beginning of the trimester to the end of the trimester, students who exited, I would say they have gained more confidence.” Similarly, from the teacher survey four out five teachers, or 80%, responded that they agree or strongly agree that their Black male students felt more confident in completing their reading assignments through participation in the Supplemental program.

The second Student Satisfaction Survey prompt did not directly ask students about gains in their confidence but asked them if they felt they gained reading skills. From the review of literature regarding the relationship between self-esteem and achievement, self-esteem influences accomplishment (Alpay, 2002). El-Anzi (2005) found a significant positive relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement, which is consistent with this finding. For the purposes of this study, gaining skills in an academic area will be considered as an aspect of increasing academic self-confidence.

Table 1.6

Level of Student Agreement Regarding Gaining Reading Skills (n = 37)

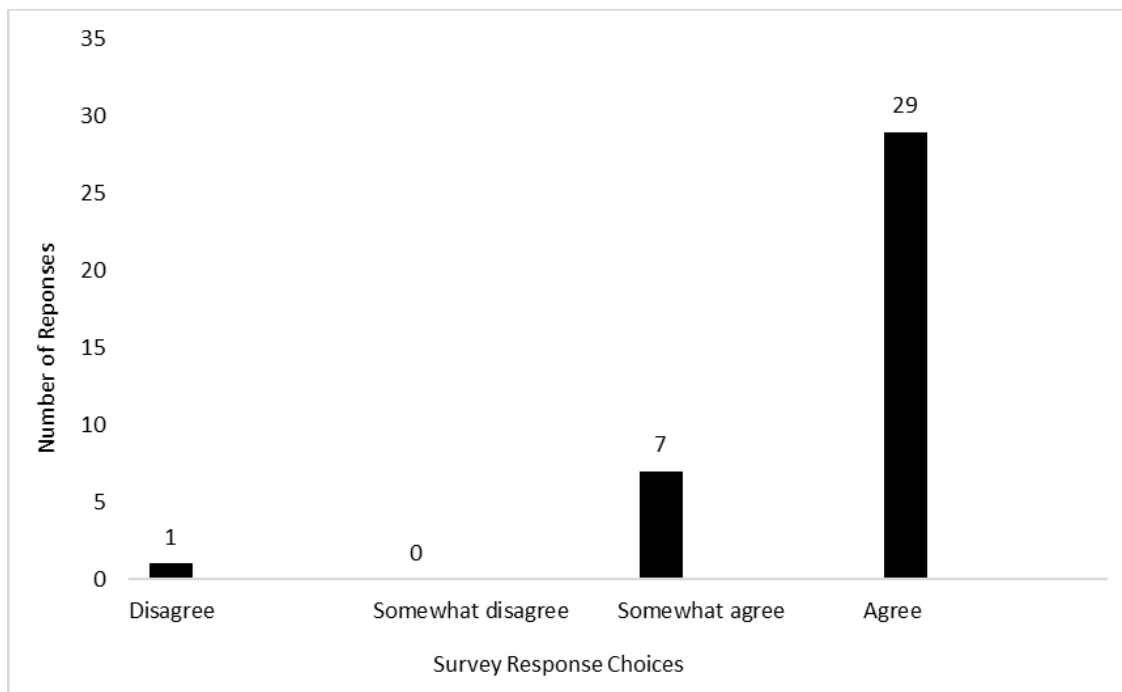


Table 1.6 indicates that 36 out of 37 program participants, or 97.2%, agreed or somewhat agreed that they gained reading skills by the end of the trimester. One student disagreed that they had gained reading skills. This data provides an even stronger indicator than the teacher interview responses in which three of five teachers, or 60%, agreed that students had gained

skills. For example, teacher 3 connected gaining skills and confidence when stating, “For the most part, they're feeling confident. And they're, they're saying a lot of positive things about what they've learned and how much they've improved.” Teacher 1 stated “As they told me at the end of the trimester, they were surprised at how much they learned and how much they gained.”

Research Question 2 Findings

The second research question was “What are the strengths and weaknesses that teachers identified about implementation of the additional reading program?.” Questions 1-7, 13-15, and 17 from the teacher interview are relevant to the second research question. These questions address the program objectives, materials, process, strengths, and weaknesses. According to the interviewed teachers, the purpose of this program is to bring students' reading abilities closer to the norm for ninth graders. Students are identified based on screeners, grades, along with communication with their English teachers. In analyzing the data from these teacher interview questions, several themes emerged for both strengths and weaknesses for the Supplemental reading program.

Program Strengths. The advantage of utilizing smaller class sizes was a theme that developed through the interview responses. Three of five teachers directly commented on their smaller class sizes for the Supplemental reading program. Class sizes ranging from 10 to 17 students were mentioned throughout the interviews. Teacher 2 stated, “It's a small size, class size. And we can have deeper conversations than just, you know, than just about class stuff. So, I would say feeling successful, feeling like someone cares.” Similarly, teacher 4 described being able to build relationships with each student more easily because they have class sizes of around 10 to 12 students. Teacher 3 discussed the advantage of small class size but also mentioned that

they can get too small. This teacher said “I can't complain about class size, they've just loaded this year from last year. So now I might have a max of 12 in order to do the small group things. So that's, you know, don't go lower than that. It wouldn't be much of a class then.”

Another strength that emerged from the interview responses was that teachers all used additional assessments and data to help personalize instruction for their students. For example, teacher one stated, “After I've gathered all that assessment data, and I've figured out how I could get the kids according to what they need, then I'm working the majority of class time in small groups.” Teacher 3 mentioned “So the goal is to identify first individual needs. So, I do a lot of further assessments to figure out what specific learning gap there is for each kid, and then to work on improving those to get up to a certain standard to hopefully exit the class.” Additionally, teacher 4 explained that “fluency is one of the things that we measure in every 2 weeks progress monitoring, and it's something that can help them exit the class if they get their level up to a certain standard.” These statements revealed that teachers use data to attempt to address individual needs with the materials and practice they plan.

A third strength indicated within the teacher interview responses was their choice to use a variety of activities and materials. The small classes made this easier to do. Teachers created a variety of activities because they explained that it helped to engage their students. Four of five instructors mentioned the importance of using many activities that interest students. Teacher 5 remarked, “We emphasize a variety of reading methods, with the majority of learning targets revolving around word work allowing children to have fresh strategies to attack larger, unfamiliar words, as well as a great deal of fluency practice reading aloud with partners.” Several teachers emphasized the effectiveness of providing extra practice, group work, and interactive

tasks. For example, teacher 3 stated “I would say a majority of them needed more practice or more opportunity to demonstrate reading comprehension.” Teacher 5 explained. “I find that a lot of the kids that come to my classes have really strong verbal skills. And that's a strength of theirs, but just not as strong in reading and writing. So, they're usually quick to jump in on those types of things where they're interacting with each other and collaborating.” A few examples teachers provided include philosophical chairs, Readers Theatre, and a song lyrics unit. Teacher 1 stated “I try to do a reader's theater. So that's where they're assigned parts. And surprisingly, I get 100% participation.” Teacher 2 stated “I do a song lyrics unit. So, they're writing song lyrics and annotating debate and some of those more engaging group activities that we're still practicing all the things we've learned in the trimester but doing it in a different way.”

An additional strength found, and confirmed several times, within the interview responses was the instructional focus on both academic and social emotional goals within the daily class activities. Within the program, there was no requirement or planned lessons provided for social emotional goals. However, teachers shared that this was a successful part of how they chose to implement strategies in their classrooms. As stated by teacher 2 “The majority of children only want to feel successful. Relationship building is key.” Teacher 3 said the goals are “just building their confidence in school and building their confidence in themselves.”

Another strength of the program mentioned by three of the five teachers, was the use of progress graphs created using the program software provided by the district. Many students, according to teacher 4, have never given fluency work any thought or deemed it to be important. But then students were astounded by how much more quickly they could read and comprehend what they were reading after practicing phonics and fluency. This teacher also said, "I believe

that for children who have some gaps in their word learning phonics, intensive training in this sort of manner turns on some light bulbs." Teacher 5 explained that "The children in the reading program are hesitant readers who have not been exposed to many written materials outside of school, and that many of them lack a good vocabulary. Teachers give data-driven graphs to students as a visual depiction of their improvement and accomplishment, since they believe it is crucial for students' self-esteem to witness their progress."

The last strength that was identified in the teacher interview responses was the intentional selection of relevant materials and activities. Again, without a set curriculum to follow, teachers created or selected their own materials. The importance of using materials relevant to their learners was noted multiple times. Four of the five teachers, or 80%, described the reason they chose to select materials that are relevant. Teacher 1 explained that reluctant readers do not want to stop reading when provided with a high-interest text. Providing interesting articles with varying perspectives and subjects was a strategy used by this teacher, "I'm just pulling articles from online; I try to pick relevant things that kids are interested in, current events and teen based topics and sports related things." Similarly, teacher 3 stated "So I try to do things that are relatable to them and their life and what's happening around them, but also multiple perspectives and culture." Getting students to become interested and buy-in to the learning was expressed as the main reason for selecting relevant reading material by teacher 2.

Program Weaknesses. Areas in which interviewed teachers felt the program could be improved in the future were addressed in interview questions 13-14. Several suggestions were offered by the interviewed teachers and fall into three general categories: communication, scheduling, and curriculum preparation.

The first area for improvement, identified through teacher responses, is communication with students and families. Teacher 1 brought up a parent situation in which the parent was upset because they were not included in the scheduling choice. According to this teacher “She was really, really upset that she was not included in that decision. We met with her and talked about the class and talked about our students' needs.” In addition, three out of five teachers throughout the interviews noted that many students were frustrated with being enrolled in the Supplemental class. Teacher 2 made the suggestion that prior to the first day of the trimester, students should be informed that they would be placed in the Supplemental Reading Program to facilitate a smooth transition into this course. The same teacher also mentioned the possible missed communication for some families, “The district uses snail mail and hard copies of various forms to convey information to families, although many of our children do not reside at those addresses.”

The next area for improvement conveyed through teacher interview responses was scheduling. Two of the five teachers interviewed suggested scheduling more sections of the class would be helpful. There were multiple comments regarding the ability to work more effectively with students if their students were purposefully and flexibly grouped by the specific reading skills they needed to work on most. For example, teacher 3 stated they “would like to have more flexibility and grouping by skills gaps.” Teacher 4 expressed the following thought, “...and if we had more flexibility, and maybe making more deliberate placement of students in particular hours, which would be helpful, mostly, I'd say mostly in the pairing together, and less about splitting people up. But I think that's one sort of, maybe a hurdle, a roadblock that's kind of out of our control.” Teacher 5 brought up the difficulty in providing lessons to some students that are

not needed by other students in the intervention class because students with all different reading needs are scheduled together. Another scheduling suggestion that emerged was related to entering and exiting the program in ways the suit learner needs and progress. Teacher 3, while describing scheduling concerns, stated, “I wish that we could be more fluid. You know, if a kid is ready to leave at mid-tri or like they need like a trimester and a half. If there's a way for them to be more fluid moving in and out of reading intervention, that would be ideal.” This comment is related to wanting the flexibility to move students in or out of the program as needed, rather than just at trimester breaks.

The final weakness identified by the Supplemental program teachers was the lack of prepared curriculum and the additional time teachers were required to develop curriculum on their own. All five interviewed teachers commented that there was no prepared curriculum to work with or select from. With that being the case, teachers must prepare their own curriculum. “Yeah, there's no curriculum for this class. So, the only thing the district gives us is the assessment piece. So, the rest is up to us.” was shared by teacher 2. Teachers 1 and 2 explained that they need to plan the lessons for each week. Three out of five teachers, or 60%, liked the ability to choose what was appropriate and relevant for the students. However, it was also mentioned that creation of materials takes a lot of preparation time. For example, teacher 4 stated “The planning is a lot of time because I'm just creating stuff.” In addition, the need for collaboration time was mentioned by teacher 1; “I struggle with just finding that place where we can collaborate with the other reading teachers, but also find a common ground that we all have.”

Research Question 3 Findings

The third research question was “What did the implementation of the additional reading program reveal in relation to student achievement as gathered by district data?.” The data sources that relate to this question include the students’ fall and winter Supplemental reading scores and several of the teacher survey questions.

The district's fall and winter Supplemental Reading Program exam scores are archived and were shared with the researcher for this study. The two sets of scores will be used to assess potential performance variations among students. Data for the Black male participants are included in Table 2.1 below. The fall score is depicted by the blue lines and the winter score, after a trimester of Supplemental Reading Program participation, is depicted by the orange line. Both the graph and the summary of data take into account the data for the Black male participants. The data from the students who participated but did not take both the fall and winter exams were excluded from the progress calculations.

Table 2.1

Comparison of Individuals Supplemental Reading Test Scores from Fall to Winter

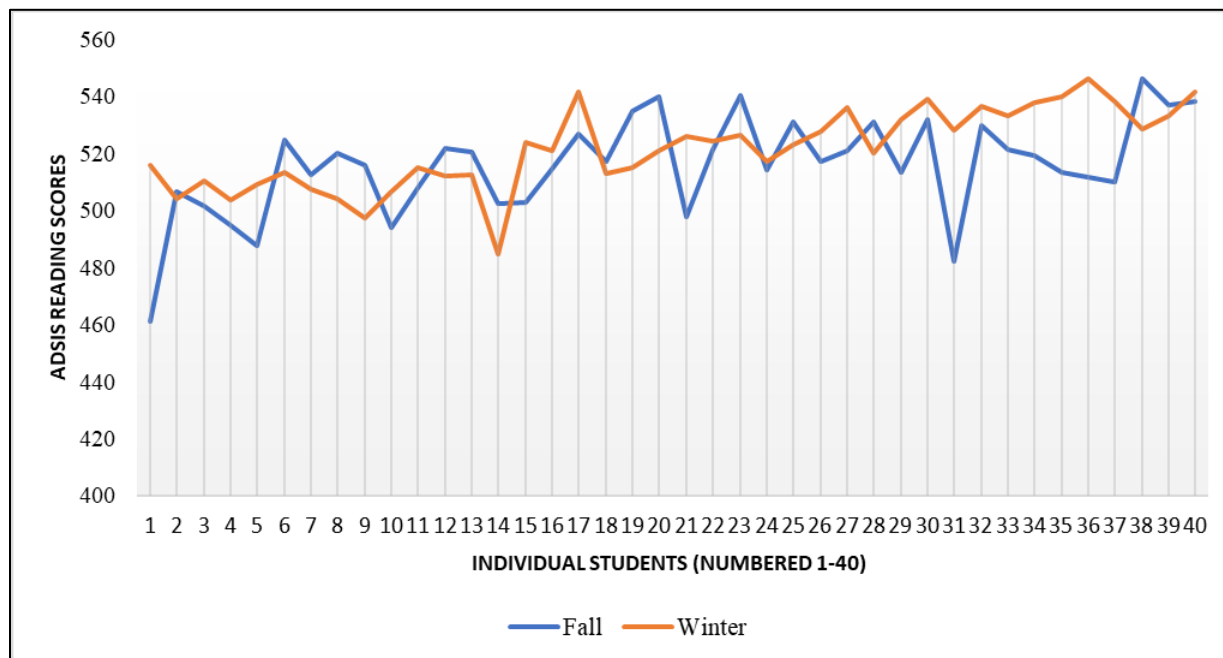
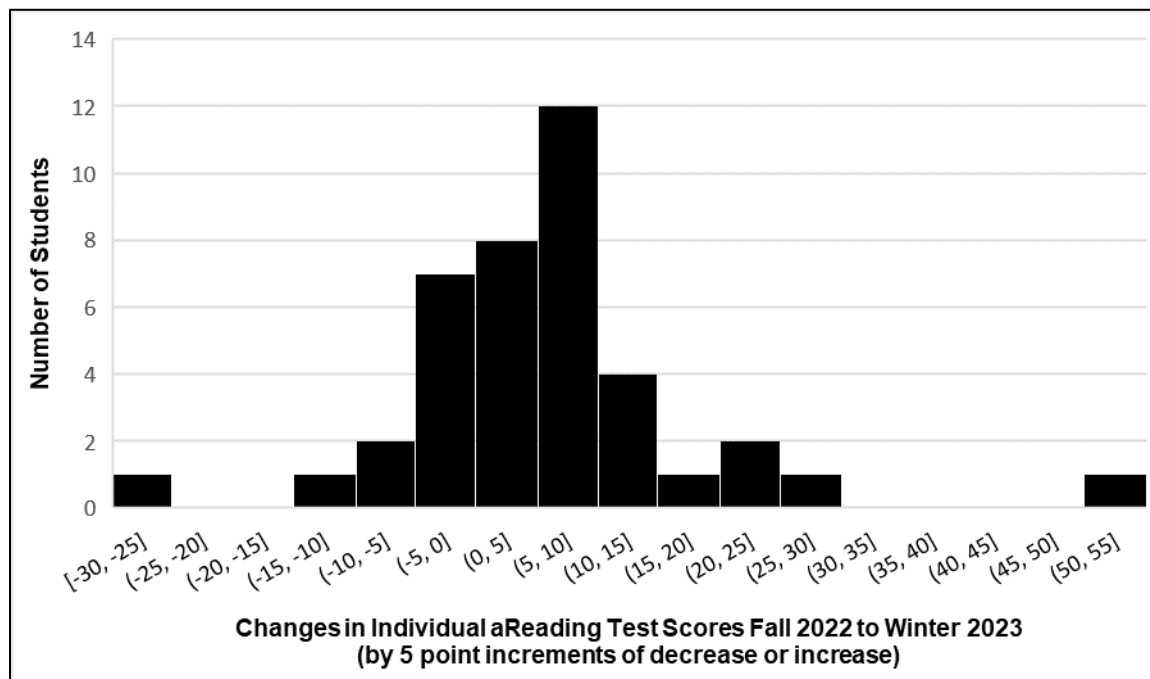


Table 2.1 shows the individual fall and winter reading scores for the 40 Black male students who were tested. Eleven of the 40 students received a lower grade in the winter than they received in the fall. The declines for these 11 students ranged from a minimum of -2.20 points to a maximum of -27.9 points. Table 2.1 also shows that the reading test results for 29 out of 40 students increased from fall to winter. These increases ranged from a minimum of 0.14 points to a maximum of 54.6 points, with a mean increase of 10.2 points.

Another way to view and analyze the changes in individual student aReading test scores from fall of 2022 to winter of 2023 is to look at a histogram. Table 2.2 below displays the changes in test scores in a histogram where the horizontal axis groups students within the same five-point increment of change. Decreases in test scores from fall to winter are displayed as negative values. Increases in test scores from fall to winter are displayed as positive values.

Table 2.2

Changes in aReading Scores after One Trimester of the Supplemental Reading Program



The bars in Table 2.2 show the number of students whose fall to winter reading scores changed by an amount within the 5-point range listed below it. For example, the bar above (10, 15] on the horizontal axis represents the number of students that improved between 10 and 15 points. The majority of changes are between -5 and 25 points. Sixty percent of the participants, or 24 of 40 students, fall within the 0–15-point increase range. Nearly 13% of participants showed growth of more than 15 points from fall 2022 to winter 2023.

A second source of data used to address research question 3 is the teacher survey questions 1-3, 5-7 and 9. Teachers were surveyed 14 weeks into the trimester. These responses were used to evaluate possible success in the program through considerations such as student's work completion, student perception of their abilities, participation, and confidence. While these responses are not coming from district achievement data, they can be helpful in looking at

student achievement through another lens. The survey questions specifically addressed Black males in the Supplemental Reading Program. The teacher survey included five participants. The specific Likert-type survey questions will be summarized in Tables 2.3-2.9 below, by both number of responses and percentages.

Teacher survey question 1 asked the program teachers to rate how often their Black male students complete their reading assignments in a timely fashion. Survey question 1 was: During a typical week, how often do your Black male students complete their reading assignments on time? Table 2.3 summarizes their responses.

Table 2.3*Teacher Responses on Black Male Student Reading Assignment Timely Completion*

Response	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Never	0	0%
Sometimes	2	40%
Often	3	60%
Always	0	0%

Table 2.3 indicates that two out of five program teachers stated sometimes, and three out of five program teachers stated that often their Black male students in the Supplemental program completed their reading assignments on time. Completing practice within the reading program assists students in improving their reading skills. As one teacher noted, completing the assignments helps the student “turn on some light bulbs.”

Question 2 of the Teacher Survey asked program instructors to rate how frequently their Black male students participated in classroom activities during Supplemental reading class. Even though this is not a reading achievement test score, increased participation is a positive change that may lead to improved achievement. Survey question 2 was: During a typical week, how often do your Black male students choose to participate in the classroom activities during reading class? Table 2.4 summarizes their responses.

Table 2.4*Teacher Responses on Frequency of Black Male Participation in Activities*

Response	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Never	0	0%
Sometimes	1	20%
Often	3	60%
Always	1	20%

Table 2.4 shows that overall teachers are reporting increased participation in classroom activities. One out of five program teachers stated sometimes, and three out of five program teachers stated often, and one out of five program teachers stated that always their Black male students in the Supplemental program participate in daily reading class activities.

Question 3 of the teacher survey asked teachers how frequently their Black male students participate in class discussions during the Supplemental reading class. Again, this information is being considered as a measure of success that may lead to increased understanding, engagement, and improved achievement. Survey question 3: During a typical week, how often do your Black male students choose to participate in the class discussions during reading class? Table 2.5 includes their responses.

Table 2.5

Teacher Responses of the Frequency of Black Male Participation in Discussions

Response	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Never	0	0%
Sometimes	0	0%
Often	5	100%
Always	0	0%

Table 2.5 shows that all five program teachers often observe their Black male students participating in discussions during the Supplemental reading class.

Question 5 of the teacher survey asked program teachers if their Black Male students can comprehend a Supplemental reading assignment if they have an example to follow. The responses to this question gauge if having the guidance of an example helps Black males with comprehension, which impacts their achievement. Survey question 5: My Black male students can usually understand a reading assignment if they have an example to follow. Table 2.6 includes their responses.

Table 2.6

Teacher Responses of Black Male Students Comprehension When Following an Example

Response	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Agree	1	20%

Strongly Agree	4	80%
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Table 2.6 shows that all five program teachers agree or strongly agree that their Black male Supplemental program students have shown their comprehension of assignments when an example has been provided.

Teacher survey question 6 asked teachers to rate whether their Black male students were able to explain how they arrived at an answer for their reading assignment. Being able to explain their answers provided the teachers with another way to assess students' reading skills and comprehension. Survey question 6: My Black male students can usually explain how they arrived at an answer within their reading assignment. Table 2.7 summarizes their responses.

Table 2.7

Teacher Responses on Black Male Students Ability to Explain Their Thinking

Response	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Agree	3	60%
Strongly Agree	2	40%

Table 2.7 shows that all five program teachers agree or strongly agree that their Black male Supplemental program students have shown the ability to describe how they arrive at their reading assignment answers.

Teacher survey question 7 asked program teachers to rate whether their Black male students can complete a new Supplemental reading assignment if they comprehend the questions.

The responses to this question provide another way for teachers to assess possible improvements in the reading skills of their students. Survey question 7: My Black male students can usually complete a new reading assignment if they understand the questions that are being asked. The teacher responses are summarized in Table 2.8.

Table 2.8

Teacher Responses on Black Male Students Work Completion if Question is Understood

Response	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Agree	2	40%
Strongly Agree	3	60%

Table 2.8 shows that all five program teachers agree or strongly agree that their Black male Supplemental program students successfully complete their reading assignments when time is taken to ensure they understand what is being asked.

Teacher survey question 9 asked Supplemental reading program teachers to rate whether their Black male students understand the instructions and examples provided to help them complete reading assignments. Student understanding of examples and ability to use them to complete work, provides an additional measure for teachers regarding students' abilities to achieve in reading. Survey question 9: My Black male students appear to understand the directions and examples I provide to help them complete their reading assignments. Teacher responses to question 9 are summarized in Table 2.9.

Table 2.9

Teacher Responses on Black Male Understanding of Assignment Example and Instructions

Response	Number of Participants	Percent of Responses
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	1	20%
Agree	3	60%
Strongly Agree	1	20%

Table 2.9 shows that one out of five program teachers disagree, and four out of five program teachers agree or strongly agree that Black male students in the Supplemental reading program understand the directions and examples provided to them during reading class.

Summary

The study data presented here has many educational implications. Several significant findings were presented in this summary of the data. Student attitudinal surveys revealed positive shifts in the areas of confidence and motivation and in perception of success. Pre and post Supplemental reading test scores showed growth after one trimester of participation in the Supplemental Reading Program. Teacher interviews provided anecdotal evidence of attitudinal changes, descriptions of the program, and suggestions for future programs. Each of these findings will be discussed in terms of the research questions in the following chapter. The educational implications will be discussed, and recommendations based on study data will be given.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusions

Introduction

Academic achievement is influenced by a student's academic self-confidence. (Adams et al., 2020). Self-esteem is a subjective emotional response that an individual has towards themselves (Heatherton & Wyland 2003). Shirk et al. (2003) demonstrate that low academic achievement and other social behaviors are associated with low self-esteem and that it is essential to address this relationship in order to improve children's overall performance.

Numerous studies have demonstrated that a positive self-concept or self-efficacy facilitates academic engagement, goal setting, task selection, persistence and effort, intrinsic motivation, strategy use, performance, and achievement, and even career choice (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003).

Students who read more become more proficient in reading fluency, comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and cognitive development (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001). As students practice reading, they acquire fluency and reap the benefits of their efforts (Spiegel, 1992); however, many educators overlook the significance of reading attitudes (Gillespie, 1993). In general, research indicates that students with more positive attitudes have more positive reading experiences and read more frequently, resulting in higher reading achievement (Thames & Reeves, 1994).

This study was conducted to examine an intervention program designed to address the issues of underperformance of Black male students in reading with an emphasis on reading skills and academic self-concept.

Statement of the Problem

Test scores improve test-taking skills, but not always student learning, according to research (Brooks & Brooks, 2005). Educational practices designed to meet testing accountability measures ignore instructional methodology, student motivation, and student development (Brooks & Brooks, 2005). In a review of the literature few studies have been found regarding the impact on reading achievement in African American males who participate in additional reading instruction with emphasis placed on reading skills and increasing student self-concept.

Purpose of the Study

Students' self-beliefs have a big impact on how hard they work and how well they do (Lawrence, 2006; Levine, 2002). According to research, students' perceptions of themselves as learners have an impact on their self-esteem, motivation, and achievement (Dweck et al., 2004). Self-belief is a crucial component of education and success. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of an additional reading program with instruction focused on skill building and student academic self-confidence related to the literacy achievement of Black males in high school. The attempt to evaluate success through changes in self-beliefs in addition to traditional measures, such as test scores, is a unique feature of this study.

Discussion

As outlined in the research review, addressing the concerns of adolescents could be a crucial step in boosting the confidence and accomplishment levels of Black boys. The Supplemental reading program was created as an intervention meant to address the needs of adolescents in an effort to improve academic performance. The program was motivated by the necessity to prepare students in danger of failing. The affective components of student self-

beliefs play a crucial role in student motivation, effort, and achievement. This claim is supported by a survey of relevant literature. Multiple types of archival data were analyzed to address the study's research questions. Interpretation of the research findings was driven by the research questions stated in Chapter 1. The findings are reported by research question. The research questions are:

1. What impact does one additional period of reading instruction for one quarter per school year on Black male academic self-concept as reported by teachers participating in the reading instruction program?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses that teachers identified about implementation of the additional reading program?
3. What did the implementation of the additional reading program reveal in relation to student achievement as gathered by district data?

This chapter contains a summary of the findings, the conclusions reached regarding each of the three research questions, implications of the study, and suggestions for future research.

Discussion of Study Findings

The first research question relates to changes in Black male student self-concept after participation in a supplemental reading program.

Research Question 1: What impact does one additional period of reading instruction for one trimester per school year on Black male academic self-concept as reported by teachers participating in the reading instruction program?

Based on the Supplemental reading program teacher interviews, teachers' surveys, and student satisfaction surveys research question 1 can be answered. The teacher interviews and surveys provided important information that teachers identified related to student self-beliefs. There were a variety of opinions regarding the impact that the reading instruction class had, as stated by the program teachers. The program teachers came to the conclusion that all of the students wanted to be successful, and that their confidence was growing as a result of a number of different factors. One of the contributing factors was keeping class sizes to 15 students or fewer so that teachers could spend more time working with each individual student, which in turn helped them build their confidence on a daily basis. Student communication and self-belief were both boosted by the relationship that was being built. This is supported by research finding that for teen-aged readers, autonomy, drive, good self-beliefs, and supportive adult connections are among the most commonly cited demands (Cushman, 2007; Dika et al., 2002; Dolgin & Rice, 2002; Erwin, 2003; Lawrence, 2006; Miller, 2006).

One important finding of the study was that students also developed a sense of self-assurance as a result of receiving feedback from their teachers. According to the teachers surveyed, this data enabled students to observe their own achievements in real time, which in turn inspired students to exert more effort and have faith in their own ability to be positive and productive students. Because of their more positive attitudes toward reading and the fact that they were able to track their progress through weekly reports, not only did their sense of self-esteem improve in the reading class, but it also increased in all of their other classes. This finding is similar to the research that states the Attribution theory, self-efficacy theory, and self-worth theory, children's beliefs about self-competence are crucial, because if they believe they can

complete a task, they will perform better and be more motivated to choose increasingly difficult tasks (Bandura & Wessels, 1994; Covington, 1984; Weiner, 1985).

In this study it became clear that many students' sense of self-concept shifted when they were placed in a classroom with other students who had similar reading levels. This made it possible for everyone to avoid the feelings of shame and embarrassment that can result in unfavorable behavior and students becoming withdrawn.

Another finding that emerged was that as instructors put in more effort to win the students' trust, students' academic performance improved and their sense of self-worth was boosted. According to the teachers in this study, the students' motivation to attend all of their classes and believe in themselves increased as their sense of self-worth increased. This is similar to the research that states academic achievement is influenced by a student's academic self-confidence (Adams et al., 2020).

One of the teachers in the study reported that a few of the students came into the class with an inflated opinion of their reading skills, hoping to conceal the gaps in their knowledge. As the lesson progressed, those students eventually felt confident enough to admit that they did not read as well as they believed they did. Students became aware that there is room for improvement in their performance. This is also supported by the experience of the researcher. Over many years as a teacher and administrator, the researcher has observed Black male students with skills deficits, entering a learning setting portraying themselves as confident and sure of themselves to hide their lack of knowledge.

Students demonstrated daily participation in the reading assignments and classroom discussions, as indicated by the findings of the survey administered to teachers. The teachers are

in agreement that because of the skills taught in the Supplemental Reading Program, students experienced an increase in their self-confidence and that they felt positive about their progress in normal English class as well. In fact, some of the teachers expressed that their students sought assistance in applying the skills to their assignments for English class. A number of the teachers felt that the students have improved as readers and gained more self-assurance in all of their classes. The findings from the Student Satisfaction Survey support the assertion from teachers that students gained reading skills and confidence. Thirty-six of the 37 surveyed students agreed or somewhat agreed that they gained skills, and 34 of 37 agreed or somewhat agreed that they gained confidence.

From the teacher survey, it was found that three out of five teachers, or 60%, noted that Black males in the Supplemental reading program completed their reading assignments on time. According to the teachers involved in this study, this is an essential factor in achieving success. This is similar to the study findings for a supplemental math program in which teachers identified greater participation, work completion and improving skills as factors that increased achievement motivation for students (Fairchild, 2007).

Teachers also stated that most Black male participants in the supplemental Program contributed to daily class discussions. Lastly, instructors working in the Supplemental Program reported that Black males enrolled in the Supplemental program took part in daily reading activities and that students who slowed down and took their time were better able to comprehend and finish their assignments.

The student responses to the Student Satisfaction Survey question regarding self-confidence support the teacher's perception of improvement in self-concept. According to the

results of the student survey, 9 out of 10 students who participated in the program noticed an improvement in both their reading confidence and their skill level after attending the class for an entire academic trimester. According to three program teachers, many students did not wish to drop the class at the conclusion of the trimester, because they are feeling successful.

Based on the study findings from teacher and student surveys and teacher interviews, it is clear that there were increases made in student effort, motivation, and academic self-confidence. This is consistent with Dika et al.'s 2002 finding that elements considered modifiable by academic intervention include school-related achievement characteristics such as involvement, attitudes, perceptions, and perceived usefulness of subject matter (Dika et al.). Students improved as readers, learned to trust teachers for assistance, and found their new skills helped them have more success in other classes such as English.

The second research question aims to identify program strengths and areas that could use improvement based on program teacher's feedback. This question will be answered using the teacher interview responses.

Research Question 2: What are the strengths and weaknesses that teachers identified about implementation of the additional reading program?

Through the interview responses, several strengths were identified by the program teachers. Two strengths that aligned with each other were the small class sizes and the similar reading levels of the students in each section. These aspects of scheduling gave teachers the ability to focus on specific reading skills and allowed for the work to be planned and paced appropriately for all of the students to be successful. Teachers viewed this as very beneficial. Other research studies support this finding. For example, a 2005 study which reported that

smaller classes have a large and lasting impact on achievement (Gauthier et al., 2005). Another aspect teachers noted as valuable with this class setup, was the student gains from working in small groups with their classmates of similar skill level, as it facilitated learning and collaborating with others.

Another strength of the program identified by teachers was assessment data available to them from the progress testing of the Supplemental Program software. According to teachers, the data provided them with valuable information to personalize instruction and a method to provide accurate progress reports to students. The researcher, as an instructional leader, has also observed that data driven decisions and instruction are generally the most impactful. The personalized instruction allowed teachers to target just the skills needed to work on. According to the teachers, progress reporting to students was one factor in improving student confidence.

The last significant finding on identified strengths was the teacher's choice to use relevant reading materials. Since a curriculum was not provided, this strength area was developed and used by the teachers. According to all of the program teachers, interest and engagement were increased by using texts that students could relate to.

When asked to identify weaknesses of the Supplemental Reading Program, the teachers mainly commented on curriculum and scheduling concerns. Although teachers were happy with the data they got from the program, they found it difficult to create all the lessons on their own because a set curriculum was not provided. According to teacher responses there was some advantage to having the flexibility to select content relevant to their students, but it was too time consuming to find or create everything for daily lessons with no base to start from. Lack of a

prescribed curriculum also created a challenge for establishing and maintaining consistency of the lessons throughout the trimester, according to one teacher.

For scheduling concerns, two teachers stated that they wish the Supplemental program was more adaptable to scheduling changes. For example, one expressed the idea that some children need longer than one trimester of support to acquire the reading skills necessary for them to develop both internally and in all their other classes. Another teacher thought that a student should be able to enter or exit the supplemental class part way through a trimester if they showed adequate improvement, rather than being locked into a full trimester. One teacher concluded that each student's placement in the classroom needed to be reviewed using English teacher feedback in order to ensure the highest possible level of achievement for all students. The same teacher suggested that the English department should have been given more authority to make decisions regarding at what point a student was considered ready to leave the Supplemental reading class. The researcher, based on administrative and master scheduling experience, agrees that because students' individual needs vary, it could be beneficial to schedule students for more or less than one trimester of support.

The third research question guiding this study relates to identifying possible changes in student achievement through participation in the supplemental reading class. The main source of data used to answer this question will be the district reading test data. Several of the teacher survey questions, administered by the researcher, also add to the understanding of student growth and achievement in ways other than test scores. They will also be discussed.

Research Question 3: What did the implementation of the additional reading program reveal in relation to student achievement as gathered by district data?

According to district data, the reading test scores showed that the reading performance of 72.5% of Black male students in the Supplemental Reading Program improved. This finding is consistent with the teacher interview and survey responses, in which all program teachers reported that students were improving. The average rise in score for this group was 10.2 points, which is a considerable number. The fact that the total mean score for all Black male participants in the program was a 5.76-point increase demonstrates the successful implementation of the program.

Test scores showed improvement in student reading achievement as stated above. Program participation also resulted in other positive outcomes as indicated by the Teacher Survey responses. According to one study in the research, emphasizing involvement, relevance, and engagement, increasing learning time has been found as an effective strategy for increasing motivation (Dika et al., 2002). Impacts such as these were reported in this study within the teacher survey responses. Some findings that stand out are the majority of Black male program participants were completing their reading assignments on time, participating in class activities and discussions, able to complete assignments using examples, able to explain how they got an answer, and able to complete work when they were clear on what was being asked. Each of these indicators can anecdotally be considered an element of academic achievement and improvement.

In considering all of the major findings of this study, the supplemental Supplemental Reading Program has been shown to be effective in improving the reading skills of Black males. There is

positive data that demonstrates improved participation, work completion, motivation, and student self-concept. Students appear to be motivated to work harder in their reading class and apply their reading skills to work for their other classes. Other benefits include developing trust and strong relationships with their teachers.

Limitations

Study limitations identify weaknesses in the study design or implementation (Burkholder et al., 2020). For this study, the following limitations were identified:

1. During the study trimester there was a death of a student from the high school. This may have impacted some students' attendance and motivation for learning for an unknown period of time as they worked through the trauma.
2. Due to illness on the part of a teacher interviewee, one interview needed to be rescheduled. This resulted in one interview being conducted a week further into the program than planned. This may have had some impact on the participant's interview responses, as they were one week further into the program implementation than the other interviewees.
3. Teachers were asked both interview and survey questions regarding their students' efforts and mindsets. Because teacher responses were based on their interactions with and observations of their students, not from the students themselves, there may be some inaccuracies.

Recommendation for Further Study

This study reviewed the effects of a supplemental reading program for Black male students who were underperforming in reading. The intent of the study was to assess the impact

of receiving additional support for one academic trimester with a focus on reading skills and self-concept. This study involved the review of 14 weeks of participation by students. In reviewing the study data there were several ideas that arose that may warrant further study:

1. A study should be conducted on the impact of one academic year of participation in a supplemental reading program.
2. A study should be conducted on the impact of a supplemental reading program for Black female students.
3. A study should be conducted on the lasting impacts of a supplement reading program, one to two years after completion to see if academic self-concept continues to improve and impact achievement.

Recommendations for the Field

This study showed that there is a positive impact for many Black male students who participated in one trimester of a supplemental reading program. It is recommended that administrators from any school with Black male students who are behind or underperforming in reading consider implementing a similar support program. In implementing such a program, it is recommended that a flexible schedule is used, a preset curriculum or support for teachers creating the curriculum is provided, and a longer period of participation is available to students.

The favorable findings of this evaluation indicate that students' self-confidence and success in their reading and English classes have increased. More research is required in this area of education to find the most successful strategies for enhancing students' self-beliefs, which have been demonstrated to influence motivation, engagement, and achievement.

Summary

The purpose of the study of the Supplemental reading program was to gather information about its effectiveness in aiding Black males' reading success. The majority of students struggled to accept that they needed assistance in reading, but once the process began, they recognized the value of the additional reading class. Students demonstrate growth throughout the trimester, which gives them confidence in the majority of their other classes. The data indicates that the majority of students were pleased with their reading progress. In addition, the program's instructors expressed optimism for the program's continued development. The teacher was able to tailor the curriculum to the needs of each student, allowing for the differentiation necessary for student success. Even though success was evident, the teacher concluded that there was a need for class registration flexibility. Teachers felt it would be advantageous to allow students to enter or exit the program when needed.

While this study does not provide conclusive statistical evidence that a supplemental reading program dramatically changes grades, standardized test scores, or attitudes, it does provide substantial credence to the potential benefits of such programs. The length of individual participation in this supplementary program was likely detrimental to the significance of measured outcomes. In spite of this, the findings were extremely encouraging given the duration of participation and the fluid nature of this program's development. Notable is the rise in student confidence and motivation reflected in the survey results. Similarly, it is motivating to read student comments expressing elation at finally comprehending reading concepts and an increased capacity and confidence to participate in class discussions. The variance in letter grades during the participation quarter was marginal but statistically significant.

The achievement of students has always been the primary concern of educators. This Supplemental reading program provides potential solutions for the long-awaited narrowing of the achievement gap. In addition to measuring academic growth with traditional grades, this study also considered changes in self-beliefs. According to adolescent and educational research, self-beliefs predict motivation and academic achievement (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003; Eccles & Roeser, 1998; Huang & Waxman, 1996).

The combination of extra time on grade-level curriculum, skills remediation, homework assistance, the incorporation of engaging activities, and caring, enthusiastic teachers appear to have improved these adolescents' self-confidence and academic performance by addressing their diverse needs. This research was motivated by the opinion of Hamachek (1995). He suggests that it is difficult to help students improve their academic performance without also improving their self-concept, and that it is nearly impossible to improve students' self-concept without also helping them improve their academic performance. A program incorporating these elements with the objective of enhancing students' self-beliefs is worthy of consideration as schools seek ways to boost student achievement and meet AYP requirements.

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Appendix A: Teacher Survey Questions

(Google Form)

I've invited you to fill out a form:

Teacher Reading Survey

For Questions 1-12, select the answer that best represents your classroom experience. Note that response choices for Questions 1-3 are different from the choices for Questions 4-12. Question 13 is an open response.

1.

During a typical week, how often do your Black male students complete their reading assignments on time?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

2.

During a typical week, how often do your Black male students choose to participate in classroom activities during reading class?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

3.

During a typical week, how often do your Black male students participate in class discussions during reading class?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

4.

My Black male students can usually figure out their reading assignment if they take time to think.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

5.

My Black male students can usually understand a reading assignment if they have an example to follow.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

6.

My Black male students can usually explain how they arrived at an answer within their reading assignment.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

7.

My Black male students can usually complete a new reading assignment if they understand the questions that are being asked.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

8.

My Black male students appear to be confident in their ability to complete reading assignments.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

9.

My Black male students appear to understand the directions and examples I provide to help them complete their reading assignments.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

10.

My Black male students appear to feel good about their progress in their regular English class.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

11.

My Black male students appear to consider themselves to be good readers.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

12.

It seems to be important to my Black male students that they do well in their regular English class.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

13.

Open Response

What have your Black male students expressed regarding how they feel about having both an English and Supplemental Reading class? (write your response below)

Your answer

Appendix B: Teacher Interview Questions

Reading Study Teacher Interview Questions

1. What general academic and attitudinal objectives did you have for the students in the program?
2. Please give a general description of the ability levels and differences within your classes.
3. What were the main needs of your students at the beginning of each quarter and how did you determine them?
4. Describe how you determined what reading content to emphasize in your lessons.
5. Describe the general format you followed to utilize your time with these students.
6. What type of activities were most engaging to students?
7. What types of activities do you feel helped students' progress most?
8. To what extent do you feel students were confident with their reading abilities and their comprehension skills when they entered your class?
9. Did you notice any change in student's attitudes regarding confidence with their reading and comprehension skills by the end of the quarter? If yes, explain.
10. Describe student's general motivation levels to complete work or try to apply reading strategies at the beginning of each quarter?

11. Did you see any change in motivational level throughout the quarter with any of the students? If so, describe the changes.
12. To what extent do you believe students took advantage of this opportunity to improve their success?
13. What variables beyond your control, such as scheduling, class size, and class location do you feel could be changed to make this program more effective for students?
14. What could do differently to make the program more effective for students in the future?
15. What program components do you feel did the most to boost student success?
16. Describe ways you believe this program has helped students become more successful?
17. How would you define success for a student in this Reading program?
18. Do you believe that student perceptions of their success in reading improved during their experiences while in the reading program? If so, explain why you think so.

Appendix C: IRB Approval



Institutional Review Board
720 Fourth Avenue South, AS 101, St. Cloud, MN 56301-4498

November 15, 2022

To: Antwan Harris
Email: aharris@go.stcloudstate.edu
Faculty Mentor: John Eller

Project Title: An Examination of Self-Concept and Literacy in High School Black Males. The Institutional Review Board has reviewed your protocol to conduct research involving human subjects. **Your project has been: Approved**

Expiration Date: N/A
Approval Type: Exempt
SCSU IRB#: 43677980

Please read through the following important information concerning IRB projects:

ALL PROJECTS:

- The principal investigator assumes the responsibilities for the protection of participants in this project. Any • adverse events must be reported to the IRB as soon as possible (ex. research related injuries, harmful outcomes, significant withdrawal of subject population, etc.).
- The principal investigator must seek approval for any changes to the study (ex. research design, consent process, survey/interview instruments, funding source, etc.). The IRB reserves the right to review the research at any time

EXEMPT PROJECTS:

- Exempt review only requires the submission of a Continuing Review/Final Report form in advance of the expiration date indicated in this letter if an extension of time is needed.

EXPEDITED AND FULL BOARD REVIEW PROJECTS:

- The principal investigator must submit a Continuing Review/Final Report form in advance of the expiration date indicated on this letter to report conclusion of the research or request an extension.
- Approved consent forms display the official IRB stamp which documents approval and expiration dates. If a renewal is requested and approved, new consent forms will be officially stamped and reflect the new approval and expiration dates.

If we can be of further assistance, feel free to contact the IRB at 320-308-4932 or email ResearchNow@stcloudstate.edu and please reference the SCSU IRB number when corresponding.

Sincerely,

IRB Chair: IRB Institutional Official:
William Collis-Prather Dr. Claudia Tomany
Dean of Graduate Studies
Program Director
Applied Clinical Research
Associate Provost for Research