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EFFECTS OF SCRIPTED AND TEACHER GENERATED LITERACY PROGRAM ON MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

to the faculty of the

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP
of
THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
at
ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY
New York
by
Lindsay M. Blaszcyk

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ABSTRACT

EFFECTS OF SCRIPTED AND TEACHER GENERATED LITERACY PROGRAM ON MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

Lindsay M. Blaszcyk

Will a teacher generated literacy curriculum be more effective for student literacy growth more than a scripted literacy curriculum? Archived data of pre- and post-testing of 535 public middle school students were analyzed to examine the effectiveness of these two approaches over a two-year time span. The data were gathered using the Benchmark Assessment System, second edition (BAS-2). Data were analyzed using an ANCOVA to determine the significance of difference in students' literacy growth by two literacy programs. A series of ANOVAs were used to see any significant differences in literacy growth between groups based on students' characteristics. Regression analysis was used to determine the interaction effects of students' posttest and pretest scores based on student characteristics. In the end, students' literacy growth increased in both programs, but with higher gains in the scripted program. Literacy program has a significant effect on student literacy growth. Student characteristics can influence their growth, with the expectation of gender and classification. Hispanic/ Latino and African American students achieved higher growth in a scripted program. These results can steer educational leaders and policy makers in the right direction concerning literacy curriculum.

DEDICATION

To all the students I have taught, and those I have yet to teach.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This would not have been possible without Dr. Seokhee Cho. Thank you for your patience, knowledge and experience.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Recent reports have suggested that American students' literacy knowledge ranks poorly compared to other countries (NAEP, 2017). The United States has experienced a shift in literacy education with the introduction of the Common Core Standards (2011), and the newly formed Next Generation Standards (2017). As educators our focus is to make life-long readers, writers, and learners. Currently, there are trends of scripted programs being pushed onto educators as if they are the golden standard of teaching (Margolis & McCabe, 2006). It is vital for educators to understand the best possible methods for instructing students and bring them up to their proper reading level. Overall, this topic is important not just to the researcher, but to the educational community.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of two types of literacy curriculum on students' literacy growth. The researcher determined if a teacher generated literacy curriculum is more beneficial to increase student literacy growth compared to that of a scripted literacy curriculum. Prior research in this area mainly focuses on students in the primary grades (Powell, Cantrell, & Correll, 2017), where this study focused specifically on secondary level students. In addition, this study connects the impact of the literacy program to students' literacy growth. Prior studies have focused on teacher impact, not student impact (Demko, 2010). Every child should have access to the best possible literacy curriculum. Reading is a right, not a privilege, and a literate society is one that will flourish. It is the hope that the results of this research will allow educational leaders to enact a literacy curriculum that best benefits student literacy growth.

Significance of the Study

The United States Department of Education and the National Institute of Literacy have recently released a series of eye-opening statistics concerning literacy in the United States. According to their research, 14% of the American population is considered illiterate (NAEP, 2017). With that, 21% of adults read below the fifth-grade level (NAEP, 2017). For our high school graduates, 19% of them graduate below a fifth-grade reading level. Literacy is linked to crime as 85% of children who end up in the juvenile justice system are considered "functionally illiterate" (NAEP, 2017). Furthermore, 70% of American inmates in the prison system read below a fourth-grade reading level. Literacy is not just a national concern, but a global one, "Worldwide, 774 million individuals cannot read (NCES, 2017). We need to address these literacy concerns.

The research focus determined if a teacher generated literacy curriculum was more effective than a scripted literacy curriculum. This was measured by determining students' literacy growth. It is clear from recent research that literacy levels need to be increased. Various programs on the national, state, public and private level have appeared because of national and global literacy rates. Recently, the federal government has called on states to create a "comprehensive literacy state development program" to address these needs (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). Past studies concentrated on the qualitative effects of students and teachers. The research focused on children in primary schooling. This research will directly connect the impact of the curriculum to the student's reading level. The results will inform decisions made for the future of the literacy curriculum and measuring literacy rates.

Literacy is a function of life and is vital to the success of a person. This modern era of public schooling was created to allow students to become citizens. John Dewey (2018) preached a school system that would improve our society through making our pupils into citizens. If a student is successful with their reading skills, they will be able to succeed in many aspects of life. Education should be an investment. "…[T]he habits, knowledge and skills that make individuals more productive" (Brimley, Verstegan, & Garfield, 2016, p. 1) should occur within the educational system. We want our students to be productive members of society and add to a growing civilization. Reading connects to all the major content areas. We know that education is a right, and not a privilege (Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas, et al, 1954), so let us make sure that we, as educators, give our students the best platforms to be successful and literate. Education should be viewed as human capital and the great equalizer, students from all backgrounds should come into the school system and have a chance to be successful. Horace Mann in 1848 proclaimed, "The most important producer of human capital in the United States is the public education system" (Brimley et al., 2016, p. 1).

Research Questions

Research Question One: Will there be significant differences between two instructional delivery modes of literacy programs (teacher generated versus scripted) on student's literacy growth during the school year?

Null Hypothesis: There will not be a significant difference between two instructional delivery modes of the literacy programs (teacher generated versus scripted) on student's literacy growth during the school year.

Research Question Two: Will there be significant differences in literacy growth between groups based on students' characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, classification, and grade?

Null Hypothesis: There will not be significant differences in literacy growth between groups based on students' characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, classification, and grade.

Research Question Three: Will there be interaction effects between the literacy program's instructional delivery mode and students' background characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, and classification on student literacy growth?

Null Hypothesis: There will not be significant interaction effects between the literacy program's instructional delivery and each of the students' background characteristics on student literacy growth.

Definition of Terms

BAS-2: Benchmark Assessment System, second edition is a testing kit used to measure student reading levels developed by Fountas and Pinnell.

Fall reading level: A student's reading level measured in the months of September and October using the BAS-2.

Student literacy growth: The increase in a student's reading level from the baseline reading level to the reading level after the experimental period has ended.

Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI): A reading program developed by literacy specialists Irene Fountas and Gary Pinnell and published through Heinemann Publishing Company. According to their website, it is a program designed to provide "intensive, small-group, supplementary literacy intervention for students who find reading and writing difficult. The goal

of *LLI* is to lift the literacy achievement of students who are not achieving grade-level expectations in reading": https://www.fountasandpinnell.com/lli/ (2020).

Scripted literacy curriculum: The literacy curriculum purchased by the district to increase student literacy growth. In the case of this study, the school district uses Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI). The student's Fall reading level is used a baseline data point. This allows the teachers to begin at the correct point in the scripted curriculum.

Spring reading level: A student's reading level measured in the months of May and June using the BAS-2.

Teacher generated literacy curriculum: The literacy curriculum created by a teacher based off student needs and baseline assessment data.

Winter reading level: A student's reading level measured in the months of February and March using the BAS-2.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Theoretical Framework

One major theory which is seen in abundance in this research study is constructivism. Constructivism focuses on active learning, and away from the notion of a scripted curriculum. A teacher generated program moves away from such passive learning and into the realm of critical thinking and creativity. Although it is stated that "…over the past serval years, constructivism increasingly has been applied to learning and teaching" (Schunk, 2016, p. 296), one can argue that while this theory has increased in education, so has the increase in scripted programs. Lev Semenovich Vygotsky (1978) focuses his theory of sociocultural constructivism as showing the importance of the social environment in education. Moreover, according to Schunk, "…'school' is not simply a word or a physical structure but also an institution that seeks to promote learning and citizenship" (Schunk, 2016, p. 312).

Vygotsky saw schooling as a way for students to become the person they are supposed to be. Firstly, he believed that learning is a lifelong process as, "…children's learning begins long before they attend school" (Vygotsky & Cole, 1981, p. 84). With that, Vygotsky believed that all learning is connected to prior experiences, calling it the scaffolding, "Any learning a child encounters in school always has a previous history" (Vygotsky & Cole, 1981, p. 84). He believed that students learn best through social interactions and peer collaboration, calling this the zone of proximal development. The zone of proximal development is

> …the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as

> determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky & Cole, 1981, p. 86).

These foundations are vital to the learning process.

Although many of Vygotsky's notions were built upon by preceding theorists, his work is an influence on this research. Vygotsky is noted for saying that learning does not occur in isolation, and that it "…may play a role in the course of the development or maturation" (Vygotsky & Cole, 1981, p. 80). We must vary our teaching styles for students to reach their optimal learning points. With Vygotsky's notion in mind, the research will specifically look at students' starting points, and see how the reading curriculum effects their zone of proximal development and their ability to move. In other words, does the scripted or a teacher generated program best meet the child where it is supposed to and benefit their literacy growth?

Curriculum is a vital part of the educational system. Curriculum, concerning scripted programs, has dramatically changed in traditional public schools, specifically in secondary schooling (Randell, 2018). Secondary teachers have been used to a sort of "freedom" to create their own units. They have been trained to teach a topic, using whichever style or instructional tools best meet the needs of their students. However, secondary education is currently experiencing the integration of scripted programs (Randall, 2018). With this, we must ask which one is more effective for students' literacy growth?

Based on the theory of constructivism the researcher believes that a teacher generated reading program will be more effective for student literacy growth. Although both programs begin at the students' specific starting put, a teacher generated classroom

will be able to vary teaching styles for students to reach their optimal learning points. Scripted programs do not take students' learning styles into account. This research is designed to compare the two reading programs with and without adjustment according to the students' needs. In the end, this research design will allow to see whether the theory really applies and works.

Related Research

Teacher Impact: A Teacher's Perception of Literacy Scripted Programs

Many teachers often say that their role as a teacher has shifted since the introduction of scripted programs in the classroom. "A teacher's role was dramatically changed from that of an educator to that of a facilitator with the adoption of semi-scripted curriculums" (Ainsworth, Ortlieb, Cheek, Pate, & Fetters, 2012, p. 77). Ainsworth et al. (2012) examined various teachers' perceptions of "teaching a newly adopted semi-scripted reading curriculum" the researchers observed and interviewed four first grade elementary school teachers from a large urban district located in a southern state in the United States (Ainsworth et al., 2012, p. 78). All schools, from the district, participating in this case study were "chosen by purposive sampling…on the basis of student diversity" (Ainsworth et al., 2012, p. 80). All the teachers were observed for four weeks, during their designated 90-minute literacy block. The researchers used Spradley's Developmental Research Sequence protocols while observing the teachers. Each of the teachers was "interviewed a minimum of two times" and all interviews were semi-structured and were one-on -one (Ainsworth et al., 2012, p. 81). In addition, prior to the interview, teachers received a questionnaire titled *A Teacher's View of the State-Mandated Curriculum* to answer. The survey "was discussed at a more in-depth level

than just ranking responses" during the interviews (Ainsworth et al., 2012, p. 82). The survey was originally given to 16 first grade teachers, but only four were willing to remain, and they consented to observations and interviews.

The study was guided by four research questions:

> (1) How does reading instruction compare between first-grade teachers using the state mandated English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum? (2) To what degree do teachers feel supported (by the principal and via professional development) in implementing the new state-mandated curriculum? (3) What resources, if any, do teachers use other than those listed in the mandated curriculum? (4) How has the state-mandated curriculum impacted teachers' planning and instruction? (Ainsworth et al., 2012, p. 78).

Through qualitative analysis these research questions allowed for the researchers to organize the data into three major themes. The first is "teachers were minimally supported in professional development for using the curriculum" (Ainsworth et al., 2012, p. 77). The teachers often expressed that they did not feel supported with the new materials and programs put into place by the district. Due to this, the researchers noted, in the second theme, that teachers "often ventured beyond the scope of the curriculum in resource usage" because they did not fully understand how to properly implement and use the materials in the program (Ainsworth et al., 2012, p. 77). Finally, the results indicate that teachers "planning was eased with the adoption of a semi-scripted curriculum" (Ainsworth et al., 2012, p. 77). Teachers felt as if they were able to just read from the manual, even though many admitted they did not fully understand all lessons.

The findings of this study are clearly vital to educators, teachers, and administrators alike. However, a major limitation to the study is the use of only one grade and the small participants involved.

On the same notion, the article "Colonized Teachers: Examining the Implementation of a Scripted Reading Program" also discusses teacher perceptions. Several elementary teachers were observed and interviewed concerning a district wide mandated literacy program called *Open Court* in a California school district. The school district serves over 700,000 students and more than half receive free and/or reduced lunch. Teachers from the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) described their perspectives on scripted reading programs, and how it affects them and their students. This study takes a qualitative approach to researching the importance of teacher perspectives when it comes to scripted reading programs. The researchers took field notes while conducting observations, as well as open-ended questions during the interview process. In the end, the results indicate that many of the teachers believe "they have a handle on using the scripted program, [but] they still harbor conflicting feelings" (MacGillivray, Ardell, Curwen, & Palma, 2004, p. 136). The researchers observed that the teachers had a "constant awareness of district surveillance" and felt that they had to speak and act a certain way about the program due to the district mandate to use it (MacGillivray et al., 2004, p. 136). The researchers also admit that they may have been a large limitation to the study, but its useful information as it was used as a major finding.

Continuing, the researchers found that the "Teachers have multiple concerns regarding the district's mandated reading curriculum; specifically, how it affects their daily interactions with students and their overall growth as a teacher" (MacGillivray et

al., 2004, p. 137). Some of these results are positive, while others are considered negative. The authors declare that all the negative findings deal with teacher identity. The first being that "teachers' professional identities are being redefined" due to the scripted reading mandate (MacGillivray et al., 2004, p. 137). In other words, teachers feel as if "the district regards them all similarity" and they do not feel they have individual characteristics (MacGillivray et al., 2004, p. 137). The second finding shows that teachers believe that the programs implementation has restricted their professional identities. This not only effects the teachers, but also the students as teachers feel "Forced to comply with the district's pacing of the lessons, teachers are restricted from making instructional decisions to support the needs of their specific students" (MacGillivray et al., 2004, p. 138). The third negative finding suggested that "teachers' professional identities are subsumed" (MacGillivray et al., 2004, p. 139). The teachers just rationalize why the program is being implemented and accept the lack of academic control in the classroom. In all, the results declare that "The redefinition of what teachers can teach hinders their professional growth" (MacGillivray et al., 2004, p. 137).

As for the positive findings the researchers describe them as "rewards" (MacGillivray et al., 2004, p. 140). Firstly, whether the teachers feel their identity has been shifted or not, they all feel a sense of group membership. The teachers "gain membership into a group and enjoy a common bond with other teachers" (MacGillivray et al., 2004, p. 140). A second realization is that teachers believe if they just accept and follow the program, they have more control of their classroom and more expertise to share with their students. This allows them to manage "simple rote tasks" and there is no need to do "active planning to meet students; individual needs" as the program does it all for the teachers

(MacGillivray et al., 2004, p. 140). With that, teachers believe the program offers them a "sense of security" as they know they are doing their job correctly, as they are simply following the script. Overall, these findings suggest that "Responsibility for student learning can be shifted from the teacher to the basal program" the teacher "simply needs to follow directions correctly" (MacGillivray et al., 2004, p. 140).

Teacher Impact: A Teacher's Knowledge, Experience and Development as Professional

A teacher's perception of a program is heavily influenced by their knowledge and development as a professional. If teachers do not believe they are receiving proper support, it hinders their development and leaves them with negative experiences. Researchers have compared teachers' "…perceptions of their own knowledge" and quantify it in order to "...measure participants' confidence in their responses" (Cohen, et al, 2017, p. 653). The purpose of this study was to look at the definitions and knowledge teachers have about literacy base concepts and then compare this information. The study asked four target questions. Firstly, they wanted to know if there were significant differences in the definition and knowledge scores of the teachers depending on the grade taught and whether they were using a scripted literacy program or not. Secondly, the researchers wanted to see which variables are the most valuable predictors for teacher knowledge. The third research question asked if there were significant differences in teachers' perceptions of knowledge depending on the use or nonuse of a scripted reading curriculum. The fourth research question connects to the third by asking "How accurate are the perceptions of knowledge" between teachers who use and those who do not use scripted literacy programs (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 659). The final research question

wanted to measure the differences in the "2013 third-grade reading scores" between the schools using a scripted program, and those which are not (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 659). The participants in the study included 114 kindergarten through third grade elementary teachers from seven different schools. All the schools were in Arizona and varied in demographics but were equal in state rating.

The researchers administered an untimed paper copy, in a group setting, of *The Survey of Preparedness and Knowledge of Language Structure Related to Teaching Reading to Struggling Students*. The survey was used had both multiple choice and open-ended questions. Furthermore, "The survey's knowledge items were divided into two distinct parts: Definitions and application" (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 653). After the survey, the "Participants were divided into groups based on their districts' use or non-use of a scripted, code-based reading program" (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 653). Out of the 114 teachers, 60 of the teachers taught using a scripted reading program and the remaining 54 did not. In addition, to compare achievement scores the researchers used Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS). It should be noted that the reliability and validity of the AIMS data points, place a large limitation on the study.

The researchers conducted various data analyses using the survey and achievement data including a multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA), multiple linear regression, analyses of covariance (ANCOVA), and a four sets of partial correlation tests. The findings suggest that there is "no significant differences between groups in definitions or application knowledge" as well as no significant differences in teachers' perceptions (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 653). Demographic variables proved to have a weak non-significant correlation to teachers' knowledge. In the end, the study suggests

that teachers do not have enough knowledge about reading concepts, regardless if they use or do not use a scripted literacy program. The article states, "The results of this study suggest that the use of a scripted, code-based reading program does not guarantee mastery of language structure, phonics, and other code-based concepts" (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 653). Overall, the results suggest that teacher knowledge and program show no correlation; however, as the researchers state "teaching experience, coursework, and professional development" could also interfere with teacher knowledge and may have skewed the results. In addition, the results may not apply to upper grade students nor schools outside of the "state rating".

Sometimes a teacher's experience teaching a scripted literacy program hinders their development as a professional. The article "From Scripted Instruction to Teacher Empowerment: Supporting Literacy Teachers to Make Pedagogical Transitions" discusses a serious transformation teacher needed to make to move away from a script and towards professional judgment. This four-year longitudinal study took place in Florida with the purpose of supporting "the efforts of in-service teachers to make pedagogical transitions from total reliance on prepackaged commercial programs to making informed decisions about curriculum and pedagogy autonomously" (Fang & Lamme, 2004, p. 58). Elementary school teachers from six rural schools in northeast Florida took place in a professional development project aimed at transforming their "total reliance on prepackaged commercial curricula to independently making informed pedagogical decisions that are responsive to children's needs and interests" (Fang & Lamme, 2004, p. 58). Teachers were trained in a professional development project "coordinated by the North East Florida Educational Consortium (NEFEC)" (Fang &

Lamme, 2004, p. 59). The trainings focused purely on creating "classrooms where teachers grow as professionals who design and implement research-based, effective literacy instruction that produces a positive impact on student learning and achievement" (Fang & Lamme, 2004, p. 59). The teachers who participated were required to attend an annual summer institute, agree to regular classroom visitations by the university faculty, NEFEC staff and fellow teachers. They also were to attend monthly meetings and agree to an end-of-year showcase/ reflection meeting.

The study began in four elementary schools. All teachers involved were volunteers and their administrators agreed to create "professional development classrooms', or PDCs" (Fang & Lamme, 2004, p. 59). Into the study, two more elementary schools entered the professional development project. To maintain reliability and validity, each of the participating classrooms had "a student population comparable to that in other classrooms in terms of gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and scholastic aptitude" (Fang & Lamme, 2004, p. 59). Furthermore, one-third of the students who participated were not reading on grade level at the beginning of the project. At the end of the study, the researchers noted the major themes based on the findings. Firstly, teachers "learned to trust their own professional wisdom and judgement based on their daily observation and interaction with students" (Fang & Lamme, 2004, p. 61). Furthermore, they took charge of planning, goal setting, material selection and specific teaching strategies for each child in their classroom. With that, teachers also showed an increase in lesson adjustment for each child. Participating teachers "understood and appreciated that instruction should be based on documented student needs, rather than on what is specified in scripted manuals" (Fang & Lamme, 2004, p. 61). Overall teachers gained extreme confidence in their

professional abilities, which allowed them to "become empowered professionals" which truly led them to be more effective teachers (Fang & Lamme, 2004, p. 61).

"Curriculum Materials for Elementary Reading: Shackles and Scaffolds for Four Beginning Teachers" is another longitudinal research study which puts emphasis on the danger of scripted programs on teacher's overall development and experience as a literacy professional. The purpose of this four-year research study was to see how elementary school teachers understand the instructional reading materials, and then how these materials shape the way the teachers teach. The study followed four elementary school teachers "…during their first 3 years on the job" (Valencia, Place, Martin, & Grossman, 2006, p. 96). The teachers, who come from "markedly different school situations" were specifically observed during the instructional reading and writing portions of the day (Valencia, et al., 2006, p. 93). The teachers were provided with a variety of reading curriculum materials, "…ranging from scripted reading programs to supplemental materials without teaching guides" (Valencia, et al., 2006, p. 93). Some teachers were provided with very restrictive materials and a script, while other teachers were assigned a variety of reading materials with no guide. The researchers gathered their data through classroom observation, interviews – both group and individual-, and a document analysis from classroom and district level materials. Each teacher participant was observed "…a minimum of 17 times and interviewed each individually on at least 32 occasions" (Valencia, et al., 2006, p. 96). During each observation, the researchers took field notes and collected curriculum documents used during the observation. The teacher participants also had a pre-observation and post-observation meetings with the researchers to discuss the lesson layout.

Researchers "drew on data from interview transcriptions, classroom observation field notes, and review of curriculum materials for each teacher as well as the cross-case analyses to illuminate themes" (Valencia, et al., 2006, p. 101). During the data analysis process, the researchers utilized a peer review process as, "At least two researchers reviewed the data for each teacher, comparing and contrasting emerging categories and supporting each with multiple data points" (Valencia, et al., 2006, p. 97). The findings suggest that in the beginning stages of the study, teachers believed it was their job to create a reading program in their classroom based on the materials given to them. With that, "these elementary teachers were more concerned with how to address all the components of a complete reading program" (Valencia, et al., 2006, p. 101). The second theme showed that all the teachers were concerned that the materials did not meet the needs of the large range of students in their classroom (ELL and special education students). The researchers were "struck by how often they expressed concern about having appropriate material and lessons to meet individual students' needs" (Valencia, et al., 2006, p. 101).

Furthermore, the teachers who were provided with the scripted materials were less likely to assist and adapt their reading instruction to meet student needs. The teachers who were provided with various reading materials and no teacher guide were more able to adapt their instruction and meet student needs. In the end the study found that "…the teachers in this study were deeply influenced by the curriculum materials provided to them and the curriculum contexts in which they worked" (Valencia, et al., 2006, p. 114). The scripted program truly shapes teacher development and a teacher's ability to adapt their lessons to meet their students' needs. Connecting to teacher development, comes

teacher planning, was a limitation. “The teachers’ lack of preparation for using many of the materials in their classrooms” was something the researchers did not anticipate. This lack of knowledge and preparation could have skewed the results against the mandated program.

The first year of a new program can be the most challenging. The notions of the importance of literacy, and the vital connection to society are not new. Dixie Massey (2004) in the article “You Teach!” Beginning Teachers’ Challenges to Teacher Educators” follows three first year teachers and documents their struggle balancing scripted literacy programs. Participants were three preservice elementary school teachers. The researcher selected the participants based on their academic performance in their undergraduate studies, as well as their student-teaching performance (Massey, 2004, p. 78). In addition, all the participating teachers were Caucasian and had similar backgrounds, concerning their socio-economic status and family structure. Continuing, all the teachers were hired in schools with similar demographics and socio-economic rankings. One teacher taught kindergarten, another second grade and another third grade, but they all were required to use a scripted literacy program. The teachers were followed throughout their first and second years of teaching. The researcher used initial and ongoing interviews, classroom observations, teacher lesson plans, field notes, and various forms of informal conversations (phone and email) to document the teachers’ progress. The researcher visited each classroom six times, and only during the designated literacy time.

This qualitative research study asked two important research questions, the first being how their instruction was categorized in their beginning years of teaching (Massey,

2004, p. 75)? The second question asks if the teachers were using the content and methods, they learned in their literacy training and applying in their classroom (Massey, 2004, p. 75)? Massey (2004) used informal conversations, classroom observations, emails, and interviews to document the teachers' progress. Over time, Massey (2004) noticed that all three teachers, in different schools and teaching different grades, developed similar patterns concerning how they approach their scripted literacy curriculum provided by the district. Massey (2004) described these as phases. All three teachers, even though teaching different grades and teaching in different schools, developed similar patterns in their approach to literacy instruction.

The patterns went in phases and the phases repeated themselves. In the first phase all three teachers relied heavily on the mandated curricula and did not integrate new ideas. With that, they felt overwhelmed by the structure and amount of materials to learn and teach. During the second phase each of the teachers went through a period where they ignored the mandated curricula and created their own lesson plans. This made the teachers feel less overwhelmed. In the final phase, all the teachers wished to watch the researcher model literacy instruction as they observed. All the beginning teachers asked for help. In the end, from the final interviews of all the teachers, each one of them noted "…the course [and methods] were helpful, if I could use it" (Massey, 2004, p. 93). Overall, this shows that the scripted literacy program made the teachers feel overwhelmed and less prepared to teach.

What happens when a teacher believes their opinion does not matter and they feel forced to do something? Powell, Cantrell and Correll (2017) wanted to know what teachers' experiences were during their first year of implementing a scripted literacy

program. More specifically, the researchers sought to investigate "…the impact of a scripted program in an urban, culturally, and linguistically diverse, low socioeconomic elementary school" (Powell, Chambers Cantrell, & Correll, 2017, p. 94). The study included 17 elementary school teachers, who taught in grades 3-5. All the teachers worked in a "high poverty elementary school" and were from the same district (Powell et al., 2017, p. 95). Furthermore, the researchers used purposive sampling and the teachers recruited ranged from general education, special education, literacy specialist and English as a second language (ESL) teachers. The researchers used the phenomenology methodology as their purpose was to "…clarify the nature of a particular phenomenon" (Powell et al., 2017, p. 100). The study utilized interviews as the major data collection form. The interviews were "conducted in pairs or small groups" and the researchers acted as engaged listeners (Powell et al., 2017, p. 101). The researchers used an interview guide, but the interviews themselves were unstructured. "Each interview was transcribed, and the first author transcribed a second time so that teachers' exact wordings could be captured" (Powell et al., 2017, p. 101).

From the data analysis of the interviews four themes emerged. The first theme says that the "program supported teachers' work with the most struggling students" (Powell et al., 2017, p. 93). The second theme discussed how teachers felt forced to do the scripted program and it than had "negative outcomes for students" (Powell et al., 2017, p. 93). The third theme simply stated that the program, in general, had a negative impact of teacher's well-being. The fourth theme spoke about the structure of the school system and how it made teachers feel that their professional opinion did not matter. In the end, the findings suggest that teachers believe the program did benefit some students

positively, but most of the students negatively. Overall, the teachers "experienced a wide range of reactions" and felt that they could not meet their students' "academic and emotional needs", which made them feel powerless (Powell et al., 2017, p. 109). The authors state the use of a phenomenological study could itself be a limitation. "Phenomenology involves purposive versus random sampling in participant selection, and therefore data are limited to the experiences of the selected participants" (Powell et al., 2017, p. 109).

Student Impact: Does a Literacy Program Effect Student Success?

If teachers are impacted, you can guarantee it is also going to impact the students. Motivation in students is key to success. Howard Margolis and Patrick McCabe (2006) believe that "scripted programs can help teachers" as "many teachers do not know how to teach reading, especially to struggling readers" (Margolis & McCabe, 2006, p. 435). Their article "Motivating Struggling Readers in an Era of Mandated Instructional Practices" suggests that teachers often complain about literacy programs, however, "the culprit may not be scripts and programs per se, but the mandate that teachers follow them submissively, unreflectively, and unresponsively, whether or not the readers benefit" (Margolis & McCabe, 2006, p. 435). One of the popular complaints' teachers have concerning scripted reading programs, relates to student engagement and motivation. Teachers say that scripted programs do not allow them to teach to what students like, causing a lack of engagement and motivation. Margolis and McCabe (2006) train teachers on five principles to incorporate into their scripted reading lessons to address these concerns. As the two researchers act as trainers, they use field notes and

observations to see the progression and reactions of the teachers. Their goal was to see if there was a change in the teachers' perceptions.

All the teachers involved with elementary school teachers and varied in teaching experience. A major validity and reliability concern in the article are the lack of demographic and sample information provided by the researchers. However, the researchers detailed the five principles taught to the teachers. They are as follows:

> Principle 1—Use materials and assignments that promote successful performance. Principle 2—Increase expectations of success by ensuring adequate background and vocabulary. Principle 3—Create value by linking instruction to readers' interests and goals. Principle 4—Create value by temporarily using extrinsic reinforcers. Principle 5—Teach struggling readers to make facilitative attributions (Margolis & McCabe, 2006, p. 437-8).

The researchers say that "By understanding motivation, teachers can help readers" (Margolis & McCabe, 2006, p. 436). The results indicate that teachers respond positively when understanding the importance of reflecting on the lessons taught and applying a variation of the five principles within the reading lessons. For examples teachers learned how to "use opportunities to support readers before, during, and after lessons" (Margolis & McCabe, 2006, p. 443). Also, the researchers noticed that teachers focused less on the mandated part of the program and more on knowing "what interests struggling readers and hat goals are important to them" (Margolis & McCabe, 2006, p. 445). Overall, teacher's perception of the program can change when they focus on the student aspect of the program and not the script.

On the same notion of student impact related to motivation, Applegate and Applegate (2010) in their article "A Study of Thoughtful Literacy and the Motivation to Read" wanted to build upon prior studies done in motivation and how it relates to student reading success. It is known that "engaged and motivated readers have found that they read more than their less enthusiastic counterparts" (Applegate & Applegate, 2010, p. 226). The researchers wondered if "children who achieved higher scores on a measure of thoughtful literacy be more motivated to read than their lower scoring counterparts. (Applegate & Applegate, 2010, p. 226). From there they organized elementary school students into two groups: "Those who could recall what they read and who demonstrated the inclination to think deeply about it "and "Those who could recall what they read but who did not demonstrate the inclination to respond thoughtfully to the text:" (Applegate & Applegate, 2010, p. 227). The two developed one straightforward research question: Would "these two groups differ with respect to their overall motivation to read, the value that they ascribed to reading, and their perceived self-efficacy as readers" (Applegate & Applegate, 2010, p. 227).

To answer this research question, the researchers had a sample of "443 children (202 males and 241 females) ranging from grade 2 through grade 6" (Applegate & Applegate, 2010, p. 228). All the students went to school in either Pennsylvania, New Jersey, or Delaware. The students came from 80 different schools, and a variety of different school structures. "Public school students accounted for 63% of the sample, while parochial students (26%), private school students (10%), and home-schooled children (1%) accounted for the remainder" (Applegate & Applegate, 2010, p. 228). The student demographics were not as diverse with "Eighty-six percent of the children were

Caucasian and 14% were members of minority groups." (Applegate & Applegate, 2010, p. 228). All the students were receiving literacy instruction using a scripted reading program.

The participants were given the reading survey *Motivation to Read Profile* (MRP), a 20-item Likert scale instrument, and the *Critical Reading Inventory* (CRI). All these instruments were used to measure reading comprehension, self-efficacy, and student motivation. Comprehension scores allowed for the researchers to organize students into two groups, a Red Group, and a Blue Group. "Red Group consisted of children strong in text-based but weak in higher order comprehension" and the "Blue Group consisted of children strong in both text-based and higher order comprehension" (Applegate & Applegate, 2010, p. 228). Both groups scored "independent" for comprehension, but the Blue Group students also scored independent in thoughtful response, whereas the Red Group students tested at frustration. Consequently, the results indicate that students with higher comprehension scored higher on thoughtful responses. "Children with high inclination to respond thoughtfully to text were significantly more motivated to read than children who excelled only in text-based comprehension" (Applegate & Applegate, 2010, p. 229). The scripted program does not affect student motivation to read. One major limitation is the fact that research has proven that "the motivation to read decreases with age, even among elementary school children" (Applegate & Applegate, 2010, p. 227). Those students in the upper elementary grades could have skewed the results.

To Script or Not to Script: Pro Teacher Generated Literacy Classes

Edwards and Chard (2000) compared two classes of students over a four-week time span. The researchers used a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest comparison design

to see the difference between high teacher involvement classroom versus a more scripted classroom. The participants in the study were 22 students with classified emotional and behavioral disorders in a community residence treatment program. Each of the classes would have 11 students, and both classrooms would integrate English language arts and history curriculum, but one classroom would use a manual approach, while the other used teacher designed lessons.

The researchers used a rubric based narrative writing prompt which must include short story elements as their instrument. This rubric was created by the teachers and based off the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework and statewide ELA and Social Studies standards. It should be noted that the specific unit was chosen "due to the teacher's interest as well as prior plans to teach the unit" (Edwards & Chard, 2000, p. 260). Certain limitations can be raised about the use of this as a valid or reliable instrument, specifically since the rubrics can be subjective in nature and were not provided to the readers. Furthermore, the teachers created the rubrics, and it was based off a unit they showed interest in, therefore enjoyed teaching. During the pretest students showed little knowledge of story elements and narrative writing skills. However, the posttest scores show that students who participated in the teacher input integrated language arts and history unit plan benefitted. The results show successful improvements in student academic engagement, teacher engagement, and student achievement. The results indicate that student achievement will increase with high levels of teacher engagement in the design of the unit plan. "Results from our intervention highlight the importance of planning instruction that involves high levels of teacher engagement" (Edwards & Chard, 2000, p. 262).

This suggests that student achievement will increase with a curriculum where teachers are more engaged in the creation. Then why have a scripted literacy program at all? Rocío Dresser's article, "The Impact of Scripted Literacy Instruction on Teachers and Students" connects the impact of a scripted literacy program on both teachers and students. The article states how many districts are using these scripted programs to "solve" problems in their district, as well as "close the achievement gap" (Dresser, 2012). The article also details a history of legislation in which caused many districts to turn towards such a route. In all, the article names the importance of moving away from such scripted curricula, as it is time consuming and overwhelming towards teachers, and with that negatively effects student achievement.

This action research study, aimed to address various concerns teachers had about the ineffective nature of the scripted reading program they were using. To address this, "this study examined the impact of blending two well-known teaching methods, Reciprocal Teaching and Narrow Reading" to benefit student's literacy progression (Dresser, 2012, p. 72). The participants in this study were four fourth grade classrooms in an inner-city elementary school and the four teachers in each participating classroom. Before the research period began, the teachers were required to attend professional development on the implementation of Reciprocal Teaching and Narrow Reading strategies. The researcher and teachers integrated thematic language arts and science unit for six weeks. During this study students were given three pre-tests and post-tests. The instruments used for this were a "Qualitative Reading Inventory [QRI], an essay, and a content area teacher-designed test" (Dresser, 2012, p. 73). Furthermore, "At the beginning of the study, teachers and students participated in Reciprocal Teaching reading

activities" for students to learn the instructional procedures associated with the strategy (Dresser, 2012, p. 73).

Pretest scores showed most of the students were reading below grade level and had limited comprehension (Dresser, 2012, p. 73). The students were organized into three groups based on their decoding and comprehension scores: frustration, instructional, and independent. Dresser (2012) coded and analyzed the data. In the end, the results showed that there was improvement in the student's literacy scores, concerning decoding and comprehension, in such a short period. For the frustration group of students, "There was a small improvement among this group of students" (Dresser, 2012, p. 75). There was only a 5% increase in scores for those students on the instructional level, and for students on the independent level, they showed an increase of 7% (Dresser, 2012, p. 75). The English Language Learners (ELL) students showed the most difficulty in reading gains (Dresser, 2012, p. 75). In the end, the teachers commented that they "found these methods to be valuable and engaging" for the students and wished they could continue to integrate them into the scripted curriculum (Dresser, 2012, p. 75). The inner-city demographics of the participants may show limitations, as would the results be able to transfer into a more rural setting. Furthermore, although the QRI is a proven reliable and valid instrument, there is always a concern about interpretation of student reading results. Does a scripted literacy program put too many restrictions on teachers, and learning styles? Perhaps if teachers were able to incorporate various teaching methods into their literacy lessons, students would succeed more.

To Script or Not to Script: Pro Scripted Literacy Classes

Teachers often wish for a mandated program to disappear, claiming it does not assist the students' needs. However, why would scripted programs be created if there was not some positive research to support their need? Katz and Carlisle (2009) conducted a feasibility study to determine if a literacy program can effectively increase students' close reading skills. The researchers conducted a case study of three students using a standardized pretest and posttest for comparative analysis for 12 weeks. The participants in the study titled "Teaching Students with Reading Difficulties to be Close Readers: A Feasibility Study" were three fourth grade Caucasian girls "…who demonstrated mild-to-moderate reading and language difficulties" (Katz & Carlisle, 2009, p. 328). The participants were recruited from a private clinic and were finalized using parent reports and the *Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-Revised* (WJPB-R) exam. The same assessment was used to measure the students' pretest and posttest scores. This testing instrument is known as a reliable and validity reading measurement tool. However, a major limitation to the study would be the use of only three participants and all of them are females in one grade. One wonders if the results can be generalized.

"The purpose of this exploratory study of CR [close reading] was to evaluate the potential benefits of a program" (Katz & Carlisle, 2009, p. 327). The program assigned to the three students incorporated various literacy skills including decoding, comprehension skills and "…daily reading in which the researchers guided the students' engagement with texts" (Katz & Carlisle, 2009, p. 327). To ensure reliability and validity the researchers wrote down all their planned lessons and allotted a specific time amount for each lesson. Furthermore, all the lessons were recorded with parental consent. Results

were broken down based on assessment subtests. For the reading subtests all the participants showed "Gains on the passage Comprehension subtest of the WJPB-R were notable for all 3 girls." (Katz & Carlisle, 2009, p. 327). In addition, all the girls showed small to moderate gains in their decoding skills, recognition of sight words, letter-word identification and word attack skills. As for the language subtests, the girls made "noteworthy gains on the listening comprehension subtest" as well as "substantial gains on vocabulary measures (Oral Vocabulary and Picture Vocabulary) (Katz & Carlisle, 2009, p. 325). As the authors note, a limitation to the results of the listening combination can be attributed to the students' weaker word attack skills, which may have affected the results. Overall, "All 3 students showed improved word reading and comprehension with small to large effect sizes on standardized and experimental measures" (Katz & Carlisle, 2009, p. 325).

Many pre-packaged literacy programs are created to assist with a predetermined reading disability. In the article "Linking Science-Based Research with a Structured Literacy Program to Teach Students with Dyslexia to Read: Connections: OG 3D" the authors discuss the use of a "structured literacy curriculum that systematically teaches the entire structure of the English language" and how it benefits students with dyslexia (Klages, Scholtens, Fowler, & Frierson, 2019, p. 49). The program is called Connections: OG 3D can incorporates the five elements for foundational reading. The researchers aim to investigate "any student literacy growth over an academic school year" while using the Connections: OG 3D reading program. (Klages, et al., 2019, p. 50). The participants in the study consisted of students in kindergarten, first, second, third and fourth grade from two different elementary schools in the state of Arkansas. Both

elementary schools average with more than half of the students considered low-income. However, one of the schools received a top rating from the state education department, whereas the other school received a failing mark. The school ratings, and variety of grades allows for better generalization of results. However, the use of two elementary schools in the same district does not.

Students participated in this quasi-experimental pretest-posttest designed experiment for an entire school year. Once the students were identified they were given the treatment three times a week for 45 minutes each session. The instrument used for the pretest and posttest measurement is a validated assessment called the Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). This is a district determined instrument. In addition, the posttests were given "periodically throughout the school year based upon predetermined school district guidelines" (Klages, et al., 2019, p. 50). Result indicate that "not one student regresses in learning nor remained stationary in reading development" (Klages, et al., 2019, p. 56). Furthermore, the researchers say that every student that participated in the study "earned double digit growth while learning with Connection: OG 3D" (Klages, et al., 2019, p. 56). The highest improvement in reading gains came from the third-grade cohort of students. Overall, future research is needed on this literacy program, as it is new and "it is important on the use of Connection: OG 3D" (Klages, et al., 2019, p. 56).

In the modern era of education, literacy is being taught in various ways. Blended learning is becoming a popular way for schools to mix the traditional and digital models of teaching. The article "Elementary School–Wide Implementation of a Blended Learning Program for Reading Intervention" discusses hybrid learning in depth, and its effects on literacy instruction. "Blended learning incorporates face-to-face, teacher-led

instruction along with digital technology using actionable data to provide students with a personalized educational path" (Prescott, Bundschuh, Kazakoff, & Macaruso, 2017, p. 497). Blended learning is not a one size fits all. "Blended learning can take various forms, thus allowing users to adapt a program that best fits their pedagogical goals and physical setting" (Prescott et al., 2017, p. 497). Prescott et al. (2017) "examined the implementation of a blended learning program for literacy instruction" in elementary school students (p. 497). The students ranged in age from kindergarten to fifth grade. 722 students had access to the digital component of the literacy program, but only 641 students were included in the final data analysis due to absences and missing data points. The school in which the participants attended is considered a Title 1 urban school and is "part of a district with one of the country's largest populations of students who are both ELs and Black" (Prescott et al., 2017, p. 499). "There were a total of 31 classes in the study" and the classes varied in size and grade (Prescott et al., 2017, p. 499). The school was purposefully picked due to their student population and the use of a blended reading program.

The school used the Lexia Reading Core5 (Lexia Learning, Concord, MA) as the digital aspect of the blended learning curriculum. Students were given a pretest and posttest to compare scores. "Reading performance was pre- and post-tested with the Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE)" (Prescott et al., 2017, p. 499). "The GRADE contains developmentally appropriate subtests designed to measure component reading skills at each grade level" and is considered a standardized test as "Standard scores reflect a student's performance relative to a norm sample of students in the same grade administered the same test at the same time point in the school

year" (Prescott et al., 2017, p. 501). For further assurance on reliability and validity the researchers stated that "The data on student usage indicate that in general the online component of Core5 was implemented with high fidelity" (Prescott et al., 2017, p. 500).

To see if the participating students showed growth the researchers used "repeated measures analyses of variance (ANOVAs)" for the GRADE scores (Prescott et al., 2017, p. 501). Furthermore, "To examine pre- and posttest differences both within and between groups, post hoc tests were run with Bonferroni corrections" (Prescott et al., 2017, p. 501). In addition, the researchers used multiple regression analysis "to examine how well the number of levels completed in Core5 predicted growth on the GRADE" (Prescott et al., 2017, p. 501). The results were broken grade by grade. Kindergarten, first, second, third and fifth grade students "showed significant growth on the GRADE from pretest to posttest (Prescott et al., 2017, p. 501-2). Fourth grade students "did not show significant growth on the GRADE from pretest to posttest" (Prescott et al., 2017, p. 502). Overall, "Results of this study indicate that a blended learning program can provide a viable means to enhance reading performance for students attending a Title I elementary school." (Prescott et al., 2017, p. 503). With that, there are limitations. The researchers could have used a comparative model to contrast students in a treatment group versus a control group. The study could have "included treatment and control classes within the same school or compared students who used the blended learning program in a treatment school with students from a similar school within the district who did not use the program" (Prescott et al., 2017, p. 504).

So, not all students showed progress, but a majority did with a blended scripted literacy program. There is no doubt that literacy concerns are best addressed in the

primary elementary years. “A Randomized Controlled Trial of an Early-Intervention, Computer-Based Literacy Program to Boost Phonological Skills in 4- to 6-year-Old Children” discusses the use of an early-intervention reading program. 98 students ranging from ages 4-6 were participants in a study to evaluate the “effectiveness of the commonly used the Lexia Reading Core5 intervention” (McIvor, McVeigh, Rushe, & O'Callaghan, 2016, p. 546). All the participants in the study were recruited from England, Wales, and North America, and were labeled as either being in pre-kindergarten or kindergarten. The study itself took place in Northern Ireland. The two schools used in the study were chosen due to their technology access to computers and having already purchased the rights to the computer-based scripted literacy program. The study was designed as a parallel-group with a randomized controlled trial (RCT) with a no-treatment, and a wait-list control group. Every child who participated in the study was “randomized to either the Experimental group (8 weeks of daily 20- to 30-min sessions of the intervention) or a wait-list control group (standard classroom teaching)” (McIvor et el., 2016, p. 548). The scripted program uses the Phonological Assessment Battery 2nd Edition (PhAB-2) for its measuring instrument. “Children were assessed individually pre-intervention (T0), post-intervention (T1), and at 2-month follow-up (T2) (intervention group only)” (McIvor et el., 2016, p. 548). The reliability and validity of the instrument was assured by the researchers by stating it was a “standardized protocol for both test administration and scoring, detailed in the test manual” (McIvor et el., 2016, p. 550). To calculate the findings, the researchers used “Repeated-measures ANOVAs” that allowed them to measure the effects of the subjects in the intervention groups for all variables. With that

"linear regression analysis was used to identify the demographic, procedural and baseline variables" that could predict student literacy improvements (McIvor et el., 2016, p. 551).

The results of the study show that "Randomization resulted in no significant difference on age, gender, year group" (McIvor et el., 2016, p. 552). However, the "Lexia intervention group were better able to blend sounds….and read non-sense words… than the wait-list control group after the intervention" (McIvor et el., 2016, p. 552). Overall, the "Lexia Reading Core5 intervention group made significantly greater gains in blending" and "An early-intervention, computer-based literacy program can be effective in boosting the phonological skills of 4- to 6-year-olds" (McIvor et el., 2016, p. 546). With that in mind, as the researchers note, a major limitation to the study is the fact that two of the participants discontinued their interview due to frustration and four other students were chronically absent during the treatment.

Relationship Between Prior Research and Present Study

The research articles have discussed the significant impact scripted literacy programs have on teachers and students. There are mixed reviews on whether scripted programs are a positive for teachers and students. Some research says a scripted literacy curriculum is beneficial to staff and students alike, while others say it is not. There is clearly a direct connection between literacy curriculum and the impact on students and teachers. Most of the existing literature is conducted in the elementary school setting and is solely about the points of view of teachers. This research will be conducted in a secondary setting and will exclusively focus on students.

Overall, this research will examine the effects of two types of literacy curriculum on students' literacy growth. The researcher will determine if a teacher generated literacy

curriculum is more beneficial to student literacy growth compared to that of a scripted literacy curriculum. There is a current gap in the existing state of knowledge of the topic concerning sample setting, participants, and instrument/ program comparisons. As already stated, many of the studies conducted about scripted literacy programs and reading achievement take place in an elementary school setting, not a secondary setting. Many of the studies also take a qualitative direction in research, where this study will be purely quantitative and focuses just on students' literacy growth.

The current studies have a lack of comparison of programs. Current research looks at the effects of one scripted literacy program on either the students or the teachers. This research will examine a comparison of students' literacy growth in a scripted program versus a teacher generated curriculum. Furthermore, the scripted curriculum being examined is a program called Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI). This program has had truly little research, as it is a newer program. Furthermore, the instrument used for assessment of students' reading level, called the Benchmark Assessment System, system 2 (BAS-2) is also a newer reading assessment, and has had little research conducted on it. These provided reasons and acknowledged gaps assert that the research topic will address a concern in the educational community and have positive implications for both educators and students.

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

Research Questions/ Hypotheses

Research Question One: Will there be significant differences between two instructional delivery modes of literacy programs (teacher generated versus scripted) on student's literacy growth during the school year?

Null Hypothesis: There will not be a significant difference between two instructional delivery modes of the literacy programs (teacher generated versus scripted) on student's literacy growth during the school year.

Research Question Two: Will there be significant differences in literacy growth between groups based on students' characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, classification, and grade?

Null Hypothesis: There will not be significant differences in literacy growth between groups based on students' characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, classification, and grade.

Research Question Three: Will there be interaction effects between the literacy program's instructional delivery mode and students' background characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, and classification on student literacy growth?

Null Hypothesis: There will not be significant interaction effects between the literacy program's instructional delivery and each of the students' background characteristics on student literacy growth.

Research Design and Data Analysis

Research Design. This study utilized quasi-experimental research design.

Variables. Research Question One: Will there be significant differences between two instructional delivery modes of literacy programs (teacher generated versus scripted) on student's literacy growth during the school year?

Statistical Analyses: ANCOVA

Independent Variable: Literacy curriculum

Level One: Scripted literacy curriculum

Level Two: Teacher generated literacy curriculum

Dependent Variable: Post reading level

Covariate: Pre reading level

Research Question Two: Will there be significant differences in literacy growth between groups based on students' characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, classification, and grade?

Statistical Analyses: ANOVA

Predictor Variable: Students' background characteristics including grade, language classification, special education, gender, and race/ethnicity.

Dependent Variable: Students' literacy gain scores

Research Question Three: Will there be interaction effects between the literacy program's instructional delivery mode and students' background characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, and classification on student literacy growth?

Statistical Analyses: Regression analysis

Predictor Variable: Literacy program delivery mode, students' background characteristics including language classification, special education, gender, and race/ethnicity.

Criterion Variable: Students' growth in literacy scores

Validity of Research Design

All participants were chosen purposefully, but randomly assigned to either the teacher generated or scripted program by building and district administrators. This was intended to not create a more favorable outcome for either program. Both the scripted and the teacher generated classrooms used the same testing instruments, measurements, and procedures. All teachers used the BAS-2 testing system. To limit extraneous variables from interfering all teachers were trained properly in the administration of the BAS-2. The testing was administered by each of the scripted and teacher generated classroom teachers to remain consistent. The testing process was uniform and occurred during the same three times during the school year regardless of program type. Student's reading levels were assessed in the Fall, Winter, and Spring.

Further threats to validity were reviewed by balancing, as much as possible, the two groups of students. As indicated in Table 2 students in both the teacher generated and scripted programs have similar number of participants. Similar numbers in the students' gender and ethnicity also adds to the validity of the study. Furthermore, students in both program types received the same instructional hours and were exposed to the similar classroom conditions with every student receiving instruction from a highly qualified educator. The only notable difference is the scripted program followed the LLI program guide, whereas the teacher generated program was created specifically by each teacher.

The LLI scripted program used was developed by Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell to provide a variety of tools, options, and resources you need to "…systematically examine a student's strengths and needs" (Fountas & Pinnell, 2011, p. 140). Fountas and

Pinnell believe that this program is “highly supportive” and “The books are especially engaging, and the comprehension conversation is warm and supportive” for students and teachers (Fountas & Pinnell, 2011, p. 140). The quality of the program is highly rated as it allows for teachers to monitor their student’s progress, assist with what instructional interventions come next, and allow for teachers to learn more about literacy development. “Over time, observations made through the assessment, instruction designed to move students ahead from level to level, and follow-up assessment will deepen your understanding of literacy development” (Fountas & Pinnell, 2011, p. 140).

Teachers in the teacher generated curriculum group created the curriculum based on student needs and interests. They used their relationships with students to their advantage, but bring in materials that the students will find engaging. In addition, all the teacher generated classrooms used current event articles in their curriculum to supplement the fiction with non-fiction articles. Just as there is literature and research to support the use of such programs, there is also those who declare that a teacher generated program is more beneficial to student literacy growth. The teacher generated program prides itself on student engagement and teacher freedom to understand their students’ needs. Lee (2013) found that student engagement is important in all content areas of school, but particularly in reading. In fact, student engagement “significantly predicted reading performance” in his study (Lee, 2013, p. 179).

Reliability of Research Design

To maintain the reliability of the research, all student participants in the program were either two or more grade levels below their proper reading level. In addition, students were organized by grade level and reading level before being assigned into

either the treatment or comparison groups. For example, all students in one grade, on a reading level were homogeneously grouped based on that criterion. Once they were assigned to the treatment, they received the instruction for the entire school year, for each of the two years of data collection. Furthermore, every participant in the program maintained the same instructor throughout the research period. All 8 of the teachers are New York State certified literacy teachers and had an overall score of either effective or highly effective on their Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR). Many of the teachers are dually certified and were placed in either a teacher generated, or scripted classroom based on their certifications and seniority. Even though all the teachers did not teach the scripted program, they all have been thoroughly trained in LLI for an entire year prior to the data collection process. However, once the teacher was assigned to either be a scripted or teacher generated instructor, they also maintained that status throughout the data collection process. Teacher demographics can be seen in Table 1.

As for the instruction itself it was necessary to conduct "fidelity checks" to maintain reliability. Throughout the year, teachers in both the scripted and teacher generated classroom were asked to do informal "check-ins" with the researcher and department chair. These check-ins were established to make sure the programs were being followed and implemented properly. With that, during the specific data point collection time periods teachers were responsible for testing students using the BAS-2 and getting the data to the department chair by a certain due date.

Table 1

Teacher Demographics

Teacher	Years of Teaching Experience	Certifications	Program
1	21	Literacy, Special Education, and Elementary Education	Scripted
2	19	Literacy and Special Education	Scripted
3	23	Literacy, Special Education, and English as a Second Language	Scripted
4	17	Literacy and Special Education	Scripted
5	10	Literacy and English as a Second Language	Scripted
6	19	Literacy, Special Education, and English Language Arts	Teacher Generated
7	11	Literacy and English Language Arts	Teacher Generated
8	22	Literacy and English Language Arts	Teacher Generated

Sample and Population

Sample. This research used 535 students from the public middle school. The data for this research was collected over two years. These students were chosen from grades 6-8. The researcher used purposive sampling based on the student's specific qualifications. The number of students sampled was based on student population for receiving literacy services (Table 2). Every student in the sample is at least two grade levels below their proper reading level. The students in the sample were first organized by program type. Of the 535 students, 221 (41%) were in the teacher generated classroom and 314 (59%) in the scripted curriculum classroom.

The students were then filtered by their gender, grade, ethnicity, and classification. 58% of the students were male and 42% were female (Table 2). For grade breakdown, there was about a third from each grade in the sample. 37% of the students

were in 6th grade, 31% in 7th grade, and 32% in 8th grade (Table 2). Of the 535 students, the ethnicity of the students was represented of the overall population of the school. 27% of the students are White, 40%, Hispanic/ Latino, 32%, African American, and 1% Other (Table 2). Student classification was broken down into four categories: general education, special education, English language leaner (ELL), and both ELL and special education. As Table 2 shows, 47% of the students in the sample were general education, 22% special education, 28% ELLs, and 3% of the students were both ELLs and special education.

Population. The population for this study consisted of public-school students in a middle school in suburban area in Suffolk County, New York. Students are in grades 6-8 and range in age from 11-14 years old. The target public school for this study was a Title One and is eligible for Title Three grants. The data used for the study was collected over two years, the population for each of those two years can be seen in table 3. During the 2017-2018 school year, the school has a total number of 1,121 students with 27% of them receiving a literacy service. In the 2018-2019 school year, the middle school had a total enrollment of 1,096 students with 22% in a reading class. Not all students who received a reading intervention in the school could be used for the sampling due to various factors including: moving, chronic absenteeism, and schedule changes. However, the students included in the sample data represents the target population.

During the 2017-2018 school year more students received the scripted literacy instruction, with 188 students, and then 110 in teacher generated classroom. For the following school year, the numbers saw less of a drastic difference with 126 students in the scripted class and 111 in the teacher generated classroom. Demographic information

for student population is found in Table 3 below. Information was gathered based on internal department measures.

Table 2

Student Sample for Literacy Services

		Curriculum	
Gender	**Total Number of Students (%)**	**Teacher Generated**	**Scripted**
Male	312 (58%)	122	190
Female	223 (42%)	99	124
Grade			
Grade 6	196 (37%)	88	108
Grade 7	167 (31%)	47	120
Grade 8	172 (32%)	86	86
Ethnicity			
White	143 (27%)	59	84
Hispanic/ Latino	212 (40%)	97	115
African American	170 (32%)	60	110
Other	10 (1%)	5	5
Classification			
General Education	251 (47%)	106	145
Special Education	115 (22%)	39	76
English Language Leaner	152 (28%)	66	86
Special Education and English Language Learner	17 (3%)	10	7

Table 3

Student Population for Literacy Services by School Year

School Year	Total Number of Students	Number of Students in Literacy Program (%)	Program	
			Teacher Generated	Scripted
2017-2018	1,121	298 (27)	110	188
2018-2019	1,096	237 (22)	111	126
Total	2,217	535 (24)	221	314

Instruments

The overall goal of any literacy curriculum is to increase a student's reading level. The purpose of this study was to determine if a scripted literacy program was more effective for a students' literacy growth more than a teacher generated literacy program. A reading level can be measured using various screening tools. However, for the purpose of study, the students were all tested using the Benchmark Assessment System, second edition (BAS-2). The screening measurement system was developed by Fountas and Pinnell (2011) and is used in various literacy programs across the country. This specific system was developed for the Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) program. LLI is the scripted program used in this research. To keep consistency, the BAS will be used in both the scripted and teacher generated literacy classrooms as a literacy assessment.

Fountas and Pinnell (F & P) developed two separate BAS systems. The first system is "set one" which can test students from levels A-N. The second system is a "set two" and test students from levels L-Z. Set one is recommended for grades kindergarten to 2nd grade, and the second set is recommended for grades 3-8. Currently, the system is only developed for elementary and middle school students. Due to the nature of a

student's pretest, posttest 1 and posttest 2 reading measurements, to determine a student's reading starting point measurement, the literacy professionals may need to utilize both set one and set two of the BAS, from here on out referred to as BAS-1 and BAS-2.

Concerning the validity and reliability of this assessment, the assessment manual describes:

> You cannot get closer to authentic assessment than with this assessment. A student reads several books, thinks, and talks about them, and writes about reading. This is not only a valid assessment of the competencies you want to measure but is a productive use of teacher and student time (Fountas & Pinnell, p. 140).

Furthermore, the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System underwent a "A formative evaluation" in order to ensure that "(1) the leveling of the texts is reliable and (2) the reading scores are valid and accurately identify each student's reading level." (Pearson, 2011). According to the Executive Summary published by Pearson:

> Field testing was conducted with 498 students enrolled in a socioeconomically and ethnically diverse group of 22 schools from five geographic regions across the U.S. Determinations of each school's socioeconomic status were made using federal guidelines for categorizing low-, middle-, and high-SES schools (Pearson, 2011).

With that, "Results from the field testing indicated that the fiction and nonfiction books in the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System progressed in difficulty as the levels increased from Levels A-Z" (Pearson, 2011). This shows the effectiveness of the testing tool. "The field testing also confirmed that students' developmental reading levels

are similar for fiction and nonfiction texts at each level…76% of the students read the fiction and nonfiction books at similar reading levels within one level of text difficulty" (Pearson, 2011).

In specific terms of its reliability, it is a standardized assessment. In other words, the administration, coding, scoring, and interpretation are standardized in procedures to get reliable results" (Fountas & Pinnell, 2011 p. 140). The BAS system underwent a series of reliability measures.

> To measure the test-retest reliability of Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System, the students' reading scores on the fiction series were correlated with their scores on the nonfiction series. In general, test-retest results should exhibit a reliability coefficient of at least .85 for an assessment's information to be considered stable, consistent, and dependable." (Pearson, 2011).

As the test-retest results depict, the system passes the reliability test as Book Series A-N had a score of .93, Book Series L-Z had a score of .94, and overall, all Books (A-Z) had a rating of .97 (Pearson, 2011).

The validity of the instrument is also discussed in the executive summary. "There was a strong relationship between the reading accuracy rates of Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark System 1 fiction and nonfiction books (Book Levels A-N)" (Pearson, 2011). The researchers compare the accuracy rates to similar standardized assessment such as "Reading Recovery®" stating it has "correlations of .94 for fiction and .93 for nonfiction" (Pearson, 2011). This is even more notable as "Reading Recovery® was recently recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as an effective and

scientifically based reading program" (Pearson, 2011). Continuing, "There was a moderate association between the Benchmark System 2 (Book Levels L-Z) fiction and nonfiction books and other literacy assessments" (Pearson, 2011). The comparable literacy measure was noted as the Slosson measure of word reading. The "study indicated the Benchmark System fiction texts (correlation of .69) and nonfiction texts (correlation of .62)" (Pearson, 2011).

These results confirm the validity and reliability of the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System. "After two and a half years of editorial development, field testing, and independent data analysis…the Benchmark Assessment System…were demonstrated to be both reliable and valid measures for assessing students' reading levels." (Pearson, 2011). Overall, it appears that the assessment being used for this study aligns with the standards of validity and reliability. As already noted, In the BAS system, the reading measurements when totaled, equal a letter. This letter can be translated to either a grade level equivalent or a Lexile measurement range (Table 4). With that, set 1 and set 2 of the BAS have overlapping letters. In both the BAS-1 and BAS-2, letter measurements L-N overlap. It should be noted that the testing tools used in these kits, for the overlapping lettered measurements, are not the same. Therefore, only tools in BAS-2 for letters L-N are used to remain consistent.

To get to the total "lettered measurement" in the BAS, there is a series of aspects the students are tested on. It is essential to explain the testing process. Students are first given a series of "word lists". The student reads the words from each of the word lists until they reach a ceiling, or frustration point. It is from there, that the tester views a "starting point chart", therefore seeing where to begin the second phase of testing (Table

5). After the tester determines the starting point for the specific student, the teacher goes into the BAS kit, either BAS-1 or BAS-2, depending on the students' reading level, and begins the second phase of the assessment.

Table 4

Fountas and Pinnell Reading Conversion

Grade Level	Fountas & Pinnell Guided Reading Levels	Lexile Levels
.0	A	BR-47
.3	B	48-95
.6	C	96-143
.9	D	144-189
1.0	E	190-218
1.2	F	219-257
1.4	G	258-296
1.6	H	297-335
1.8	I	336-374
1.10	J	375-419
2.0	K	420-453
2.4	L	454-487
2.8	M	489-519
3.0	N	520-593
3.4	O	594-667
3.8	P	668-739
4.0	Q	740-769
4.4	R	770-799
4.8	S	800-829
5.0	T	830-861
5.4	U	862-893
5.8	V	894-924
6.0	W	925-939
6.4	X	940-954
6.8	Y	955-969
7.0	Z	970-1009
8.0	Z+	1010-1049
9.0	Z+	1050-1079

Each lettered measurement has a non-fiction and fiction book to use during the testing process. For the pretest and posttest 1 point of testing, given in the Fall and Winter, the students will use the fiction book and the non-fiction book will be used for the posttest 2, given in the Spring. During the actual testing process, the student reads a portion of the book out loud, as the teacher begins the running record process of the testing, scoring the students accuracy and fluency. A student's accuracy is based on a scale of mistakes. A complete error is scored as a negative point, and self-corrections do not count for or against the students. An example of the students' accuracy chart can be seen in table 6. The higher the accuracy score is, the less mistakes the student made while reading. Fluency is scored on a scale of 0-3. 0 is the worst score a student can receive and it usually means a student reads one word at a time. A score of 1 means a student reads mostly in two-word phrases of strands. A score of 2 is when a student mostly reads in three- or four-word strands. The highest score is a 3, and this is when a student reads in "larger meaningful phrases" with little to no pauses.

For the remainder of the testing process, the student reads the rest of the book independently. After the student completes reading, the teacher reads a pre-written summary to the student, then begins the questioning part of the testing. The questioning portion is developed to test a students' comprehension based on three different levels: Within the text details, beyond the text details, and about the text details. In each of these sections' students are scored on a scale of 0-3, 0 being the worst, and 3 being the best. The comprehension scale explanation can be seen in Table 7. At the end, the comprehension score is tallied, and the student can receive a total of 10 points, as the tester is allowed to add on an extra point as a "bonus point" if the student shows mastery.

In the end, all three scores: Accuracy, fluency and comprehension are brought together for the final lettered score, and from there a tester determines the next step. If a student is labeled as "independent" based on the scores, the tester must move up to the next reading level, and re-test. If the student is labeled as "frustrated" the tester must move down a reading level and re-test. If a student is labeled as "instructional", then that is the students' accurate reading level according to the BAS conversion chart (Table 8).

Table 5

Word List Starting Point

# Correct	List 2	List 3	List 4	List 5	List 6	List 7	List 8
0-5	E	I	M	P	R	T	U
6-10	F	J	M	P	R	T	V
11-15	G	K	N	Q	S	U	V
16-20	G	L	O	Q	S	U	V

Table 6

Accuracy Rates

Errors	13 or more	11-12	8-10	6-7	4-5	2-3	0-1
%	below 95%	95%	96%	97%	98%	99%	100%

Table 7

Comprehension Scale

3	Proficiency in understanding the text
2	Approaching proficiency in understanding the text
1	Limited proficiency in understanding the text
0	Not Proficient in understanding the text

Table 8

Overall Reading Score

Comprehension	**9-10**	**7-8**	**5-6**	**0-4**
Accuracy	Excellent	Satisfactory	Limited	Unsatisfactory
98-100%	Independent	Independent	Instructional	Frustrated
95-97%	Instructional	Instructional	Frustrated	Frustrated
Below 95%	Frustrated	Frustrated	Frustrated	Frustrated

Intervention

The students included in this research were all tested using the BAS. The testing process occurs during three separate time frames. All time frames are based on the New York State public school calendar, and any revisions made by the local Board of Education. All 535 students used in this research received instruction for a full school year, for each of the two school years collected. The first testing measurement is during the Fall (September/ October). The second testing mark is during the Winter (February/ March). The third and final testing measurement is taken during the Spring (May/ June). When the students are not being tested, they are receiving instruction, either from a scripted literacy class or a teacher-generated classroom. On average, each student receives about 175 days of instruction, during 40-minute class periods. This, of course, depends on the student absences, school-wide plans, and of course any other environmental factors which could occur.

The testing and instruction are both given by trained and certified literacy teachers. The same teacher that tested the student, also gave the student instruction. There

are 8 reading teachers. All the reading teachers have been trained in how to effectively use the BAS testing system. In addition, all the literacy teachers spent an entire year, with a total of 10 sessions, learning the LLI reading program. As part of this training, teachers were asked to let professional developers into their classroom for model lessons and fidelity checks. The teachers who teach the LLI program were assigned to the program due to their specialty and years of teaching experience. The teachers who were certified in both special education and literacy were placed in the scripted program. In addition, those teachers with less seniority were also assigned to teach the LLI program. Therefore, the teachers just certified in reading or certified in both English Language Arts and Reading, and with higher seniority were placed in the teacher generated curriculum. All assignments of teachers were made in collaboration with the department chair of reading, the assistant principal in charge of creating the master schedule, and the Director of Humanities for the district.

The participants in this study include 535 students from literacy classes in a public-school setting. The student's demographics will be broken down by gender, grade level, ethnicity, student classification, as well as program type. Participants were tested three times, for the pretest, posttest 1, and posttest 2. However, for the purposes of data analysis only the students' posttest 2 scores will be used as a comparison to pretest scores. Students will be purposefully sampled and randomly assigned to either treatment or comparison group. They are grouped due to their reading level. Reading classes are organized by grade, so students were first separated into grade-level assignments. After that, the student's classification of special education and/or ENL was considered. Some students had specific requirements based on their Individualized Learning Plan (IEP) and

could only fit into a teacher generated or scripted class. The rest of the students were organized based on their reading level, and then placed into groups. For example, all students in grade 6, with a letter L were grouped. Each of those groups was broken down into subgroups of 6-10 students.

Whether students learned with a scripted or teacher generated curriculum was randomly decided. Treatment group students learned teacher generated curriculum, while comparison group students learned a scripted curriculum approach by their classroom teacher. All students involved are students who were two or more grade levels below their grade appropriate reading level. In addition, students in both the treatment and the comparison group were assigned to each class based on the scheduling process in the building. By creation of the master schedule, teacher availability, and grade level requirements, the higher the reading level the more likely the student would end up in a teacher-generated classroom. Many of the students had prior classifications of special education and/or ENL. The process for assigning students to classes was done by the department chair for reading and the Director of Humanities for the district. All student and teacher information remained confidential throughout the process.

Procedures for Collecting Data

Consent. To use the archived data collected by the reading department, the researcher first asked permission from the principal of the school. Upon receiving permission from the principal, the researcher than asked the Director of Humanities for the district, who also gave written approval for the use of the data.

Data Collection. For each of the years of data collection, the teachers taught and assessed the students. Each of the 535 participants was assessed three times a year. The

data was collected by the teachers and stored in a department wide Microsoft Excel sheet. All the data was gathered and compiled into one master Microsoft Excel sheet by the department chair of Reading. Students' names were gathered in this process but were re-coded to keep their information confidential. This data sheet was stored on a password protected computer. Students were also coded based on the type of literacy program they were in. Level one students are those who received the scripted literacy program (LLI). Whereas Level two students are those who received teacher generated literacy curriculum. Students information was also coded based on gender, ethnicity, grade, and student classification. Since the students are coming from various teachers, there was no need to collect teacher information, as the focus of the research is on the curriculum and not the instructor. The time frame for all data points is two school years. The testing data points between each pretest to posttest 1 was 5-6 months. The time between the data collection for posttest 1 and posttest 2 was 4-5 months. All data from the master Microsoft Excel sheet with will be transferred to SPSS to analysis.

Data Analysis. After the data points were transferred into SPSS statistical software, the data was analyzed. For Research Question 1, descriptive statistics were computed to find the mean and standard deviations of the pretest (Fall) and posttest 2 (Spring) scores for both literacy groups. ANCOVA analysis was conducted to examine the significance of the difference in students' literacy level growth at the posttest between literacy programs. Reading level at the pretest score was used as the covariate. For Research Question 2, gain scores were computed to see the differences in students' reading level based on student characteristics. Regression analysis was used with a series of ANOVAs to determine significant differences among students' literacy growth based

on student characteristics. For Research Question 3, to investigate the interaction effects between program delivery types and students' demographic identifiers, multiple regression analyses with interactions between categorical variables were conducted.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of two types of literacy curriculum on improving students' reading literacy. The researcher explored the reading growth in a teacher generated literacy curriculum and a scripted literacy curriculum with the intention of discovering which is more beneficial to improve student reading levels. With this, the researcher developed three research questions. The results and findings for each of the following questions will be presented.

Research Question One: Will there be significant differences between two instructional delivery modes of literacy programs (teacher generated versus scripted) on student's literacy growth during the school year?

Research Question Two: Will there be significant differences in literacy growth between groups based on students' characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, classification, and grade?

Research Question Three: Will there be interaction effects between the literacy program's instructional delivery mode and students' background characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, and classification on student literacy growth?

Results: Research Question One

Research Question One: Will there be significant differences between two instructional delivery modes of literacy programs (teacher generated versus scripted) on student's literacy growth during the school year?

Descriptive statistics on pretest scores (students' reading level in Fall semester) and posttest scores (students' reading level in Spring semester) are presented in Table 9.

The type of literacy curriculum was the independent variable, with two levels. Level "1" was a group of students who were taught using the scripted curriculum (n= 314), and level "2" was another group of students who were instructed with a teacher generated curriculum (n= 221).

Table 9 shows that the average pretest scores for the scripted literacy program (m= 4.07) are lower than that of the teacher generated curriculum (m= 4.71). Likewise, the posttest mean scores in the teacher generated curriculum (m = 5.72) is higher than the mean score for the scripted literacy curriculum showed a lower average (m = 5.22). Gain scores were computed by subtracting pretest scores from posttest scores of all students in both curriculums. Gain scores of students in scripted curriculum were found to be slightly higher than those in teacher generated curriculum.

To find out whether this difference is from the type of literacy curriculum, ANCOVA analysis was run with posttest scores as an outcome variable and pretest scores (students' reading level in Fall semester) as the covariate variable. The difference in the gain scores between scripted and teacher-generated program controlling pretest scores was significant $F_{(1, 532)}$=10.19, p<.01. One possibility is this reflects regression to the mean effects, since the pretest scores of students in teacher-generated curriculum was significantly higher than those in scripted curriculum $F_{(1, 532)}$=2024.98, p<.001.

Table 9

Mean and Standard Deviation of Reading Level at Pre and Posttest

Program Type		Pretest	Posttest	Gain
	n	*M(SD)*	*M(SD)*	*M (SD)*
Scripted Curriculum	314	4.07(1.1998)	5.22 (1.3891)	1.15 (.55)
Teacher generated Curriculum	221	4.71(1.0020)	5.72 (1.2329)	1.00(.68)
Total	535	4.33 (1.1652)	5.43 (1.3484)	1.09(.61)

Table 10

Significance of Difference between Teacher generated and Scripted Program in Literacy Growth from Fall to Spring Semesters

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*Sig.*	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	775.51[a]	2	387.76	1056.58	.000	.80
Intercept	23.67	1	23.67	64.51	.000	.11
Pretest score	743.14	1	743.14	2024.98	.000	.79
Program	3.74	1	3.74	10.19	.001	.02
Error	195.23	532	.37			
Total	16726.17	535				
Corrected Total	970.75	534				

a. R Squared = .799 (Adjusted R Squared = .798)
b. Dependent Variable: Posttest score (students' Spring score)

Results: Research Question Two

Research Question Two: Will there be significant differences in literacy growth between groups based on students' characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, classification, and grade?

Differences in Literacy Growth among students in Grades 6, 7, and 8. The difference in gain scores between students with different background characteristics were examined. When Means and SDs of students in different grades were examined visually, students in grade 6 demonstrated the lowest literacy growth, while students in grade 8 have the largest literacy growth during all testing periods (Table 11). The largest gain was found from the Fall to the Spring gain for grade 6 with *M(SD)*=.96 (.62), grade 7 *M(SD)*=1.11 (.52), and grade 8 *M(SD)*=1.22 (.65).

A series of univariate ANOVAs were used to examine the data for Research Question 2. In students' literacy growth, univariate testing indicated that there are significant differences among students in different grades in their gains from Fall to Winter ($F_{(2,532)}$=4.88, p<.01) from Winter to Spring ($F_{(2,532)}$=5.16, p<.01), and from Fall to Spring ($F_{(2,532)}$=8.55, p<.001) respectively (Table 11). Tukey test showed that there is a significant difference in gain scores between grades 6 and 7 and between grades 6 and 8 (p<.05) during the Fall to Winter gain. Table 12 shows that students in grades 6 and 8 and students in grades 7 and 8 show statistically significant differences p<.01 and p<.05, respectively during their Winter to Spring gain. The Fall to Spring gain showed students in grades 6 and 8 have statistically significant differences p<.01.

Table 11

Mean and Standard Deviation of Literacy Growth by Grade

Growth Period		*N*	*M(SD)*	*F*	*Df*	*Sig*
Fall to Winter	Grade 6	196	.48(.47)			
	Grade 7	167	.61(.44)			
	Grade 8	172	.61(.43)			
	Total	535	.56(.45)	4.88	2, 532	.008
Winter to Spring	Grade 6	196	.48(.33)			
	Grade 7	167	.50(.39)			
	Grade 8	172	.61(.53)			
	Total	535	.53(.43)	5.16	2, 532	.006
Fall to Spring	Grade 6	196	.96(.62)			
	Grade 7	167	1.11(.52)			
	Grade 8	172	1.22(.65)			
	Total	535	1.09(.61)	8.55	2, 532	.000

Table 12

Post Hoc Analysis of Literacy Growth by Grade

Dependent Variable	*(I) Grade*	*(J) Grade*	*Mean Difference (I-J)*	*Sig.*
Fall to Winter	Grade 6	Grade 7	-.13*	.021
		Grade 8	-.12*	.021
	Grade 7	Grade 8	.01	1.00
Winter to Spring	Grade 6	Grade 7	-.02	.88
		Grade 8	-.13*	.01
	Grade 7	Grade 8	-.11*	.04
Fall to Spring	Grade 6	Grade 7	-.15	.05
		Grade 8	-.26*	.00
	Grade 7	Grade 8	-.11	.21

Differences in Literacy Growth among Ethnic Groups. Differences in students' literacy growth was examined among different ethnic groups. As seen in Table 13, students labeled as "other" have the highest literacy rate growth from Fall to Spring gain score *M(SD)*=1.26 (.57). However, the small sample size of students may skew these results (*n*=10). White students also showed an increase in literacy growth *M(SD)*=1.24 (.60). With that, Hispanic/ Latino students showed an increase only slightly below their White peers *M(SD)*=1.11(.59). African American students showed the smallest reading growth increase *M(SD)*=.94(.62).

Univariate testing indicated that there are significant differences among students with different ethnicities from Fall to Winter ($F_{(3,531)}$=5.31, p<.001) and from Fall to Spring ($F_{(3,531)}$=6.96, p<.001), but not from Winter to Spring. Post hoc analysis indicated that during the Fall to Winter testing session there was a statistically significant difference between White students and African American students (p<.001). The Fall to Spring gain scores indicate that there is a statistically significant difference in scores between White students and African American students (p<.001) and Hispanic/ Latino students and African American students (p<.05).

Table 13

Mean and Standard Deviation of Reading Literacy Growth by Ethnicity

Growth Period		***n***	***M(SD)***	***F***	***Df***	***Sig***
Fall to Winter	White	143	.66(.49)			
	Hispanic/ Latino	212	.57(.42)			
	African American	170	.46(.44)			
	Other	10	.60(.39)	5.31	3,531	.001
	Total	535	.56(.45)			
Winter to Spring	White	143	.58(.45)			
	Hispanic/ Latino	212	.54(.43)			
	African American	170	.47(.41)			
	Other	10	.66(.32)			
	Total	535	.53(.43)	1.90	3,531	.128
Fall to Spring	White	143	1.24(.59)			
	Hispanic/ Latino	212	1.11(.59)			
	African American	170	.94(.62)			
	Other	10	1.26(.57)			
	Total	535	1.09(.61)	6.96	3,531	.000

Table 14

Post Hoc Analysis of Literacy Growth by Ethnicity

Dependent Variable	***(I) ETHNICITY***	***(J) ETHNICITY***	***Mean Difference (I-J)***	***Sig.***
Fall to Winter	White	Hispanic/ Latino	.09	.247
		African American	.20*	.001
		Other	.06	.973
	Hispanic/ Latino	African American	.11	.077
		Other	-.03	.998
	African American	Other	-.14	.781
Winter to Spring	White	Hispanic/ Latino	.04	.814
		African American	.10	.142
		Other	-.08	.933
	Hispanic/ Latino	African American	.06	.479
		Other	-.12	.806
	African American	Other	-.19	.534
Fall to Spring	White	Hispanic/ Latino	.13	.191
		African American	.30*	.000
		Other	-.02	1.000
	Hispanic/ Latino	African American	.17*	.028
		Other	-.15	.868
	African American	Other	-.32	.352

Differences in Literacy Growth between Gender. Male and female students averaged in the same range of growth for the Fall to Spring gain scores as well as the Winter to Spring gain scores, *M(SD)*=1.12 (.63) and *M(SD)*=1.06 (.58) and *M(SD)*=.53 (.44) and *M(SD)*=.53 (.41), respectively. Table 15 indicates the difference in literacy

growth between the two genders occurs during the Fall to Winter testing measures where male students show a larger gain in scores *M(SD)*=.59 (.47) and *M(SD)*=.53 (.43). Univariate testing indicated that there are no significant differences among gender from any of the testing periods.

Table 15

Mean and Standard Deviation of Literacy Growth by Gender

Growth Period		***n***	***M (SD)***	***F***	***Df***	***Sig***
Fall to Winter	Female	223	.53(.43)			
	Male	312	.59(.47)			
	Total	535	.56(.45)	2.170	1, 533	.141
Winter to Spring	Female	223	.53(.41)			
	Male	312	.53(.44)			
	Total	535	.53(.43)	.004	1, 533	.949
Fall to Spring	Female	223	1.06(.58)			
	Male	312	1.12(.63)			
	Total	535	1.09(.61)	1.076	1, 533	.300

Differences in Literacy Growth among Different Classification Groups. Overall, students classified as both special education and English language learners had the largest increase in reading levels from the Fall to Spring gain score *M(SD)*=1.29 (.58). The sample size of students is small (*n*=17) in comparison with other student groups and may affect the results. Table 16 shows that English language learners and general education students had similar gains in reading level from the Fall to Spring *M(SD)*=1.12 (.55) and *M(SD)*=1.11 (.61), respectively. Students classified as special education showed the lowest gain in reading scores, *M(SD)*=.99 (.68). Univariate testing indicated that there are no significant differences amongst student classification for any of the gain score periods.

Table 16

Mean and Standard Deviation of Literacy Growth by Classification

Growth Period Groups	**Classification**	***n***	***M (SD)***	***F***	***Df***	***Sig***
Fall to Winter	General Education	251	.55(.46)			
	Special Education	115	.53(.51)			
	English Language Leaner	152	.59(.39)			
	Special Education/ English Language Leaner	17	.60(.45)	.580	3,531	.628
	Total	535	.56(.45)			
Winter to Spring	General Education	251	.56(.42)			
	Special Education	115	.45(.45)			
	English Language Leaner	152	.52(.41)			
	Special Education/ English Language Leaner	17	.69(.45)	2.539	3,531	.056
	Total	535	.53(.43)			
Fall to Spring	General Education	251	1.11(.61)			
	Special Education	115	.99(.68)			
	English Language Leaner	152	1.12(.55)			
	Special Education/ English Language Leaner	17	1.29(.58)	1.881	3,531	.132
	Total	535	1.09(.61)			

Table 17

Post Hoc Analysis of Literacy Growth by Classification

Literacy Growth	***(I) Classification***	***(J) Classification***	***Mean Difference (I-J)***	***Sig.***
Fall to Winter	General Education	Special Education	.02	.985
		English Language Learner	-.05	.733
		Special Education and ELL	-.05	.974
	Special Education	English Language Learner	-.07	.642
		Special Education and ELL	-.07	.942
	English Language Learner (ELL)	Special Education and ELL	-.01	1.000
Winter to Spring	General Education	Special Education	.11	.110
		English Language Learner	.05	.718
		Special Education and ELL	-.13	.635
	Special Education	English Language Learner	-.06	.641
		Special Education and ELL	-.23	.147
	English Language Learner (ELL)	Special Education and ELL	-.17	.387
Fall to Spring	General Education	Special Education	.13	.260
		English Language Learner	-.00	1.000
		Special Education and ELL	-.17	.663
	Special Education	English Language Learner	-.13	.331
		Special Education and ELL	-.30	.231
	English Language Learner (ELL)	Special Education and ELL	-.17	.684

Results: Research Question Three

Research Question Three: Will there be interaction effects between the literacy program's instructional delivery mode and students' background characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, and classification on student literacy growth?

Ethnicity. To investigate the interaction effects between the program delivery type and ethnic groups on literacy achievement, multiple regression analyses were conducted with two categorical variables. African American students benefit more from a scripted program and they increase in gains score is high *M(SD)*= 1.0 (.57) compared to that of the teacher generated program *M(SD)* = .76 (.68). Table 24 also shows that the same can be said of the Hispanic/ Latino students who also benefit more from the scripted literacy program *M(SD)*= 1.2 (.52) compared to that of the teacher generated program *M(SD)*= 1.0 (.66).

Students with an ethnicity of "Other" also show an increase in their means scores in both literacy programs. However, their scores are higher in the scripted literacy program *M(SD)*= 1.4 (.48) rather than in the teacher generated program *M(SD)*= 1.1 (.66) (Table 24). With that, these increases may be skewed due to the limited number of participants (*n*=10). Furthermore, White students show a stagnant growth pattern for both literacy programs. Table 24 shows the similar growth patterns for White students in both the scripted program *M(SD)*= 1.2 (.56) and the teacher generated program *M(SD)*= 1.3 (.63).

Figure 1 shows that both Hispanic/ Latino and African American students have an increase in their overall growth score for scripted and teacher generated literacy programs. 4.5% of the variance in student growth score from Fall to Spring is being

accounted by program delivery type, ethnicity, and their interactions in this multiple regression model (Table 18). Table 19 shows the standardized coefficient is -.34 and there are clear interaction effects between type of literacy program and student ethnicity ($p<.05$). The interaction effect is also evident while viewing the comparison scores of the programs shown in Table 24.

Table 18

Interaction Effects between Program Delivery Type and Ethnicity on Literacy Growth

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.22[a]	.05	.05	.60

a. Predictors: (Constant), Program*Ethnicity, Program, Ethnicity
b. Dependent Variable: Fall to Spring Gain Score

Table 19

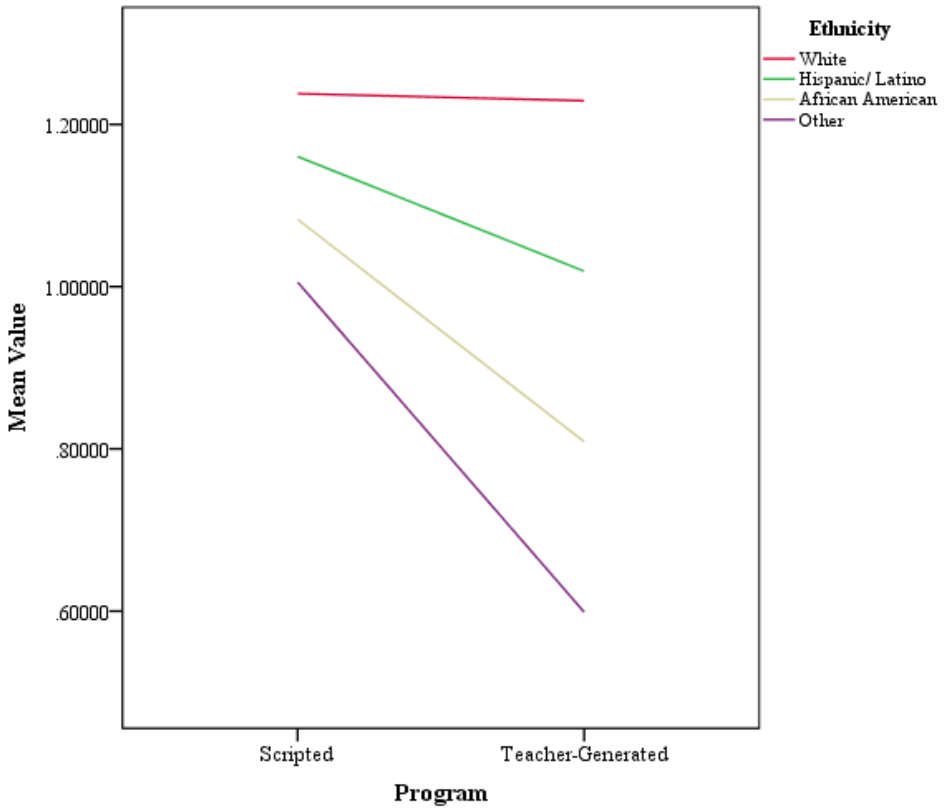
Coefficients: Program and Ethnicity

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.19	.22		5.47	.000
	Program	.12	.15	.10	.85	.395
	Ethnicity	.06	.10	.07	.57	.569
	Program* Ethnicity Interaction	-.13	.07	-.34	-2.02	.043

a. Dependent Variable: Fall to Spring Score

Figure 1

Interaction Effects between Program Delivery Type and Ethnicity on Literacy Growth



Gender. In the scripted literacy program female students have an average gain score of 1.1 reading levels *M(SD)*= 1.1 (.48), whereas male students have a 1.2 average score *M(SD)*= 1.2 (.59). Similar growth gains were seen in the teacher generated program where both females *M(SD)*= 1.0 (.69) and males *M(SD)*= 1.0 (.67) moved an average of one reading level from the Fall to Spring benchmark (Table 24). Figure 2 shows that both male and female students have an increase in their overall growth score for scripted and teacher generated literacy programs. As seen in Table 20, 1% of the variance in student growth score from Fall to Spring is being accounted by program delivery type, gender, and interaction between the two factors. Table 21 indicates that there are no

significant interaction effects present between type of literacy program and student gender.

Table 20

Interaction Effects between Program Delivery Type and Gender on Literacy Growth

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.125[a]	.02	.01	.61

a. Predictors: (Constant), Program*Gender Interaction, Gender, Program
b. Dependent Variable: Fall to Spring Gain Score

Table 21

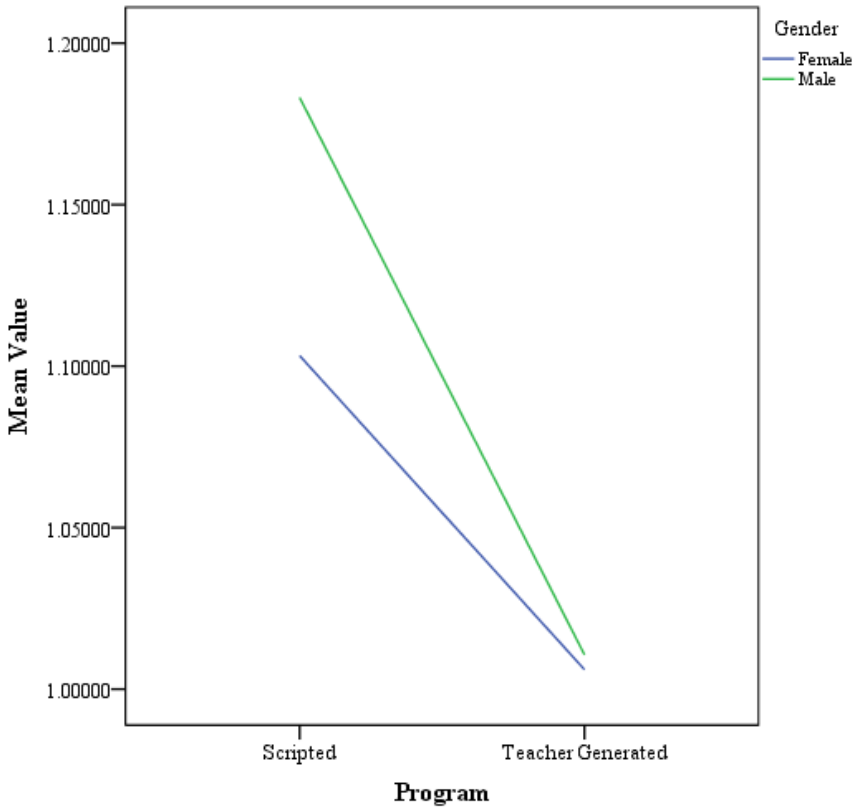
Coefficients: Program and Gender

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	*t*	*Sig.*
1	(Constant)	1.12	.18		6.21	.000
	Program	-.10	.08	-.08	-1.19	.237
	Gender	.08	.07	.07	1.14	.256
	Program*Gender Interaction	-.08	.11	-.05	-.70	.487

a. Dependent Variable: Fall to Spring Gain Score

Figure 2

Interaction Effects between Program Delivery Type and Gender on Literacy Growth



Classification. General education students had a larger increase in the scripted program *M(SD)*= 1.2 (.53) and in the teacher generated *M(SD)*= 1.0 (.70) (Table 25). Special education students also have a larger increase in the scripted program *M(SD)*= 1.1 (65) rather than *M(SD)*= .76 (.68) in the teacher-generated program. Table 24 also shows that English Language Learners (ELL) students do well in both the scripted *M (SD)*= 1.2 (.50) and the teacher generated program *M(SD)*= 1.1 (.61). Those students who are classified as both special education and ELL represent a small sample size (*n*=17) but seem to do better in the teacher generated program *M(SD)*= 1.4 (.68) versus the scripted program *M(SD)*= 1.2 (.28) (Table 24). Figure 3 shows that all classification types have an increase in their overall growth score for scripted and teacher generated literacy

programs. Table 22 indicates there was a l% variance in student growth score from Fall to Spring is being accounted by program delivery type, classification, and their interaction in this multiple regression model. The standardized coefficient is .12. Table 23 shows there are no significant interaction effects between type of literacy program and student classification.

Table 22

Interaction Effects between Program Delivery Type and Classification on Literacy Growth

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.12[a]	.02	.01	.61

a. Predictors: (Constant), Program*Classification Interaction, Program, Classification
b. Dependent Variable: Fall to Spring Score

Table 23

Coefficients: Program and Classification

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	*t*	*Sig.*
1	(Constant)	1.39	.18		7.66	.000
	Program	-.23	.12	-.18	-1.89	.059
	Classification	-.05	.09	-.08	-.59	.557
	Program* Classification Interaction	.04	.06	.12	.77	.440

a. Dependent Variable: Fall to Spring Score

Figure 3

Interaction Effects between Program Delivery Type and Classification on Literacy Growth

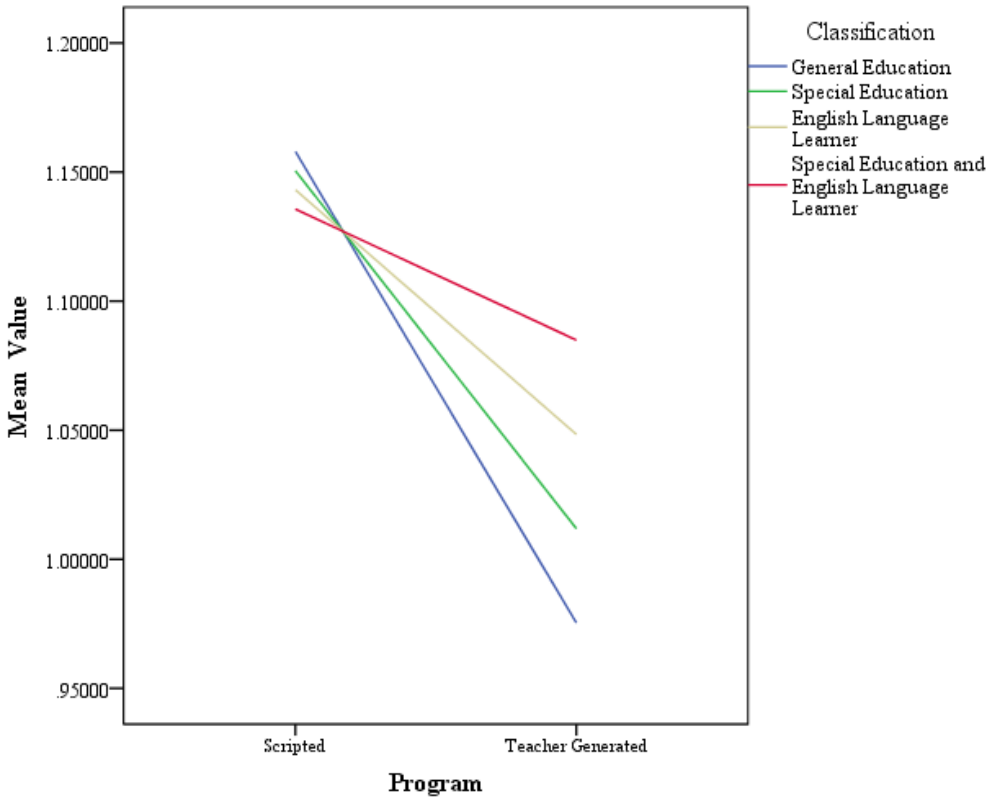


Table 24

Descriptive Statistics: Program by Gender, Ethnicity and Classification Fall to Spring

Student Grouping		Scripted Program		Teacher Generated Program	
		M(SD)	***n***	***M(SD)***	***n***
Gender	Female	1.1 (.48)	124	1.0 (.69)	99
	Male	1.2 (.59)	190	1.0 (.67)	122
	Total	1.2 (.55)	314	1.0 (.68)	221
Ethnicity	White	1.2 (.56)	4	1.3 (.63)	59
	Hispanic/ Latino	1.2 (.52)	115	1.0 (.66)	97
	African American	1.0 (.57)	110	.76 (.68)	60
	Other	1.4 (.48)	5	1.1 (.66)	5
	Total	1.2 (.55)	314	1.0 (.68)	221
Classification	General Education	1.2 (.53)	145	1.0 (.70)	106
	Special Education	1.1 (.65)	76	.76 (.68)	39
	English Language Learner	1.2 (.50)	86	1.1 (.61)	66
	Special Education and ELL	1.2 (.28)	7	1.4 (.73)	10
	Total	1.2 (.55)	314	1.0 (.68)	221

These results show that students' literacy growth increased in both programs, but students in the scripted program had higher overall gains in their literacy growth. Therefore, type of literacy program has a significant effect on student literacy growth. These results also show that specific student characteristics influence their literacy growth. Hispanic/ Latino and African American students achieved higher growth in a scripted program. Gender and student classification do not influence student literacy growth in either program.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Interpretation of Results

This study examined the effect of a scripted versus a teacher generated literacy curriculum on literacy growth. The literature on the topic of literacy programs mainly focuses on the effects the curriculum has on teachers, not students (MacGillivray, Ardell, Curwen & Palma, 2004). This study purely focused on students and how the programs effect their reading levels throughout a year. Overall, students' literacy growth increased in both the scripted program and the teacher generated program. Instructional literacy program has a significant effect on student literacy growth.

Students in the scripted program had a larger increase in their overall gain scores than students in the teacher generated program. The results indicate that students in the scripted literacy program started with a greater deficient in their reading levels but had a larger increase in their literacy growth. In comparison, students with a higher pretest scores still made progress in a teacher generated program. Students in the teacher generated program started at a higher "starting point" for their reading scores, than those students in the scripted program due to the random but purposeful placement of the students. The difference in starting points could explain why the ending point for students' scores are not as high in the teacher generated program than in the scripted program. There could have been a regression to the mean effects for students in teacher generated program since their starting scores were much higher than those in scripted program.

There is a connection between literacy program type and student literacy growth. Next, student identifiers were examined to see if there were significant differences in

literacy growth based on student characteristics. Students in all grades showed a significant difference in literacy growth. Grade 6 had the smallest gain, while students in grade 8 appeared to have the largest gain from Fall to Spring reading level scores. In the same fashion, grades 6 and 8 proved to be significant factors of reading level growth during all three benchmark assessments. Students in grades 6 and 7 made gains based on the Fall to Winter and the Fall to Spring benchmark periods. Grades 7 and 8 only showed growth during Winter to Spring.

Students with different ethnicities showed a significant difference in their literacy growth. The largest literacy growth gain occurred during for the Fall to Spring gain. White students showed the most growth, while their African American peers showed the smallest increase. Both White and African American students have significant growth for the Fall to Winter and the Fall to Spring gains. Hispanic/ Latino students also showed significant growth during the Fall to Spring gain.

A student's gender did not show significant differences in literacy growth. Male and female students averaged the same growth patterns from Fall to the Spring. The same pattern of growth is seen during the Winter to Spring gain. Males did show a slight increase their reading level more during the Fall to Winter testing frame, however it is not significant. Student classification did not show a significant difference for student literacy growth. Although certain student classification groups made gains during specific gain periods, Post Hoc analysis proved that no student group had statistically significant difference between scores. Student background characteristics do show significant differences in literacy growth, with the expectation of student gender and classification.

Next, the interaction effects between the literacy program's instructional delivery mode and students' background characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, and classification on student literacy growth were examined. The Fall pretest and the Spring posttest gain scores were used as the dependent variable. There were no interaction effects between program delivery type and gender. There were also no interaction effects between program delivery type and students' classification of learning. All students, regardless of their classification and gender with their literacy program showed literacy growth.

On the other hand, the effects of literacy instruction delivery were different for students with different ethnicities. All students, regardless of their ethnicity, showed literacy growth in both the scripted and teacher generated literacy programs. More specifically, both Hispanic/ Latino and African American students achieved higher growth in a scripted literacy program rather than a teacher generated program. The same can be said for students labeled "other". However, White students showed similar growth between both literacy programs.

Relationship Between Results and Prior Research

As already stated, much of the prior research on the topic of literacy programs focuses on the effect on teachers, and not students (Powell, Cantrell, & Correll, 2017). Many of these studies show the negative effect these programs have on teachers (Massey, 2004). According to the literature, these negative effects on teachers trickle down to the students (Valencia, Place, Martin, & Grossman, 2006). Teachers feel that they are unprepared to best serve the students and raise their reading levels when all they know is how to follow a program (Valencia, et al., 2006). This is a major concern as this study

focuses on student literacy growth. How can teachers assist students when they do not have the knowledge and skills to do so (Cohen, Mather, Schneider, & White, 2017)?

The entire purpose of a reading curriculum is to raise student reading levels. This curriculum is vital and has changed dramatically with the introduction of scripted programs (Randell, 2018). These programs have now been integrated into the reading curriculum as the schools react to federal and state pressure (Dresser, 2012). The results of this study show the importance of a reading curriculum, and the effect it has had on student literacy growth. It is clear, as stated earlier, that students in scripted literacy program achieved a higher rate of literacy growth than those in the teacher generated program.

Past studies have shown how these pre-packaged programs negatively affect teachers, but the results of this study indicate that the opposite is true for students. The results of this study show that overall students in a scripted program are more likely to increase their literacy growth than those students in a teacher generated program. A student's ethnicity showed significant differences in literacy growth. Hispanic/ Latino and African American students achieved higher growth in scripted literacy program rather than teacher generated program. Although the reasons for this need to be further researched, a possible reason for this notable finding could be out of the 535 students in this study, 314 of them were in the scripted program. A larger sample size for the scripted program could impact the results.

Furthermore, 72% of the students enrolled in the reading programs were either identified as African American or Hispanic/Latino (Table 2). Breaking that down even more, 115 students were Hispanic/ Latino and 110 were African American in the scripted

program, with only 314 participating (Table 2). Most of the students in the scripted program were either Hispanic/ Latino or African American. This could be a possible reason why students who identified as either one of these ethnicities showed a larger increase in their literacy growth in a scripted reading program.

Moving beyond the possible statistical reasoning for the findings, we should examine the actual curriculum materials used in the programs. A possible reason for the positive effect on African American and Hispanic/ Latino students in a scripted program could be the relatable books, discussion questions, and writing prompts built into the program. Throughout the LLI program, the books are designed to reach a diversity of learners. The books have a variety of characters and conflicts in which many of the students can relate to. In order to teach students higher ordering thinking skills, the discussion questions and writing prompts are designed to engage students and catch their attention. For example, a character in the book will be around the same age as a student and have a problem that a typical middle school student has. This may have peaked the student's interest and engagement them in a way to increase their literacy growth.

The teachers and their use of the curriculum and learning materials, in both programs, may also have led to the positive effect on specific students on their literacy growth. Teachers in a scripted program were provided with all the needed materials and trainings. While teachers in the teacher generated program were left to use their professional judgement and find the curriculum resources themselves. Perhaps teachers in the teacher generated program did not have the proper resources to accomplish the best setting for increasing students' literacy growth. Or was it perhaps that the teachers re

used materials and curriculum they already had without taken the student's individual reading needs into consideration?

Limitations

One of the major limitations to this study is the use of testing. If a student did not move a reading level, they could be exposed to the same testing materials twice. This is likely to happen during the Fall and Winter testing time periods. A second major limitation to the study would be the setting and selection of participants. The study took place at one middle school with grades 6-8. In addition, the school is a Title I suburban public school, with low socio-economic standing. Furthermore, there is a high special education and English language learners (ELL) population. Continuing, the school is classified as low performing, based on past state assessment scores. All participants in this study were two or more grade levels below their assigned grade reading level. This may restrict the generalizability of the results.

Teaching styles and student relationships with a teacher could also affect the results in this study. Irrelevancies in the experimental setting could skew results based on subjective measures. The treatment can be interpreted differently by each instructor and student. Teaching style and instructor and student relationships effect the experimental setting. Limitations of this study will be addressed in the next section, to discuss future research.

Implications for Future Research

Student literacy achievement and scores continue to be an area of concern in the world of education. With the current trends on student reading levels in America, and all over the world, schools are acting to address the known gaps (NEAP, 2017). Schools are

using these literacy programs as "fixers" and implementing them without the data to support their effectiveness on students (Dresser, 2012). Further research is needed to see how these programs effect students. The sample size of this study should be expanded, to use more participants from various grade levels. This pool of participants should particularly be expanded to the secondary level of students, as there is a gap in the research for those students. With that, future research should include a variety of schools, and not just hyper focus on one school.

Based on the results of this study, research should be conducted to see why a teacher generated curriculum is not effective in increasing a student's literacy. With that, various scripted reading programs should be compared and evaluated. This study only analyzed one scripted literacy program, Leveled Literacy Intervention. There are a variety of scripted programs to compare. This researcher suggests that student demographics continue to be taken while analyzing student literacy growth. If there are any other available demographic identifiers besides gender, grade level, ethnicity, and student classification, they should also be used to measure the impact on the student literacy growth.

Implications for Future Practice

The results of this study show there are benefits to a scripted literacy program. A scripted literacy program is more effective at raising student reading levels. Although all students seem to benefit, this is especially seen for students who identify as African American and Hispanic/ Latino. All grades showed growth, but grade 6 and grade 8 showed the largest increase in literacy growth. It is known, through the literature and from personal experience that teachers often complain about using a scripted program.

However, do they not take into consideration the positive effects it could have on student's literacy growth? Teacher complaints about a scripted program hold no ground when the results of this study prove it to be an effective tool for increasing students' literacy growth.

It is the recommendation of the researcher, based on the results of this study that schools look to use scripted literacy programs, especially for Hispanic/ Latino and African American Students to close the reading deficits in their schools. It is further suggested that Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) be used as an academic intervention service to provide treatment for those students who are two or more grade levels below their proper reading level. Teachers should be professionally trained in the program to implement with fidelity to achieve the proper results.

APPENDIX A

Federal Wide Assurance: FWA00009066

Oct 22, 2020 11:35 AM EDT

PI: Lindsay Blaszcyk
CO-PI: Seokhee Cho
Dept: Ed Admin & Instruc Leadership

Re: Initial - IRB-FY2021-147 STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IMPACT: SCRIPTED V. TEACHER- GENERATED LITERACY CURRICULUM

Dear Lindsay Blaszcyk:

The St John's University Institutional Review Board has rendered the decision below for STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IMPACT: SCRIPTED V. TEACHER- GENERATED LITERACY CURRICULUM.

Decision: Exempt

PLEASE NOTE: If you have collected any data prior to this approval date, the data must be discarded.

Selected Category: Category 4. Secondary research for which consent is not required: Secondary research uses of identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens, if at least one of the following criteria is met:

(i) The identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens are publicly available;

(ii) Information, which may include information about biospecimens, is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, the investigator does not contact the subjects, and the investigator will not re-identify subjects;

(iii) The research involves only information collection and analysis involving the investigator's use of identifiable health information when that use is regulated under 45 CFR parts 160 and 164, subparts A and E, for the purposes of "health care operations" or "research" as those terms are defined at 45 CFR 164.501 or for "public health activities and purposes" as described under 45 CFR 164.512(b); or

(iv) The research is conducted by, or on behalf of, a Federal department or agency using government-generated or government-collected information obtained for nonresearch activities, if the research generates identifiable private information that is or will be maintained on information technology that is subject to and in compliance with section 208(b) of the E-Government Act of 2002, 44 U.S.C. 3501 note, if all of the identifiable private information collected, used, or generated as part of the activity will be maintained in systems of records subject to the Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. 552a, and, if applicable, the information used in the research was collected subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, 44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.

Sincerely,

Raymond DiGiuseppe, PhD, ABPP
Chair, Institutional Review Board
Professor of Psychology

Marie Nitopi, Ed.D.
IRB Coordinator

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Vita

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