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SILENT SUSTAINED READING

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UNDERSTANDING STUDENT READING IDENTITIES AND THE INFLUENCE OF  
SILENT READING

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## Abstract

This study used a quantitative research approach to investigate how students view themselves as readers. The purpose of the study was to identify the reading culture at a comprehensive high school in order to create a Silent Sustained Reading (SSR) program that was more responsive to student needs. Data from a schoolwide survey was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Additionally, a variety of correlation coefficients were run to analyze the relationship between aspects of student's reading identities and their actions as readers. The findings suggest that having a positive reading identity and engaging in an SSR program do not produce student reading outside of class.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The National Endowment for the Arts (2007) report painted a bleak picture of reading in the United States. The findings of their research showed sharp declines in the rates of reading for pleasure among youth. The results of this study warn that declining readings rates could have negative impacts on career options for those youth as well as negative impacts on the civic, cultural and social fabric of our society (National Endowment for the Arts, 2007). However, the report is only a warning and does not recommend any solutions to the problem. The results of the National Endowment for the Arts report are not new. Rather, the decline in reading across all ages has been well documented (Anderson, 1985; Jacobs, Lanza, Osgood, Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Rand Reading Study Group, 2002).

In an effort to address these declining reading rates there has been a renewed interest in Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) (Dickerson, 2015; Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2006; Pilgreen, 2000). SSR programs have existed since the 1960s and have taken on various forms that include entire schools stopping to read at a specific time, to more social programs where teachers and students discuss their reading habits and materials (Gardiner, 2005). SSR programs have renewed interest because they can be developed independently from assigned curriculums and take little money to start (Fisher, 2004). Given that reading rates continue to decline, the practice of SSR may merit another look.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore how students view themselves as readers as well as how they view the SSR program. A variety of SSR strategies will be implemented in ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth grade classrooms in an attempt to increase students' motivation to read as well as shift their identities as readers from negative to positive. I believe that a lack of access to engaging or culturally relevant texts, modeling of reading habits and encouragement to form positive reading identities are affecting student reading habits and an SSR program may be able to address these concerns while producing positive outcomes for the students and teachers. This study seeks to establish the reading identities of our students as well as their preliminary views on SSR in order to create an SSR program that better serves our student population.

### Preview of Literature

The National Endowment for the Arts (2007) researched declining rates of reading among the United States population; however, they expressed an increased concern for the increasing decline in reading among teenagers. Some researchers questioned these rates but ultimately found that reading rates were declining among students even if you expanded the definition of reading to include sources such as email or texts (Moje, Overby, Tysvaer & Morris, 2008). Researchers have investigated the reason for this decline and found that it may be related to a discrepancy between students' identities as readers and the demands of the classroom (Luttrell & Parker, 2011). This discrepancy may be a result of school reading being removed from the interests or passions of students (Lenters, 2006). The lack of access to engaging texts results in the creation of resistant readers.



In order to address this phenomenon, researchers have advocated for increased access to reading material that connects with students interests as well as opportunities for students to choose their own reading material (Pitcher et al., 2007). By providing increased access to high interest materials teachers may be able to create reading communities that engage and motivate students to read (Strommen & Mates, 2004). These reading communities are often tied to the practice of Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) that includes space for students and teachers to discuss their reading habits and materials in order to create interpersonal relationships and positive reading identities (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2006; Parr & Maguiness, 2005; Pilgreen, 2000). Additionally, researchers have created a variety of tools to aid teachers in identifying how students view themselves as readers in order to allow teachers to tailor their reading practices to their student population (Coddington & Guthrie, 2009; Henk, Marinak & Melnick, 2012).

### Preview of Methodology

The goal of this study is to assess the impact of a department-wide SSR program on student motivation and identity in relation to reading habits. A 58-question survey was administered to students in English classes at both the College Preparatory and Honors/AP levels across grades 9-12. The survey measured students' perception of themselves as readers, their motivation to read, as well as the effect of SSR on their reading habits in and outside of school. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the frequencies and mean scores for students' responses, and to test for connections between how students perceive themselves as readers and their reading habits in and outside of school.

### Significance of Study

As the rates for reading decline across all age groups it is important to look at ways to arrest this decline. The implementation of an SSR program holds potential as an effective and inexpensive way to increase student motivation to read. Additionally, if the program gives students the opportunity to build a positive reading identity in high school, they may carry that identity with them beyond school and continue to be readers. If this is possible, it may increase students access to higher education as well as more competitive occupations (National Endowment for the Arts, 2007). The results of this study will inform my school site, as well as similar schools sites, of the advantages or pitfalls in implementing an SSR program on campus as well as its impact on student's motivation to read and their identity as readers.

### Summary

Reading among teenagers is on the decline. This is not a new issue, but instead remains a pressing issue across the United States. SSR holds the potential to increase student motivation to read with little financial investment from schools. The ease of implementation along with the potential for positive outcomes make SSR an appealing choice for educators looking to create motivating reading communities within their classroom. However, given the long history of SSR programs, it's worth acknowledging that SSR may have little effect on student motivation. Additionally, motivation is difficult to measure, so the results of the study may not be conclusive. However, given the pressing issues at hand, it is worth exploring SSR as a solution to the lack of motivation to read within our students.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

In 2004, the National Endowment for the Arts published “Reading at risk: A survey of literary reading in America”. The results were alarming. The research showed that the sharpest decline in reading was among youth ages 18-24. The National Endowment for the Arts followed up on this study in 2007 with similar results. They found that “nearly half of all Americans ages 18-24 read no books for pleasure” (National Endowment for the Arts, 2007, p. 5). Additionally, they reported that the “percentage of 17-year-olds who read nothing at all for pleasure has doubled over a 20-year period” and that “voluntary reading rates diminished from childhood to late adolescence” (p. 5-6). The results of the National Endowment for the Arts surveys are not the only research to come to this conclusion. While research has pointed to this decline for years (Anderson 1985; Anderson, Wilson & Fielding, 1988; Jacobs, Lanza, Osgood, Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Rand Reading Study Group, 2002; Reeves, 2004) the National Endowment for the Arts report found the rate of decline to be increasing. Following the report, researchers questioned whether the survey accurately represented the reading habits of teenagers (Moje et al., 2008). Moje et al. were interested in exploring how the definition of reading may have impacted the survey results. They were concerned that questions about reading may have been interpreted to mean only literature or even compulsory school texts. Instead of limiting reading for pleasure to literature, Moje et al. (2008) asked youth about 17 different kinds of texts including cheat codes, music lyrics and emails. However, even with this expanded selection they found that very little reading was being done and that “novel reading was not a major source of activity” (Moje et al., 2008, p. 127). Even with an expanded view of reading, youth are not

reading for pleasure at very high rates. Dana Gioia, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, warns that these reading trends speak to larger issues in the future including “lower levels of academic achievement” and “a lack of employment, lower wages and fewer opportunities for advancement” (National Endowment for the Arts, 2007, p. 3). This call to action begs the question: What will it take to make teenagers readers?

### Reader Identity

The work of Moje et al. (2008) opens up a new way to approach the reading habits of adolescents. While the results of their study do not show students read texts other than traditional literature at high rates, it does ask educators to consider the ways school may define reading as opposed to the many ways students may actually be engaging with reading. The work of Pitcher et al. (2007) found that the “use of multiliteracies” student grades six through twelve “was overwhelmingly apparent” (p. 392). The literacy of these students was not reflective of the kind of literacy schools demand and instead reflected a broad use of technology and literacy connected to peer communities. This is consistent with the work of Luttrell and Parker (2011) who found that “students use their literacy practices to form their identities within, and sometimes in opposition to, [the] figured worlds of school, work and family” (p. 245). Additionally, Moje et al. (2008) calls on educators to reevaluate the literacies they privilege in the classroom and to consider the ways students are already exploring literacy outside of school in order to make room for these literacies within the school environment. The identities that students build around reading come from past reading experiences and can have an impact on how they approach new assignments. Henk, Marinak and Melnick (2012) observed that “students who perceive themselves as poor readers often anticipate struggling with new material” because

they have “endured a history of failure and rarely experience reading as a source of gratification” (p. 312).

### Resistant Readers

The way students view literacy in school seems to affect their reading habits. Lenters (2006) observed that interest in the material affected the frequency with which students read assigned material. Additionally, students are resistant to assigned texts and will go out of their way to avoid reading these texts if they do not find them interesting. Students are aware of this disconnect and “found their reading and writing passions at odds with the demands of the school curriculum” (Luttrell & Parker, 2001, p. 245). In addition to finding interests that drew them away from reading, some students may simply move away from reading as the academic demand becomes greater (Reeves, 2004). Similar to the work of Moje et al. (2008), Luttrell and Parker (2001) found that students were aware that “only some students’ rich, everyday literacy lives were being validated” by the school curriculum and thus chose not to engage with school assigned reading (p. 245).

Strommen and Mates (2004) chose to categorize students as readers or not-readers and were surprised to find that reading ability did not seem to correlate with students identifying as readers or not readers. Not-readers could be found in honors level classes while students identifying as readers might also be struggling with the act of reading (Strommen & Mates, 2004). The construction of a positive reading identity does not necessarily correlate with reading ability.

Reeves (2004) observes that “reading exemplifies the conflict that many adolescents feel between doing and knowing what they want to do and know and doing and knowing what school

requires them to do and know” (p. 5). Reeves (2004) expands on this idea explaining that students reacted to academic texts in two ways, either exerting their identity by refusing to read and thus controlling their experience or by engaging in the experience and finding “psychic pain” as their identity did not match the one school demanded (p. 23). These experiences can lead to what Bintz defines as a *resistant reader*, a reader that can read but chooses not to out of interest or a rejection of the requirements of the school assigned reading (as cited in Lenters, 2006). This definition is useful because it untangles *resistant readers*, those that are choosing not to engage with reading, with those that cannot engage with the reading due to reading ability. While there is crossover between the two groups, with the *resistant reader* in mind, it is possible to explore how interest might be instilled in readers (Lenters 2006).

### Reading Choice and Access

Reeves (2004) observes that “younger people and older people get to choose what to read; only in middle and high school are people’s reading choices so controlled” (p. 242). As Lenters (2006) observed, if students do not find reading interesting or purposeful, they will often choose not to read the material. In fact, many students noted that they enjoyed when they were allowed to choose their reading material (Pitcher et al., 2007; Ivey & Broaddus, 2001).

Additionally, research by Worthy, Moorman and Turner (1999) concluded that “students’ interest must be addressed in order to capture their attention and engagement” (p. 24).

Furthermore, struggling readers may need even more choice in reading material in order to sustain a reading habit (Sweet, Guthrie & Ng, 1999; Guthrie & Davis, 2003). However, choice is not effective without access. Sustaining interests requires that students have easy access to reading material that they find engaging. In order to allow for choice research suggests that it is

important to make a wide variety of texts accessible to students so that they may explore reading that interests them (Allington & McGill-Grazen, 2003; Elley, 2000; Strommen & Mates, 2004).

### A Community of Readers

A student's identity as a reader is developed through their experience with reading in the classroom, home and "anywhere else reading takes on a social dimension" (Henk et al., 2012, p. 313). Teachers, family members and peers all influence and motivate students to read (Pitcher et al., 2007; Worthy et al., 1999; Guthrie & Davis, 2003). Strommen and Mates (2004) emphasize that "young people must see themselves as participant readers in a community that pursues reading as a significant and enjoyable recreational activity if reading is to become a lifelong endeavor" (p. 199). Their research found that when compared to non-readers, readers were often part of reading community that started with their family but extended to friends and teachers (Strommen & Mates, 2004).

Moje et al. (2008) define this as a "reading network" composed of peers and teachers (p. 132). This reading network allows students to build social capital as well a social network around reading that can support further engagement and motivation to read (Moje et al., 2008). Hall (2012) also emphasizes the importance of students and teachers working together to plan reading goals in order to produce a positive reading identity for the student. Worthy, et al. (1999) found similar patterns and noted that elementary and middle school students valued teacher recommendations and interest in student reading materials.

While reading may be viewed as an individual activity, the research suggests that if reading is made into a social activity, even struggling students will become more engaged and motivated readers (Guthrie & Davis, 2003). Guthrie and Davis (2003) recommend making

reading a social experience by allowing students to work together on reading or participate in book talks. Within a social reading experience, readers begin to create a positive reading identity due to the influence of peers, teachers or siblings (Guthrie & Davis, 2003). Despite the common view that parents have little influence on adolescents, Klauda (2009) found that parents support for reading can have a positive impact on reading habits into adolescence if they share books that they read or discuss common interests.

Reading can be silent activity. However, to create positive reading identities, a more social environment is necessary. This environment often starts at home but extends into the sphere of school and peer relations. Learning is a social and reading should be as well (Fisher & Frey, 2007).

### Motivating Readers

While research that family may play a role in the development of a positive reading identity, teachers may have little control of what happens at home (Guthrie & Davis, 2003; Klauda, 2009; Pitcher et al., 2007; Worthy et al., 1999). Instead, it may be worth focusing on what teachers can do to create a positive reading community in the classroom that involves both teacher to student interaction as well as peer to peer interaction focused on reading. The purpose of creating a community of readers would be to turn *resistant* readers into motivated readers. The research points to building intrinsic, rather than extrinsic, motivation within students in order to create stronger readers (Froiland and Oros, 2013). Intrinsic motivation, “the enjoyment of reading for its own sake and the disposition to read frequently,” can be developed in all readers and help struggling readers read for enjoyment (Cox & Guthrie, 2001, p. 117). Froiland and Oros (2013) encourage teachers “instill a sense of enjoyment” in students so that they can become



intrinsically motivated to read (p. 129). Additional research supports this conclusion and adds that both motivation and reading skill must be targeted in order to help struggling readers become stronger readers (Cockroft & Atkinson, 2017; McGeown, Duncan, Griffiths & Stothard, 2014; Morgan and Fuchs, 2007). Guthrie and Davis (2003) expand on this idea and add that “competent readers maintain a balance of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, whereas less competent readers show a precipitous drop in intrinsic motivation” (p. 62). Additionally, Sweet et al. (1998) found that students that were intrinsically motivated needed less extrinsic motivation to read as compared to lower achieving students. If teachers are to reach all readers in the classroom, it is clear they must not work only on reading strategies but instead on motivation as well. A classroom focused on reading as a social activity provides the opportunity to build interpersonal relationships with students around the topic of reading in order to increase motivation (Reeve, Jang, & Harris 2006).

### Identifying Readers in the Classroom

In order to shift the reading culture within a classroom it is necessary to identify how students view themselves as readers. Researchers have created a variety of tools in order to categorize students as readers. Coddington and Guthrie (2009) created the Young Reader Motivation Questionnaire (YRMQ) in order to evaluate the reading motivation of first grades. The YRMQ is broken into three sections: efficacy for reading, reading orientation, and perceptions of difficulty in reading (Coddington & Guthrie, 2009). The researchers acknowledge that results may not be reliable given the age of the students; however, the YRMQ may still be useful for teachers looking to better understand reading motivation in young students (Coddington & Guthrie, 2009). Malloy, Marinak & Melnick (2013) provide an alternative

diagnostic, the Motivation to Read Profile-Revised (MRP-R), that is appropriate for students in grades 2-6. The researchers assert that the MRP-R gives teachers a reliable way to assess motivation for reading and that this data can be used to create classwide or individual plans for developing reading motivation (Malloy, et al., 2013).

Additional research has focused on older students and their perception of reading. Henk et al. (2012) created the Reader Self-Perception Scale 2 (RSPS2) in order to target students in grades 7-10, while Pitcher et al. (2007) adapted the Motivation to Read Profile to create the Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile (AMRP), a diagnostic applicable to students in grades 6-12. The RSPS2 focuses on how students view themselves as readers and the factors that may be influencing their reading motivations (Henk et al., 2012). The AMRP was designed to allow teachers to understand the reading motivation of adolescent students and is composed of a survey and an interview (Pitcher et al., 2007). The survey uses a four-point scale while the interview questions are left open-ended (Pitcher et al., 2007). The AMRP, like the RSPS2, allows teachers to make more informed decisions when making instructional choices around reading practices in the classroom (Henk et al., 2012; Pitcher et al., 2007).

Strommen and Mates (2007) take a different approach and used a questionnaire and interview process to identify readers and non-readers within grades six and nine. The researchers were trying to identify these groups in order to find patterns in behavior that make an individual a reader or non-reader and could be helpful in giving teachers a broad view of how many readers or non-readers are in their classroom (Strommen & Mates, 2007). The diagnostics discussed give teachers an idea of the students in their classroom and their perceptions of reading. However, they do not offer a reading program to address the needs of students who perceive themselves as non-readers or who lack motivation to read.

## The Effectiveness of Sustained Silent Reading Programs

Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) may be a viable option to address the needs of unmotivated readers in the classroom environment. A variety of models of SSR exist that build off of the research into what motivates students to read. Ivey and Broaddus (2001) found that students largely enjoyed free reading time and Krashen (2005) observed that while there may be some concern over students using SSR time to read, most students will in fact read if given the opportunity. There may be some concern about the academic rigor of an SSR program, but Lewis and Samuels (2002) conducted a meta-analysis of SSR programs and concluded that SSR can be beneficial for increasing student reading achievement. Additionally, Worthy, et al. (1999) argued that SSR can give students time to explore high interest reading and that this interest can then be worked into the curriculum by teachers. Siah and Kwok (2010) found that SSR worked for students that valued reading but did not have a large impact on readers that did not value reading. However, they noted that by creating an environment that allows students to feel comfortable in taking on a identity that values reading, students may take on a positive reading identity (Siah & Kwok 2010). Guthrie and Davis (2003) similarly observed that adolescents may lose interest in reading as they enter middle school; however, “given the right situation, with an attractive text and peer or teacher support, students who are otherwise considered struggling can be seen to read attentively and skillfully” (p. 66). Lee (2011) found that even resistant readers can become motivated readers through the use of SSR. She did warn that some students have built up resistant identities over years of schooling and that SSR is not an instant fix for these students; instead, it may take years of schooling to change these negative identities into positive

ones (Lee 2011). SSR programs can be constructed to give students the appropriate context to grow as readers.

### Sustained Silent Reading Models

An SSR program that simply has students reading by themselves does not lend itself to the kind of environment that research shows to motivate resistant readers (Guthrie & Davis, 2003; Lee 2011; Siah & Kwok, 2010). Additionally, if students read without guidance there may be little impact on their reading achievement (Topping, Samuels, Paul, 2007). Instead, a variety of new models of SSR have been tried by educators.

Kelley and Clausen-Grace (2006) advocate for an  $R^5$  SSR program (*read, relax, reflect, respond and rap*). The model allows students to discuss their reading and begin building a conversational reading identity with other students in the class. Parr and Maguiness (2005) provide a similar SSR model that added conversation into the practice of SSR to allow for students to better negotiate their identities as readers and for teachers to better understand their students as readers. Furthermore, the inclusion of conversation was key to creating a reading community that included both the students and the teachers as equal participants (Parr and Maguiness, 2005). Dickerson (2015) also found success in implementing a discussion based SSR program with 11th grade students. She incorporates time for students to read in class, facilitates conversations about the books her students are reading, allows her students to abandon a book and incorporates a variety of avenues for student processing (Dickerson, 2015). By incorporating these routines, she is able to address student interest while also providing resistant readers with positive models through teacher to student and peer to peer conversations focused on reading (Dickerson, 2015).

In addition to classroom specific interventions, some researchers have proposed more general guidelines for creating SSR programs. Pilgreen (2000) outlined Eight Factors of SSR success which include access, appeal, environment, encouragement, staff training, nonaccountability, follow-up activities and distributed time to read. These factors mirror the research that calls for conversational spaces that allow students to access reading that is relevant to their interests (Pilgreen, 2000).

### Summary

As reading rates among adolescents' decline, it is worth investigating how to create more motivated readings in the classroom. Research points to identity as a major factor in reading habits and thus it is important to explore reading strategies that allow for students to engage with and build new reading identities (Moje, et al., 2008). Interest and motivation are major factors contributing to both reading habits and identity (Lenters, 2006; Luttrell & Parker, 2001; Pitcher et al., 2007). Both interest and motivation can be developed if a welcoming reading community is built within the classroom (Strommen & Mates, 2004). Finally, SSR programs that include conversational models to allow for teacher and peer interaction around reading show promise in developing motivating reading communities (Dickerson, 2015; Kelley & Clausen, 2006; Parr & Maguiness, 2005; Pilgreen, 2000). The next chapter will explain how data concerning an SSR program was gathered at comprehensive high school in Southern California.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

The reading rates of adolescents is in decline. This has negative ramifications for their future job prospects as well as their ability to enter college. SSR programs may be an inexpensive way to arrest this decline and allow students to find pleasure in reading, increase their motivation to read and create more positive reading identities.

A survey was used to identify the impact of an SSR program on students' motivation to read as well as their perception of themselves as readers. Quantitative data was collected from the survey. The survey includes eight questions about demographics, 47 questions adapted from the Reader Self-Perception Scale 2 and four open-ended questions to investigate how students view SSR. The Reader Self-Perception Scale 2 was given in order to assess the four dimensions of self-efficacy as identified by Henk, Marinak, and Melnik (2012): progress, observational comparison, social feedback and physiological states. The four open-ended questions were included in order to question the impact of the SSR program on the four dimensions of self-efficacy.

#### Participants

Students in grades 9 through 12 participated in the survey. Students were chosen because their teacher had chosen to implement a conversation based SSR program during the 2017/18 school year. The design of the SSR program was at the teachers' discretion. However, some common themes prevailed. Students were given consistent time to read in class every week of at least 10 minutes a day. Students were able to choose their own novels and were required to participate in a conversation about their novel multiple times throughout the semester. Students

that participated came from across the academic spectrum and include students in our SPED program, our College Preparatory classes and our AP classes. A total of 1,141 students completed the survey.

### Research Setting

The survey was given at a comprehensive high school in Southern California. The school has approximately 3,400 students. The school is in a politically conservative area and pulls from areas of high and low income. The survey was given halfway through the second semester of the 2017/18 school year. Student responses reflect their experience with an SSR program for a semester and a half. The student population pulls from a variety of demographics and representative of many Southern California schools. Because the survey was given to students at all academic levels, it could provide useful data for many high school educators.

### Instrument

The researched used a quantitative survey built upon the Reader Self-Perception Scale 2 (RSPS2) survey created by Henk, Marinak, and Melnik (2012). This survey is a revision of survey used in earlier research. It has been adapted for use in grades 7 through 10. This study is focused on how students view themselves as readers as well as what motivates them to read. The RSPS2 is based upon Bandura's theory of self-efficacy and focuses on the ways that "self-perception can either motivate or inhibit the learning process" (Henk, Marinak, and Melnik, 2012). Furthermore, Henk, Marinak, and Melnik (2012) argue that reading is a social practice and the RSPS2 is designed with this theory in mind. The SSR program implemented in the school is focused on ways to allow students to have conversations around the books they have chosen to read. This makes the RSPS2 an appropriate means of assessing the efficacy of the SSR

program. The RSPS2 is composed of “one general item and 46 specific items that relate to the four scales (Progress, Observational Comparison, Social Feedback, and Physiological States)” (Henk, Marinak, and Melnik, 2012, p. 313). Participants respond to the statements by selecting from five options: strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree or strongly disagree. The survey used in this study did not include the general item. Additionally, four open-ended questions were added to the survey in order for students to identify and reflect on the SSR programs implemented by their teacher. This allowed the researcher to connect students’ ideas of themselves as readers to the practices implemented in the classroom.

The demographic questions include grade level, gender, how many books read per semester, how many books read over the summer, genre(s) students choose to read, hours spent reading per week, the platforms students use to read and nine true, false or not applicable questions about the social practices of reading. The RSPS2 includes 46 questions based round four scales and one general item (“I think I am a good reader”): progress (16 questions), observational comparison (9 questions), social feedback (9 questions) and physiological states (12 questions). These questions correlate with a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree). The open-ended questions include a total of four questions that ask how students chose their SSR book, what they enjoy or don’t enjoy about reading, activities teachers have implemented as part of SSR and how they feel they could become a better reader.

### Data Collection

Students completed the survey during class time using Chromebooks provided by the school. The survey was distributed to teachers by email and then distributed to the students



through Google Classroom to complete anonymously. Teachers used a provided script to introduce the survey and explain the purpose to the students. The RSPS2 was introduced using the introduction provided by Henk, Marinak, and Melnik (2012). The survey took students approximately 20 minutes to complete. Data was collected using a Google form. This distribution method allowed teachers to choose the best time to give the survey. Additionally, it allowed for efficient, anonymous data collection. As a researcher, I also had my students complete the survey. I was a participant in the implementation of the SSR program and chose to include my students in the data set.

### Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using mixed methods as well as the instructions provided by Henk, Marinak, and Melnik (2012) to interpret the results of the RSPS2. Descriptive statistics were used to identify the grade of the students, the gender of the students, how many books they read a semester, how many books they read over the summer, the genres they chose to read, how many hours they spend reading for pleasure, and the platforms they use to read. A correlation coefficient was run to determine the relationship between variables within the four scales.

### Chapter Summary

The purpose of the study was to explore how students viewed themselves as readers as well as how they viewed the school's SSR program. A digital survey was used to collect data from students across grades 9-12 at a comprehensive high school. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the demographic data as well as the results of the Reader Self-Perception Scale 2 survey. The Pearson correlation coefficient was completed for a variety of variables in order to

establish correlation between how students' perception of themselves as readers and their reading habits.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

The purpose of the study was to investigate how our students view themselves as readers and the implications this may have on our SSR program. First the demographic information of the students that responded was explored. This was followed by an analysis of the reading habits of the students. Then the results of the RSPS2 survey were analyzed with emphasis on the four themes: progress, observational comparison, social feedback, and physiological states. The Pearson correlation coefficient was found for the number of books students read per semester and each of the four reader self-perception scales. The Pearson correlation coefficient was also found for the number of books students read during the summer and the four reader self-perception scales. Finally, trends within the open-ended questions concerning how students felt about the SSR program were identified and explored.

#### Demographics

Students that took the survey ranged from ninth grade to twelfth grade (n=1,141). 48.1% of respondents were female, 49.2% of students were male, 1.8% prefer to self-describe, and 1% prefer not to say their gender (n=1,139). 1,141 students responded to the grade level question and there is representation from both the College Preparatory (CP) and Honors/AP programs at each grade level. Of the 1,141 students that responded there were a total of 48.6% CP students and 51.4% Honors/AP students. 316 (27.7%) ninth graders took the survey. 151 (13.2%) of the ninth-grade students were in CP courses and 165 (14.5%) were in Honors/AP courses. 496 (43.4%) tenth graders took the survey. 143 (12.5%) tenth grade students were in CP courses and 353

(30.9%) were in Honors/AP courses. 83 (7.3%) eleventh graders took the survey. 81 (7.1%) of the eleventh-grade students were in CP courses and 2 (0.2%) were in Honors/AP courses. 246 (21.6%) twelfth graders took the survey. 179 (15.7%) of the twelfth-grade students were in CP courses and 67 (5.9%) were in Honors/AP courses.

### Reading Habits

The responses to “How many books do you read per semester during the school year?” and “How many books do you read over the summer?” were grouped into four categories: 0 books, 1-2 books, 3-4 books, and 5 or more books. 2.1% of students reported reading zero books per semester. 43.0% of students reported reading 1-2 books per semester during the school year. 36.4% reported reading 3-4 books per semester and 18.7% reported reading five or more books per semester.

37.8% of students reported reading zero books over the summer. 38% of students reported reading 1-2 books over the summer. 11.5% of students reported reading 3-4 books over the summer and 12.7% of student reported reading five or more books over the summer.

The greatest difference between how many books students read per semester when compared to how many they read during the summer was in the zero category. This category saw a 35.7% increase in students. The greatest decrease in students occurred in the 3-4 books category. This category saw a decrease of 24.9%. Students reporting reading 1-2 books saw a decrease of 5.0% and students reporting reading 5 or more books saw a decrease of 6.0%.

Students listed the genre(s) they read in response to an open-ended question. The responses were merged to create 15 categories. Students listed multiple genres so the total

number of responses as categorized by genre are not representative of the total number of students that responded to the question. The total for each genre is provided below.

Table 1. Total number of times genres were reported on the survey

<i>Genre</i>	<i>Number of responses</i>
Fiction	318
Mystery/Crime/Suspense	315
Action/Adventure	248
Science Fiction	220
Fantasy	179
Non-Fiction	165
Horror/Thriller/Scary	164
Historical/War/Politics	118
Drama	76
Realistic Fiction	67
Young Adult/Teen	63
Comedy	48
Biography	32
Comic/Graphic Novel/Cartoon/Manga/Anime	26
Dystopian	12

1,129 students chose their preferred reading platform. 1,062 (94.1%) students indicated that they used a hardcopy to read while 100 (8.9%) students stated that they used an e-reader. An additional 481 (42.6%) indicated that they read on their cell phone while another 126 (11.2%) use a tablet and another 236 (20.9%) use a computer or laptop.

## Reading Networks

Students reported seeing adults in their lives, parents (44.3%) and grandparents (45.0%), reading at higher levels than siblings, older (21.5%) and younger (34.4%) or friends (29.7%). Additionally, students reported similar rates of discussion about reading across all age groups. The averages for each category including true, false and not applicable are reported in the table below.

Table 2. Rates of seeing or discussing reading

<i>Survey Items:</i>	<i>True</i>	<i>False</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
I often see my parents read.	44.3%	52%	3.8%
I often see my older siblings read.	21.5%	42.0%	36.5%
I often see my younger siblings read.	34.4%	34.4%	31.2%
I often see my grandparents read.	45.0%	34.0%	21.0%
I often see my friends reading.	29.7%	65.6%	4.7%
I often discuss reading with my friends.	26.2%	69.8%	3.9%
I often discuss reading with my siblings.	20.8%	68.6%	10.6%
I often discuss reading with my parents.	30.5%	64.9%	4.6%
I often discuss reading with my grandparents.	12.8%	70.2%	17.1%

The responses for each true or false question were coded as numbers and added. A response of true received one point while a response of false or not applicable received a 0. There was a low correlation between reading relationship and each of the four self-perception scales ( $r=0.32$  for progress,  $r=0.22$  for observational comparison,  $r=0.32$  for social feedback, and  $r=0.37$  for physiological states).

### Reader Self-Perception Scale

The Reader Self-Perception Scale scores were processed according to the instructions provided by Henk et al. (2012). The raw scores were added for each of the four scales. The scores were then averaged, and the standard deviation and standard error were found (see Table 4 and 5). The responses were organized into performance bands and the percentage of students in each band was calculated. Each scale was then analyzed by grade and course level (See Tables 6-24).

Table 3. Descriptive statistics by scale and grade level for progress and observational comparisons

Grade Level	Progress				Observational Comparisons			
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE</i>
9 CP	151	60.1	11.1	0.91	151	29.0	7.2	0.59
9 H	165	62.8	9.1	0.71	165	31.5	6.1	0.47
9 All	316	61.7	10.2	0.58	316	30.3	6.8	0.38
10 CP	143	58.7	11.4	0.96	143	28.3	6.8	0.57
10 H	353	62.9	9.6	0.51	353	30.4	7.0	0.38
10 All	496	62.1	10.3	0.46	496	29.8	7.0	0.32
11 CP	81	58.7	12.6	1.40	81	28.5	8.0	0.89
11 AP	2.	65	8.5	8.50	2	29.5	2.5	2.50
11 All	83	58.4	12.6	1.39	83	28.6	7.9	0.87
12 CP	179	61.5	10.5	0.79	179	31.0	6.9	0.52
12 AP	67	60.6	12.4	1.53	67	29.6	7.0	0.87
12 All	246	60.9	11.2	0.71	246	30.6	7.0	0.45
Total:	1145	61.3	10.9	.32	1145	29.9	7.1	.21

Table 4. Descriptive statistics by scale and grade level for social feedback and physiological states

Grade Level	Social Feedback				Physiological States			
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE</i>
9 CP	151	30.0	6.2	0.50	151	40.5	11.6	0.95
9 H	165	32.4	4.9	0.38	165	43.9	9.9	0.77
9 All	316	31.2	5.7	0.32	316	42.3	10.9	0.61
10 CP	143	30.2	6.1	0.51	143	40.8	11.1	0.93
10 H	353	32.8	6.0	0.32	353	44.9	10.8	0.57
10 All	496	32.0	6.1	0.28	496	43.7	11.0	0.49
11 CP	81	30.9	5.5	0.62	81	42.0	9.7	1.09
11 AP	2	32.5	2.5	2.50	2	51.0	8.0	8.00
11 All	83	30.9	5.5	0.61	83	42.2	9.8	1.08
12 CP	179	32.5	6.5	0.48	179	43.7	9.7	0.73
12 AP	67	32.7	7.0	0.86	67	44.0	9.9	1.22
12 All	246	32.5	6.6	0.42	246	43.8	9.8	0.62
Total:	1145	31.7	6.2	.18	1145	43.1	10.8	.32

The Pearson correlation coefficient was found for each of the four self-perception scales and student reading habits per semester and during the summer. When students at all grade levels were analyzed together, there was a low correlation between the number of books they read and how they perceived themselves as readers. The Pearson correlation coefficients for the number of books during summer and progress, observational comparison, social feedback, and physiological states are 0.15, 0.16, 0.14, and 0.24 respectively. The Pearson correlation



coefficients for the number of books per semester and progress, observational comparison, social feedback, and physiological states are 0.14, 0.14, 0.10, and 0.21, respectively.

Progress

Henk et al. (2012) define the progress category as “measur[ing] how one’s sense of *present* reading performance compares with *past* reading performance” (p. 313). The greatest percentage of students (44.3%) can be found in the average performance band (n=372) while the smallest percentage of students (12.4%) can be found in the low performance band (n=104).

The results for the Progress Performance band were analyzed for each grade level. At all grade levels, students in CP courses represented a greater percentage of students in the low percentile range. The 12th grade class contains the highest percentage of students (15.2%) within the low percentile. At all grade levels, the greatest percentage of students can be found in the average percentile.

Table 5. Progress percentiles for 9th grade

<i>Grade</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Above Average</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Low</i>
9 CP	108	11.1%	26.9%	47.2%	14.8%
9 H	118	24.6%	21.2%	48.3%	5.9%
9 All	226	18.1%	23.9%	47.8%	10.2%

Table 6. Progress percentiles for 10th grade

<i>Grade</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Above Average</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Low</i>
10 CP	104	16.3%	26.9%	39.4%	17.3%
10 H	272	18.0%	29.4%	44.1%	8.5%
10 All	376	17.6%	28.7%	42.8%	10.9%

Table 7. Progress percentiles for 11th grade

<i>Grade</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Above Average</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Low</i>
11 CP	52	15.4%	25%	36.5%	23.1%
11 AP	2	50%	0.0%	50%	0.0%
11 All	54	16.7%	24.1%	37.0%	22.2%

Table 8. Progress percentiles for 12th grade

<i>Grade</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Above Average</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Low</i>
12 CP	133	18.8%	25.6%	42.1%	13.5%
12 AP	51	7.8%	18.5%	52.9%	18.5%
12 All	184	15.8%	23.9%	45.1%	15.2%

A weak correlation was found between how many books students read per semester and the Progress self-perception scale ( $r=0.14$  for high,  $r=-0.04$  for above average,  $r=0.06$  for average, and  $r=0.08$  for low). A similarly weak correlation was found between the number of books students read during the summer and their progress self-perception scale scores ( $r=0.22$  for high,  $r=0.02$  for above average,  $r=0.11$  for average, and  $r=0.06$  for low). A positive view of one's growth as a reader did not significantly impact the number of books a student read during the school year or during the summer. The correlation for students in the highest percentile is greater

than that of students in the lowest percentile; but even the highest percentile does not show a moderate or strong correlation.

### Observational Comparison

Observational Comparison “refers to how students think their reading ability compares to the abilities of classmates” (Henk et al., 2012, p. 313). The greatest percentage of all students (35.7%) can be found within the low percentile. The smallest percentage of students (11.0%) can be found within the high percentile.

The greatest percentage of students at all grade levels can be found within the average percentile. The 10th grade CP class has the greatest percentage of students (48.35%) in the low percentile. CP students can be found in the low percentile at higher rates than Honors or AP students. However, in 12th grade the percentages are close with 33.5% of CP students in the low percentile and 32.8% of AP students in the low percentile.

Table 9. Observational comparison percentiles for 9th grade

<i>Grade</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Above Average</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Low</i>
9 CP	151	8.6%	17.2%	35.8%	38.4%
9 H	165	13.9%	23.0%	32.1%	31.0%
9 All	316	11.4%	20.3%	33.9%	34.4%

Table 10. Observational comparison percentiles for 10th grade

<i>Grade</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Above Average</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Low</i>
10 CP	143	8.4%	11.9%	34.5%	48.3%
10 H	253	15.8%	30.4%	48.2%	5.5%
10 All	496	10.5%	19.0%	33.7%	36.9%

Table 11. Observational comparison percentiles for 11th grade

<i>Grade</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Above Average</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Low</i>
11 CP	81	8.6%	19.8%	32.1%	39.5%
11 AP	2	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%
11 All	83	8.4%	19.3%	32.5%	40.0%

Table 12. Observational comparison percentiles for 12th grade

<i>Grade</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Above Average</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Low</i>
12 CP	179	14.0%	22.3%	30.2%	33.5%
12 AP	67	7.5%	25.4%	34.3%	32.8%
12 All	246	12.2%	23.2%	31.3%	33.3%

A low correlation was found between how many books students read per semester and the Observational Comparison self-perception scale ( $r=0.05$  for high,  $r=-0.14$  for above average,  $r=0.06$  for average, and  $r=0.00$  for low). Similarly, low correlation was found between the number of books students read during the summer and their observational comparison self-perception scale scores ( $r=0.05$  for high,  $r=-0.10$  for above average,  $r=0.03$  for average, and  $r=0.03$  for low). A student's perception of themselves as a reader compared is not correlated to the number of books they read per semester or during the summer.

## Social Feedback

Henk et al. (2012) define social feedback as the “direct and indirect input that students receive from teachers, peers and family members” (p. 313). The greatest number of students (34.9%) can be found in the above average percentile while the fewest number of students (16.5%) can be found in the low percentile.

The 9th grade contains the greatest percentage of students (17.7%) within the low percentile. The 10 CP group of students represent the highest percentage of students (27.3%) within the low percentile. 12th grade students represent the highest percentage of students (33.3%) in the high percentile.

Table 13. Social feedback percentiles for 9th grade

<i>Grade</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Above Average</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Low</i>
9 CP	152	21.1%	31.0%	25.7%	22.4%
9 H	164	30.5%	39.0%	17.1%	13.4%
9 All	316	26.0%	35.1%	21.2%	17.7%

Table 14. Social feedback percentiles for 10th grade

<i>Grade</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Above Average</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Low</i>
10 CP	143	18.9%	35.7%	18.1%	27.3%
10 H	353	33.1%	36.8%	16.7%	13.3%
10 All	496	29.0%	36.5%	17.1%	17.3%

Table 15. Social feedback percentiles for 11th grade

<i>Grade</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Above Average</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Low</i>
11 CP	81	23.5%	28.5%	30.9%	17.3%
11 AP	2	50.0%	0	50.0%	0
11 All	83	24.1%	27.7%	31.3%	16.9%

Table 16 Social feedback percentiles for 11th grade

<i>Grade</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Above Average</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Low</i>
12 CP	180	31.1%	35.0%	20.0%	13.9%
12 AP	66	39.3%	30.3%	19.7%	10.6%
12 All	246	33.3%	33.7%	19.9%	13.0%

A low correlation was found between how many books students read per semester and the Social Feedback self-perception scale ( $r=0.08$  for high,  $r=-0.07$  for above average,  $r=0.05$  for average, and  $r=0.10$  for low). Additionally, a low correlation was found between the number of books students read during the summer and their social feedback self-perception scale scores ( $r=0.13$  for high,  $r=-0.19$  for above average,  $r=0.10$  for average, and  $r=0.00$  for low). Students that felt positively about the social feedback they received did not produce a strong correlation between the feedback and the number of books they read per semester or during the summer.

### Physiological States

Physiological states are defined as the “internal feelings that students experience while reading” (Henk et al., 2012, p. 313). The greatest percentage of students (27.4%) are found within the above average percentile. The smallest percentage of students (19.3%) are found within the low percentile.

The 9th grade class has the greatest percentage of students (22.8%) in the low percentile. Additionally, the difference between the percentage of Honors students (15.8%) and CP students (30.5%) in the lowest percentile is almost double. The greatest number of students in the high percentile can be found in 10 Honors (32.6%). The 10th grade as a whole has the greatest percentage of students (29.8%) in the high percentile. The difference between CP students and AP students in the 12th grade is the smallest of all grade levels at 0.2%. The full results can be found in Table 30, 31, 32, and 33.

Table 17. Physiological states percentiles for 9th grade

<i>Grade</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Above Average</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Low</i>
9 CP	151	19.9%	26.5%	23.2%	30.5%
9 H	165	29.1%	27.3%	27.9%	15.8%
9 All	316	24.7%	26.9%	25.6%	22.8%

Table 18. Physiological states percentiles for 10th grade

<i>Grade</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Above Average</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Low</i>
10 CP	143	23.1%	20.3%	32.2%	24.5%
10 H	353	32.6%	29.5%	20.7%	17.3%
10 All	496	29.8%	26.8%	24.0%	19.6%

Table 19. Physiological states percentiles for 11th grade

<i>Grade</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Above Average</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Low</i>
11 CP	81	21.0%	27.2%	33.3%	18.5%
11 AP	2	50.0%	0	50.0%	0
11 All	83	21.7%	26.5%	33.7%	18.1%

Table 20. Physiological states percentiles for 12th grade

<i>Grade</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Above Average</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Low</i>
12 CP	179	26.3%	28.5%	30.2%	15.1%
12 AP	67	23.9%	32.8%	23.4%	14.9%
12 All	246	25.6%	29.7%	29.7%	15.0%

A low correlation was found between how many books students read per semester and the Physiological States self-perception scale percentiles ( $r=0.15$  for high,  $r=-0.03$  for above average,  $r=0.06$  for average, and  $r=0.16$  for low). Additionally, a low correlation was found between the number of books students read during the summer and the Physiological States self-perception scale percentiles ( $r=0.21$  for high,  $r=-0.03$  for above average,  $r=-0.06$  for average, and  $r=0.07$  for low). A strong correlation between the internal feelings students have while reading and the number of books they read could not be found.

### Reading Practices

Students were asked four open-ended questions. The questions asked students to their reading process including how they chose books, what they enjoyed and disliked about reading, activities they completed related to SSR and how they could become a better reader. The results of each question were filtered by keywords in order to identify any trends among the responses.



## Choosing a Book

1134 students described how they chose their most recent SSR book. The following descriptions may contain overlap between students. A student that said a family member had recommended a book may have also reported that a friend had recommended a book. Of the 1134 students, 101 (9.0%) described receiving the book or a recommendation for the book from a friend. The students that received a recommendation from a friend were overwhelmingly female (73.3%). A similar number of students 110 (9.7%) described receiving the book or getting a recommendation from a family member such as a sibling, parent, aunt and uncle, or grandparent. Of these respondents, 55 (50%) identified as female, 53 (48.2%) identified as male, one preferred to self-describe (0.9%) and one preferred not to say their gender (0.9%). Only 34 (3.0%) of students reported having a teacher play a role in helping them choose their most recent SSR book. Of these students, 16 (47.1%) identified as female and 18 (52.9%) identified as male. 57 (5%) of students reported choosing their book because it was the next one in the series. Of these students, 32 (56.0%) identified as male, 22 (38.6%) identified as female, and 3 (5.3%) preferred not to say their gender.

50 (4.4%) of students described going to the library to obtain a book while 29 (2.6%) described going to a store. 93 (8.2%) of students described reading a summary or the back of the book before deciding to read the book. Students (5.1%) also described choosing a book because a movie or film was based on the book.

## What Students Enjoy and Do Not Enjoy About Reading

1135 students responded to the questions: What are some things that you enjoy about reading? What are some aspects of reading you find difficult or boring? Of those students, 793 (70.0%) were able to identify some aspects of reading that they enjoyed. 44 (3.9%) did not identify anything enjoyable about the reading process and instead wrote that they hated reading, did not find it enjoyable, or found it to be boring. Some students (18.0%) reported a more positive experience and found that reading was calming or relaxing.

## SSR Activities

Students were asked to describe any activities they did with SSR that they enjoyed. Many students simply explained the SSR process, rather than a specific activity related to SSR. Some students identified social activities such as sharing an important part of what they had read with classmates or working in books clubs. Students also identified activities they completed when they had finished a book. These activities included writing reviews to be posted in the classroom or creating creative deliverables that allowed students to be more creative in how they responded to the book. Students described drawing responses or making Netflix previews for the book they completed.

## How You Become a Better Reader

When students were asked how they could become a better reader, many students simply wrote that they should keep reading. Additionally, some students identified that you should read books you enjoy reading rather than books that are forced upon you. The idea that you should read challenging books or harder books in addition to books you simply enjoy was also described

by some students. Students felt that by reading progressively more difficult books you could become a stronger reader while also expanding your vocabulary. Additionally, students identified that reading had to be a consistent practice. Some students also combined these ideas and noted that if you found books you enjoyed, you would more consistently read and by reading more consistently you could become a better reader.

### Summary

The purpose of the study is to document how our students view themselves as readers as well as how they view of SSR program in order to better understand the needs of our students. A survey was used to collect data on the reading habits of students in grades nine through twelve. A moderate correlation was found between the number of individuals a student observes reading as well as or individuals a student discusses reading with and the progress scale, the social feedback scale and the physiological scale. Additionally, the RSPS2 was used to collect data on how students view themselves across four scales: progress, observational comparison, social feedback, and physiological states. It was determined that a weak correlation existed between the number of books read per semester and all four self-perception scales. A weak correlation also exists between the number of books read during the summer and the four self-perception scales.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

The National Endowment for the Arts (2007) reported declining rates of reading among youth. Anecdotally, our school observed similar trends among our students. In an effort to spark greater interest in reading among our students, our school implemented an SSR program. SSR have a history reaching back to the 1960s, but there has been renewed interest in more social versions of SSR (Gardiner, 2005). Additionally, current research questioned whether the lack of interest in reading might due to a discrepancy between how students view themselves as readers and the reading demands of the classroom (Luttrell & Parker, 2001). SSR allows for students to choose their own books and thus they may be able to find material that better fits their interests (Pitcher et al., 2007). This chapter will present the findings and educational implications of the survey results as well as recommendations for further research.

#### Summary of Findings

Overall, our students are reading books. However, as a habit, they are inconsistent readers. During the summer there is a sharp increase in the percentage of students that do not read a single book. A majority of students do not see family members or friends reading. Additionally, the majority of students do not discuss reading with family or friends. A moderate correlation was found between reading relationships (seeing people read or discussing read with someone) and the Progress, Social Feedback, and Physiological States scales. A weak correlation exists between reading relationships and the Observational Comparison scale. This may indicate that our students have weak reading networks which Moje et al. (2008) identified as factors that

can support engagement and motivation in reading. However, 44.3% of students did report seeing their parents read which may present a way to increase the amount of reading our students are choosing to complete. Klauda (2009) emphasized the positive impact parents can have adolescent reading habits if parents discuss or share the books they read. Rather than having SSR conversations happen in the classroom, perhaps teachers could somehow encourage these conversations at home to build student reading habits.

The majority of students scored within the high to average percentile range for all four Reader Self-Perception scales which could indicate a student body with a fairly positive reading identity. This makes sense as 70% of students were able to report some aspect of reading that they enjoyed. However, there were more students (35.7%) in the low percentile for Observational Comparison than in any of the other scales. Marinak and Melnick (2012) observed that students that view themselves as poor readers might be hesitant to engage with new material. The large portion of readers in the low percentile may be these readers. While SSR allows students to repeatedly engage with new material with low stakes, it does not seem to be improving these students view of themselves as readers. This trend is especially pronounced in the 10 CP class where 48.3% of students fell within the low percentile. Our 10 CP and 10 Honors English courses are open to all students. However, it may be that students that perceive themselves as poor readers compared to their peers opt to enroll in the lower level CP course rather than the honors course. Additionally, there is an increase of 10% from the 9 CP students in the low percentile and those in 10 CP. This may be a result of students moving from 9 Honors to 10 CP after a poor experience in 9th grade.

Close to 20% of students also fell within the low percentile for the Physiological States scale. These students may be representative of resistant readers, a reader that can read but

chooses not to (Lenters, 2006). While they may have the ability to read, the low percentile score could indicate that reading simply isn't an enjoyable experience for them. The percentage of students in the low percentile is fairly consistent across all grade levels. This pattern may be indicative of a fairly stable population of resistant readers. The school site has been doing SSR for a few years, but this is the first year that most teachers have had students read in class every day. Lee (2011) observed that resistant readers may have built a resistant identity over years, and thus it may not be possible to shift this identity in a single year. If the school site continues SSR, this group of students might decrease.

The fact that there is only a weak correlation between reading books over the summer and the four self-perception scales may confirm the work of Siah and Kwok (2012) who observed that SSR works well for those that enjoy reading but does not make significant impacts on the habits of students that do not value reading. The fact that the majority of students fall into the average to high percentiles for the progress performance band indicates that most students believe they are becoming better readers. However, this does not seem to translate into students becoming habitual readers in their free time.

The open-response questions to give credence to the social aspects of SSR advocated by some researchers (Dickerson, 2015; Guthrie & Davis, 2003; Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2006; Pilgreen, 2000). When asked about the activities they enjoyed related to SSR, students identified a variety of social activities such as working in book clubs or sharing what they had read with a peer or the entire class. The students that identified these activities may view themselves as part of a reading community which could help make reading into a lifelong habit (Strommen & Mates, 2004).

Students mentioned receiving book recommendations from teachers, peers and family members. When describing how they chose their most recent book, many students also described reading the back of the book to see if they were interested. Some students reported going to the library or bookstore in order to do this; however, if we really want students to read we need the books to be easily accessible (Allington & McGill-Grazen, 2003; Elley, 2000; Strommen & Mates, 2004). It may be possible to engage with more readers if teachers had larger libraries in their classroom and gave students time to browse rather than just read.

### Implications

The findings of this study present a snapshot of a school. Our students are reading in class, but this does not translate to reading habits outside of school. Additionally, a large population of our students do not view themselves as strong readers as compared to other students. The population of students within the low percentile for the Social Feedback scale indicate a sizeable population that is not being reached by our current practices. However, our overall student population has a positive reader identity and feel they are making progress as readers. The task as a school then is to find a way to reach those students with a negative reading identity and to push those with a positive identity into more sustained reading habits.

Social practices connected to SSR should be continued and, if possible, a greater connection to the reading relationships students have at home should be encouraged. This could be done by asking students to not only share their reading with peers, but also family members at home. Additionally, back to school night and other school functions that bring teachers and parents together could be used to emphasize the importance of not only reading around kids but also discussing reading with students.

In order to allow greater access to reading material, teachers should develop more robust libraries in their own classroom. Students indicated that they choose books by reading the summary on the back to see if they are interested. A resistant reader is unlikely to make the trip to the library to do this, so teachers should make this process as easy as possible by providing a rich classroom library. The social aspects of the SSR program could also be expanded so that students that are looking for a new book could solicit suggestions from the class. Instead of only discussing books when students finish them, having a student that can't find a book actively solicit suggestions from their peers may help them find a book and welcome them into a reading community.

#### Limitations and Future Research

There are several limitations within this study. The survey was given only once. This makes it difficult to assess any growth over the year in student's views of themselves as readers. Additionally, it's hard to understand the impact of the SSR program in its current form because it has only been in implementation for a year. At the time of the survey, students had only participated for a little over a semester. Finally, sample size varies greatly across grade levels. Further research should administer the survey at least twice a year with a more consistent sample size in order to better understand any trends within the data. Additionally, if the same survey was given to students for multiple years, it would be possible for researchers to track trends in each class across grade levels. This would give a much clearer view of the impact of the SSR program on students reading habits.

Some of the survey questions were hard to analyze do to the wide range of answers open to students. Instead of creating open-ended answers for questions such as "how many books do



you read during the summer”, it would be helpful to give students a range of books to choose from. With quantifiable answers, additional correlations could be identified.

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