

Perceptions of the Role of the Principal in the Development, Implementation, and  
Continuation of a Series Reading Program

Lindsay Crump Porzio

Dissertation submitted to the faculty of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State  
University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

In

Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

Ted S. Price, Chair

Carol S. Cash

Autumn S. Nabors

John R. Gratto

March 9, 2021

Blacksburg, Virginia

Keywords: series reading program, independent reading, struggling readers, English  
Language Learners, principal as instructional leader

Role of the Principal in the Development, Implementation, and Continuation of a Series Reading Program: Principals' and Teachers' Perspectives

Lindsay Crump Porzio

**Abstract**

Elementary students continue to read below proficiency levels. Principals play a key role in the reading programs at their school. The purpose of this study was to identify perceptions of selected elementary principals and teachers regarding the principal's role in the development, implementation, and continuation of an effective series reading program. Through this study, factors contributing to the success or failure of the principal's role in a series reading program were suggested. A qualitative research design was used with semi-structured interviews to determine the perceptions of principals and teachers regarding the role of the principal in the development, implementation, and continuation of a series reading program. Principals and teachers were interviewed from elementary schools in Alabama and Nevada.

The findings from the research provide principals and division leaders a compendium of strategies and themes to be used to implement and continue a successful series reading program. The findings suggest that principals empower and motivate teachers and staff to implement new and continue existing reading programs by modeling it themselves, that principals allocate funding for series reading books to add to the collection of books at the school, and that a principal's literacy background and personal experiences influence the effectiveness of a series reading program. Principals and teachers that indicated reading books in a series was beneficial to struggling readers and students new to learning English (L2), and that the series reading program promoted adult-student relationships supportive of increased reading volume. Implications for school leaders and principals are shared as well as suggestions for future research.

Role of the Principal in the Development, Implementation, and Continuation of a Series Reading Program: Principals' and Teachers' Perspectives

Lindsay Crump Porzio

**General Audience Abstract**

The purpose of the study was to identify perceptions of selected elementary principals and teachers regarding the role of the principal in the development, implementation, and continuation of an effective series reading program. Through this study, factors contributing to the success or failure of the principal's role in a series reading program were suggested. Principals and teachers were interviewed from elementary schools in Alabama and Nevada.

The findings suggest that principals empower and motivate teachers and staff to implement new and continue existing reading programs by modeling it themselves, that principals allocate funding for series reading books to add to the collection of books at the school, and that a principal's literacy background and personal experiences influence a series reading program. Principals and teachers indicated that reading books in a series was beneficial to struggling readers and students new to learning English (L2), and that the series reading program promoted adult-student relationships supportive of increased reading volume. Implications for school leaders and principals are shared as well as suggestions for future research.

## **Dedication**

I am dedicating this dissertation to all of the students, families, teachers, and staff I have had the pleasure of teaching with and serving during the past 30 years as a teacher and administrator. It is because of them that I continue to strive to learn more and challenge myself to be the best I can.

## **Acknowledgements**

First, I would like to acknowledge my committee members, Dr. Ted Price, Dr. Carol Cash, Dr. John Gratto, and Dr. Autumn Nabors for your work helping me to navigate this incredible journey. Dr. Ted Price taught me the power of breathing and how to continually take care of myself during this process while at the same time asking me key questions to guide my thinking. Dr. Carol Cash's valuable feedback, constant availability, and clear direction helped me to feel confident and guided me through each stage of the process. Dr. John Gratto and Dr. Autumn Nabors provided insight into my literature review, research questions, and study format, and gave valuable feedback when I needed it most. You both made me think in different ways that stretched me to be better.

Special thanks to the members of the Virginia Tech- Richmond 2021 doctoral cohort!

Thank you to Jennifer Parsons, my assistant principal and friend, who always listened to me talk about my classes and supported me in more ways than she ever knew through all of the ups and downs of this doctorate process. As with everything, I could not have done this without her!!

My world is complete because of my husband, Dan Porzio. Without him, I would never have been at this point in my life to make this happen. He is the love of my life.

## Table of Contents

<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>General Audience Abstract.....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Dedication .....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Table of Contents .....</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>List of Figures.....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>List of Tables .....</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Chapter 1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
Overview of the Study .....	2
Historical Perspective .....	2
Statement of the Problem.....	4
Significance of the Study .....	5
Purpose of the Study .....	6
Justification of the Study .....	6
Research Questions.....	6
Conceptual Framework.....	7
Definition of Terms.....	7
Limitations .....	9
Delimitations.....	9
Organization of the Study .....	10
<b>Chapter 2 Literature Review .....</b>	<b>11</b>
Introduction.....	11
Search Procedures for Literature Review .....	12
Role of the Principal in Quality Reading Instruction.....	12
Characteristics and Habits of Lower-Achieving and Struggling Readers .....	14
<i>Engaging Reluctant Readers Through Excessive/Extensive Reading .....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Promoting Excessive Reading Through Structured Independent Reading Time.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>The Case for Narrow Reading .....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Narrow Reading of Series Books .....</i>	<i>23</i>
Summary .....	25
<b>Chapter 3 Methodology .....</b>	<b>28</b>
Purpose of the Study .....	28
Research Design.....	28
Research Questions.....	29

Site/Sample Selection .....	31
Data Collection Procedures.....	31
Data Gathering Procedures .....	32
Instrument Design.....	32
Instrument Validity and Reliability .....	33
Data Treatment and Management.....	34
Data Analysis Techniques.....	34
Timeline .....	35
Methodology Summary .....	35
<b>Chapter 4 Analysis of Data .....</b>	<b>36</b>
Introduction.....	36
Study Results .....	36
Data Analysis.....	37
Research Question 1 .....	38
<i>Data Collection and Analysis: Research Question 1 (Principal’s perspective)</i> .....	38
<i>Major Themes</i> .....	52
Research Question 2 .....	54
<i>Research Question 2 (Teachers’ Perspectives)</i> .....	55
<i>Major Themes Emerging for Research Question 2</i> .....	70
Summary .....	72
<i>Themes Emerging from the Analysis of Data for Research Question 1:</i> .....	73
<i>Themes Emerged from the Analysis of Data for Research Question 2:</i> .....	73
<b>Chapter 5 Findings, Implications, and Recommendations for Future Studies.....</b>	<b>75</b>
Introduction.....	75
Summary of Findings.....	75
<i>Finding 1</i> .....	75
<i>Finding 2</i> .....	76
<i>Finding 3</i> .....	78
<i>Finding 4</i> .....	79
<i>Finding 5</i> .....	80
Implications of Findings .....	81
<i>Implication 1</i> .....	81
<i>Implication 2</i> .....	81
<i>Implication 3</i> .....	82
<i>Implication 4</i> .....	82
<i>Implication 5</i> .....	83
Conclusion .....	83
Suggestions for Future Research .....	84
Personal Reflections.....	85

<b>References .....</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Appendix A Virginia Tech Study Information Sheet .....</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>Appendix B Human Subjects Protection Certificate of Completion.....</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>Appendix C IRB Approval Letter .....</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>Appendix D Interview Protocol .....</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>Appendix E Principal Recruitment Email.....</b>	<b>97</b>

## List of Figures

<b>Figure 1 <i>Conceptual Framework</i></b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Figure 2 <i>Major Themes Emerging from Research Question 1</i></b> .....	<b>54</b>
<b>Figure 3 <i>Major Themes Emerging from Research Question 2</i></b> .....	<b>72</b>

## List of Tables

Table 1 <i>Alignment of Research Questions to Interview Questions</i> .....	30
Table 2 <i>Research Question 1/Interview Question 1 Data Units and Corresponding Principal Responses</i> .....	39
Table 3 <i>Research Question 1/Interview Question 2 Data Units and Corresponding Principal Responses</i> .....	41
Table 4 <i>Research Question 1/Interview Question 3 Data Units and Corresponding Responses</i> .....	42
Table 5 <i>Research Question 1/Interview Question 4 Data Units and Corresponding Principal Responses</i> .....	43
Table 6 <i>Research Question 1/Interview Question 5 Data Units and Corresponding Principal Responses</i> .....	45
Table 7 <i>Research Question 1/Interview Question 6 Data Units and Corresponding Principal Responses</i> .....	48
Table 8 <i>Research Question 1/Interview Question 7 Data Units and Corresponding Principal Responses</i> .....	50
Table 9 <i>Research Question 1/Interview Question 8 7 Data Units and Corresponding Responses</i> .....	51
Table 10 <i>Major Themes Emerging from Research Question 1 and Codes Contributing to Themes</i> .....	52
Table 11 <i>Research Question 2/Interview Question 1 Data Units and Corresponding Teacher Responses</i> .....	57
Table 12 <i>Research Question 2/Interview Question 2 Data Units and Corresponding Teacher Responses</i> .....	59
Table 13 <i>Research Question 2/Interview Question 3 Data Units and Corresponding Teacher Responses</i> .....	61
Table 14 <i>Research Question 2/Interview Question 4 Data Units and Corresponding Teacher Responses</i> .....	64
Table 15 <i>Research Question 2/Interview Question 5 Data Units and Corresponding Responses</i> .....	66
Table 16 <i>Research Question 2/Interview Question 6 Data Units and Corresponding Teacher Responses</i> .....	68
Table 17 <i>Research Question 2/Interview Question 7 Data Units and Corresponding Teacher Responses</i> .....	70

**Table 18 *Major Themes Emerging from Research Question 2 and Codes Contributing to Themes*.....71**

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

In 2017, the Nation's Report Card revealed that only 37% of fourth graders in the United States performed at or about the *Proficient* level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress reading assessment (NAEP Report Card, 2017). Only 20% of Black and 23% of Hispanic fourth graders met this benchmark (NAEP Report Card, 2017). Scholastic's *Kids & Family Reading Report* showed that only 31% of students ages 6-17 saw themselves as fluent readers. In the report, 40% of eight-year-olds stated they *love reading*, but among nine-year-olds, this number drops to 28% (Scholastic, 2019). Only 19% of nine-year-olds reported reading books for fun as being *extremely important* (Scholastic, 2019). These statistics highlight a national crisis in literacy. A large percentage of students did not see themselves as readers and do not read at the grade level proficiency.

One way to engage readers and increase reading achievement is through structured teacher-led independent reading time (Guthrie, Schafer, & Huang, 2001). Guthrie et al. concluded, "Teachers who provided students with more opportunities to read in the classroom and encouraged wide reading had significantly more highly engaged readers" (2001, p. 157). Series reading is a special form of independent reading where students read books that come in a series by the same author (Renandya, Krashen, & Jacobs, 2018). Popular series include the *Harry Potter* books by J. K. Rowling, Dave Pilkey's *Captain Underpants* books, and the *Goosebumps* books by R. L. Stine (Renandya et al., 2018). Renandya, Krashen, and Jacobs (2018) argued that series reading books contain "easy-to-follow story lines and relatable characters" that can "get students hooked on reading and keep them reading" (p. 148). Morrison (2017) detailed how reading books in a series allows students to become comfortable with an author's writing style, and this familiarity with key phrases and actions of the characters helps a reader to improve fluency. Series books can be highly motivating and at the same time provide multiple exposures to content and function words (Renandya et al., 2018). With series reading familiarity, students can focus more on automaticity, which can increase comprehension (Morrison, 2017).

According to Dhuey and Smith (2014), a principal influences student achievement by creating a positive climate and culture, monitoring student progress data, observing and evaluating teachers, and implementing new programs and instructional resources. Fullan (2018)

argued that for change to happen, principals have “to use the power of the group to change the group” (p. 29). The principal's role is to guide groups of teachers through the learning process while learning alongside and reflecting upon what is working and what is not (Fullan 2018).

With the 2017 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, now called the Every Student Succeeds Act, states are required to define academic standards and accountability measures (Wardlow, 2016). Yearly assessments in reading continue under the Every Student Succeeds Act with the state publishing annual report cards that compare scores with those from other schools/students in Virginia (Wardlow, 2016). Schools performing in the bottom 5% and/or schools with the greatest achievement gaps between differing achievement groups are subject to penalties and state intervention plans (Wardlow, 2016).

In this research study, elementary principals and teachers from schools who started their own series reading program will be interviewed. Questions will revolve around perceptions of the principal's role in the development, implementation, and continuation of a series reading program. Themes and concepts will emerge from the perspective of the principal and from the perspective of the teacher as to the principal's role.

## **Overview of the Study**

The scientific methodology of this investigation will entail a qualitative, phenomenological design in which the lived experiences of principals and teachers will be examined. The study will identify perceptions of principals and teachers with regard to the principal's role in the development, implementation, and continuation of a series reading program. Principals and teachers will be interviewed from schools where series reading programs were implemented in elementary schools across the United States. These phenomenological interviews will be the primary method of data collection. Findings will be combined and ordered into themes, categories, and concepts.

## **Historical Perspective**

As early colonists settled throughout America seeking religious freedom from European countries, education became a “practical and spiritual necessity” (Owings & Kaplan, 2020, p. 33). The Massachusetts Act of 1642 required parents and masters to be responsible for their sons' and servants' education including learning how to read text about and understand religious principles. Girls and women learned household tasks such as sewing, cooking and caring for

children (Owings & Kaplan, 2020). In 1647, the Massachusetts Bay Colony passed the *Ye Olde Deluder Satan Law*, which presumed that those who could read and understand the Bible would not be tempted to follow Satan (Owings & Kaplan, 2020). This legislation established elementary schools for all towns, and *The New England Primer* published in the 1680s became the most influential early reading textbook along with the Bible. Additional colonies began to follow this model and by the end of the Revolutionary War, education became a function of each state's constitution (Owings & Kaplan, 2020). During this time and until the mid-1800s, children were taught to read through memorization of the alphabet, lists of spelling words, and continued work with sound-letter correspondences (Halford, 1997).

In 1836, *The McGuffey Readers* were published providing teachers and students with more-engaging reading texts including essays, poems, stories, and speeches. The series of six grade-level books became the basis of reading instruction with more than 120 million copies sold between 1836 and 1960 (Lynch, 2016). These readers were designed to match a child's age and ability (Halford, 1997). Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, reading programs changed and taught students how to sight read using the look/say method that was popular in the *Dick and Jane* reading series and moved away from sound-letter correspondences and phonics and to focus on comprehension (Glavin, 2014). Rudolph Flesch wrote, *Why Johnny Can't Read* in 1955 sparking a debate between teachers, parents, and scientists over the teaching of phonics. Flesch argued that children could not read because they had not been taught how to decode or sound out words (Flesch, 1957). The debate, often referred to as the "Reading Wars," pitted use of systematic phonics instruction against the look/say method and continued through the 1990s (Parker, 2019).

Beginning in the 1970s, the whole-language approach became the new model for teaching reading. This approach rejected the repetitive *Dick and Jane* readers and moved away from the teaching of phonics, and it relied instead on the belief that children will discover the necessary letter/sound relationships naturally as books are read and unfamiliar words identified (Parker, 2019). In 1986, the Simple View of Reading model was proposed where reading comprehension is the product of both decoding ability and language comprehension (Parker, 2019). The National Reading Panel (NRP) published a 480-page report in 2000 which examined scientific research available on how to teach children to read most effectively (National Reading Panel, 2000). The panel determined systematic phonics instruction to be the best method for

teaching beginning readers who are in kindergarten and first grade (Parker, 2019). The report identified five areas that lead to reading success: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (National Institute of Health and Human Development, 2000).

Published in 2010, Dehaene's *Reading in the Brain* introduced brain science into the understanding of reading instruction. His research detailed how the brain needs both the phonological route of converting letters to speech sounds and the lexical path of giving meaning to words for reading to happen effectively (Dehaene, 2010). Dehaene's shared research about the temporal and frontal lobes areas of the brain responsible for encoding sound patterns and meaning. These areas of the brain work together through the three major stages of reading acquisition: the pictorial, phonological, and orthographic stages (Dehaene, 2010). Beginning reading starts with children recognizing a few words, and then moving to learning to decode graphemes into phonemes; word recognition then becomes automatic and fast (Dehaene, 2009). Students with dyslexia have trouble learning to read due to a disorganized temporal lobe where connectivity is altered (Dehaene, 2009). Several regions of the brain of children with dyslexia are not sufficiently activated during the reading process causing an impaired ability to process phonemes (Dehaene, 2009).

Today's elementary reading instruction revolves around the Balanced Literacy formula of shared reading, guided reading, writing, word study, and independent reading (CCPS Literacy Plan, 2017). During guided reading instruction, students work in small teacher-led groups to grow their understanding of the reading process, develop phonological awareness, and build comprehension strategies (CCPS Literacy Plan, 2017). Independent reading time is spent having students read books of their choice, work with the teacher to develop reading goals, and attend conferences with teachers about what has been read (CCPS Literacy Plan, 2017).

### **Statement of the Problem**

With years of research and various method approaches to teaching reading throughout the last century, American students continue not to be proficient in reading, and elementary principals need to do something to change this statistic. In the United States, 37% of fourth graders performed at or above the *Proficient* level on the 2017 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP Report Card, 2017). As reported in Scholastic's *Kids and Family Reading Report* (2019), only 31% of students ages 6-17 years saw themselves as frequent readers. To engage students who do not see themselves as readers, schools must value reading

for pleasure and devote time to independent reading (Scholastic, 2019). Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) argued that positive reading development is linked to extensive, engaged reading. Extensive, engaged reading occurs when the reader self-selects text that has clear purpose, and when reading is done with enjoyment and self-efficacy motivation (Guthrie & Wingfield, 2000). Guthrie, Schafer, and Huang (2001) indicated that “student reading achievement was predicted by the students’ amounts of engaged reading” (p. 158). Series reading is one form of independent reading in which students select and read books in a series (Krashen, 2004). Series books can be highly motivating and at the same time provide multiple exposures to content and function words (Renandya, Krashen, & Jacobs, 2018).

By creating and nurturing a collective culture of efficacy, principals “indirectly but nonetheless explicitly” affect student learning and progress (Fullan, 2018, p. 57). At the elementary level, student reading progress is key to a child’s overall future educational experience, and an elementary principal’s role in influencing quality reading instruction is vital to this lifelong success (Dhuey & Smith, 2014). The principal’s knowledge of and involvement in his or her school’s reading program can be the factor that determines the program’s success or failure (Mackey, Pitcher, & Decman, 2006). The principal plays a key role in promoting independent reading by ensuring that it is a major part of the instructional program and is included in the school schedule (Sanacore, 1994).

Although many authors praise the benefits of reading series books for all students, most of the studies have focused on English Language Learners (L2) and no studies could be found relating to students who have English as their first language (L1). While several articles concluded the importance of the principal’s role in promoting reading programs, none were found that were related to the principal’s role in series reading programs.

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study is to identify the perceptions of the principal regarding their role in the development, implementation, and continuation of a series reading program and to determine the teacher’s perceptions of the role of the principal in the development, implementation, and continuation of a series reading program. A series reading program is one way to encourage students to read more which translates into better reading performance. The data collected will provide current and future administrators with a set of themes, concepts, and ideas to put in place when starting a series reading program. The practices identified in this

study can be replicated by principals in other schools to enhance reading programs in their schools to raise student achievement. In addition, this study will help give a greater understanding of what principals across the United States can do to implement a series reading program while adding to the importance of research of the principalship.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to identify the perceptions of selected elementary principals and teachers regarding the principal's role in the development, implementation, and continuation of a series reading program. Principals and teachers will be interviewed to identify their perceptions of the principal's role in the series reading program's development, implementation, and continuation. In this study, the researcher will identify factors contributing to the success or failure of the principal's role. The data from this study will provide principals and division leaders with a compendium of strategies and themes to be used to implement and continue a successful series reading program.

### **Justification of the Study**

The principal's role is to guide groups of teachers through the learning process while learning alongside and reflecting upon what is working and what is not (Fullan, 2018). By creating and nurturing a collective culture of efficacy, principals “indirectly but nonetheless explicitly” affect student learning and progress (Fullan, 2018, p. 57). Leithwood, Seashore-Louis, and Anderson (2011) argued that school leaders impact student achievement by influencing teachers' motivation, knowledge and skills, and working conditions. Educational leaders need to know principals' perceptions of their role and teachers' perceptions of the principal's role which contribute to the success and/or failure of an elementary reading program.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions will guide this research study:

1. What are the perceptions of elementary principals regarding their role in the development, implementation, and continuation of an effective series reading program?

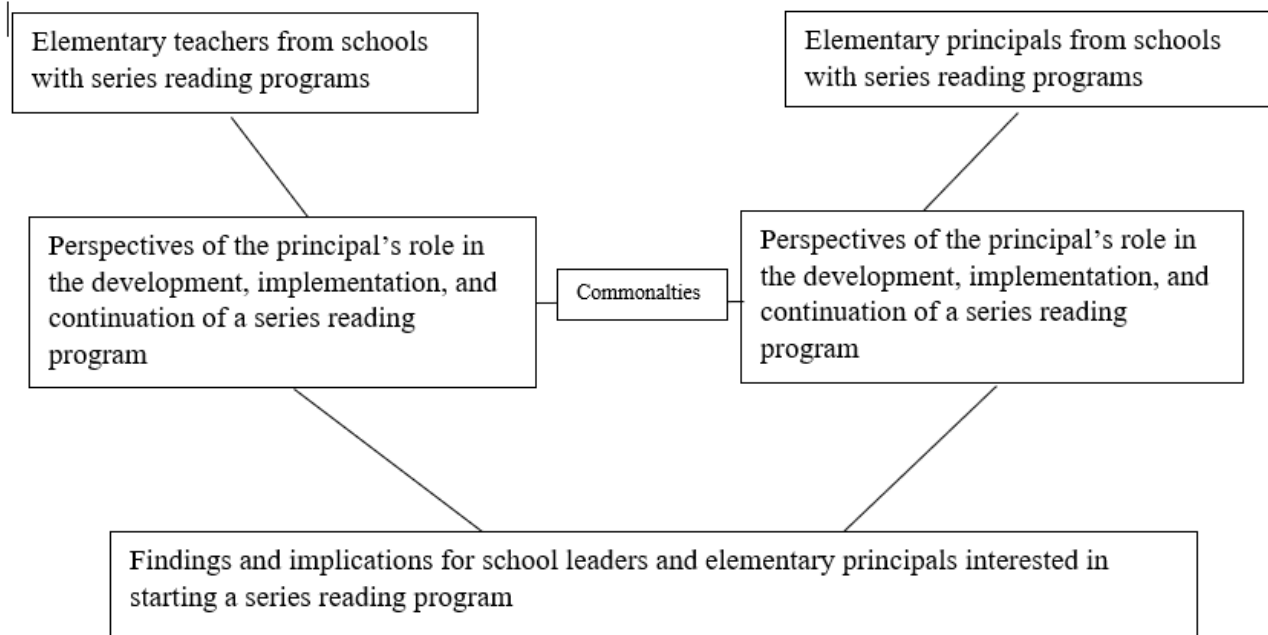
2. What are teachers' perceptions of the role of the elementary principal in the development, implementation, and continuation of an effective series reading program?

### Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is shown in Figure 1. The figure represents the perspectives examined and what, if any, relationships exist. Each group of participants has its own perceptions with commonalities in the center which link to findings and implications from the research.

**Figure 1**

#### *Conceptual Framework*



### Definition of Terms

The following key terms are used throughout the study.

**Engaged reading:** “the joint functioning of motivation, strategy use, and conceptual knowledge during reading” (Guthrie, Schafer, & Huang, 2001, p. 146)

**English Language Learners (ELs or L2):** students who often come from non-English-speaking backgrounds or homes in which there exists an inability to fluently communicate effectively in

English; interchangeable terms include limited English proficient (LEP), non-native English speakers, and students new to learning English (<https://www.edglossary.org/english-language-learner/>)

**Excessive/extensive reading:** a reader self-selects multiple texts of high interest and reads them with motivation (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000)

**Guided repeated oral reading (GROR):** a reading strategy where students read leveled “passages orally with systematic and explicit guidance and feedback from the teacher” (National Reading Panel, 2000, p. 12)

**Home run book:** a single, especially loved book that creates a positive experience for the reader (Kim & Krashen, 2000)

**Independent reading:** students reading books of their choice

**Narrow reading:** a subset of excessive reading when students read several books by one author or topic of interest over the course of time through a number of texts (Krashen, 2011)

**Reading fluency:** the ability to read with speed (measured in words per minute), accuracy (automatic word recognition or skills to sound out unfamiliar words), and prosody (appropriate pitch, stress, and timing to convey meaning) (<https://readingeggs.com/articles/2019/01/08/what-is-reading-fluency/>)

**Series reading:** a special form of narrow reading where students read books that come in a series by the same author; examples of series books include *Harry Potter*, *Captain Underpants*, *Goosebumps*, and *The Babysitter’s Club* (Renandya, Krashen, & Jacobs, 2018)

**Series reading program:** teachers choose book series to host in different places in the building, at a specific time of the day students visit these teachers/spaces to check out books from that series. Students are acknowledged when they finish a series (George Lucas Educational Foundation, 2016)

**Struggling readers:** students who make common reading errors, such as automatic word callers, struggling word callers, word stumblers, slow and steady comprehenders, slow word callers, disabled readers (Buly & Valencia, 2002)

**Structured/Scaffolded Independent Reading (ScSSR):** dedicated time during class where students read independently while the teacher confers with students, models and teaches how to self-select books, and holds students accountable for their reading (Miller & Moss, 2013)

**Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) and Drop Everything and Read (DEAR):** dedicated time during class where students read independently while the teacher's role is to model reading behavior by reading silently themselves (Miller & Moss, 2013)

### **Limitations**

This research study will focus on the perceptions of elementary principals and teachers. There will be limitations in this study beyond the researcher's control that could affect the outcome of this study. These limitations included the following:

1. The candidness of the principals' and teachers' responses may have limited and influenced the interview data.
2. The interview responses may have been skewed based on negative or positive experiences in the current school setting of the interviewee(s). Their general dissatisfaction or satisfaction related to the setting may have influenced their perceptions on the specific topic.

### **Delimitations**

The delimitations were factors in which the researcher had control. These delimitations could include:

1. The study could be limited by the number of participants (principals and teachers) who are part of a series reading program.
2. Some principals interviewed in this study may not have been the principal of the school at the series reading program was developed and began to be implemented.

## **Organization of the Study**

This research study contains five chapters. Chapter one introduces the topic of study and the research questions. This chapter provides historical perspective, an overview of the study, statement of the problem, significance of the study, purpose of the study, justification of the study, a conceptual framework, definition of terms, and limitations and delimitations of the study.

Chapter two contains a review of relevant research literature related to the study including the following topics: role of the principal in quality reading instruction, characteristics of lower-achieving and struggling readers, engaging reluctant readers through excessive/extensive reading, promoting excessive reading through structured independent reading time, the case for narrow reading, and narrow reading of series books.

Chapter three provides an explanation of the qualitative methodology used in the study. It provides the purpose of the study, research design, research questions, site/sample selection, data collection procedures, data gathering procedures, instrument design, instrument validity and reliability, data treatment and management, data analysis techniques, timeline, and methodology summary.

Chapter four presents and analyzes the data, reviews the research questions and interview questions, and describes the raw data responses by questions. Major themes for each research question are reported.

Chapter five provides a summary of the findings and their implications, and provides recommendations for future research. Personal reflections end chapter five.

The study concludes with references and appendices.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### Introduction

In 2017, the Nation's Report Card revealed only 37% of fourth graders in the United States performed at or above the *Proficient* level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading assessment (NAEP Report Card, 2017). Only 20% of Black and 23% of Hispanic fourth graders met this benchmark (NAEP Report Card, 2017). Over the last 25 years, the overall percentage has grown only 8% (NAEP Report Card, 2017). Scholastic's *Kids & Family Reading Report* (2019) showed only 31% of students age 6–17 years saw themselves as frequent readers. In the report, 40% of eight-year-olds stated that they *love reading*, but among nine-year-olds, this number drops to 28% (Scholastic, 2019). Only 19% of nine-year-olds reported that reading books for fun is *extremely important* (Scholastic, 2019). These statistics highlight a national crisis in literacy. This document serves as a review of literature on the elementary principal's role in fostering reading achievement through series reading.

This literature review is divided into six sections: (1) Role of the Principal in Quality Reading Instruction, (2) Characteristics and Habits of Lower-Achieving and Struggling Readers, (3) Engaging Reluctant Readers through Excessive/Extensive Reading, (4) Promoting Excessive Reading through Structured Independent Reading Time, (5) The Case for Narrow Reading, and (6) Narrow Reading of Series Books. The first section of the literature review focuses on the principal's role in quality reading programs with research shared on the importance of principals playing an active role through instructional leadership. To understand better how to improve students' reading, the second section focuses on why students struggle with reading and the characteristics of lower-achieving readers, as well as habits of students learning to read when English is not their first language. Research shows that many struggling readers are not engaged in active reading, so section four highlights research on how to engage reluctant readers through excessive and extensive reading. One way to promote excessive/extensive reading is through structured independent reading time. Recent debate on the classroom practice of SSR and its effects are discussed, as well as research on teacher perspectives of more Scaffolded Independent Reading. Narrow reading during independent reading is the focus of section five, especially the benefits of narrow reading with L2 students. Narrow reading of books in a series, such as *Harry Potter*, *Captain Underpants*, *Goosebumps*, and more, is the topic for section of this literature

review. The summary outlines conclusions from the resources analyzed during the search process and provides suggestions for further research.

### **Search Procedures for Literature Review**

Online sources were consulted to search for research related to this literature review topic. The researcher established a series reading program at school and became interested in this topic. An article (Renandya, Krashen, & Jacobs, 2018) posted on Twitter in December 2018 started the search, and the article's reference page was utilized as a starting point for further investigation. In addition to Google searches, the researcher used the online advanced search tool through Virginia Tech's library. Key terms used in these searches included *principal as instructional leader*, *principal role reading programs*, *narrow reading*, *independent reading*, *series reading*, *struggling readers*, and *English language learners and reading*. Five books from the researcher's own collection which referenced series reading were utilized, with additional articles located from the texts' reference sections. The searches were conducted between December 2018 and March 2020. To determine which articles to include or exclude in this literature review, Mendeley was utilized to organize by topic. Searches through Mendeley produced other articles and references.

### **Role of the Principal in Quality Reading Instruction**

According to Dhuey and Smith (2014), a principal influences student achievement by creating a positive climate and culture, monitoring student progress data, observing and evaluating teachers, and implementing new programs and instructional resources. Fullan (2018) described the role of the principal as a "learning leader—one who models learning, but also shapes the conditions for all to learn on a continuous basis" (p. 9). Fullan (2018) argued that for change to happen, principals have "to use the power of the group to change the group" (p. 29). The principal's role is to guide their groups of teachers through the learning process while learning alongside them and reflecting upon what is working and what is not. By creating and nurturing a collective culture of efficacy, principals "indirectly but nonetheless explicitly" affect student learning and progress (Fullan, 2018, p. 57).

Leithwood, Seashore-Louis, and Anderson (2011) described leadership as having two main functions: "providing direction and exercising influence" (p. 4). Leithwood et al. (2011) outlined leadership as organizational improvement driven by strong stability collective in nature.

The authors argued that school leaders influence student achievement by influencing teachers' motivation, knowledge and skills, and working conditions. At the elementary level, student reading progress is key to a child's overall future educational experience, and an elementary principal's role in influencing quality reading instruction is vital to this lifelong success (Dhuey & Smith, 2014).

Principals must have a necessary understanding of quality reading instruction to make these decisions (Carbo 2005). Carbo (2005) detailed five critical areas of reading knowledge principals need: phonemics, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Phonemics allows students to become aware of spoken words' sounds, whereas phonics increases awareness of the sounds from written words. Phonics instruction focuses on sound patterns within words and provides practice in text. As students finish second grade, reading instruction shifts from basic phonics instruction to fluency practice (Carbo, 2005). Students continue to be exposed to shared reading and choral reading, and they listen to and model fluid readers (Carbo, 2005). Vocabulary develops as children listen, speak, are read to, or read on their own (Carbo, 2005). Direct vocabulary instruction includes the use of visuals; an understanding of prefixes, suffixes, and roots; and a familiarity with high-frequency words (Carbo, 2005). These four areas prepare students for the ultimate goal of quality text comprehension. Students with strong comprehension skills monitor their own progress, ask clarifying questions as they read, and can visualize story structure (Carbo, 2005).

The principal's knowledge of and involvement in his or her school's reading program can be the factor that determines its success or failure (Mackey, et al., 2006). When principals lack reading knowledge, they delegate responsibility to others or make unguided and poor decisions that are not grounded in research (Mackey et al., 2006). Jacobson, Reutzel, and Hollingsworth (1992) studied principals' perceptions of different reading topics and determined that principals had a general understanding of the reading issues but did not have the needed confidence to implement innovative changes in their school's reading programs.

Mackey et al. (2006) furthered the study of principal reading program success factors. Their study compared four principals in each of the three identified areas: vision, background, and role as an instructional leader. The authors determined that strength in these areas enabled the principal to influence the school's reading program and student reading progress (Mackey et al., 2006). Principals who involve teachers in decision-making, cultivate stakeholders, and see

themselves as constantly learning, changing, and growing can articulate a vision for reading instruction in their school (Mackey et al., 2006). Mackey et al. (2006) described the impact of these characteristics in principals who are developing school reading programs. One principal in particular had a master's degree in reading, was working on an Ed. D. in educational leadership and had the most background knowledge of effective reading programs in the group. He also was personally involved in professional development during implementation and sought understanding for himself before the vision was put in place. He increased classroom library collections and provided more literacy center materials as he supervised his teachers through professional development (Mackey et al., 2006). This principal sought out curriculum experts, and teachers were given permission to experiment and learn during the change process. The principal's school's Maryland Comprehension Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS) scores rose from the 35th percentile to the 55 percentile over three years, whereas the schools' scores for other three principals who were lacking in the three focus areas had small gains or decreased (Mackey et al., 2006). Another factor the authors recognized was the time spent on independent reading (Mackey et al., 2006). The school where the CTBS scores decreased averaged only four minutes and 15 seconds of independent reading each day. This school was influenced heavily by state mandates and high-stakes testing programs (Mackey et al., 2006).

### **Characteristics and Habits of Lower-Achieving and Struggling Readers**

As principals navigate the world of state testing results, they often look for a reading program scripted to fix perceived student weaknesses without understanding the complex needs of struggling readers (Buly & Valencia, 2002). Students develop decoding and basic reading skills in the lower grades, but mandated state and federal testing is conducted in the upper-grades (Buly & Valencia, 2002). The question becomes, what is holding students back from the ultimate goal of smooth fluency, solid reading comprehension, and vast vocabularies?

Buly and Valencia (2002) examined profiles of students who failed state reading tests to seek an answer to this complex question. First, the authors found that poor performance on these tests was not because of lack of phonics or decoding abilities, but instead for most students was due to poor understanding of word meaning. Decoding speed differences can lead to slower fluency because students are stopping to decipher unknown words, and these frequent pauses can negatively affect overall comprehension (Buly & Valencia, 2002). In the study, students were given the Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery-Revised (WJ-R) to assess word attack

and identification. Buly and Valencia (2002) then compared students' scores on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning and the Qualitative Reading Inventory II (QRI-II) and found that students consistently decoded text at higher levels than they could comprehend (Buly & Valencia, 2002).

Buly and Valencia (2002) identified the following clusters of common reading errors into which students fall: automatic word callers, struggling word callers, word stumblers, slow and steady comprehenders, slow word callers, and disabled readers. The authors determined that automatic word callers and slow word callers are often second language learners and have limited knowledge of word meanings, which contributes to low comprehension scores. Struggling word callers and word stumblers were shown to have lower word attack skills and lower words-per-minute rates (Buly & Valencia, 2002). Slow and steady comprehenders lack fluency with multisyllabic words but are strong with text comprehension (Buly & Valencia, 2002). Buly and Valencia (2002) theorized that these students exhibit basic reading skills but do not enjoy reading or do not spend large amounts of time reading to develop higher levels of proficiency. Students in the last cluster, disabled readers, were low in all examined areas, including word identification, fluency, and meaning (Buly & Valencia, 2002).

Struggling readers spend more time in remedial groups that focus on isolated skill instruction rather than comprehension development (Sanacore, 1990). Work with different teachers can create a lack of "curricular congruence" (Sanacore, 1990, p. 59). Without cohesion, instruction can become fragmented as students work with several teachers who have different instructional goals. Since instructional time is spent in intervention groups, students with these types of weaknesses often experience less time in actual text than do their peers with stronger reading abilities (Sanacore, 1990). Without this time in the text, struggling readers do not learn how to select books that interest them in reading on their own, grow to dislike reading, and develop low academic confidence (Sanacore, 1990). They know how to read, but they do not enjoy reading during free time or become actively engaged in the text (Sanacore, 1990). Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) described disengaged, unmotivated readers as being "inactive and inert" and that they tend not to enjoy reading (p. 342).

Beer (2003), in her book, *When Kids Can't Read: What Teachers Can Do*, outlined the differences between dependent and independent readers in secondary school. Beer (2003) defined independent readers as those who set goals for reading, use reading strategies, make

comprehension visible, and can figure out when the text is confusing to them. Conversely, Beer (2003) stated that dependent readers keep “comprehension at the invisible level,” stop often in the text, seek the teacher’s guidance when confused, and continue to read without realizing their confusion (p. 16). Beer (2003) separated dependent readers into three areas, with the first being readers who lack cognitive abilities to read and thus struggle with reading in all areas. The second group of dependent readers is disengaged from the reading process and lack confidence socially and emotionally. The last area is students who have not found books that are enjoyable for them and who lack the stamina to complete an uninteresting text (Beer, 2003). Good readers are able to evaluate their own engagement and interaction with text and understand why certain books appeal to them while others do not (Beer, 2003).

### *Engaging Reluctant Readers Through Excessive/Extensive Reading*

In Scholastic’s 2019 national survey on children’s reading habits, 58% of children reported that they *love/like reading for fun a lot*. These readers have access to a wide range of materials, opportunities to select books that interest them, and social interactions regarding their reading (Scholastic, 2015). On the other side of this statistic are the children who do not love/like reading. To engage these readers, schools must value reading for pleasure and devote time to independent reading (Scholastic, 2019). Scholastic (2019) urged parents and educators to provide opportunities for children to self-select books that interest them. Eighty-eight percent of kids will finish a book picked out by themselves, but 46% of students report trouble finding a book they like (Scholastic, 2019). A robust classroom library and the number of books at home can be critically important factors for developing frequent readers (Scholastic, 2019). An engaging topic students are personally interested in can motivate reluctant readers (Scholastic, 2019).

Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) argued that positive reading development is linked to extensive, engaged reading. Extensive, engaged reading occurs when the reader self-selects text, that has a clear purpose, and when reading is done with enjoyment and self-efficacy motivation (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) reported that as students became engaged, readers’ learning opportunities were self-generated and equivalent to several years of education. These engaging reading tasks and activities need to be moderately challenging to support continued motivation (Gambrell, 2015). Guthrie and Wigfield’s (2000) engagement

model of reading detailed reading achievement being predicted by students' amounts of engaged reading.

Guthrie, Schafer, and Huang (2001) went further to define engaged reading as “the joint functioning of motivation, strategy use, and conceptual knowledge during reading” (p. 146). Guthrie et al. (2001) studied the relationship between engaged reading levels and student progress on the Maryland fourth grade NAEP. As part of the NAEP, students answered a variety of survey questions, and the authors chose to examine responses relating to how often students read for fun and if their teacher gave them time to read books they chose themselves in class. For the study, students with high ratings on these questions were considered engaged readers. Guthrie et al., (2001) concluded, “Teachers who provided students with more opportunities to read in the classroom and encouraged wide reading had significantly more highly engaged readers” (p. 155). Reading achievement was also linked to teachers having students respond and explain their reading and to teachers providing directed instruction in these specific skills (Guthrie et al., 2001). The results showed that when Black and Latino students were given more time to read, their engagement levels were higher than those of their White and Asian peers (Guthrie et al., 2001). The authors reported, “student reading achievement was predicted by the students' amount of engaged reading” (p. 158). Guthrie et al., (2001) also found that “a highly engaged reader with low parental education is likely to achieve higher on the NAEP than a less-engaged reader with higher parental education” (p. 159).

Students new to learning English (L2) involved in extensive reading were shown to increase vocabulary knowledge and the ability to comprehend what was read (Ghanbari & Marzban, 2014). Krashen (2011) conducted a meta-analysis of nine studies relating to excessive reading and L2 student reading comprehension and found that the number of titles read per student had a substantial effect on reading progress. Krashen (2011) examined students' access to reading material and the duration of the excessive reading and found a positive correlation between the two.

In 2014, Nakanishi, and similarly, in 2018, Liu and Zhang conducted a meta-analysis of research with extensive reading with L2 students research and had some similar and different findings. Nakanishi (2014) analyzed 34 studies and examined the overall effectiveness of extensive reading, the best ages for extensive reading, and how the length of time impacted test scores. Nakanishi (2014) found extensive reading to have an effect on reading proficiency, but

the only age group that yielded an effect size was university students. The author also noted that there needed to be more studies involving children. When looking at the length of time needed for extensive reading to have an effect, the results of Nakanishi's (2014) analysis revealed one year of extensive reading produced a medium and medium-to-large effect, while one semester of intervention yielded a small effect (2014). Nakanishi (2014) suggested that future research include more studies that contained control groups, longitudinal studies that extended more than one year, and studies with larger sample sizes.

Liu and Zhang (2018) furthered Nakanishi's (2014) analysis by examining 21 studies of extensive reading with a focus on whether extensive reading improved vocabulary proficiency for L2 students. The analysis revealed that students who received extensive reading outperformed students who did not on pre/post contrasts. Liu and Zhang (2018) found that "through extensive reading, learners can develop good reading habits, build up vocabulary knowledge, and enhance positive reading attitudes" (p. 2). Like Nakanishi (2014), the authors found that extensive reading had a larger effect size on older learners but also agreed that more research needed to be conducted on school-age learners. Liu and Zhang (2018)'s results differed from those of Nakanishi (2014) in showing shorter-term extensive reading had a greater effect than did longer extensive reading time.

### *Promoting Excessive Reading Through Structured Independent Reading Time*

For students to read excessively/extensively, they must be given adequate time in text (Miller & Moss, 2013). Lower readers are often in remedial groups and miss this valuable opportunity (Sanacore, 1990). Over the past 30 years, DEAR and SSR have been the models for independent reading time spent in schools (Miller & Moss, 2013). During this approach, the teacher's role was to model reading behavior by reading silently themselves (Miller & Moss, 2013). Many schools have moved away from this practice to a more structured or scaffolded independent reading (IR) time where the teacher confers with students, models and teaches how to self-select books, and holds students accountable for their reading (Miller & Moss, 2013). IR time is spent having students apply the explicit reading instruction to their own interests (Miller & Moss, 2013). During focused lessons, teachers demonstrate how readers make meaning, provide students with access to high-interest texts, and model how to talk about reading (Miller & Moss, 2013). After IR time, teachers encourage students to reflect and discuss what was read and their connections to the text (Miller & Moss, 2013). Teachers begin by building in small

chunks of classroom IR time, having books available, and monitoring IR through conferring (Miller & Moss, 2013). Conferencing builds relationships with children that can focus on making connections to learning goals (Miller & Moss, 2013). Asking simple open-ended questions about what students are reading, what they like best, and what good readers do can assist teachers in setting individual reading goals (Miller & Moss, 2013).

In 2000, the National Institute of Health and Human Development published the 449-page *Report of the National Reading Panel*. This report critically reviewed the research at the time and described implications for future reading instruction based on their findings. The panel focused only on research that was experimental in nature, conducted with students in kindergarten through grade 12, had appeared in a refereed journal, and had been carried out with English language reading. The report argued the research supporting SSR found correlational support but did not imply causation. The authors stated, “No doubt, it could be that the more children read, the more their reading skills improve, but it is also possible that better readers simply choose to read more” (National Reading Panel, 2000, p. 12). NRP (2000) reported that GROR was an effective literacy strategy for improving fluency. In GROR, students read leveled “passages orally with systematic and explicit guidance and feedback from the teacher” (National Reading Panel, 2000, p. 12).

Garan and DeVogd (2008) criticized the *Report of the National Reading Panel* regarding independent silent reading. In their opinion, the NRP did not find that SSR was ineffective but instead claimed there were not enough studies conducted that met the NRP’s methodological requirements, especially for research that was experimental in nature. Many studies were also conducted with L2 learners which did not meet the panel’s requirements because they were conducted in countries other than the United States (Garen & DeVogd, 2008). The authors argued that Scaffolded Silent Reading (ScSSR) makes students more accountable than does the traditional SSR time where students just read books of their choice with no accountability.

Reutzel, Jones, Fawson, and Smith (2008) conducted a study comparing the effects of ScSSR versus GROR on third graders’ posttests on the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy (DIEBLS) oral reading fluency (ORF) test and found that both methods showed an increase in literacy skills. ScSSR differs from the traditional SSR described in the NRP because the teacher monitors progress, sets goals, holds conferences, and guides book selection (Reutzel

et al., 2008). The authors' study concluded that both approaches showed gains in "reading accuracy, rate, expression and comprehension" (Reutzel et al., 2008, p. 202).

Chua (2008) conducted a study of the effects of SSR on cultivating secondary students' habits and attitudes in reading books and concluded that SSR did increase the number of students who read for leisure and the number of students who agreed that reading books was pleasurable. Chua's (2008) time-series design study revealed that the number of students who spent more than one hour reading books after school actually decreased. He concluded that the SSR program had a "significant effect on cultivating students' reading habits in the SSR period" (Chua, 2008, p. 183). The study also indicated students did enjoy books during school, but this did not translate to reading time spent at home. This study did not examine any connections to academic achievement with SSR (Chua, 2008).

Sanden (2012), also critical of the NRP report, observed eight elementary teachers identified as highly effective based on instructional attributes such as classroom management, balanced literacy instruction, use of scaffolding, and high expectations for students. These teachers' beliefs about IR and their students' perceptions of IR were surveyed, and Sanden (2012) looked for patterns and themes. Sanden (2012) found that all the teachers interviewed shared the belief that during IR students should be given choices, work at their level, and interact with text and adults to solve problems. Teachers also shared that guided or scaffolded IR allows young readers to have a choice in what is read, but there still needs to be accountability, with a focus on student growth (Sanden, 2012). Sanden's (2012) observations also noted the need for teachers to ensure students are reading materials at the appropriate reading level and selecting a variety of books. The teachers in this study all taught lessons about selecting just-right books, had classroom libraries that contained leveled book selections, and had procedures in place that ensured that students spent time reading connected to tasks. Sanden's (2012) observations also noted that the highly effective teachers all modeled independent reading aloud not by reading silently themselves. Direct instruction of reading skills occurred separately from IR, but through conferencing, teachers used IR to differentiate learning for their young readers (Sanden, 2012).

The principal plays a key role in promoting literacy through IR by ensuring that it is a major part of the instructional program and is included in the school schedule (Sanacore, 1994). Often in schools under the leadership of a principal who is coerced into focusing only on improving test scores, IR gets pushed aside from being an instructional focus (Sanacore, 1994).

Kamil (2008) reported in their study that recreational reading alone does not increase achievement. Successful IR requires explicit reading instruction and teacher professional development (Kamil, 2008). Principal leadership in scheduling, classroom library promotion, and IR professional development set the path for successful reading immersion (Kamil, 2008). Vocabulary development is also improved as students read for pleasure (Kamil, 2008). Teachers who just focus on new words in the basal reader will teach around 500 vocabulary words each year (Kamil, 2008). Through structured IR, students are exposed to the repetition of words, which leads to improved comprehension (Sanacore, 1994).

Deacon, Mimeau, Chung, and Chen (2019) studied how young readers learn spelling and determine the meaning of words during IR. The authors used an “independent reading scenario to evaluate the extent of young children’s orthographic and semantic learning through their reading” (Deacon et al., 2019, p. 4). Orthographic learning is how students acquire representations of spelling for novel words, whereas semantic learning is making meaning of those words (Deacon et al., 2019). The researchers questioned if six- and seven-year old English-speaking children simultaneously process orthographic and semantic representations and if decoding is required for both orthographic and semantic learning to occur. This study was conducted by having students independently read short stories that contained nonwords (Deacon et al., 2019). Assessment of progress was acquired through pre- and post-testing (Deacon et al., 2019). The findings showed both the first grade and second grade students self-taught the spellings (orthographic) and the meanings (semantic) of words through IR, even with the absence of accurate decoding (Deacon et al., 2019).

### *The Case for Narrow Reading*

A subset of extensive reading is narrow reading which is defined as reading several books by one author or topic of interest over the course of time through a number of texts (Krashen, 2011). Krashen’s Comprehension Hypothesis claims that, “we acquire language when we read and hear language we understand” (Krashen, 2018, p. 148). Krashen (2004) argued that vocabulary and text structure come from multiple exposures in similar contexts. Narrow reading provides built-in review because each author has a distinctive style and use of vocabulary (Krashen, 2004). Reading multiple texts about the same topic helps the reader develop background knowledge to bring to each new text (Krashen, 2011). This is especially true for students learning English (L2), who are often the weakest readers (Krashen, 2011).

Students acquiring English who narrow read do not have to switch from topic to topic, so recalling new background information is limited, giving more focus on comprehension (Chang & Millett, 2017). Related texts contain similar word types and proper nouns that promote fluency and comprehension (Chang & Millett, 2017). Schmitt and Carter (2000) examined the lexical advantages of narrow reading by looking specifically at two types of frequent words: function words and content words. Function words are articles, prepositions, pronouns, and other word types needed for standard text filling (Chang & Millett, 2017). Content words, including proper nouns, carry meaning and are similar in narrow reading texts (Chang & Millett, 2017). Narrow reading reduces the load of new vocabulary on the developing reader while at the same time providing multiple exposures to words (Chang & Millett, 2017). After counting and comparing words from related newspaper articles and unrelated newspaper articles, Schmitt and Carter (2000) found that though the articles contained the same number of words, known collectively as tokens, the amount of new words (types) differed. With fewer new words or types to decode, the reduced vocabulary load on a new reader can lead to improved comprehension (Schmitt & Carter, 2000).

Chang and Millett (2017) investigated “whether students who read a series of related texts read faster and comprehend better than if they read unrelated tests” (p. 5). Two groups of Taiwanese senior high school students learning English read either genre-related titles from the Sherlock Holmes series or the same story, *The Railway Children*, from different publishers. Both groups read three selections that progressed in reading level. There were more recurring words in *The Railway Children* than in the Sherlock Holmes stories, but the two contained similar levels of token words. Both sets of students who read either the title or genre-related texts “increased reading speeds more efficiently than reading unrelated texts” (Chang & Millett, 2017, p. 12). Although the reading rates of both groups increased, the reading comprehension score of the Sherlock Holmes series was higher than that of *The Railroad Children* group, but both were statistically higher than with those reading unfamiliar texts (Chang & Millett, 2017).

Kang (2015) examined narrow reading as an effective method to grow vocabulary in L2 students by having 61 Korean 11th graders read either related topic news stories (narrow reading) or unrelated topic stories (wide reading). Kang (2015) gave pre- and post-tests to analyze receptive and productive vocabulary gains in isolation and in context. The test data showed that the narrow reading group performed better than did the wide reading group in both

vocabulary growth in isolation and in context (Kang, 2015). Kang (2015) concluded that “L2 learners benefit more from reading texts arranged around a common theme than reading random texts in terms of accurate recognition of word meanings” (p. 175). Participant exit interviews reported that students felt that narrow reading of a related topic increased background knowledge and memory of target words, making it easier to understand subsequent texts (Kang, 2015).

Cho, Ahn, and Krashen (2005) examined the use of narrow reading with beginning students learning English. Thirty-seven Korean fourth graders learning English for the first time comprised the study group and were taught using six books from the *Clifford* series, where the teacher read the books and the students followed along with their own copy. Follow-up lessons included whole-group activities, shared reading experiences, and journal writing (Cho, Ahn & Krashen, 2005). The students completed the textbook-driven regular curriculum but had the additional 40-minute period of narrow reading added to their instruction (Cho, Ahn & Krashen, 2005). The results from Cho, Ahn, and Krashen (2005) indicated that substantial gains were made in both the vocabulary and comprehension subsets of the reading post-test. A student questionnaire showed more confidence and interest in reading English, more awareness of narrow reading, and more students indicating that reading English was fun (Cho, Ahn & Krashen, 2005). Their results showed that narrow reading can be effectively used with younger students, and narrow reading can “provide a transition to more advanced input” (Cho, Ahn & Krashen, 2005, p. 63).

### *Narrow Reading of Series Books*

Series reading is a special form of narrow reading where students read books that come in a series by the same author (Renandya, Krashen, & Jacobs, 2018). Popular series include the *Harry Potter* books by J. K. Rowling, Dave Pilkey’s *Captain Underpants* books, and the *Goosebumps* books by R. L. Stine (Renandya et al., 2018). Renandya, Krashen, and Jacobs (2018) argue that series books contain “easy-to-follow story lines and relatable characters” that can “get students hooked on reading and keep them reading” (p. 148). Series books can be highly motivating and at the same time provide multiple exposures to content and function words (Renandya et al., 2018). This familiarity with vocabulary allows for a deeper understanding of the book, broader connections between characters, and more books read over time (Renandya et al., 2018).

Morrison (2017) details how reading books in a series allows students to become comfortable with an author's writing style, and this familiarity with key phrases and actions of the characters allows a reader to improve fluency. She describes this as "knowing" an author. With series reading, a reader goes in already knowing the author's syntax and rhythm of the language and flow of the plot (Morrison, 2017). Many series reading books also contain a similar setting and take place in the same time period (Morrison, 2017). For a reluctant reader, getting to "know" an author takes valuable time away from the nuances of decoding and the reading comprehension process (Morrison, 2017). Precious energy is spent breaking unfamiliar words apart and figuring out how to pronounce new words (Morrison, 2017). With series reading familiarity, students can focus more on automaticity, which can increase comprehension (Morrison, 2017).

Cho and Krashen (1995) wrote a series of reports on the effects of reading novels from the *Sweet Valley* series on adult second language acquisition, and the findings revealed positive results. One participant read 25 *Sweet Valley Kids* books, 21 read *Sweet Valley Twins* volumes, and more than 20 read *Sweet Valley High* books, in all totaling around 1,000,000 (Cho & Krashen, 1995). This reader was able to take advantage of familiar background knowledge to make the text more comprehensible (Cho & Krashen, 1995). As a new English speaker, she started by reading the book using the dictionary and then moved to rereading the same text several times (Cho & Krashen, 1995). She reported being able to move away from this strategy because the books interested her (Cho & Krashen, 1995).

Von Sprecken, Kim, and Krashen (2000) interviewed 214 fourth graders and found that 53% could attribute their reading enjoyment to beginning with a single, especially loved book. This type of book is referred to as a "home run book" because it begins a reading habit and contributes to greater school successes (Krashen, 2015). Of the students who were interviewed in the study, books in series such as *Animorphs* and *Goosebumps* were referenced as their home run book (Von Sprecken et al., 2000).

Cho, Ahn, and Krashen (2005) continued their work on series reading with their study of Korean children learning English by reading six books from the Clifford series. Students showed gains in reading comprehension and vocabulary (Cho, Ahn, & Krashen, 2005). During the study, students also completed pre- and post-questionnaires that showed that 51% of students said they were motivated to read more with series books than with reading just one book.

Twenty-seven percent stated the vocabulary was easier in series books because they had seen the words more often (Cho, Ahn, & Krashen, 2005). Using a Likert scale of 1 to 5, gain was shown in the question of whether series books help them understand the next story (increase from 3.57 to 4.05) and in understanding the next volume better when reading a series (increase from 3.19 to 3.92) (Cho, Ahn, & Krashen, 2005). Gains were also made in the questions concerning following characters being easier in a series (increasing 3.89 to 4.38) and in students wanting to read the next book in a series (increase from 3.7 to 4.43) (Cho, Ahn, & Krashen, 2005).

Harvey and Ward (2017) in *From Striving to Thriving* also argue the benefits of series reading, detailing that series books are “page-turners and turning pages means volume” (p. 101). In their book, readers who struggle are termed “striving readers,” and the goal is to move from striving to thriving as a reader. The authors also note the predictable structures of series books, including familiarity with characters and setting, as being appealing to the striving reader (Harvey & Ward, 2017).

Harvey and Ward (2017) also caution the use of series reading with striving readers because many series books are geared to a specific reading level that corresponds to a grade level. Struggling/striving readers, in an attempt to keep up with peers, will select these books when actually, the books are at too high a reading level for them to be successful (Harvey & Ward, 2017). Because striving readers are often encouraged to read more-accessible lower-level series, there can be a social stigma attached (Harvey & Ward, 2017). The authors gave the example of when a third grader reads the *Magic Tree House* book, it is perceived by peers differently from when a fifth grader does. Harvey and Ward (2017) detailed that striving readers can find the simplistic characters and plot lines in books at their reading level to be below their maturity level. The authors suggested seeking out high-interest but more mature-looking series, such as ones similar to *Eerie Elementary* (Harvey & Ward, 2017). Graphic novel series, such as *Captain Underpants*, *Amulet*, and *The Baby-Sitter’s Club*, are high interest and can also serve as a bridge to other reading experiences (Harvey & Ward, 2017).

## **Summary**

This literature review illustrates the need for the elementary principal to play a leading role in reading instruction. In 2017, NAEP fourth grade reading scores indicated that only 37% of students performed at or above the *Proficient* level (NAEP Reading Report Card, 2017). Principals who have more background and knowledge in reading and a strong vision and who

see themselves as instructional leaders influence reading progress (Mackey et al., 2006). Many weaker readers are dependent readers who are disengaged from the reading process and lack confidence socially and emotionally (Beer, 2003). Disengaged readers have not found books that are enjoyable and lack the stamina to complete text (Beer, 2003).

One way to engage readers and increase reading achievement is through structured teacher-led independent reading time (Guthrie et al., 2001). Guthrie et al. concluded, “Teachers who provided students with more opportunities to read in the classroom and encouraged wide reading had significantly more highly engaged readers” (2001, p.157). Krashen (2011) conducted a meta-analysis of studies relating to excessive reading and L2 student reading comprehension and found that the number of titles per student read had a substantial effect on reading progress.

The principal plays a key role in promoting independent reading by ensuring it is a major part of the instructional program and is included in the school schedule (Sanacore, 1994). With today’s high-stakes testing pressure, principals must continue to value promoting structured independent reading (Sanacore, 1990). Principal guidance with reading instruction can mean the difference between “dynamic or mediocre outcomes” (Sanacore, 1994, p. 602).

One form of independent reading is narrow reading of series books (Krashen, 2004). Series books can be highly motivating and at the same time provide multiple exposures to content and function words (Renandya et al., 2018). Morrison (2017) detailed how reading books in a series allows students to become comfortable with an author’s style, and this familiarity with key phrases and actions of the characters allows a reader to improve fluency. However, Kamil (2008) argued that with series reading, students are not exposed to different authors’ styles, vocabulary development is narrowed, and students do not branch out in genres. Harvey and Ward (2017) cautioned against using series books geared to a specific reading level that corresponded to a grade level because older students could be embarrassed reading less-mature books.

Series reading studies have focused on L2 students mostly from other countries and on the level of English language learning. While many authors praise the benefits of reading series books for all students, no studies could be found relating to students who have English as their first language (L1). More research needs to be conducted to find correlations or causations between series reading and L1 students’ reading growth. While several articles concluded the

importance of the role of the principal in promoting reading programs, none was found relating to the principal's role in series reading promotion.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

This chapter describes the methodology of this study. The sample selection population development, data collection procedures, instrument design, validity and reliability methods, data treatment, management and analysis techniques, timeline, and methodology summary are described.

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to identify perceptions of elementary principals and teachers regarding the role of the principal in the development, implementation, and continuation of a series reading program. Principals and teachers were interviewed to identify perceptions on the principal's role in the series reading program's development, implementation, and continuation. In this study, the researcher identified factors contributing to the success or failure of the elementary principal's role in a series reading program. The results show commonalities between the perspectives of principals on their role and the perspectives of teachers on the principal's role. The data from this study will provide principals and division leaders with a compendium of strategies and themes to be used to implement and continue a successful series reading program.

#### **Research Design**

To explore the perceptions of the elementary principal's role in a series reading program through the lens of the principal and teacher, the scientific methodology of this investigation was a qualitative, phenomenological design in which the lived experiences of principals and teachers were examined. This approach's purpose was to describe, interpret, and understand multiple perspectives. Merriam and Tisdell, stated "to get at the essence or basic underlying structure of the meaning of an experience, the phenomenological interview is the primary method of data collection" (2016, p. 27). Harding argued that qualitative interviews provide "opportunities for the researcher to listen to views or experiences of one respondent for an extended period of time and to ask probing questions to explore ideas further" (2019, p. 44). The study identified perceptions of principals and teachers in regard to the principal's role in the development, implementation, and continuation of a series reading program. Principals and teachers were interviewed from elementary schools where series reading programs were implemented across the United States. These phenomenological interviews were the primary method of data collection.

The study was conducted in two phases: individual principal interviews and principal-recommended teacher interviews. The principal interviews were conducted first, followed by the teacher interviews. An interview protocol consisting of eight questions was used to collect qualitative data from each principal. These questions were developed to allow for open-ended responses. At the end of the interview, principals were asked to identify a teacher or teachers who were instrumental in the series reading program's development, implementation, and continuation. The second phase involved an interview protocol consisting of seven open-ended questions that was used to collect qualitative data from each recommended teacher. The interviews were recorded using the Zoom meeting format, which transcribed the interactions. The transcriptions were triangulated, member checked, and peer debriefed. Findings were combined, coded, and ordered into themes, categories, concepts, and tentative hypotheses.

### **Research Questions**

This study's guiding questions are as follows:

1. What are the perceptions of elementary principals regarding their role in the development, implementation, and continuation of an effective series reading program?
2. What are teachers' perceptions of the role of the elementary principal in the development, implementation, and continuation of an effective series reading program?

In Table 1, the two research questions driving this study are listed on the left. On the right, are the interview questions that correspond to each research question. There are eight interview questions corresponding to research question one and seven to research question two, for a total of 15 questions.

**Table 1**

*Alignment of Research Questions to Interview Questions*

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Interview Questions for Principals</b>
(R1) What are the perceptions of elementary principals regarding their role in the development, implementation, and continuation of a series reading program?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Describe the development history of your school's series reading program. What role did you play?</li><li>2. Describe your literacy background.</li><li>3. What type of professional development and supports were given to teachers and staff? What role did you play?</li><li>4. Describe the implementation history of your series reading program. What role did you play?</li><li>5. How were students motivated to participate in the program? What role did you play?</li><li>6. Describe the program's continuation success. What role did you play?</li><li>7. How would you describe the overall success of your series reading program? What role did you play?</li><li>8. How do you feel about the overall experiences of a series reading program? What would you have done differently?</li></ol>
<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Interview Questions for Teachers</b>
(R2) What are teachers' perceptions of the role of the elementary principal in the development, implementation, and continuation of a series reading program?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Describe the development history of your school's series reading program. What role did the principal play?</li><li>2. What type of professional development and supports were put in place for teachers and staff? What role did the principal play?</li><li>3. Describe the implementation history of your series reading program. What role did the principal play?</li><li>4. How were students motivated to participate in the program? What role did the principal play?</li><li>5. Describe the program's continuation success. What role did the principal play?</li><li>6. How would you describe the overall success of your series reading program? What role did the principal play?</li><li>7. How do you feel about the overall experience of a series reading program? What would you have done differently? What role did the principal play?</li></ol>

## **Site/Sample Selection**

This study was conducted throughout the United States. A purposeful criterion-based sampling method was used to choose the sites and principals. Merriam and Tisdell describe criterion-based sampling as “decid[ing] what attributes of your sample are crucial to your study and then find[ing] people or sites that meet those criteria” (2016, p. 96). The criterion for this study was that the school has or had an existing series reading program. The researcher began by googling “series reading programs.” From this search, schools were identified, and the researcher emailed or called each principal using the Principal Recruitment Email script (see Appendix E). After speaking with the principal and obtaining verbal consent, the researcher emailed the principals a Zoom meeting invitation with the attached Virginia Tech Study Information Sheet (see Appendix A). From the principal interviews, each participant selected a teacher(s) who served in a leadership position during the development, implementation and continuation of the school's series reading program. The principal emailed the researcher with contact information for the teacher(s). The researcher then emailed the teacher(s) the Teacher Recruitment Email script as well as a Zoom meeting invitation with the attached Virginia Tech Study Information Sheet (see Appendix A). When determining the number of participants for a study, Merriam and Tisdell state, “What is needed is an adequate number of participants, sites, or activities to answer the questions posed at the beginning of the study” (2016, p. 101).

## **Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher completed the required training for Human Subjects Protection and received a Certificate of Completion (see Appendix B). After completion of the prospectus defense by the dissertation committee, a Virginia Tech Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) was submitted and approved (see Appendix C). After approval, the researcher began collecting the sample selection by conducting the Google search. Principals and teachers were sent the Virginia Tech Study Information Sheet which included a brief summary of the researcher's dissertation topic, the confidentiality statement, and university and researcher contact information (see Appendix A).

This research involved virtual person-to-person semistructured interviews with elementary principals and teachers where the questions have been developed ahead of time (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Each participant was asked to describe his or her perspectives of the

principal's role in series reading programs. Harding states semistructured interviews provide a guide in which every respondent comments on each topic (2019). Bryman (2008) details skills required by the interviewer to include structuring and finishing the interview appropriately, allowing for balance between not dominating the interview and saying too little, and clearly interpreting and clarifying without imposing their own bias or meaning to the responses (as cited in Harding, 2019, p. 77-78).

### **Data Gathering Procedures**

Due to concerns surrounding the spread of the COVID-19 disease, each interview was conducted via Zoom, a real-time audiovisual web conferencing technology, using the researcher's Virginia Tech Zoom secured and password-protected account. Merriam and Tisdell outline the strengths and weaknesses of computer-mediated communication (CMC) tools such as Zoom (2016). One strength is that the researcher is not constrained by geography, and Zoom allows for video recordings to be made and transcribed (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Weaknesses could be difficulties with internet access, the chance of confidentiality being compromised, and the participants' reluctance and unfamiliarity with the Zoom venue (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Salmons (2012) describes CMC tools as "more than a simple transnational medium," with communications being experienced differently in both "subtle and obvious ways" (p. 2). Salmons also recommends having back-up options in case of problems with connectivity access and ensuring that safeguards are in place to protect participants' confidentiality when using CMC platforms such as Zoom (2012).

The interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes, and verbal consent was obtained from participants granting permission to record the interview via the CMC tool, Zoom. Once transcribed, the researcher solicited feedback from each of the participants in the form of member checks also called respondent validation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This involved reviewing the transcriptions with the participants to verify intent and accuracy, so each participant was emailed the transcription and asked to respond if inaccuracies were noted.

### **Instrument Design**

The interview instrument protocol was designed by the researcher (see Appendix D). Merriam and Tisdell advise, "the key to getting good data from interviewing is to ask good questions: asking good questions takes practice" (2016, p. 117). According to Merriam and

Tisdell, including follow-up questions about how the participants felt about the experience can also be more effective. This interview guide was based on Patton (2015)'s six types of questions: experience and behavior, opinions and values, feeling questions, knowledge, sensory, and background/demographics (as cited in Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p. 117-118). Patton (2015) also recommends against asking "why" questions because the responses are usually speculation, asking multiple questions in one, and leading questions (as cited in Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Seven questions for each research question were chosen based on Merriam and Tisdell's advice that fewer, more-open-ended questions were better because it allowed for the researcher to listen more attentively to "follow avenues of inquiry that will yield potentially rich contributions" (2016, p. 125). The interview questions were shared and validated by the Virginia Tech 2021 Central Virginia doctorate cohort through critique. Suggestions from the cohort were added to the interview guide.

### **Instrument Validity and Reliability**

Siegle (2015) stated that an instrument is valid only for a specific purpose or group of people, and the instrument should be used to the extent that appropriate inferences can be made ([researchbasics.education.uconn.edu/instrument\\_validity](http://researchbasics.education.uconn.edu/instrument_validity)). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) argued that validity and reliability are addressed in the way data are "collected, analyzed, and interpreted and the way in which findings are presented" (p. 238). Internal validity focuses on whether the research matches the reality (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) outline questions the researcher should ask themselves to ensure validity:

1. "How congruent are the findings with reality?"
2. Do the findings capture what is really there?"
3. Are investigators observing or measuring what they think they are measuring?" (p. 242)

Merriam and Tisdale suggested the use of triangulation to shore up internal validity (2016). Triangulation in this study involved using multiple sources of data from people with different perspectives to compare and cross-check for accuracy (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Another strategy to ensure internal validity is member checks, where the researcher takes the analysis back to the participants to ask for their validation. Respondents should be able to recognize their perspective in your interpretation (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016). Harding (2019)

suggests after writing your findings to go back and read through the data again, and researchers “should actively look for findings that do not fit with their chosen explanation” (p. 116).

### **Data Treatment and Management**

The researcher’s Virginia Tech Zoom management account was used to conduct the interviews due to COVID-19-related concerns with actual in person face-to-face interviews. This CMC tool provided the researcher with a transcription and video recording. The researcher assigned a nondescript identifier to maintain anonymity. Principals were assigned P1, P2, etc., and teachers were identified by T1, T2, etc.

The data were saved electronically in numerous locations by the researcher, including stored USB drives and the researcher's password-protected laptop. The researcher’s Virginia Tech Google Drive, Google Mail, and electronic folders were used to help manage data. A Google Sheet program was developed with each participants’ responses aligned with the interview questions. This allowed the researcher to filter the data for each question to sort and filter responses.

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

Once the interviews were completed, the researcher used the qualitative results to identify similarities and differences between the principals’ and teachers’ perspectives. The results allowed the researcher to make conclusions about the role of the principal in the development, implementation, and continuation of a series reading program.

The data gathered from the qualitative interviews was coded by the researcher. The results for each question were based on the frequencies of similarities and differences between the perceptions of principals and teachers. The researcher read and reviewed each transcription multiple times, checking for accuracy. Next, the researcher compared field notes recorded in a reflexive journal to capture the entire interview experience. The researcher printed the transcripts and used different colored pens that aligned with research and interview questions. These grouped themes were put into categories and organized to clarify key findings.

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggested analyzing the data and collecting the data simultaneously. After your first interview, read the transcriptions, field notes, and documents and comment with notes in the margins (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Next, write notes capturing “your reflections, tentative themes, hunches, ideas, and things to pursue that are derived from your first

set of data” (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016, p. 196). These ideas will form your focus for the next interview, and with each future interview, your findings will continue to capture tentative categories or themes (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016). The data for this study was analyzed in this manner with a final descriptive analysis of the findings.

### **Timeline**

After completion of the prospectus defense by the dissertation committee, a Virginia Tech Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) was submitted. Upon receiving HRPP approval, the researcher began googling to find elementary schools with series reading programs. Once secured, the researcher contacted the elementary principals to set up interview appointments. Principal and teacher interviews were conducted in October and November 2020. The analysis of the data was completed by January 2021.

### **Methodology Summary**

Based on a review of the literature, this research utilized a qualitative, phenomenological design allowing the perspectives of the research participants to be assessed. An interview instrument and guide were designed by the researcher and validated by the 2021 Virginia Tech Central Virginia doctoral cohort. Data were gathered from principals and teachers regarding the role of the principal in the development, implementation, and continuation of a series reading program using the interview protocol developed by the researcher. Each interview was conducted through Zoom, which provided a transcription and video recording. The researcher coded the data looking for common themes. The data were organized, managed, and stored in multiple secure locations. Throughout the study, research-based steps were taken to validate the study and to protect the confidentiality of those interviewed. The results of the data received were analyzed and discussed in Chapter 4.

## Chapter 4

### Analysis of Data

#### Introduction

In 2017, the Nation's Report Card revealed only 37% of fourth graders in the United States performed at or about the *Proficient* level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading assessment (NAEP Report Card, 2017). Only 20% of Black and 23% of Hispanic fourth graders met this benchmark (NAEP Report card, 2017). Scholastic's *Kids & Family Reading Report* showed only 31% of students ages 6-17 years saw themselves as fluent readers. In the report, 40% of eight-year-olds stated they *love reading*, but among nine-year-olds, this number drops to 28% (Scholastic, 2019). Only 19% of nine-year-olds reported reading books for fun as *extremely important* (Scholastic, 2019). These statistics highlight a national crisis in literacy. A large percentage of students did not see themselves as readers and do not read at the grade level proficiency level.

At the elementary level, student reading progress is key to a child's overall future educational experience, and an elementary principal's role in influencing quality reading instruction is vital to this lifelong success (Dhuey & Smith, 2014). The principal's knowledge of and involvement in his or her school's reading program can be the factor that determines its success or failure (Mackey, Pitcher, & Decman, 2006).

The purpose of the study was to identify perceptions of selected elementary principals and teachers regarding the principal's role in the development, implementation, and continuation of a series reading program. The study included semi-structured Zoom interviews with four principals and four teachers from elementary schools in Nevada and Alabama. The sample size was limited because of districts suspending research studies due to COVID-19 concerns.

#### Study Results

To explore the perceptions of the elementary principal's role in a series reading program through the lens of the principal and teacher, the scientific methodology of this investigation was a qualitative, phenomenological design in which the lived experiences of principals and teachers were examined. This approach's purpose was to describe, interpret, and understand multiple perspectives. Merriam and Tisdell, stated "to get at the essence or basic underlying structure of

the meaning of an experience, the phenomenological interview is the primary method of data collection” (2016, p. 27).

The researcher developed interview questions to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of elementary principals regarding their role in the development, implementation, and continuation of an effective series reading program?
2. What are teachers’ perceptions of the role of the elementary principal in the development, implementation, and continuation of an effective series reading program?

The interview instrument was divided into two categories to match the two research questions: principal perceptions of their role and teacher perceptions of the principal’s role.

### **Data Analysis**

The interviews were conducted and transcribed through the researcher’s password protected Virginia Tech Zoom account. The data were inventoried, organized, coded into themes, and stored in the researcher’s password-protected Virginia Tech Google drive, which was accessible only by the researcher. All responses were organized by question allowing for a thorough analysis of the data collected. The researcher began the process of data analysis by identifying segments of the data that were specific responses to the questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The researcher open coded each transcript by writing different “notes, comments, observations, and queries in the margins” (Merriam & Tisdell, p. 204, 2016). These units of data were then organized by research question and broken down by individual interview question into tables and charts in a Google workbook with individual sheets created for each question. The use of colored fonts helped reveal information that stimulated the researcher to focus on “recurring regularities in the data” and to assign the units into themes or categories (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 203). To name the categories, the researcher returned to the study’s purpose, literature review, and the meanings made by the participants. Throughout the analysis, the researcher continually reviewed her own biases in order not to project personal experiences and beliefs or suspend judgement. The goals of the researcher were “to arrive at structural descriptions” of the experiences and to identify the “underlying and precipitating factors” that account for what was experienced so conclusions could be drawn based on the research questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 227).

## **Research Question 1**

What are the perceptions of elementary principals regarding their role in the development, implementation, and continuation of a series reading program? The following interview questions correspond to research question one:

1. Describe the development history of your school's series reading program? What role did you play?
2. Describe your literacy background.
3. What type of professional development and supports were given to teachers and staff? What role did you play?
4. Describe the implementation history of your series reading program. What role did you play?
5. How were students motivated to participate in the program? What role did you play?
6. Describe the program's continuation success. What role did you play?
7. How would you describe the overall success of your series reading program? What role did you play?
8. How do you feel about the overall experiences of a series reading program? What would you have done differently?

### *Data Collection and Analysis: Research Question 1 (Principal's perspective)*

#### **Interview Question 1: Describe the development history of your school's series reading program? What role did you play?**

Two interviewees (Principals 2 and 3 [P2 and P3]) became the principal after their program had been implemented. One of those principals came from a school with the program and visited her present school to observe the program before becoming the new principal.

Principal 1 (P1) opened a new school with the program four years ago. As part of her interview for the position, she referenced her intent to bring the series reading program to the new school. Another colleague opened the school with her and brought her the idea after watching the Edutopia video and was familiar with the featured school, Walter Bracken STEAM Academy. P1 stated that having a teacher spearhead the idea was helpful because, "they're more willing to listen to somebody that's a teacher, rather than an administrator." (P1, / 331) P1

reported it being helpful to open the school with the program because it made “a huge difference because now it’s just embedded in our culture.” (P1, / 47)

Principal 4 (P4) was looking for a way to monitor reading and to get students into just-right books. She worked closely with her literacy coach because she had a strong background in reading and reading curriculum. Together, they both were searching for a program which students would “buy into it and something that could be scaffolded along the way.” (P4, / 20) The literacy coach and she watched the Edutopia video, and then the literacy coach reached out to Walter Bracken STEAM Academy where permission was given to “piggyback on what they had done.” (P4, / 21) P4 described how before the series reading implementation, when she asked what a child was reading, the response would not be a book but instead, the student would give his/her reading level. She shared an example of asking a child what he/she was reading and being told, “level 2.1-2.5.” (P4, / 98) Her mission was for students to have “a real conversation about a series, no matter the child.” (P4, / 98)

Table 2 represents the data unit identified in this interview question and the corresponding principal respondent.

**Table 2**

***Research Question 1/Interview Question 1 Data Units and Corresponding Principal***

***Responses***

Data Unit	P1	P 2	P3	P4
Principal is new to the school and does not have the background		X	X	
Principal collaborated with other teacher(s) to develop the program	X			X
Principal had personal experiences with children reading books in a series	X			
Principal saw the Edutopia video and was inspired to bring the program to their school	X		X	X

**Interview Question 2: Describe your literacy background.**

P1 stated, “well, actually I really don’t have much of a literacy background, I’m more of a math background.” (P1, / 65) She started teaching middle school resource math and science and then dropped to elementary resource for a few years. After she received her administration

degree, she transferred to an elementary school and started teaching fourth and third grade before she became an assistant principal. She also took different literacy courses the district offered to build her literacy background. P1 stated that she hired an assistant principal who had been her literacy specialist because she needed someone with more reading experience. P1 described how her own son enjoyed reading the *Mr. Klutz is Nuts! Weird School* series when he was in third grade. This realization occurred around the time she opened the new school, so she thought, “I could just see him like he just jumped series to series. Hey, well, I see that it works for him. Why not try it with the other kids?” (P1, l 345) She shared how the experience with her son helped to build her series reading background.

Principal 2 (P2) reported that she had taught fifth and third grades and had worked on creating common formative assessments for the district as her literacy background.

Principal 3 (P3) described her literacy background as “it’s pretty solid.” (P3, l 78) P3 took additional courses to enhance her understanding, was a reading strategist at one point where she worked with small groups of students on reading, and was a classroom teacher. P3 also attended “a lot of professional development” through the district and “throughout the years gained my knowledge and my experience” with reading. (P3, l 84) P3 stated, “I try to read up on the research and latest strategies and to see what’s going on here in the district as to new programs and new approaches.” (P3, l 85) She continued, “I always try to keep up with that and use certain portions of it as I see fit, or I see what might work in the environment that I’m placed in.” (P3, l 86) P3 shared, “I think I have a solid knowledge of best practices so I’m able to guide my staff and students to reach what we hope our goals are.” (P3, l 87)

P4 was a first-grade teacher for fourteen years, a reading teacher for four years, and wrote reading curriculum for the county before becoming an administrator. She “made it my business to know reading as a first-grade teacher.” (P4, l 6) She presented professional development on guided reading and about working with struggling readers for her county. P4 stated, “I have a strong background in reading and reading curriculum, but my knowledge of curriculum was kind of above where my teachers were as far as getting children into just-right books.” (P, l 20) Table 3 represents the data unit identified in this interview question and the corresponding principal respondent.

**Table 3**

***Research Question 1/Interview Question 2 Data Units and Corresponding Principal Responses***

Data Unit	P1	P 2	P3	P4
Principal describes self as having not much of a literacy background	X	X		
Principal wants to improve literacy background and takes classes, does additional reading	X		X	X
Principal has presented on literacy at either the district or state conference level		X		X
Principal describes their literacy background as strong.			X	X

**Interview Question 3: What type of professional development and supports were given to teachers and staff? What role did you play?**

Prior to the professional development, all four principals described how the teachers were surveyed about their series reading preferences and were allowed to pick the series they were interested in. All four principals described how this action was an important part of teacher buy-in with the series reading program. P1 opened a new school with the program and used the first few days of school to discuss every staff member’s role in the program. P1 stated, “We really didn’t do much except kind of model what would happen in the classroom that was it.” (P1, / 84) P1 described how she had her own series in her office to serve as a model to the staff for the program.

P4 conducted professional development with her literacy coach and began the session by showing the Edutopia video to “whet their appetite for series.” (P4, / 45) P1 and P4 described continued professional development as the program progressed to identify problems with procedures and to brainstorm solutions.

Table 4 represents the data unit identified in this interview question and the corresponding principal respondent.

**Table 4*****Research Question 1/Interview Question 3 Data Units and Corresponding Responses***

Data Unit	P1	P 2	P3	P4
Principal surveyed staff about book interest was key for teacher buy-in	X	X	X	X
Principal modeled the program by having their own series for students to check-out	X		X	
Principal presented PD with the staff about the program	X			
Principal let teachers pick the books interesting to them and used school funds to purchase them	X	X	X	X
The school created a series reading website.	X		X	

**Interview Question 4: Describe the implementation history of your series reading program.****What role did you play?**

Both P2 and P3 became principal after the implementation of the program at their school, so both were unable to give specific answers to interview question number 4. P1 opened a new school with a series reading program.

After having teachers choose a series to have in their classroom for checkout, P1 worked with the leadership team to develop procedures for the program including ways to make the checkout process something the teachers could also choose how to implement. P1 used available funds from the budget given to open a new school to purchase the books. She stated, “with part of the budget of opening a school, we were able to just make sure that every teacher had two series in every room when we started.” (P1, l 56) She continued, “to me, it was more about the support of purchasing all the books and then just making sure that every staff member understood their role in the series.” (P1, l 57) She shared, “teachers were excited because we were building the building,” and teachers chose to come to the new school knowing the programs it would be implementing. (P1, l 101)

P4 was “very fortunate to have a couple of programs in our school that made good money.” (P4, l 50) A paid PreK program gave her “a good base for money,” so she was able to purchase each series that a teacher was “passionate about.” (P4, l 49) She described how the Accelerated Reader (AR) program was previously used to promote reading and was run by the

media specialist. P1 said about AR and the media specialist, “that was kind of her thing, she really bought into that.” (P4, / 56) Her concern with implementation was many of the series books “live in our media center,” and she knew there were “holes in the series” library collection, so the teachers needed to house the books in their rooms. (P4, / 58) When the program began, every “teacher had series sets in their classroom in addition to every special teacher had a set or more that they have including the principal.” (P4, / 60)

Met with animosity from teachers who previously used AR to encourage student reading, P4 had to “really do a sell job with it.” (P4, / 134) With AR, students set a goal for a certain number of points, and P4 was concerned that students were “reading all these picture books” to get the points instead of reading chapter books. (P4, / 77) P4 organized a kickoff event where each teacher dressed up like their series character. She describes how the children, especially the older students, were excited about participating in the series reading program, but she continued to work on convincing the teachers. She detailed, “sadly, it took our teachers to understand it’s okay to have them read from chapter book series.” (P4, / 84) P4 described how she continued to focus on returning teachers to better understand the reasons driving what they were doing through the series reading program. Table 5 represents the data unit identified in this interview question and the corresponding principal respondent.

**Table 5**

***Research Question 1/Interview Question 4 Data Units and Corresponding Principal Responses***

<b>Data Unit</b>	<b>P1</b>	<b>P 2</b>	<b>P3</b>	<b>P4</b>
Principal walked into the program after the implementation		X	X	X
Principal determined series reading programs was something happening at their school	X		X	
Program was built upon series teachers were interested in hosting	X		X	
The school hosted events to share the program with parents.			X	X
The principal allocated funds to purchase series books for the school				X

**Interview Question 5: How were students motivated to participate in the program? What role did you play?**

To motivate students to read a series, P1 recognized those who had finished a series in the school's daily recorded announcements. A bookmark listed the books in each series, and when students finished each book in the series they were required to take a quiz on the book through the website [www.readnquiz.com](http://www.readnquiz.com). After passing the assessment, teachers would initial on the bookmark as each book was read. Along with being recognized on the announcements, students had their picture taken and displayed in the library once the bookmark was full and the series finished. P1 described how each series aligned to a point system, and once students had a certain number of points, they could earn "brag tags" to hang on a chain necklace displayed on a bulletin board in their classroom. P1 stated, "they just keep the chain on the bulletin board so they don't lose them, or if they wanted to take them home they could. Most of them prefer to keep it there so that it becomes more of a brag tag thing." (P1, / 131) P1 described the biggest motivating factor in this way: "the most important thing for me is making sure that the kids get excited, so offering the opportunity for them to request series and having the budget makes a difference." (P1, / 192) P1 detailed how switching the series she hosted in her office each year was a motivator because students wanted to visit her office to check out books.

P2 also described the use of a bookmark with the books in the series listed as a way student were motivated to participate. She stated at her school when students finished a series, a "lot of teachers would showcase them outside their door." (P2, / 86) At P2's school, students would also take an AR quiz on the book read from the series, and once all books on the bookmark were completed, students earned series tabs to display on a chain necklace. P2 described how each Friday, the literacy coach would recognize students with the tabs. She detailed more about the literacy coach's and the teachers' role in motivating students, but never described herself as recognizing students or talking to them about their reading.

Similar to P2, P3 had only been in her role for a year and a half, and since the COVID pandemic started in March 2020, the series program had been halted. P3 stated when she started as principal she "just wanted to observe what was happening to be more informed" about the program. (P3, / 89) P3 described how she celebrated student reading by going through classrooms and making herself visible. P3's school was designed as an outdoor school where there are garden areas and spaces, "so kids read everywhere, so it was easy for me to see that

excitement.” (P3, l 91-92) P3 described seeing the students’ excitement as they traveled to different classrooms checking out books. She explained that students were motivated because they had the freedom to choose “what they really like to read.” (P3, l 95) “I would just say I was a cheerleader” was how she explained her role in motivating students to participate in the program. (P3, l 96) She also described how she “was really impressed with the ability of the students to share what they really like about their love for series” as a motivation for students. (P3, l 94)

P4 focused on her role of encouraging teachers to participate in the series reading program as a way of getting students motivated with the program. She saw her role as the person who believed in the program but had to “sell it like a used car” to her teachers. (P4, l 134) In the end, she detailed, when “they saw that their kids were excited about it, that their children can be successful with it,” there was teacher buy-in. (P4, l 101) With the teachers onboard, students naturally became more motivated to participate, she shared; “those kids were holding teachers accountable.” (P4, l 137) P4 described the use of bookmarks at her school, similar to what the other principals in the study described. Students also took an AR test on books read and received chain necklaces or backpack tags when series were completed. P4 described the conversations between students and teachers about the series books read as a motivator for students because of the trust built during the conversations. Table 6 represents the data unit identified in this interview question and the corresponding principal respondent.

**Table 6**

***Research Question 1/Interview Question 5 Data Units and Corresponding Principal Responses***

<b>Data Unit</b>	<b>P1</b>	<b>P 2</b>	<b>P3</b>	<b>P4</b>
Students were recognized school-wide either during announcements or in an assembly	X		X	
Students used a bookmark to keep track of the books read	X	X	X	X
Students earned “brag tags” for completed series	X	X	X	X
Student had the freedom to select books interesting to them or to request new series	X		X	
Students’ excitement for the program and the personal conversations about what was read were encouraged.			X	X
The principal encouraged teachers to participate.				X

**Interview Question 6: Describe the program’s continuation success. What role did you play?**

P1 described her role in the program’s continuation success as being the one who reminds teachers of its importance. She stated, “I’ve integrated with the teachers you need to have those conversations with the kids so that they want to go to somebody else and have conversation too.” (P1, / 177) P1 changes up the series she hosts each year to encourage new students to participate. She talks with students to hear about their favorite series, takes notes, and then hosts that series the next year. Each year, the school does a series kickoff event the second week of school where each grade level has a designated time where the teachers would show their students the website and where they could find the different series. Having a certain designated time at the beginning of the year for each grade level to go and come back with books was one way P1 said she promoted the program’s continuation each year. Her school also hosted a parent Series Reading Night each year where families came to the building so students could show them how to go to the different classrooms to get the books. P1 described how this event was usually part of another family engagement event, but it actually played a big role in the program’s continuation success because “it gets the parents a little more involved in the series.” (P1, / 144) P1 also detailed the role she plays in securing funding for the program. She utilizes school funds and has had fundraisers in the past to purchase books, but she stated that it was easier to build the program using the funds allocated from opening a new school. P1 shared that during the pandemic, students would come to the school because of technology concerns, and she would encourage them to take a book from one of her series as an example of a small way the program continued.

P2 described how the school’s website was one way the program continued successfully. Through the website, students are able to see the different series available in the school and can print off series bookmarks, “I know they have a, I have a website where they kind of keep up what series they have so that the kids also can look through and kind of see, kind of shop online.” (P2, / 80) P2 detailed how the program was not continuing during the COVID-19 pandemic because students were not allowed to move around, and for safety reasons, it was necessary for books to be put in isolation before being checked out.

P3 described herself as a motivator and cheerleader for the program before the pandemic started, and she now sees this role as even more critical to student success and the continuation

of the series reading program. She stated, “we’re still trying to continue with this distance motivation and keeping up asking students” about their reading. (P3, / 96) P3 also wants teachers to continue with these conversations about reading. She described how students have access to digital books during the school day now through [www.getepic.com](http://www.getepic.com), and their library has opened up a curb pickup and drop-off. She shared how students request books online, the library staff prepares the books, and families drive to the school to pick them up. Students can continue to use their school’s series reading website to access different series and to read digital books accessed through [myOn.com](http://myOn.com). P3 shared that because series reading has not continued during the pandemic, she has been brainstorming other ways to encourage students to read, such as having an AR point competition among student groups. She noticed “a drop in just looking at that data” with not just series reading but with overall reading this fall. (P3, / 102)

P3’s opinion about series continuation success is that the principal’s role is to hire the right staff who believe in the program. P3 shared when she became principal, she was able to hire new staff, and part of the interview process involved asking teachers to respond about the series reading program. She stated, “it has a lot to do with the hiring process also what kind of characteristics are you looking for. It really takes a teacher out of a box to think out of the box.” (P3, / 236, 243)

P4 also saw her role in the continuing success of their series reading program as the person who held teachers accountable for participating and encouraging students to participate in the program. She stated that adding new series “really made a difference” and that she would meet with specific grade levels for “revamping meetings.” (P4, / 265) She described how some of her teachers were great about implementing it, and how the others who were not became her focus. Table 7 represents the data unit identified in this interview question and the corresponding principal respondent.

**Table 7**

***Research Question 1/Interview Question 6 Data Units and Corresponding Principal Responses***

<b>Data Unit</b>	<b>P1</b>	<b>P 2</b>	<b>P3</b>	<b>P4</b>
Principal continually reminds teachers/staff of the importance of the series reading program and holds teachers accountable to having conversations with students.	X		X	x
Principal purchases new books or changes up the series available	X			
The school has a kickoff event or parent night to start each year	X			
The principal hires the right staff who believe in the program's purpose			X	X
Principal described how the COVID-19 pandemic as halted the program.	X	X	X	X
The school's series reading program is linked to the school's main website for families to access when not in the building		X	X	X

**Interview Question 7: How would you describe the overall success of a series reading program? What role did you play?**

P1 described the overall success of her school's series reading program as, "I think it's great. It really gets them excited about reading." (P1, l 169) In her opinion, the overall success of the program was not only students excited about reading, but it was also the strong relationships built between the staff and the students because of the program. She stated, "now because we have every staff member on our campus that has a series, even my office staff, so they come in and it gives everybody the opportunity to get to know kids, rather than them just knowing their teacher." (P1, l 208) When asked if she felt students were better readers because they read series books, she stated, "don't know if I would say they're better readers, but they're more excited about reading." (P1, l 211) She continued describing her student population as "higher performing" and for her community "it's more about providing the challenge for them rather than helping them get better." (P1, l 213) She shared that if she was at another school with

different population that was “more at risk, I would say yes,” because she believes a series reading program could make students better readers. (P1, / 213)

P2 described her school’s series reading program’s overall success as “very genius.” (P2, / 116) She shared how she was excited because “I just got my own series for me to start doing as well with the students.” (P2, / 116) P2 continued to describe the program’s success as follows: “I think it also gives teachers an opportunity to mentor students that they wouldn’t normally talk to as well.” (P2, / 144) She continued to share how the greater number of adults with whom a student interacts, the more advocates there are for that child. P2 described how interacting with more adults through the series reading program would “pump them up or give them some” additional adults to talk to and share interests with. (P2, / 147) She described how the series reading program made the school more “family oriented” because students were able to talk to different grade level teachers. (P2, / 148)

Describing the success of the series reading program, P3 shared, “I think it’s important to have the leadership spearhead or promote or support it.” (P3, / 232) P3 continued to share that her goal as a new principal coming in was to maintain the success of the program.

When asked about the success of the program, P4 shared that she was a “firm believer that you get better at reading by reading.” (P4, / 275) P4 detailed how her school had the highest poverty rate in the feeder pattern, but the best state test scores. P4 described reading success as more than test scores or weekly tests. She shared her belief that “to get better at reading, you have to have somebody who is working with you to understand what you read” to grow as a better reader. (P4, / 276) P4 described how during the first several years of the program, “I didn’t see a decline in reading; I actually saw an increase.” (P4, / 272) Table 8 represents the data unit identified in this interview question and the corresponding principal respondent.

**Table 8**

***Research Question 1/Interview Question 7 Data Units and Corresponding Principal Responses***

Data Unit	P1	P 2	P3	P4
The series reading program got students excited to read.	X	X		X
The series reading program promoted adult student relationships which built community		X		X
The school saw an increase in student reading levels				X

**Interview Question 8: How do you feel about the overall experiences of a series reading program? What would you have done differently?**

When asked if she would have done anything different with the series reading program, P1 responded, “I don’t think so.” (P1, / 191) P1 described how the most important thing for her was getting students excited about reading which she felt the program achieved. She included the importance of students being able to request series and making sure funds were available to purchase books students were interested in. P1 emphasized how the experiences of the series reading program built relationships between the staff and the students as conversations about books grew. Concerning these relationships, she shared, “I think that’s the most valuable piece of it.” (P1, / 207)

P2 explained that one thing she would do differently with the series reading at her school was to have a specific time for checking out books instead of having students go to classrooms at any time. When discussing the overall experiences of the program, she shared how excited students were about the brag tags. As her personal experiences with series reading grew, her views changed. She shared, “before I thought, like, what’s the point of this series, why is it such a big deal?” (P2, / 121) She described how when she saw students making connections with the characters and watching the “progression of language and growth and reading” she realized that series reading is “a genius thing.” (P2, / 123-125)

When asked about something P3 would like to do differently with the program, she focused on changes she would make to the overall school and not specific to series reading. Since being new to her school in 2019, P3 observed all the programs at the school and became concerned because, “the data is also starting to crack, to show a little bit of something needs to

change.” (P3, / 246) She described how the school had gone from a five-star distinguished school to a three-star one. P3 described how many of the staff had been with the previous principal for more than 20 years and had become “too focused on project-based learning, hands-on fun” and started to dip in progress outcome data. (P3, / 259) She detailed how her next steps for the school were to make sure there was “a purpose and a rhyme and reason to everything we do.” (P3, / 261) P3 did not mention changes to the series reading program specifically but commented on the overall shift in focus toward the school’s project-based learning.

Addressing the overall experiences and reflecting on the series reading program, P4 restated her goal for the program as such, “we never really strayed away from the underlying principle of putting children in just-right books matters.” (P4, / 330) She continued, “ensure that kids are reading. It matters.” (P4, / 332) Regarding a principal’s experience with a series reading program, P4 shared, “I believe that one of the reasons children are not as successful is we don’t have a lot of curriculum leaders who sit in our position.” (P4, / 353) She continued, “it’s great to be a cheerleader, and a happy person, but you have to have some substance, to have a belief system.” (P4, / 355) Table 9 represents the data unit identified in this interview question and the corresponding principal respondent.

**Table 9**

***Research Question 1/Interview Question 8 7 Data Units and Corresponding Responses***

<b>Data Unit</b>	<b>P1</b>	<b>P 2</b>	<b>P3</b>	<b>P4</b>
Principal felt that relationships that were built was a key aspect of the program’s success	X	X		
Principal felt students were more excited about reading and were better able to find just-right books	X	X		X
Principal described fine tuning procedures as something that could be changed to make the program more successful.		X	X	

After detailing responses to the interview questions, the researcher continued to familiarize herself with the interview transcriptions by taking notes, rereading the text, and generally reviewing the data through an organized color-coded Google Workbook. Different colored pens were also used to highlight sections of the text to describe the content and to look for commonalities. Various phrases were highlighted in different colors corresponding to

different codes. Several codes were then combined into broader themes, which were reviewed and compared to the data set.

*Major Themes*

Coded data units were used to identify seven major themes for Research Question 1: principal literacy background; principal as learning leader; collaboratively develop, implement, and evaluate instructional systems to promote student success; empower and motivate teachers and staff to foster continuous improvement for collective instructional capacity; hire, support, and retain effective teachers to ensure that each student has high academic learning opportunities; allocate and manage school resources to address each student’s academic needs; and cultivate a caring, supportive community that promotes adult-student relationships to support academic learning. These themes formed the findings described in Chapter 5 and are found in Table 10 and Figure 2.

**Table 10**

*Major Themes Emerging from Research Question 1 and Codes Contributing to Themes*

Major Themes	Codes Contributing to Themes
Principal Literacy Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Taught lower grades reading</li> <li>● Saw own child struggle with reading</li> <li>● Sought additional coursework as a teacher in reading</li> <li>● Believed children learn to read by reading</li> </ul>
Principal as Learning Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Read articles/books for latest instructional strategies</li> <li>● Saw Edutopia video on series reading</li> <li>● Brought previous experience with series to new position</li> <li>● Searching for ways to monitor student reading</li> <li>● Seeking new series and books</li> <li>● Modeled by having own series books in office</li> </ul>

(continued)

**Table 10 (cont.)**

Major Themes	Codes Contributing to Themes
Collaboratively develop, implement, and evaluate instructional systems to promote student success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Collaborated with another person to develop program</li> <li>● Someone else brought the idea to the principal</li> <li>● Principal presented professional development with teachers on series reading</li> <li>● Made changes in program procedures based on teacher input</li> <li>● Had a system to address problems with solutions</li> <li>● Continuous revision to program based on student and teacher feedback</li> </ul>
Empower and motivate teachers and staff to foster continuous improvement for collective instructional capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Shared information about series on announcements</li> <li>● Had conversations with students about progress/what they were reading</li> <li>● Built relationships with students through books</li> <li>● Distributed rewards (brag tags, certificates, etc.)</li> <li>● Encouraged students to participate</li> <li>● Served as a cheerleader</li> <li>● Pushed teachers to be more involved</li> </ul>
Hire, support, and retain effective teachers to ensure that each student has high academic learning opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Hire teachers who believe in the program</li> <li>● Provide professional development and training on series reading program</li> <li>● Give teachers choice and voice in how the program works</li> </ul>
Allocate and manage school resources to address each student's academic needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Have fundraisers to purchase books</li> <li>● Purchase incentives with school funds</li> <li>● Continue use of Accelerated Reader program</li> <li>● Purchase series reading books</li> </ul>
Cultivate a caring, supportive community that promotes adult-student relationships to support academic learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Series reading program strengthened and promoted different positive adult interactions</li> <li>● Series available to checkout from teachers and various staff members</li> </ul>

Figure 2 gives a pictorial representation of the major themes emerging from research question 1.

**Figure 2**

***Major Themes Emerging from Research Question 1***

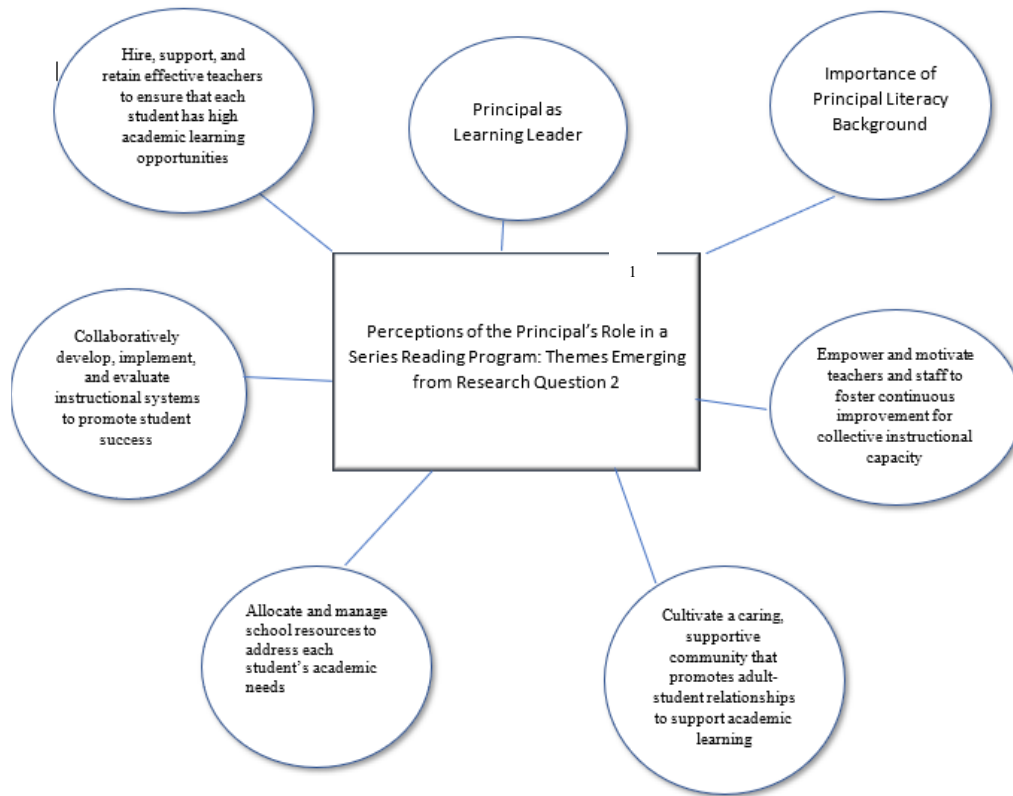


Table 2 and Figure 2 represent the major themes emerging from research question 1. These themes become the basis for findings and implications discussed in chapter 5.

**Research Question 2**

What are teachers' perceptions of the role of the elementary principal in the development, implementation, and continuation of an effective series reading program? The following interview questions correspond to Research Question 2

1. Describe the development history of your school's series reading program? What role did the principal play?
2. What type of professional development and supports were put in place for teachers and staff? What role did the principal play?
3. Describe the implementation history of your series reading program. What role did the principal play?
4. How were students motivated to participate in the program? What role did the

- principal play?
5. Describe the program's continuation success. What role did the principal play?
  6. How would you describe the overall success of your series reading program? What role did the principal play?
  7. How do you feel about the overall experiences of a series reading program? What would you have done differently?

*Research Question 2 (Teachers' Perspectives)*

**Interview Question 1: Describe the development history of your school's series reading program. What role did the principal play?**

Teacher 1 (T1) and Teacher (T4) were from the same school, and were there when it opened with the current principal. When asked about the development of the series reading program, T1 described how T4 had worked with the principal to "do a lot of research, and they traveled to different schools to see what the schools were doing" (T1, / 26-27) T1 described how T4 and the principal developed a plan of how the new school would implement the program. T1 shared how the program started, with each teacher having two or three series with the goal of building each year with new series and teachers.

Currently, T4 has a new position outside the school but was able to give insight into the development and implementation of the program. T4 described how when he and the principal were opening the new school, they were both looking for something that would make the school "unique and exciting." (T4, / 33) T4 explained how in their location, "there's a lot of competition now really frankly with public schools to make sure they keep students and that they don't go to charter schools or private schools." (T4, / 33-34) He detailed how the series reading program was just one of the pieces he and the principal wanted to have in the new school to differentiate it from other schools in the area. T4 watched the Edutopia video and reached out the school featured in the video that happened to be in the area. He described how he and the principal took different pieces of the program and put it together to work best for them. Purchasing the books with new building funds presented a challenge because each book had to be ordered through the district purchasing process. T4 described how fundraising and using grant money to purchase series sets from Amazon was more efficient. With regard to teacher buy-in, T4 stated, "the principal was all behind it, so of course that was part of the driving force." (T4, / 50) By opening a new school with new staff all coming into the position knowing that series reading would be

part of the culture, the teachers buy-in was almost automatic. T4 shared how teachers knew “this is the direction you’re going to go and you’ve all decided to come and work here,” so it was “different than being thrown into the middle of it if you were at an existing school.” (T4, l 51) T4 detailed how the procedures were developed ahead of time, including how to get the books into students’ hands, what to do first, and what kind of incentives there would be and who would be in charge of that piece.

When describing the development process at her school, Teacher 2 (T2) shared how she and the principal at the time saw the Edutopia video and knew “it was something that we could do. We believed in series reading.” (T2, l 25) T2 continued by sharing how she and the principal worked closely together for many years and had built a strong relationship. She described how she and the principal had both taught first and second grade for many years and detailed how they both “taught in our classrooms using series.” (T2, l 26) She and the principal “felt like this was a great opportunity to launch and create this on our own.” (T2, l 27) T2 shared how she and the principal showed the technology teacher the series reading website from the school featured in the Edutopia video, and the technology teacher began creating a similar website for their program.

For the past several years, Teacher 3 (T3) has served as the theme coordinator for the school featured in the Edutopia video where the idea of series reading began. When describing the development of the series reading program, she started by sharing how as a school, they noticed students not finishing books and “just jumping from place to place” with reading. (T3, l 23) T3 shared how “we have a leadership team at our school, and whenever we’re having any problems, we bring solutions to the team and we try to figure out the best way to move forward.” (T3, l 40-41) At the time, T3 described how the principal’s daughter was dyslexic and a reluctant reader, but she loved princess books. She “just gobbled them up, one after the other after the other reading it” (T3, l 39) T3 thought the whole idea for the series reading program stemmed from the principal’s own daughter’s success with series reading. The principal allocated money to purchase a series set for each classroom teacher, and next, the leadership team brainstormed ways to get the “kids excited about it.” (T3, l 43) Table 11 represents the data units identified in this interview question and the corresponding teacher respondent.

**Table 11*****Research Question 2/Interview Question 1 Data Units and Corresponding Teacher Responses***

<b>Data Unit</b>	<b>T1</b>	<b>T2</b>	<b>T3</b>	<b>T4</b>
The school was looking for something to make the school unique.	X		X	X
Staff from the school saw the Edutopia video and/or visited the featured school	X	X		X
The principal had a belief in the effectiveness of the program because of her literacy background	X	X	X	X
Teachers worked with the principal closely to develop the program for their school			X	X
School funds were used to purchase books.	X			X

**Interview Question 2: What type of professional development and supports were put in place for teachers and staff? What role did the principal play?**

Because T1 and T4 were at the same school when the program started, they both shared how during the first training days in the summer before school started, professional development and training occurred about the series reading program. T1 described how there was a half day where teachers created videos for the website and were trained on how “they were going to have the series in their rooms” and the reading engagement program. (T1 / 31) When describing the role of the principal in this part of the process, T1 stated, “she helped develop it with mainly the other teacher (T4). He and the principal were constantly in contact sitting in her office talking about how this would work.” (T1, / 40) T4 shared that during the training, a handbook with different options teachers could choose from for check-out procedures was provided for teacher support. T4 described how teachers were instructed on the program’s details, but it was ultimately the teachers’ responsibility to know who checked out what book and to remind students to return the series books in a timely manner.

T2 described how training for the series reading program began with teachers understanding the expectations. She explained, “first, we made sure that teachers knew that it was a school-wide initiative and that we really were expecting everybody to participate.” (T2, / 57) Part of the supports put in place for teachers included purchasing series books in which

teachers already had interest. T2 shared how with their program, teachers picked books appropriate for their students to limit travel time.

When describing the professional development and supports put in place for teachers, T3 shared that time was spent training teachers on how to run the different reports from the AR program so teachers could see how many points students were earning. Teachers were then trained on how to merge the existing AR program with series reading. She stated, “we just talked through exactly what the leadership team planned and how it would look, and then we took it to the staff meeting and made sure everybody understood how it was going to go.” (T3, / 525) T3 continued to share how the leadership would work together on solutions when problems arose to make little changes along the way. T3 went on to describe how conversations continued over the first few years about check-out times and adding new series. She shared, “we didn’t just introduce it and drop it, but [we] kept it alive in our meetings.” (T3, / 536-538)

Table 12 represents the data units identified in this interview question and the corresponding teacher respondent.

**Table 12*****Research Question 2/Interview Question 2 Data Units and Corresponding Teacher Responses***

<b>Data Unit</b>	<b>T1</b>	<b>T2</b>	<b>T3</b>	<b>T4</b>
Professional development and training occurred during the summer	X			X
Teachers and school leaders worked together to create materials (videos, handbooks, website) to share with staff	X		X	X
The principal worked with teachers to guide the process	X	X		X
The principal made sure the staff knew the series reading program was a school-wide initiative		X		
Teachers had some voice and choice in how the program would operate and in the books selected.	X	X		X
The series reading program PD evolved as concerns arose or there was a need to revamp			X	X

**Interview Question 3: Describe the implementation history of your series reading program.****What role did the principal play?**

The implementation history of T1's series reading program began with teachers being able to discuss what books they wanted to host in their classrooms. Teachers also chose their own system of checking out and returning the books. Bookmarks with lists of the books in a series were developed and given to teachers. The last part of the implementation process included starting the school-wide reading rewards program.

Since T1 and T4 were at the same school, T4 shared a similar implementation history. T4 shared how a student teacher who had previously been at a school with a series reading program actually helped alleviate some of the concerns teachers had about implementing the program. He described how teachers and parents were worried about students interrupting class to check out or return books, and the student teacher reassured everyone that training a student or two to assist with checkout solved the problem. Another solution to the checkout time problem involved teachers having the option of putting out a sign indicating that series reading was closed

at that location and to come back again. T4 shared, “I feel like we launched it pretty well, ready to go, and didn’t have to do a lot of revisions because we thought about it pretty hard in advance.” (T4, l 79) T4 described the implementation process as “working, living, breathing document” which started as a “skeleton,” but then teachers went back and worked together with their grade level teams to decide how the program would work best for them. (T4, l 185-188) After two or three iterations and everyone’s input, the implementation process was complete. T4 felt that the feedback from teachers and their ownership in the implementation stages were key for overall teacher buy-in with their series reading program.

T2 described the implementation process at her school as one built upon existing series books teachers already had in their classrooms. Using local school money to purchase additional books encouraged teacher implementation because teachers wanted more books in their classroom libraries. She shared that some teachers already had existing series in their rooms, so it was not necessary to buy additional sets for them. At the start of the implementation process, “every teacher had a series, so we started with about 50 series.” (T2, l, 72-75) The principal knew many students enjoyed the *Magic Tree House* series, so she hosted that popular series. Popular book series had more than one host for students to choose from. T2 shared about the media specialist’s reluctance to implement series reading because she felt “like we were stepping in her territory of checking out books and she was worried that it was going to mess up the checkout numbers for her.” (T2, l 63-64) Eventually, the media specialist “got on board” once she saw the students’ excitement and started labeling and organizing books in the library by series. Implementing the program in the second quarter of the school year allowed a comparison of data between back-to-back quarters, and T2 described how the “Accelerated Reader books was almost doubled.” (T2, l 68)

T3 detailed the implementation process at her school as an organic, slower process. T3 was teaching an after-school Crime Scene Investigation exploratory class and used the *Scooby Doo* series to interest her participants. Students in her class were sent a special letter from Scooby Doo with some Scooby Snacks included. T3 shared that students were assigned to exploratory classes based on AR, so she was able to match the *Scooby Doo* series with her group’s reading level. After her experiences, the principal taught a similar exploratory class using the *Shredderman* series and had students make commercials and solving cases. T3 described how the principal actually had around 20 series in her office at the time, and

“everybody just ended up getting lots of series” in their classrooms. (T3, l 56-57) With all of these series to choose from, a website was built so students could navigate where series were and easily locate ones that interested them. The website also grouped series books by reading level so students match series with their level more easily. T3 shared how series reading interest and excitement grew in the exploratory classes offered several times a year because the groups also became “a little book club.” (T3, l 48) The momentum from these exploratory class groups grew to where each classroom and location was hosting assigned series. A set time became devoted to series check out and return each morning, and students were assigned to be check out helpers. Table 13 represents the data units identified in this interview question and the corresponding teacher respondent.

**Table 13**

***Research Question 2/Interview Question 3 Data Units and Corresponding Teacher Responses***

<b>Data Unit</b>	<b>T1</b>	<b>T2</b>	<b>T3</b>	<b>T4</b>
Teachers chose books interesting to them and the principal purchased them	X	X	X	X
The bookmarks were created and a school-wide rewards program was launched	X		X	X
During the implementation process, feedback from teachers was used to make needed changes.	X			X

**Interview Question 4: How were students motivated to participate in the program? What role did the principal play?**

T1 shared that the website contains videos about each series and lists the different book choices as one way students are motivated to participate in the program. Each year at T1’s school, students have the end of the day on a Friday to go around the school and see where different series are located that interest them. A similar parent night adds an extra layer of motivation for students to participate. A bookmark lists the books in a particular series, and once a student has read a book and passed a *Reading A to Z* quiz, the book is checked off by the teacher on the bookmark. Once finished with a series and a bookmark, students add earned brag tags to necklaces displayed in their classrooms. Depending on the difficulty of the book, different amounts of brag tags are given when an entire bookmark is complete. T1 explained how a longer series such as *Harry Potter* would warrant 18 brag tags, but a simpler book series

may be worth only one brag tag. Pictures are also taken and displayed in the library, certificates are issued, and student success is shared on the morning announcements. T1 shared how the principal's role in motivating students was having students in her office multiple times a day to check out books, which created conversations with students about what was read. The principal had her own checkout method and is "constantly involved" in talking to students about the books not only in her office but also on the playground. (T1, / 93) T1 shared that the principal purposely hosted the popular series so she could interact with the most students.

T4 and T1 are from the same school, so T4 shared similar ways that students were motivated to participate in the program. T4 added that he felt students were motivated to participate because of the relationships developed within the building. The series reading program developed positive relationships with the principal and assistant principal with some students "who normally didn't have those positive interactions." (T4, / 67-68)

T2 shared how the principal and staff "talked about it constantly" as a way to motivate students to participate. (T2 / 103) During the recorded morning announcements, teachers would give a plug for their series, or students would share series commercials to get other students interested. Having the website available and accessible through the school app was helpful for parents because when they were at the library, parents could easily see what series were available. T2 detailed how parent involvement motivated students so during parent meetings they "really talked up series reading a lot." (T2, / 109) At T2's school, they started with "little plastic tags" purchased the first year and attached to students' bookbags. T2 described how students often lost these, so a switch was made to necklaces with brag tags that students could wear around the building. T2 shared, "it was kind of a trophy to see how many brag tags" a student could earn. (T2, / 112)

T3 shared that each student received a face card which is a bookmark with their picture and name on one side and a list of all the available series on the back. As students read different series, they would mark them off on their face card. T3 described, "as it fills up, they have a sense of accomplishment to see all the different series finished." (T3, / 81) Each series host teacher or staff member collected the face card from the student and replaced it with a bookmark listing the books in their series. As students read the books in the series, they were required to take a comprehension quiz to ensure that students were reading books appropriate for their level. T3 explained how students not showing mastery were steered to a different series more on their

reading level. Once finished with a series, students earned charms for a necklace based on the difficulty of the series. T3 shared how in the younger grades students filled up their necklaces quickly because they were finishing books and were excited, but by the time students were in fourth or fifth grade, it became “more of a status symbol for them to show like I have all these charms.” (T3, / 96-98)

Students working toward a goal became a focus as the program grew, so students could also earn charms for reaching a personal goal or if their grade level met a goal. As a school-wide goal, students earning 20 or more AR points in a month could pick out a rubber ducky as a prize. At the beginning of each month, the principal would go around from room to room distributing the rubber ducks. T3 described how they did not want students to just reach 20 points and stop, so they added a 40-point duck necklace students could earn. A Good Citizen Assembly was held each month at T3’s school where students were recognized. There, the Lamp of Knowledge trophy was awarded to the class at each grade level having the most AR points that month. T3 shared, “it gives them that sense of accomplishment and working as a whole class and team.” (T3, / 123-124) Table 14 represents the data units identified in this interview question and the corresponding teacher respondent.

**Table 14*****Research Question 2/Interview Question 4 Data Units and Corresponding Teacher Responses***

<b>Data Unit</b>	<b>T1</b>	<b>T2</b>	<b>T3</b>	<b>T4</b>
Students and families could access the website to see available series	X		X	X
The school had a yearly launch day and/or parent night	X	X		
There was a school-wide rewards system where students earned “brag tags” after completing a series bookmark	X	X	X	X
The principal modeled the series program by having her own series to check-out.	X	X	X	X
Students were recognized on the morning announcements and/or during a school-wide assembly after completing a series	X	X	X	X
Adult-student relationships were built which motivated more students to participate			X	X

**Interview Question 5: Describe the program’s continuation success. What role did the principal play?**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic closure of schools in the spring of 2020 and the social distancing requirements in place, many schools have halted or reinvented their series reading programs. When answering this question, respondents shared their program’s continuation success prior to the pandemic or their frustrations with not being able to continue series reading because of their school switching to a hybrid instructional or virtual learning model in the fall of 2020.

T1 shared that she was constantly looking for new series students were interested in to add to the program as one way to continue the program’s success. She has developed a detailed list of new books, and students can continue to access it through the series reading website. T1 explained how students could check out books on the list from the library and click on a link to watch a video about the books. Having teachers devote time for students to access the website and review the choices helped keep students engaged and was key to the program’s continuation success. When describing the principal’s role in the program’s continuation success, T1 shared

how the principal purposely hosted the most popular series and rotated series, so she could have students in her office talking about books. T1 described the principal as “constantly involved.” (T1 /, 93) T4 and T1 were from the same school. Because T4 left the school for a new position, he was limited in describing the program’s continuation success. The constant updating of the series reading website was one factor T4 shared that helped continue the program’s success.

T2 also shared how adding new series contributed to the series reading program’s continuation success. She described some new series that were recently added, and how adding more non-fiction titles encouraged students to participate. T2 detailed how the librarian had focused her purchasing efforts on adding additional series books to the collection, especially ones at a lower reading level but designed for students in upper grades. When describing the principal’s role in the continuation success, T2 shared how the new principal did use school funds to purchase new series books, but she did not have “the background knowledge of understanding of why kids need to be in a series.” (T2, / 180) The principal not understanding “the why behind it all” and being less interested than the previous principal was concerning for T2. (T2, / 181)

T3 described how the series reading website links to online services providing students with books, such as [www.getepic.com](http://www.getepic.com) and [www.myOn.com](http://www.myOn.com) was how their program was continued during the pandemic. She explained how these resources helped them create series in a “digital way.” (T3, / 187) Students read the books on Epic or myOn, and then they would take the AR test to verify comprehension and record books read on a personalized Google slide. T3 shared needed teacher training now included how to use AR reports in different ways.

The principal had T3’s school started in the fall of 2019, so she had not spent much time with the series reading program before the March 2020 school closure. When asked about the role of the new principal in the series reading program’s continuation success, T3 shared how the previous principal would go around to each classroom to distribute the prizes, but the new principal only had students gather in the multi-purpose room. T3 described how they would pull AR reports for her, but the new principal was looking more at the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA)’s Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) data than at AR reports. T3 shared that the new principal continues to have series books in her room, but not as many as the previous principal did. “She cleared out a lot of the books, and they got redistributed, and all of the office areas to limit the number of kids constantly coming in and out of the office.” (T3, /

261) T3 detailed how the new principal’s role had been to “kind of see everything we did and take notes on things.” (T3, / 265-267) Due to the pandemic, T3 shared how the new principal had not been able to make any changes.

Table 15 represents the data units identified in this interview question and the corresponding teacher respondent.

**Table 15**

***Research Question 2/Interview Question 5 Data Units and Corresponding Responses***

<b>Data Unit</b>	<b>T1</b>	<b>T2</b>	<b>T3</b>	<b>T4</b>
The series reading program was halted because of the COVID-19 school closure	X	X	X	
New series were added and/or the website was updated using digital resources	X	X	X	
Teachers devoted time for students to participate	X			
The principal would change series she hosted and/or purchase new series	X		X	

**Interview Question 6: How would you describe the overall success of your series reading program? What role did the principal play?**

T1 described the overall success of their series reading program as “really successful.” (T1, / 98) “We had some kids that were really super motivated, and it got our really low readers to get excited about something.” (T1, / 98) T1 shared how originally it was difficult to get lower readers interested in books, but once they knew they could read one book in a series, they were motivated to continue with the rest. When detailing the role of the principal in the overall success of the program, T1 stated, “she plays a really big role. She talks about it with them all the time. She’s on the playground, and she’ll ask them about what series” they are reading. (T1 / 114) T1 continued, “she’s always talking to the kids about it. She’s interacting with them at all times.” (T1, / 115)

T2 described the overall success of their series reading program as “very successful.” (T2, / 155) She shared, “I think our kids really enjoy it. It’s not only pushed our children to read more, we see that their levels are increasing as they’re reading.” (T2, / 156) Another success T2 shared was “the relationship building aspect of reading,” which grew in tandem with student

participation in series reading. (T2, / 157) T2 described how when students would be loading the buses, they would be stopping different teachers to discuss what book was next in the series or what series they had just completed. T2 detailed how before series reading, when a child was asked what they were reading, most students at her school would respond with their reading level, not with an actual book title. She felt that one success from series reading has been that students now answer the same question with book titles of series they are reading. T2 described how the students' view of the principal changed as the program evolved because the principal's office "was a happy place for them every single morning and every single afternoon versus the place where" the principal was a "mean ogre." (T2, / 196-197) For T2, this was an unanticipated series reading program success for their previous principal, but not for the new principal. T2 felt that the new principal needed to publicize the series reading program more, but she did not because she did not have the background knowledge about or understand the importance of series reading.

When describing the success of the program, T3 described how the media attention and conference presentations were met with enthusiasm by other educators as one way to measure the program's success. Many schools in the United States and Canada have come to T3's school to observe and have replicated their series reading program. T3 and her former principal presented at state and national conferences on series reading. The school's program was featured in 2016 on [www.Edutopia.com](http://www.Edutopia.com).

T4 shared he felt the program was successful because it led to students reading more, but he had not done any type of official data collection to prove his theory. T4 stated that the series reading program met the original intention of motivating students to read more. He described what he witnessed at his school in this way: "I mean, there would be kids out at the playground reading books, and they would be talking to us about how much they love the series and how they wanted the next one." (T4, / 112) T4 also shared, "kids were getting their necklaces and filling them up," which motivated "other kids who could [n't] have cared less about it." (T4, / 113) Table 16 represents the data units identified in this interview question and the corresponding teacher respondent.

**Table 16*****Research Question 2/Interview Question 6 Data Units and Corresponding Teacher Responses***

<b>Data Unit</b>	<b>T1</b>	<b>T2</b>	<b>T3</b>	<b>T4</b>
The teacher described the program as successful	X	X	X	X
Teachers saw students more excited about reading and/or reading levels increased	X	X		X
The students viewed the principal in a more positive way because the principal continually talked to them about their reading	X			
Adult-student relationships were built where students shared about what they were reading	X	X		

**Interview Question 7: How do you feel about the overall experiences of a series reading program? What would you have done differently?**

When describing how she felt about the overall experiences of the program, T1 described how the younger students were more motivated than were the older students. Reflecting on this, T1 shared that her biggest goal now is to find interesting series for students in fourth and fifth grade. Since many of the upper grades read novels as a class, she knows the students are reading, but adding reading a series can become too much for students to accomplish. Another change T1 would make is creating a universal management system with a digital checkout piece. T1 shared how she would like to make “everything for everybody to take a little bit off their plate.” (T1, l 123)

T2 felt that the overall experiences with series reading had been positive because students were reading more and continuing to grow relationships with additional adults in the school. When reflecting on changes that could be made, T2 shared that she would like for the program to change with “the digital world.” (T2, l 218) Having a scanning book check out process or a way to keep track of lost books were two additional changes she would like to implement.

When describing the overall experiences of her school’s series reading program, T3 stated, “it’s been just a really fun program.” (T3, l 577-578) The teacher continued, “it’s not our regular reading program. People think it’s your reading program, but it’s not. It’s supplemental” for independent reading. (T3, l 579) T3 described how the program helped students with English

as a second language (L2): “I think it’s also helped our ELL [L2] students because they’re familiar with the characters and they’re not having to learn a lot of terms” and names of people because they are already familiar from reading different books in the series. (T3, / 582) Referring to L2 student success, she continued, “It’s easier for them to read then, so I think it’s been really helpful for our ELL [L2] students.” (T3, / 585) Moving forward, T3 described how changes she sees needed in the program include making it more accessible in the new virtual world, encouraging teachers more to have competitions for AR points, and determining how to make the program successful digitally.

In addition to students reading more because of the program, T4 referenced the relationships developed between staff and students as another positive experience from series reading. He shared how the students’ view of the principal changed as children came to the office to check out books, but he added how the office staff were able to see students in “a different light as well” because of the program. (T4, / 138) T4 described how some students sent to the office would make “noises and be disrupting the office,” but after these same students checked out books from their series, the staff began to develop new relationships and see the students differently. (T4, / 140) T4 detailed how involving parents in the series reading program by talking about it at PTO meetings, sending out letters, and having parents participate in the process during a family night were additional positive experiences and a way to motivate students. Table 17 represents the data units identified in this interview question and the corresponding teacher respondent.

**Table 17**

***Research Question 2/Interview Question 7 Data Units and Corresponding Teacher Responses***

<b>Data Unit</b>	<b>T1</b>	<b>T2</b>	<b>T3</b>	<b>T4</b>
The series reading program motivated students to read because they were excited about the books	X	X	X	
Adult-student relationships were built where students shared about what they were reading		X		X
The students viewed the principal in a more positive way because the principal continually talked to them about their reading				X
Teachers described how the check-out process could be altered to make it easier for teachers, and how the program needed to be adapted for the digital world.	X	X		

After detailing responses to the interview questions, the researcher continued to familiarize herself with the interview transcriptions by taking notes, rereading the text, and generally reviewing the data through an organized color-coded Google Workbook. Different colored pens were also used to highlight sections of the text to describe the content and to look for commonalities. Various phrases were highlighted in different colors corresponding to different codes. Several codes were then combined into broader themes, which were reviewed and compared to the data set.

***Major Themes Emerging for Research Question 2***

Through coded data units, six major themes emerged for Research Question 2: understand and build principal literacy background; allocate and manage school resources to address each student’s academic needs; empower and motivate teachers and staff to foster continuous improvement for collective instructional capacity; develop, implement, and evaluate instructional systems to promote student success; and cultivate a caring, supportive community that promotes adult-student relationships to support academic learning. The major themes and contributing codes are described in Table 18 and Figure 3.

**Table 18**

***Major Themes Emerging from Research Question 2 and Codes Contributing to Themes***

<b>Major Themes</b>	<b>Codes Contributing to Themes</b>
Principal Literacy Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Principal’s personal experiences with struggling readers gave inspiration</li><li>● Limited literacy background equals less understanding of program</li><li>● Principal seeking additional knowledge to solve literacy data concerns</li></ul>
Allocate and manage school resources to address each student’s academic needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Purchase books for series using school funds</li><li>● Continue to use AR and purchase program</li><li>● Hold fundraisers to buy more books</li><li>● Purchase incentives for students (brag tags, necklaces)</li></ul>
Empower and motivate teachers and staff to foster continuous improvement for collective instructional capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Principal modeled the program by having series in office</li><li>● Had conversations with students about series reading to build relationships</li><li>● Distributed awards and recognized students</li><li>● Encouraged teachers and students to participate</li><li>● Used comprehension data to monitor progress</li></ul>
Develop, implement, and evaluate instructional systems to promote student success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Identify needs and seek answers to problems</li><li>● Collaborate with others to bring about change</li><li>● Leadership team addresses concerns and</li><li>● Met unique needs of EL students</li><li>● Cycle back to make needed changes in program</li></ul>
Cultivate caring supportive community that promotes adult-student relationships to support academic learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Series available to check out from teachers and staff members</li><li>● Develop relationships with multiple adults in the building</li><li>● Continually asking students what they are reading</li></ul>

Figure 3 shows a pictorial representation of the major themes emerging from research question 2.

**Figure 3**

***Major Themes Emerging from Research Question 2***



Table 18 and Figure 3 represent the major themes emerging for research question 2.

**Summary**

The purpose of this study was to identify perceptions of selected elementary school principals and teachers regarding the principal's role in the development, implementation, and continuation of a series reading program. The study was conducted in two phases, with four principal interviews and four teacher interviews. The scientific methodology entailed a qualitative, phenomenological design in which the lived experiences of principals and teachers were examined through semi-structured interviews. Interviews were recorded and transcribed via the researcher's Virginia Tech Zoom account. Two research questions were used to guide the study:

1. What are the perceptions of elementary principals regarding their role in the development, implementation, and continuation of an effective series reading program?
2. What are teachers' perceptions of the role of the elementary principal in the development, implementation, and continuation of an effective series reading program?

***Themes Emerging from the Analysis of Data for Research Question 1:***

Theme 1: The principal's literacy background plays a role in the success of the program.

Theme 2: Principals with successful series reading programs are continuous learners.

Theme 3: Principals with success series reading programs collaboratively develop, implement, and evaluate instructional systems to promote student success.

Theme 4: Principals with successful series reading programs hire, support, and retain effective teachers to ensure each that student has high academic learning opportunities.

Theme 5: Principals with successful series reading programs allocate and manage school resources to address each student's academic needs.

Theme 6: Principals with successful series reading programs empower and motivate teachers and staff to foster continuous improvement for collective instructional capacity.

Theme 7: Principles with successful series reading programs cultivate a caring, supportive community that promotes adult-student relationships to support academic learning.

The findings from Research Question 1 showed that principals play a variety of roles in the success of a series reading program. Principals have experience teaching reading or have taken additional coursework on literacy and read the latest research searching for new resources. Principals collaborate with others for continuous revision and problem solving and model the series reading program themselves by hosting series. Principals build relationships with students and motivate and encourage teachers to participate. Principals hire teachers who believe in the program, provide continuous professional development, and allocate funds to purchase books and incentives in which teachers are interested.

***Themes Emerged from the Analysis of Data for Research Question 2:***

Teachers' perceptions of the principal's role are as follows:

Theme 1: Teachers describe a principal's literacy background as an important factor in program success.

Theme 2: Teachers view the role of the principal as one who allocates and manages school resources to address each student's academic needs.

Theme 3: Teachers perceive the principal's role in a successful series reading program as being one who empowers and motivates teachers and staff to foster continuous improvement for collective instructional capacity.

Theme 4: Teachers perceive the principal's role in a successful series reading program to be one where the principal leads the staff in the development, implementation, and evaluation of instructional systems that promote student success.

Theme 5: Teachers perceive the principal's role in an effective series reading program to be one where principals cultivate a caring, supportive school community that promotes adult-student relationships to support academic learning.

The findings from Research Question 2 show teachers' perceptions of the role of the principal in effective series reading. Teachers perceive the principal's literacy background and own personal experiences as contributing to the development of the program. Teachers describe how the principals play the role of motivator and provide encouragement for both students and teachers to participate in the program. Teachers describe the principal's role as the person who allocates funds for purchasing books and incentives and who models the program themselves. Teachers perceive the principal's role to be one who identifies and seeks answers to student learning needs. Teachers perceive the principal's role as being the one who leads through collaboration to cultivate a caring, supportive community that promotes adult-student relationships to support academic learning.

Chapter 5 will include findings, implications for practice, and suggestions for future studies. Personal reflections will end the chapter.

## Chapter 5

### Findings, Implications, and Recommendations for Future Studies

#### Introduction

In this qualitative study, the researcher explored the perceptions of four elementary principals and four elementary teachers regarding the role of the principal in the development, implementation, and continuation of an effective series reading program. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews that were recorded and transcribed using the Zoom platform. The elementary principals and teachers interviewed were from Alabama and Nevada. Participants were chosen because their school had/has an effective series reading program. The study was designed to answer two research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of elementary principals regarding their role in the development, implementation, and continuation of an effective series reading program?
2. What are teachers' perceptions of the role of the elementary principal in the development, implementation, and continuation of an effective series reading program?

This chapter will state the findings, implications, conclusions and recommendations for additional studies.

#### Summary of Findings

After analysis of the data, five findings were identified. Those findings, their associated data points, and research support follow.

##### *Finding 1*

**Elementary principals in schools with series reading programs empower and motivate teachers and staff to implement and continue new reading programs by modeling the series reading program themselves.**

Throughout the interviews, several principals and teachers detailed how the role of the principal was one who empowers and motivates the teachers and staff to implement and continue the series reading program. P1 and P4 both gave teachers a voice in the selection of books, which they stated increased teacher buy-in. P1 shared how she selected series that were most interesting to students and rotated each year so she could model how to keep the students motivated to participate.

T4 shared how the principal was behind the program and was a driving force in its implementation and continuation. Seventy-five percent of the principals modeled the program by having series sets in their offices. T4 described how the principal was constantly talking to students about what series they were reading. T4 shared how these conversations were a motivating factor for students who then empowered teachers. T3 explained how the principal traveled from room -to -room distributing incentives that motivated teachers and students to participate in the program. P4 shared how she and the literacy coach presented professional development on the program together. P4 was aware of the teachers who were not on board with the program, so she made it her focus to change that. P4 described how her students' excitement served as an effective way to hold teachers accountable for their participation. Principal and teacher perspectives per research question and interview questions are found in Chapter 4. Tables 2, 4, 5, 7, 10-12, 14-16 and Figures 2 and 3 in Chapter 4 provide reference to Finding 1.

Leithwood, Seashore-Louis, and Anderson (2011) described leadership as having two main functions: "providing direction and exercising influence" (p. 4). The authors argued school leaders influence student achievement by influencing teachers' motivation, knowledge and skills, and working conditions (Leithwood et al., 2011). Mackey, Pitcher, and Decman (2006) researched principal reading program success factors through a study of four principals in the areas of vision, background, and role as an instructional leader. The authors determined that strength in these areas enabled the principal to influence the school's reading program and student reading progress. According to Dhuey and Smith (2014), a principal influences student achievement by creating a positive climate and culture, monitoring student progress data, and implementing new programs and instructional resources. Fullan (2018) argued that the principal's role is to guide their groups of teachers through the learning process while learning alongside them and reflecting on what is working and what is not. Finding 1 is consistent with this research.

### *Finding 2*

**Principals allocate funding for series reading books that adds to the collection and selection of books in the school increasing the selection and providing more book choice for student independent reading.**

P1, P3, and P4 all shared they had allocated school funds or done fundraising to purchase the initial sets of series books and had increased the collection each subsequent year. T4

described how the principal used parts of their new school opening budget to purchase books for the program, and T3 shared how the principal started the program by buying series books teachers were interested in and then continued to add to the collection. T2 reported that the principal used school funds and Title I money to buy series books teachers were interested in, so the teachers did not have to use their own money. T3 detailed how the use of a series reading website gave opportunities for even more book choices because it linked to the myOn website book collection school subscription. P3 shared how a big factor for motivating students to participate in the program was being able to choose a book from a selection which included books interesting to them. Principal and teacher perspectives per research question and interview questions are found in Chapter 4. In Chapter 4, Tables 4, 5, 7, 10, 11, 13, 15, 18 and Figures 1 and 2 provide evidence for Finding 2.

Scholastic (2019) reported that 88% of students will finish a book picked out by themselves, but 46% of students reported having difficulty finding a book they like. Children reporting that they *love/like reading for fun a lot* have access to a wide range of materials and opportunities to select books interesting to them (Scholastic, 2019). Scholastic (2019) urged educators to provide opportunities for children to self-select books highly interesting to them. Beer (2003) described three groups of readers: dependent, independent, and those who have not found books that are enjoyable to them.

Beer (2003) described good readers as those who were able to evaluate their own engagement and interaction with text and understand why certain books appeal to them while others do not. Guthrie and Wigfield's (2000) engagement model of reading reported reading achievement being predicted by students' amounts of engaged reading. Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) argued that positive reading development is linked to excessive, engaged reading, which occurs when the reader self-selects text for enjoyment. Series books can be highly motivating and at the same time provide multiple exposures to content and function words (Renandya et al., 2018). Renandya et al. argued that series books give students familiarity with characters and story lines which can hook students to keep reading them. Principals purchasing books in a series in which students are interested increases the selection of books in the school and increases motivation to participate in a series reading program. This finding is supported by research conducted by Guthrie and Wigfield (2000), Beer (2003), and Renandya et al. (2018).

### *Finding 3*

**Principals and teachers from schools with series reading programs indicated a principal's literacy background and personal experiences influence a reading program's development, implementation, and continuation.**

P1 described herself as having more of a math background than a reading one, so she took additional classes to build her literacy skills. P1 shared her own personal experiences of watching her son enjoy reading books in a series and then thought it would be beneficial to try this with her students. P3 described her reading background as solid and that she had taken additional college coursework and participated in county professional development. P4's reading background was self-described as strong because she taught first grade, where the fundamentals of reading are built. Presenting writing professional development in her district had built P4's knowledge, and she shared her strong belief about the importance of putting children in the right books. T3 described how the principal who began the program at her school watched her own child struggle with dyslexia until she started reading books about princesses. This experience gave the principal the idea to start the series reading program at T3's school.

P2 shared that she had taught upper elementary grades and worked on county reading assessments as her background. T2's perception was that P2 did not have a background of literacy, which contributed to her lack of understanding about the importance of the series reading program. P2 started her principalship in the summer of 2019, and T2's view was that the continuation of their series reading program was more difficult since P2 started as principal because P2 did not see its importance. P2 did not model having her own series as well, and T2 felt this was because she lacked background experience with reading. Principal and teacher perspectives per research question and interview questions are found in Chapter 4. In Chapter 4, Tables 2, 3, 7, 10, 11, 14, and 18 as well as Figures 1 and 2 provide evidence for Finding 3.

Dhuey and Smith (2014) reported that at the elementary level, student reading progress is key to a child's overall future educational experience, and an elementary principal's role in influencing reading instruction is vital to this lifelong success. Carbo (2005) argued that principals must have a necessary understanding of quality reading instruction to make decisions. Carbo (2005) detailed five critical areas of reading knowledge principals need: phonemics, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Mackey et al. (2006) studied the success of reading programs by comparing four principals' literacy backgrounds. The principal with a master's degree in reading who was working on an Ed.D in educational leadership had the most background knowledge of effective reading programs. This principal's school saw the scores on the Maryland CTBS rise from the 35th to 55th percentile over three years, whereas the schools' scores for the other three principals who were lacking background knowledge had small gains or decreased (Mackey et al., 2006). Finding 3 is consistent with the research.

#### *Finding 4*

**Principals and teachers at elementary schools with a series reading program indicated reading books in a series was beneficial to struggling readers and students new to learning English (L2).**

When describing the overall success of the series reading program at her school, T3 described how she felt it was beneficial to L2 students at her school. T3 said this was because the students in series books were familiar with the characters and did not have to learn new names and backgrounds. T3 shared that this made it easier for students to read and thus helpful for their success.

T4 described how the students at his school would plow through a series and try to get the next one because they loved it so much and would tell their friends about the books. He shared that he did not have any specific data to support the overall success of the program, but anecdotally, he saw evidence of students reading more. He detailed how students would be reading on the playground or loading the buses and would tell him and the principal about a series book they were reading. When T1 shared about the overall success of their series reading program, she said some students were highly motivated, especially students in the younger grades.

P1 shared she felt her students were more excited about reading and added that she thought a more at-risk school than hers would benefit from series reading to make students better readers. P4 detailed how her school had the highest poverty level in her feeder pattern but had the highest test scores. P4 described how she saw an increase in students becoming better readers during the first several years of implementing their series reading program. P2 described how she watched students participating in series reading show progression of growth in reading and then realized series reading was "a genius thing." (P2, / 123) | Principal and teacher

perspectives per research question and interview questions are found in Chapter 4. In Chapter 4, Tables 6, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17, and 18 as well as Figures 1 and 2 provide evidence for Finding 4.

Extensive reading is where students read more titles for longer time periods. Krashen (2011) examined the access to reading material and the duration of the excessive reading and found a positive correlation. Narrow reading is where students read extensively about a particular topic. Series reading is a special form of narrow reading where students read books that come in a series by the same author (Renandya et al., 2018). Morrison (2017) detailed how reading books in a series allows students to become comfortable with an author's writing style, and this familiarity with key phrases and actions of the characters allows a reader to improve fluency. For a reluctant reader, getting to "know" an author takes valuable time away from the nuances of decoding. With series reading, students are familiar with the author's style and can already decode repetitious words allowing for automaticity, which can increase comprehension (Morrison, 2017). Cho, Ahn, and Krashen's 2005 study researched L2 students' motivation to read more by using series books and found that 51% of the participants said they were motivated to read more with series reading than with reading just one book. Twenty-seven percent reported that the vocabulary was easier because they had seen the words more often (Cho, Ahn, & Krashen, 2005). Harvey and Ward (2017) described the predictable structures and familiarity appeal to a new or struggling reader. Finding 4 is consistent with the research.

### *Finding 5*

**Principals and teachers indicated that the series reading program promoted adult-student relationships supportive of increased reading volume.**

T4 shared that part of their series reading program's goals was to build relationships within the building. He described how students checked out books from custodians, or a special education teacher, but they especially loved going to the principal's office to talk about the series while selecting a new book. T1 described how she rearranged the library so students could easily find interesting series books. She shared how much she enjoyed talking to students and asking them about their favorites. When describing her perceptions about the overall success of their program, T2 reported how students were more motivated to read, but she also expressed an increase in the relationship building aspect of reading. P4 shared how students would read series books during their independent reading time and conference with their teacher.

P1 shared how the overall success of the program was not only to get students excited about reading but was to build relationships between the staff and students. P1 felt that their series reading program gave everyone an opportunity to know each other better as conversations occurred about what students were reading. P2 described how having more adults interacting with students about what they were reading helped to build community. Principal and teacher perspectives per research question and interview questions are found in Chapter 4. In Chapter 4, Tables 6, 8, 9, 10, 14, 16-18 and Figures 2 and 3 provide evidence for Finding 5.

In Scholastic's 2019 national survey on children's reading habits, 58% of students reported that they *love/like reading for fun a lot*. These readers have in common a wide access to materials and opportunities to select books that interest them. They also have social interactions regarding their reading. Scholastic urged parents and educators to provide opportunities for children to self-select books they found interesting. Guthrie, Schafer, and Huang (2001) concluded that reading achievement was linked to teachers having students respond and explain their reading. Finding 5 is consistent with the research.

## **Implications of Findings**

### ***Implication 1***

**Elementary principals who are interested in supporting reading series programs should become learning leaders alongside teachers and staff by modeling the development, implementation and continuation of reading programs.** Principal and teacher responses to the interview questions suggest that the principal should model participation in a series reading program and learn alongside teachers during its implementation. This modeling empowers and encourages teachers to become more involved in the program. Principals should have their own series for students to check out, celebrate student success, and push participation from students and teachers to continue effective series reading programs. Finding 1: *Elementary principals empower and motivate teachers and staff to implement and continue new reading programs by modeling the series reading program themselves* provides the basis for this implication.

### ***Implication 2***

**School leaders interested in increasing the selection and collection of books in a school might consider purchasing books in a series.**

Students who reported *liking to read a lot* have access to a wide range of materials which enable them to select books they find interesting. (Scholastic, 2019) Having more books for students to choose from increases the likelihood a student will self-select a book interesting to them to read independently. Series books have been shown to interest students because students are familiar with the characters, plot, and settings. Allocating funds to purchase series books increases the selection of books in the school interesting to students. Students who read more do so because they are interested in the book. Students who read more become better readers. The implication is consistent with Lui and Zhang's 2018 analysis of 21 studies of extensive reading which revealed students who received extensive reading outperformed students who did not on pre-post contrasts. Krashen's (2011) examination of access to reading material and the duration of the excessive reading and found a positive correlation between the two also serves as additional research to support Implication 2. Finding 2: *Principals allocate funding for series reading books that adds to the collection of books in the school increasing the selection and providing more book choice for student independent reading* also provides the basis for Implication 2.

### *Implication 3*

**School leaders should develop their own literacy knowledge to ensure the success of series reading programs at their school.** Research suggests that a principal's literacy knowledge is key to the success of reading programs. School leaders interested in improving reading at their school should develop their own literacy knowledge. This can be done in a variety of ways, such as taking additional course work, attending professional development, or seeking out new research on reading. Finding 3: *Principals and teachers from schools with series reading programs indicated a principal's literacy background and personal experiences influence a reading program's development, implementation, and continuation* supports Implication 3.

### *Implication 4*

**Principals who want to increase reading levels for L2 students and/or struggling readers might consider using series reading and encourage those subgroups to actively participate.**

L2 students and struggling readers should be given the opportunity and be encouraged to read books in a series because it promotes more extensive reading. Students who are familiar and interested in books read more. Series reading builds student confidence because less time is spent decoding frequently used words and names, and there is familiarity with an author's style. This automaticity improves understanding and comprehension. Finding 4: *Principals and teachers at elementary schools with a series reading program indicated reading books in a series was beneficial to struggling readers and students new to learning English (L2)* provides the basis for Implication 4.

### ***Implication 5***

**Elementary principals and curriculum leaders who want to promote a community of readers might consider implementing a series reading program.**

Promoting a community of readers where students have assistance finding books that interest them and have social interactions about what was read can be done by implementing a series reading program. Students who read more books increase their reading stamina and ability, but they also need to conference and discuss what was read. Series reading programs can create this environment where students flourish as readers and feel connected to others through reading experiences. This implication is derived from Finding 5: *Principals and teachers indicated that the series reading program promoted adult-student relationships supportive of increased reading volume.* Miller and Moss' (2013) research support Implication 5 because it detailed how conferencing with students about what they are reading builds relationships with children that focus on making connections to the text.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to identify the perceptions of the principal regarding their role in the development, implementation, and continuation of an effective series reading program, as well as the teachers' perceptions of the role of the principal in the development, implementation, and continuation of an effective reading program. The study findings suggest that the principal plays the role of motivator and cheerleader while at the same time having their own series to model. Principals influence student achievement by influencing teachers' motivation, knowledge, and skills. Principals with background knowledge of reading or those who grow their understanding of best practices in reading could be more likely to see the need to

allocate funds for a series reading program. Principals with the belief that children who read more become better readers should consider starting a series reading program at their school. Implementation of a series reading program could build the collection of books at a school and provide students with more choices and ways to find books interesting to them. Students who have more resources and materials also need adult social interaction and discussions about what was read, which a series reading program provides.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

This study included a small sample size due to COVID-19 restrictions. All the schools in the study had halted or adapted their series reading program due to the closure of school buildings and the start of virtual learning. Additional research could be conducted when schools are open for in-person learning.

A series reading program creates a culture of readers where students have a large selection of books to select from and social interactions with adults about what they have read. Considering the findings and implications of this study, it would be beneficial to conduct research in the following areas:

1. A researcher could consider a study analyzing reading achievement data alongside series reading progress to look for correlations. Although there are many factors contributing to student reading achievement, a Likert-like scale survey could be used to capture student perceptions of themselves as weak or strong readers based on their participation in series reading as one part of the study.
2. A researcher could consider a study that focuses on just one subgroup of readers, such as L2 readers, to consider student learning/reading progress when reading books in a series.
3. A researcher could increase the sample size to include more principals and teachers because COVID-19's impact limited the sample size in this study.
4. A researcher could consider interviewing principals and teachers from schools where the series reading program was not successful to help clarify the principals' role in the effectiveness of the reading program.

## **Personal Reflections**

Seeing a children's face light up when you place a book they have wanted to read in their hand is one of my greatest joys. I remember when I gave a former student, Cameron, the newest *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* book, and he grasped it and literally held it over his heart and looked at me. When I first started my principalship, many students were reluctant readers who had really never found books interesting to them. We also saw the Edutopia video in 2016 and decided to start our own series reading program. I have seen the changes in our students and wanted to see if the same thing was happening in other schools. As an elementary principal myself, I became interested in the role of the principal in this process as a way to improve myself and others around me. People look to me now as a literacy leader because of my work during the dissertation process and for that I am forever grateful.

## References

- Beers, K. (2003). *When kids can't read: What teachers can do*. Bt Bound.
- Buly, M. R., & Valencia, S. W. (2002). Below the bar: Profiles of students who fail state reading assessments. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 24(3), 219 – 229.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3594166>
- Bryman, A. (2008). *Social research methods*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Oxford University Press
- Chesterfield County Public Schools. (2017). *(CCPS) Literacy Plan - Intervention Descriptions - Programs - Resources*. <https://sites.google.com/ccpsnet.net/ccpsliteracyplan/intervention-descriptions-programs-resources?authuser=0>
- Carbo, M. (2005). What principals need to know about reading instruction. *Principal*, 85(1), 46 – 49.
- Chang, A. C., & Millett, S. (2017). Narrow reading: Effects on EFL learners' reading speed, comprehension, and perceptions. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 29(1), 1 – 19.
- Cho, K., & Krashen, S. (1995). From Sweet Valley Kids to Harlequins in one year. *California English*, (Fall), 18 – 19.  
[http://www.sdkrashen.com/content/articles/1995\\_sweet\\_valley\\_to\\_harlequins.pdf](http://www.sdkrashen.com/content/articles/1995_sweet_valley_to_harlequins.pdf)
- Cho, K., Ahn, K., & Krashen, S. (2005). The effects of narrow reading of authentic texts on interest and reading ability in English as a foreign language. *Reading Improvement*, 42(1), 58 – 64.  
<http://eds.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.lib.vt.edu/eds/detail/detail?vid=6&sid=dbe25d9f-3975-47d5-b2f1-1038a1b26d64@sessionmgr102&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWRzLWxpdmUmc2NvcGU9c2l0ZQ==#AN=16730003&db=ehh>
- Chua, S. P. (2008). The effects of the sustained silent reading program on cultivating students' habits and attitudes in reading books for leisure. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, 81(4), 180 – 184.  
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.3200/TCHS.81.4.180-184>
- Cowell, C. (2018, December 5). If we want our children to thrive, teaching them to read is not enough - they must learn to enjoy it. *The Independent*.  
<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/children-reading-pleasure-learning-read-a8666611.html>

- Deacon, S. H., Mimeau, C., Chung, S. C., & Chen, X. (2019). Young readers' skill in learning spellings and meanings of words during independent reading. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, *181*, 56 – 74. <https://doi:10.1016/j.jecp.2018.12.007>
- Dehaene, S. (2010). *Reading in the brain: The new science of how we read*. Penguin Books.
- Dhuey, E., & Smith, J. (2014). How important are school principals in the production of student achievement? *Canadian Journal of Economics*, *47*(2), 634 – 663. <https://doi.org/10.1111/caje.12086>
- Flesch, R. (1955). *Why Johnny can't read*. Harper.
- Fullan, M. G. (2018). *The principal: Three keys to maximizing impact*. Jossey-Bass, a Wiley brand.
- Gambrell, L. B. (2015). Getting students hooked on the reading habit. *The Reading Teacher*, *69*(3), 259 – 263. <https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.1423>
- Garan, E. M., & DeVoogd, G. (2008). The benefits of sustained silent reading: Scientific research and common sense converge. *The Reading Teacher*, *62*(4), 336 – 344. <https://ila.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1598/RT.62.4.6>
- Ghanbari, M., & Marzban, A. (2014). Effect of extensive reading on incidental vocabulary retention. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *116*(2014), 3854 – 3858. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.01.854>
- Glavin, C. (2014, February 6). *History of reading education in the U.S.* K12 Academics. Retrieved May 18, 2020, from <https://www.k12academics.com/reading-education-united-states/history-reading-education-us>
- Guthrie, J. T., Schafer, W. D., & Huang, C. (2001). Benefits of opportunity to read and balanced instruction on the NAEP. *The Journal of Educational Research*, *94*(3), 145 – 162. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220670109599912>
- Guthrie, J. T., & Wigfield, A. (2000). Engagement and motivation. In M. L. Kamil, P.B. Mosenthal, P.D. Pearson, & R. Barr (Eds.). *Handbook of reading research* (Vol. 3). (pp. 342– 358). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Halford, J. M. (1997, September). *Focusing the debate on student achievement*. ASCD. Retrieved May 19, 2020, from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/newsletters/policy-priorities/sept97/num10/toc.aspx>
- Harding, J. (2019). *Qualitative data analysis: From start to finish*. SAGE Publications.

- Harvey, S., & Ward, A. (2017). *From striving to thriving: How to grow confident, capable readers*. Scholastic Teaching Resources.
- Jacobson, J., Reutzel, D. R., & Hollingsworth, P. M. (1992). Reading instruction: Perceptions of elementary school principals. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 85(6), 370 – 380. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0022067.1992.9941140>
- Kamil, M. (2008). How to get recreational reading to increase reading achievement. In Y. Kim, V. J. Risko, D. L. Compton, D. K. Dickinson, M. K. Hundley, R. T. Jiménez, & D. Well Rowe (Eds.), *57th Yearbook of the National Reading Conference* (pp. 31 – 40). National Reading Conference.
- Kang, E. Y. (2015). Promoting 12 vocabulary learning through narrow reading. *RELC Journal*, 46(2), 165 – 179. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688215586236>
- Kim, J., & Krashen, S. (2000). Another home run. *California English*, 6(2), 25
- Krashen, S. D. (1981) The case for narrow reading. *TESOL NEWS*, 12, 23.
- Krashen, S. D. (2004) The case for narrow reading. *Language Magazine*, 3(5), 17 – 19.
- Krashen, S. D. (2011). *Free voluntary reading*. Libraries Unlimited.
- Leithwood, K. A., Seashore-Louis, K., & Anderson, S. E. (2011). *Linking leadership to student learning*. Jossey-Bass.
- Liu, J., & Zhang, J. (2018). The effects of extensive reading on English vocabulary learning: a meta-analysis. *English Language Teaching*, 11(6), 1. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v11n6p1>
- Lynch, M. (2016, September 2). The story of American education and the McGuffey Readers. *The Edvocate*. Retrieved May 19, 2020, from <https://www.theedadvocate.org/story-american-education-mcguffey-readers/>
- Mackey, B., Pitcher, S., & Decman, J. (2006). The influence of four elementary principals upon their schools' reading programs and students' reading scores. *Education*, 127(1), 39 – 55.
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. Langara College.
- Miller, D., & Moss, B. (2013). *No more independent reading without support*. Heinemann.
- Minero, E. (2016, February 16). *A school-wide culture of reading*. Edutopia, George Lucas Educational Foundation. <https://www.edutopia.org/practice/series-reading-program-creating-culture-reading>

- Morrison, K. (2017). *Part 4: The independent reading series*. Retrieved June 30, 2019 from <https://www.inquirybydesign.com/part-4-the-importance-of-series-reading/>
- NAEP Reading Report Card. (2017). Retrieved May 4, 2019, from [https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/reading\\_2017/nation/achievement/?grade=4](https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/reading_2017/nation/achievement/?grade=4)
- Nakanishi, T. (2014). A meta-analysis of extensive reading research. *TESOL Quarterly*, 49(1), 6 – 37. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.157>
- National Reading Panel. (2000). *Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction: Reports of the subgroups*. Retrieved July 12, 2019, from <https://www.researchconnections.org/childcare/resources/3368/pdf>
- Owings, W. A., & Kaplan, L. S. (2020). *American public school finance*. Routledge.
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). SAGE Publications
- Parker, S. (2019, June 25). *A brief history of reading instruction*. ParkerPhonics.com Retrieved May 19, 2020, from <https://www.parkerphonics.com/post/a-brief-history-of-reading-instruction>
- Reading Eggs. (2019, January 08). *Reading fluency*. Retrieved February 15, 2021, from <https://readingeggs.com/articles/2019/01/08/what-is-reading-fluency/>
- Renandya, W. A., Krashen, S., & Jacobs, G. (2018). The potential of series books: How narrow reading leads to advanced L2 proficiency. *LEARN Journal: Language Acquisition Research Network Journal*, 11(2), 148 – 154.
- Reutzel, D. R., Jones, C. D., Fawson, P. C., & Smith, J. A. (2008). Scaffolded silent reading: A complement to guided repeated oral reading that works! *The Reading Teacher*, 62(3), 194-207. <https://doi.org/10.1598/rt.62.3.2>
- Salmons, J. (2012). *Cases in online interview research*. SAGE Publications.
- Sanacore, J. (1990). Independent reading for remedial and at-risk students: The principal can make a difference. *Reading Research and Instruction*, 30(1), 59 – 65. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19388079009558034>
- Sanacore, J. (1994). Lifetime literacy through independent reading: The principal is a key player. *Journal of Reading*, 37(7), 602 – 606. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20172364>
- Sanden, S. (2012). Independent reading: Perspectives and practices of highly effective teachers. *The Reading Teacher*, 66(3), 222 – 231. <https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.01120>

- Schmitt, N., & Carter, R. (2000). The lexical advantages of narrow reading for second language learners. *TESOL Journal*, 9(1), 4 – 9. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1949-3533.2000.tb00220.x>
- Scholastic. (2015). *Kids and family reading report* (5th ed.). Retrieved from <https://www.scholastic.com/parents/books-and-reading/reading-resources/language-and-literacy-milestones/scholastic-2015-kids-and-family-reading-report.html>
- Scholastic. (2019). *Kids and family reading report* (7th ed.). Retrieved from [https://www.scholastic.com/content/dam/KFRR/Downloads/KFRRReport\\_Finding%20The%20Story.pdf](https://www.scholastic.com/content/dam/KFRR/Downloads/KFRRReport_Finding%20The%20Story.pdf)
- Siegle, D. (2015, June 11). *Instrument validity: Educational research basics* by Del Siegle. University of Connecticut [https://researchbasics.education.uconn.edu/instrument\\_validity/](https://researchbasics.education.uconn.edu/instrument_validity/)
- Von Sprecken, D., Kim, J., & Krashen, S. (2000). The home run book: Can one positive reading experience create a reader? *California School Library Journal*, 23(2), 8 – 9.
- Wardlow, L. (2016, November 15). *The Every Student Succeeds Act in historical context*. Pearson Education. <https://www.pearsoned.com/every-student-succeeds-act-historical/>

**Appendix A**  
**Virginia Tech Study Information Sheet**



Information Sheet for Participation in a Research Study

Principal Investigator: **Dr. Ted Price**

Other investigator: **Lindsay Porzio**

IRB# and Title of Study: **#20-715 Perceptions of the Role of the Principal in the Development, Implementation, and Continuation of a Series Reading Program**

You are invited to participate in a research study. This form includes information about the study and contact information if you have any questions.

I am a student at Virginia Tech working on a doctorate degree in Educational Leadership and Policy, and I am conducting this research as part of my course work.

➤ **WHAT SHOULD I KNOW?**

If you decide to participate in this study, you will complete an interview conducted and recorded through ZOOM. As part of the study, you will be asked to answer questions regarding the principal's role in the development, implementation, and continuation of a series reading program. The recording is a requirement for participation. The study should take approximately 30-45 minutes of your time. We anticipate no greater than minimal risk with this study.

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

➤ **CONFIDENTIALITY**

We will do our best to protect the confidentiality of the information we gather from you, but we cannot guarantee 100% confidentiality.

The investigator will associate data with participant identity. This information will be kept in a separate secured location, will not be shared, and will be destroyed within one year after collection.

➤ WHO CAN I TALK TO?

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact me at [lindsaycp@vt.edu](mailto:lindsaycp@vt.edu). You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact the Virginia Tech HRPP Office at 540-231-3732 ([irb@vt.edu](mailto:irb@vt.edu)).

***Please print out a copy of this information sheet for your records.***

## Appendix B

### Human Subjects Protection Certificate of Completion

		Completion Date 19-Jul-2019 Expiration Date 18-Jul-2022 Record ID 32440714
This is to certify that:		
<b>Lindsay Porzio</b>		
Has completed the following CITI Program course:		
<b>Social &amp; Behavioral Research</b> (Curriculum Group) <b>Social &amp; Behavioral Research</b> (Course Learner Group) <b>1 - Basic Course</b> (Stage)		
Under requirements set by:		
<b>Virginia Polytechnic Institute &amp; State University (Virginia Tech)</b> <small>CITI Program Institutional Training Initiative</small>		
Verify at <a href="http://www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w8e220c27-8ad6-4cb2-ac9f-24d51533609a-32440714">www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w8e220c27-8ad6-4cb2-ac9f-24d51533609a-32440714</a>		

## Appendix C

### IRB Approval Letter



Division of Scholarly Integrity and  
Research Compliance  
Institutional Review Board  
North End Center, Suite 4120 (MC 0497)  
300 Turner Street NW  
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061  
540/231-3732  
irb@vt.edu  
<http://www.research.vt.edu/siro/hrpp>

#### MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** September 25, 2020  
**TO:** Ted S Price, Lindsay Crump Porzio  
**FROM:** Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires October 29, 2024)  
**PROTOCOL TITLE:** Perceptions of the Role of the Principal in the Development, Implementation, and Continuation of a Series Reading Program  
**IRB NUMBER:** 20-715

Effective September 25, 2020, the Virginia Tech Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) determined that this protocol meets the criteria for exemption from IRB review under 45 CFR 46.104 (d) category(ies) 2(ii).

Ongoing IRB review and approval by this organization is not required. This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these activities impact the exempt determination, please submit an amendment to the HRPP for a determination.

This exempt determination does not apply to any collaborating institution(s). The Virginia Tech HRPP and IRB cannot provide an exemption that overrides the jurisdiction of a local IRB or other institutional mechanism for determining exemptions.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at:

<https://secure.research.vt.edu/external/irb/responsibilities.htm>

(Please review responsibilities before beginning your research.)

#### PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Determined As: Exempt, under 45 CFR 46.104(d) category(ies) 2(ii)  
Protocol Determination Date: September 25, 2020

#### ASSOCIATED FUNDING:

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this protocol, if required.

## Appendix D

### Interview Protocol

**OPENING REMARKS: Researcher:** Good morning/afternoon/evening. Thank you for joining me today to participate in this interview for my research study and providing some information about your experience with a series reading program

As you know, many students across the country did not read at proficiency level. Research details the benefits of reading books in a series and my specific research focuses on the role of the principal in the development, implementation, and continuation of a series reading program. You were selected because I googled series reading programs and your school was highlighted in my search.

I am interviewing principals to find out about their perspectives regarding a series reading program. The information you provide in this interview will be used for my dissertation. I am interested in learning from your experiences with a series reading program.

The interview takes approximately 30 minutes and will focus on your perspectives. Do you have any questions about the information I shared or the information in the Information Sheet that was sent to you earlier? As a reminder, the interview will be recorded. Once your responses are transcribed you will have an opportunity to review your responses for accuracy. All recordings will be destroyed and no identifying information will be included.

Do I have your permission to proceed with the interview and record your responses (wait for verbal responses)? Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study. *[Researcher asks the questions below and participants respond.]*

1. Describe the development history of your school's series reading program.  
What role did you play?
2. Describe your literacy background.
3. What type of professional development and supports were given to teachers and staff?  
What role did you play?
4. Describe the implementation history of your series reading program.  
What role did you play?
5. How were students motivated to participate in the program?  
What role did you play?
6. Describe the program's continuation success  
What role did you play?
7. How would you describe the overall success of your series reading program?  
What role did you play?
8. How do you feel about the overall experiences of a series reading program?  
What would you have done differently

**CLOSING REMARKS: Researcher:** Again, thank you for your participation. You will receive a transcribed copy of your responses within a week. Please review and provide any revisions that will help me capture your responses accurately. Thank you!

## **PROTOCOL:**

**OPENING REMARKS: Researcher:** Good morning/afternoon/evening. Thank you for joining me today to participate in this interview for my research study and providing some information about your experience with a series reading program

As you know, many students across the country did not read at proficiency level. Research details the benefits of reading books in a series and my specific research focuses on the role of the principal in the development, implementation, and continuation of a series reading program. You were selected because I googled series reading programs and your school was highlighted in my search.

I am interviewing principals and teachers to find out about their perspectives regarding a series reading program. The information you provide in this interview will be used for my dissertation. I am interested in learning from your experiences with a series reading program.

The interview takes approximately 30 minutes and will focus on your perspectives. Do you have any questions about the information I shared or the information in the Information Sheet that was sent to you earlier? As a reminder, the interview will be recorded. Once your responses are transcribed you will have an opportunity to review your responses for accuracy. All recordings will be destroyed and no identifying information will be included.

Describe the development history of your school's series reading program.

What role did the principal play?

What type of professional development and supports were put in place for teachers and staff?

What role did the principal play?

What supports were put in place for teachers and staff?

What role did the principal play?

Describe the implementation history of your series reading program.

What role did the principal play?

How were students motivated to participate in the program?

What role did the principal play?

Describe the program's continuation success.

What role did the principal play?

How would you describe the overall success of your series reading program?

What role did the principal play?

How do you feel about the overall experience of a series reading program?

What would you have done differently?

**CLOSING REMARKS: Researcher:** Again, thank you for your participation. You will receive a transcribed copy of your responses within a week. Please review and provide any revisions that will help me capture your responses accurately. Thank you!

**Appendix E**  
**Principal Recruitment Email**

Subject line- Do you have or have had a series reading program at your school?

Greetings,

My dissertation research through Va. Tech focuses on the role of the principal in the development, implementation, and continuation of a series reading program. I will be interviewing principals and teachers who have or have had a series reading program at their school. With COVID-19 restrictions, I am aware that running a series reading program is prohibited, so I will be examining past lived experiences.

Please respond by letting me know you have or have had a series reading program in your school and are interested in participating in an interview session. The interview will be conducted via Zoom lasting between 30-45 minutes and be recorded with participant permission. Transcriptions will be sent to you for verification after the interview.

After your interview, I will ask principal participants to recommend 1-3 teachers who have been involved in the series reading program. Those teachers selected will be reached out to for interview consent.

This research has been reviewed by the Virginia Tech Human Research Protection Program (#20-715). Thank you so much for your willingness to participate in this study.

Lindsay Porzio

[lindsaycp@vt.edu](mailto:lindsaycp@vt.edu)

804 638-7661

---

Teacher Recruitment email

Subject line- Recommendation by your principal

Greetings,

I am currently working on my dissertation and doctorate degree from Va. Tech. My dissertation research through Va. Tech focuses on the role of the principal in the development, implementation, and continuation of a series reading program. I have recently interviewed your principal (insert name) who has recommended you as someone who participated in the development, implementation, and continuation of your school's series reading program.

Please respond by letting me know if you are interested in participating in an interview session for my study. The interview will be conducted via Zoom lasting between 30-45 minutes and will be recorded with participant permission. Transcriptions will be sent to you for verification after the interview.

This research has been reviewed by the Virginia Tech Human Research Protection Program (#20-715). Thank you so much for your willingness to participate in this study.

Lindsay Porzio

[lindsaycp@vt.edu](mailto:lindsaycp@vt.edu)

804 638-7661