

THE EFFECTS OF IMPLEMENTING CLOSE READING IN A THIRD, FOURTH, AND  
FIFTH GRADE PUBLIC SCHOOL SETTING TO  
IMPROVE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

By

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Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this *ex-post facto*, causal-comparative study is to determine the effects of close reading on student achievement. Close reading is a strategy developed through literary criticism and the influences of I. A. Richards and the New Critics. This study analyzes close reading to determine the most efficient practice to help students develop critical reading, thinking, and written communication skills. The researcher examined 2013 to 2015 New York State English Language Arts Exam data from 10 school districts located in the Broome-Tioga BOCES Region. For the study, 6,040 student exams in Grades 3, 4, and 5 were analyzed. Using these data, this study examined whether a close-reading approach to literacy has a greater effect on student achievement in comparison to non-close-reading approaches. Data analysis was conducted using an ANOVA to compare means among schools that adapted, adopted, or did not use the New York State English Language Arts Modules. The statistical data revealed that adopting the New York State Modules does not increase students receiving a proficient or highly score on the New York State ELA Exam. With these results, the researcher concludes that prescribed curriculum does not guarantee higher student achievement over the manner in which a teacher presents close reading and motivates student learning. Recommendations for further research focus on examining exam results from multiple regions from around the state, as well as focusing a qualitative study on how teachers instruct with close reading in the three learning environments.

Keywords: close reading, student achievement, proficient, teacher training, literacy

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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

Beginning in September 2012, the New York State Education Department (2011) included close reading in its required mandates for all teachers. With this change in teaching strategy, educators want to know if this process is more efficient than previous practices. This study examines whether close reading is a more efficient teaching practice that increases students' critical thinking skills, and college and career readiness (National Governors Association Center for Best Practice, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). To analyze the success of close reading, this study assesses its practice in New York State.

### **Background**

To stimulate deep thinking into literary passages, Richards (2001) developed close reading, patterned after the literary criticism movement. The purpose of the movement was to provide literary communication between writers and readers (Glimp, 2009). Incorporating ideals of literary criticism allows a reader to focus on the meaning of an entire passage, not isolated components (Goodblatt & Glicksohn, 2003). Close reading bridges writers and readers, and Richards (2001) fostered the practice to create readers who are able to critically analyze and think about the meaning authors communicate. Close reading identifies five tasks that readers must use to decipher literary meaning from a passage, including reading, vocabulary, sentence syntax, discussion, and writing (Monk, 2011; New York State Education Department, 2011). Implementation of these tasks helps educators develop critical thought processes required of students. The New York State Education Department believes that close reading helps students meet demanding requirements of the Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practice, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010; New York State Education Department, 2011).

Since close reading has not been used for over half a century, research regarding its effectiveness has been limited. A minimal number of qualitative studies investigate students' reactions and experiences with close reading. Close reading has been used primarily with high school and college students, with limited infusion into elementary and middle school levels. However, research suggests that close reading provides students with requisite tools to analyze literary passages for deeper meaning (Hawkins, Hale, Sheeley, & Ling, 2011; Musti-Rao, Hawkins, & Barkley, 2009; Oddo, Barnett, Hawkins, & Musti-Rao, 2010). This study identifies best practices for educators who use close reading to educate students, determining whether students benefit from the method, or are better served not following the close-reading model. Analyzing this literary approach provided data to help schools make educational decisions by using data-driven instruction that increases student proficiency in English Language Arts skills. Data-driven instruction helps educators make decisions that advocate overall educational training for students.

### **Problem Statement**

With the recent requirement (New York State Education Department, 2011) to integrate close reading into daily lessons, educators want to know whether close reading is a more efficient instructional practice. Since close reading is an eclectic model that fuses reading, vocabulary, sentence syntax, discussion, and writing, educators need to learn the most effective means to harness these processes to analyze a passage as a whole, rather than isolated literary chunks. Eckstein and Friederici (2006), Hawkins et al. (2011), Radcliffe and Stephens (2009), and Silber and Martens (2010) support the individual components of close reading, but it is the responsibility of the educator to mold these tasks to implement close reading. The purpose of this study is to determine whether close reading is a more effective instructional practice than not

using it. The problem is does close reading taught by adopting New York State English Language Arts Modules produce more proficient and highly proficient student scores than adapting or not using the modules.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this *ex-post facto*, causal-comparative study is to analyze data to identify whether close reading instruction produces greater student reading achievement in grades 3, 4, and 5 at elementary schools throughout a Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) region in New York. The independent variable is close reading, which is defined as a reading method that requires students to deeply and intimately interact with the text to foster higher critical-thinking skills. The control variable is non-close reading instruction, a reading approach that includes any other program that does not follow the literary criticism model of close reading. The dependent variable is student achievement.

### **Significance of the Study**

To teach students, educators constantly search for best practices to help students develop necessary reading and thinking skills, and these best practices must be supported by data-driven instructional practices (Turner & Danridge, 2014; Woodard & Kline, 2015). In the case of New York State (2013), data are accumulated through testing in grades 3 through 8. Recently, the New York State Education Department (2013) released annotated questions with student results to help educators use data to improve teaching. The New York State Education Department (2011) believes that close reading offers educators the best practice to increase critical thinking and reading comprehension by students. By exploring the influence of close reading, educators and state-level officials can better determine the means to educate all student populations (Fisher & Frey, 2014b).

### **Research Questions and Null Hypotheses**

The research questions and null hypotheses for this study are:

**RQ1:** According to testing data from the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) Exam from 2013 through 2015, did schools in the Broome-Tioga BOCES region experience increases in the number of proficient students when comparing schools that adopted, adapted, or did not use the New York State English Language Arts Modules?

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 3 English Language Art classes increases students' proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 3 English Language Art classes does not increase students' proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 4 English Language Art classes increases students' proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 4 English Language Art classes does not increase students' proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 5 English Language Art classes increases students' proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.



**H<sub>03</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 5 English Language Art classes does not increase students' proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>4</sub>:** Student cohorts increase reading proficiency scores over a given period when adopting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in comparison to schools that only adapted or did not use the New York State English Language Arts Modules as measured by the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>04</sub>:** Student cohorts do not increase reading proficiency scores over a given period when adopting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in comparison to schools that only adapted or did not use the New York State English Language Arts Modules as measured by the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**RQ2:** According to testing data from the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) Exam from 2013 through 2015, did schools in the Broome-Tioga BOCES region increase the number of highly proficient students in comparison to schools that adopted, adapted, or did not use the New York State English Language Arts Modules?

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 3 English Language Art classes increases students' highly proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 3 English Language Art classes does not increase students' highly proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 4 English Language Art classes increases students' highly proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

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**H<sub>4</sub>:** Student cohorts increase reading highly proficiency scores over a given period when adopting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in comparison to schools that only adapted or did not use the New York State English Language Arts Modules as measured by the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>04</sub>:** Student cohorts do not increase reading highly proficiency scores over a given period when adopting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in comparison to schools that only adapted or did not use the New York State English Language Arts Modules as measured by the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

### **Identification of Variables**

The independent variable in this study is close reading, defined as understanding your purpose in reading, the author's purpose in writing, identifying ideas in the passage as being interconnected, and understanding the systems of meaning (Elder & Paul, 2004a). The control variable in this study is non-close reading instruction, a reading process that does not follow the literary criticism model of close reading. Students are required to make some inferences from text. Which usually entails writing responses to text-based questions (Paul & Elder, 2004). The dependent variable, student achievement, represents academic improvement students obtain on established assessments over a period of one year. Variables controlled for include texts the students read and teacher instruction. Regarding student text and teaching instruction, individual schools determined the texts students read and the reading approach teachers used. Although the school districts determined the degree of New York State ELA module use, educators relied on their professional judgment when completing lessons. This professional judgment gives educators the ability to modify, adjust, or eliminate lessons that fit or do not fit student needs.

Since several schools in the Broome-Tioga BOCES region use various components of the New York State ELA Modules, these reading approaches and literary texts are predetermined. For this study, reading texts controlled for appear on the New York State English Language Arts Exam. Each school district is required to provide a controlled environment for test administration, an environment that allows the schools to control the testing location for each student, and prevent students from previewing the exam before the administration time. Students who receive special education services are given all allowable accommodations that the exam permits. Extraneous variables included the ability of the students and prior instruction given to students new to the district.

### **Research Summary**

This *ex-post facto*, causal-comparative study analyzes student achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam from 2013 through 2015. An *ex-post facto*, causal-comparative design fits this study since the students completed both the instruction for the year and required state assessments. With the completion of the 2015 New York State English Language Arts Exam, the researcher was able to retrieve assessment data from the New York State Education website. After retrieving this information, the researcher analyzed English Language Arts testing results of the 10 school districts in the Broome-Tioga BOCES region. These comparisons were based on schools that adopted, adapted, or did not use the New York State ELA Modules. Schools that adopted the modules used close reading, schools that only adapted the modules used some portions of the close reading model from the modules, and those that did not use the modules did not follow the close reading model established by New York State in the ELA Modules.

The researcher compared schools with similar socioeconomic statuses, student populations, special education populations, and ethnic populations. When comparing the socioeconomic statuses of participating schools, the researcher compared data for free and reduced lunches, family median income, and parental education. These data were analyzed for each participating school to determine whether each student cohort achieved increased success with reading instruction. Participating schools are determined by their proximity in the Broome-Tioga BOCES region. Student achievement among adopted, adapted, and non-module use schools were then compared.

### **Definitions**

**Close reading** - A reading process that requires students to engage intimately with text by dissecting vocabulary and sentence syntax. Repeated readings are used to foster group

discussions and personal writing prompts. Writing requires students to analyze multiple sources of information to paraphrase, critique, and/or analyze inferential and text-based information (Elder and Paul, 2004a; Fisher and Frey 2012).

**Gestalt Theory** - This theory identifies a relationship between the entire text and its associated parts. When examining a text through Gestalt Theory, a reader begins by analyzing the wholeness of the text (Parkay, Hass, & Anctil, 2010). The reader then dissects the components of a passage as they relate to the entire passage.

**Literary Criticism** - Developed by the New Critics, this theory helps students delve into reading passages to extract meaning through personal and subjective means. According to Richards (2001), literary criticism requires readers to change their questioning from “what is a poem?” to “what gives the experience of reading a certain poem its value *or meaning* [emphasis added]” (p. 2)?

**Student Achievement** – Student academic growth over a given period that is measured by formal assessment (Beltramo & Stillman, 2015; Lassonde, 2009).

**Student Cohort** – A group of students who share a common interest. For this study, student cohorts attended the same school in the same grade, and completed the New York State ELA Exam (New York State Education Department, 2013). Students remained part of their cohorts unless they left the district or the school retained them from progressing to the next grade level.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The New York State Education Department recently adopted the Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practice, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010) in the hope that students would improve critical thinking skills. In the fall of 2012, educators in New York State had to align their curricula with these standards. To aid educators with improving these skills, the New York State Education Department (2011) implemented close reading to foster critical thinking skills in students. According to the New York State Department of Education (2011), Elder and Paul (2004a), and Fisher and Frey (2012), close reading stimulates and improves reading comprehension.

The purpose of the Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practice, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010) and literary criticism is to encourage students to look deeper into their literature and begin to understand the purpose of the text and author's perspective. Before the merging of these practices, educators and students implemented reading programs that simply addressed the basic understanding of literature. According to Haager and Vaughn (2013), educators must move away from teaching isolated reading skills and activities, and develop a comprehensive and engaging approach to teaching reading and literature. Over time, educators implemented various reading strategies to achieve deeper literature understanding (Fisher & Frey, 2012; Lehman & Roberts, 2014), but while new techniques such as Common Core are introduced or implemented, educators are "grappling with the enormous shifts the standards demand" (Brown & Kappes, 2012, p. 1). "When views that seem to conflict with our own prepossessions are set before us, the impulse to refute, to combat or to reconstruct them, rather than to investigate them, is all but overwhelming" (Richards, 2004, p. 7). By infusing Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association Center for

Best Practice, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010) and literary criticism through close reading, students begin to unlock secrets that lie within literature genres.

Close reading is a difficult procedure for students to master and educators to teach; both parties must be motivated to teach and learn through the model. Educators must implement strategies to help with student motivation, which must be intrinsic. If educators implement an extrinsic motivational system, students struggle to grasp the full effect of close reading, and fail to reach their educational goals. Without a system to aid students with their intrinsic motivations, educators are unable to enable and encourage students to read and think critically about reading passages. In the close reading approach, a reader closely reads and critically analyzes a reading passage for the author's purpose, thus improving comprehension skills. According to Lehman and Roberts (2014):

In it, we argue that teaching readers to look at texts closely—by showing them how one word, one scene, or one idea matters—is an opportunity to extend a love affair with reading. It is also a chance to carry close reading habits beyond the page, to remind students that their lives are rich with significance, ready to be examined, reflected upon, and appreciated. (p. 2)

The New Criticism ideology through literary criticism is used to help students learn to create subjectively the necessary meaning to improve critical thinking skills. The following literature review explains how elementary school English Language Arts educators can implement close reading through literary criticism to improve students' critical reading and thinking skills.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The purpose of close reading is to activate the mind's consciousness to develop the skills necessary to read, write, and respond simultaneously to authors' arguments and statements (Robson, Sumara, & Luce-Kapler, 2011). "Reading is itself a quasi-anthropological encounter, in which readers are forever confronting questions such as 'What in this world affects me?' and 'What in me affects this world?'" (Douglas-Fairhurst, 2004, p. 376). This approach helps readers learn to create subjective meaning from text. According to Melin (2010), literary works need "to be read in at least two ways: as texts that require no prior knowledge and as works of art infinitely embedded in linguistic, historical, and social conventions, hence artifacts that require a deep interpretive framework" (p. 350). Created meanings stimulate improvement in reading comprehension and critical thinking. Richards (2001) and the New Critics intended literary criticism to be a tool to help students during close reading. The initial intent of close reading involved evaluating poetry critically, but over the years, it began to incorporate extracting meaning from small passages. With this in mind, literary criticism exhibits characteristics of the New Criticism, the goal of which is to examine and evaluate a passage closely to gain insightful meaning. Scholars who espouse this literary method want readers to identify the self-contained meaning of a passage (Russo, 1989). Although the work of the New Criticism did not take root for literary evaluation, the concept appears in various theories, including modernism, objectivism, and formalism (Russo, 1989). Brooks (1951) states, "Literature is not inimical to ideas. It thrives upon ideas, but it does not present ideas partly and neatly. It involves them with the 'recalcitrant stuff of life.' The literary critic's job is to deal with that involvement" (p. 80). New criticism provides a vehicle to implement literary criticism.

### **Literary Criticism**



The New Critics under the ideals of the New Criticism established Literary Criticism. The origins of New Criticism began with Southern Agrarian traditions (Richards, 2001; Young, 1976), a band of literary scholars who rejected industrialization of the United States and wanted to retain the agrarian, conservative, and religious mindset of the southern states. However noble the ideology, these scholars had to assimilate to developments in the country. Even with their assimilation, these scholars' pattern and use of criticism fostered the New Criticism movement, the hope of which was to expand a reader's mind by embracing the thoughts and words of the writer (Curtler, 2009).

Opponents to New Criticism argue that New Critics are disconnected from human meaning, and attempt to modify their pedagogical thinking to model scientific methods (Wellek, 1978). According to Wellek (1978), the New Critics strive to understand a poet's experience when writing text; these scholars search for human understanding through words and metaphors of an author. The New Critics embrace historical contexts and its many philosophical perspectives to arrive at understanding. They use history lessons "as a standard for judgment" (Wellek, 1978, p. 615). Many opponents accuse the New Critics of moving to a more scientific mindset. To provide adequate criticism to all topics, the New Critics employed their literary criticism to all disciplines, including scientific journals. New Criticism provided a paradigm shift when exploring literary works, a method meant to embrace the culture and not be limited to a pedagogical instructional method that educational institutions embodied (Richards, 2001). Richards (2001) argues that literary works are a method of communication between a writer and reader (Glimp, 2009). Richards (2001) states:

Communication, we shall say, takes place when one mind so acts upon its environment that another mind is influenced, and in that other mind an

experience occurs that which is like the experience in the first mind, and is caused in part by that experience. (p. 177)

This communication permits readers to extract meaning from a passage that relates to their personal lives and the world around them (Douglas-Fairhurst, 2004). These connections allow a reader to improve comprehension and critical thinking skills.

Criticism must be a communication tool that rises above literary text (Spender, 1951). When scholars, students, and teachers attempt to dissect literature systematically to examine its encapsulated meaning, these critics need to form “an insight into the poet’s own experiences beyond his own; an insight into moral sensibility beyond his, and so on” (Spender, 1951, p. 208). For this insight to be successful, a critic (i.e., reader) must search text in a similar fashion as God searches the souls of men. Romans 8:27 reads, “And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.” Analyzing literature in this manner allows a critic to embody the work of the New Critics during study of literary criticism. According to J. C. R (1939), this analysis “is no more technical than it has to be, and assumes no particular theoretical apparatus, but what it has done it has not stopped far short of completeness in sampling the modes of this range of understanding” (p. 83). Curtler (2009) explains that the writer of literary text proposes the intent of the novel, but “the poet takes over and the end product, in the case of works of art *or literature* [emphasis added], comes as a surprise” (p. 273).

Literary criticism is not a theory in the mathematical sense. Occasionally, readers must understand that a passage does not give a black-and-white response. Douglas-Fairhurst (2004) argues that literary criticism identifies that literary works defy literary rules, and requires a reader to acknowledge this fact and think outside the box to elicit the meaning from a passage.

Bass and Linkon (2008) identify literary criticism as an inquiry that creates patterns that can be extracted from the text and from engaging conversation that evolves from text-based discussions. According to Brooks (1979), opponents to literary criticism remain “oblivious to the fact that the poems *or other literary forms* [emphasis added] are meant to be intoned rather than merely perceived as characters on a printed page” (p. 595). Spender (1951) states, “Criticism is the most dynamic force in literature, and in the hands of the blunderers it is an extremely dangerous one” (p. 214). Understanding this concept allows the readers, especially struggling readers, to not feel pressured to follow this form of thinking. Douglas-Fairhurst (2004) states:

Since the problem with poor reading is that it fails to exercise the mind, encouraging it to become lazy and flabby, the exercises he goes to recommend are intended to work as a form of mental aerobics, improving our critical agility, flexibility, and stamina. (p. 380)

Brooks (1979) reinforces this point:

Reader response is certainly worth studying. This direction is being taken by many of our more advanced critics today. Yet to put the meaning and valuation of a literary work at the mercy of any and every individual world reduce the study of literature to reader psychology and to the history of taste.

On the other hand to argue that there is no convincing proof that one reader’s reaction is any more correct than another’s is indeed a counsel of despair. (p. 598)

Wellek (1978) emphasizes the stance of the New Critics regarding this in-depth criticism of different literary works. Wellek (1978) states, “But the New Critics reject the distinction of form and content: they believe in the organicity of poetry and, in practice, constantly examine

attitudes, tones, tensions, irony, and paradox, all psychological concepts partly derived from Richards” (p. 618).

Goodblatt and Glicksohn (2003) argue that literary criticism involves the whole portion of the text, not isolated portions, identifying this ideology as the “emergent whole” (p. 213). According to Brooks (1951), “Man’s experience is indeed a seamless garment, no part of which can be separated from the rest” (p. 74). Similar to close reading, the emergent whole must possess an intimate relationship with all parts of a passage (Goodblatt & Glicksohn, 2003; Richards, 2001), suggesting that literary criticism demonstrates Gestalt theory (Goodblatt & Glicksohn, 2003) since “there exists a reciprocal interaction between the whole and its parts, whereby they mutually determine one another’s characteristics, so that the qualities of the whole determine the qualities of the parts” (Goodblatt & Glicksohn, 2003, p. 213). Gestalt theory requires a reader to analyze a passage in two steps. First, the reader understands the whole text, or according to predetermine literary, chunks (Lassonde, 2009). Using this theory, the reader breaks down the necessary components of a passage as it relates and brings meaning to the whole text.

### **Common Core State Standards**

The Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practice, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010) provide state education departments, local school districts, and educators with common learning standards, used to facilitate instruction and curriculum development. The standards are set for the expected minimal competency level of students (Haager & Vaughn, 2013). According to Fisher and Frey (2012), the purpose is to establish national standards to foster communication, collaboration, and student assessment. Dodson (2012) views the standards “as a map for student learning filled with rich,

open-ended questions and learning experiences” (p. 13). By using the standards, educators build on the prior year’s learning and maximize students’ learning experiences. Students begin to reach past surface learning and strive for deep learning (Smyth, 2004). At the end of their school careers, students should be able to achieve success in higher education or be competent in job-related responsibilities (Hank, 2012). To make students college- and career-ready, the standards were separated into four anchor sections: key ideas and details, craft and structure, integration of knowledge and ideas, and range of reading and level of text complexity (National Governors Association Center for Best Practice, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). According to Haager and Vaughn (2013), the goal of these standards in the early grades is to empower students’ ability to read widely diverse and complex texts. This goal is a difference between previous state standards. The range of difficulty for the standards is evident through intensified reading of informational, expository, and traditional narrative texts (Haager & Vaughn 2013; National Governors Association Center for Best Practice, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). Implementing these anchors makes students proficient in required skills by the end of each grade. The anchor standards are the basis for learning standards at each grade level.

Students should increase their comprehension and critical thinking skills from grade to grade, not only within individual grades, a change that creates a curriculum with both vertical and horizontal alignments. “Students can only gain this foundation when the curriculum is intentionally and coherently structured to develop rich content knowledge within and across grades” (National Governors Association Center for Best Practice, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010, p. 10). Lutz, Guthrie, and Davis (2006) and The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Early Child Care Research Network (2005) found that students engaged in higher-order questioning and thinking experience greater educational gains than

students who excel only at rote memorization and passive listening. Lutz et al. (2006) suggest that reading comprehension increases with moderate learning engagement and high complexity of literary tasks. The standards were designed as an instructional tool to guide educators to train students to be critical readers and thinkers. According to Haager and Vaughn (2013):

We agree with the argument that the CCSS (Common Core State Standards) are not designed as an instructional tool to provide specific procedures to teachers about how to make instructional accommodations for students, yet, there is an understanding that students who demonstrate significant reading difficulties and are struggling to read the current text will somehow be better able to access the more difficult text. (p. 6)

The Common Core State Standards are not exclusive goals; under the standards, close reading is not meant to replace early reading instruction. Students require constant practice with phonemic awareness, phonics, and reading fluency during early developmental reading years (National Reading Panel, 2000). After using these early reading components, the New York State Education Department deems that close reading is the best, advanced method to help students meet the challenges and rigor of the Common Core State Standards. Educators need to understand the intricacies of the standards and mold instruction around them to help students become college and career-ready.

### **Close Reading**

Close Reading is a reading approach that requires critical thinking of and personal engagement with text. “To read well requires one to develop one’s thinking about reading and, as a result, to learn how to engage in the process of what we call close reading” (Paul & Elder, 2003, p. 36). The close reading approach requires readers to analyze, scrutinize, and reflect on

an author's purpose of the writing (Boyles, 2012/2013; Elder & Paul, 2004a; Gewertz, 2012; Paul & Elder, 2003), and through personal reflection, readers engage with text to facilitate this understanding (Lassonde, 2009; Weber-Feve, 2009). Hellstrom (2011) argues, "While the author's intention, in their mind, could never be a norm for how to approach the text, the authorial intellect was still considered the exclusive and inimitable cause of the text" (p. 323). Close reading is an academic approach to aid students with cognitive development of critical thinking and comprehension skills that are used during academic study, and not used normally during pleasure reading (Boyles, 2012/2013; Lassonde, 2009; Linderholm, Cong, & Zhao, 2008). Echoing this statement, Adlington and Wright (2013) find close reading a scholarly method that instills skills and self-confidence in students to create independent and lifelong learners. According to Wellek (1978), Brooks (1979), Richards (2001), and Hellstrom (2011), close reading is the means the New Critics used to establish a common ground. The New York State Education Department (2011) believes that students need to understand this process, with the vast amounts of informational text they encounter. Brooks (1979) states:

The New Critics have also persuasively described the function of literature in not yielding abstract knowledge or information, message, or stated ideology, and they have devised a technique of interpretation which often succeeded in illuminating not so much the form of a poem, *or other literary forms* [emphasis added], as the implied attitudes of the author, the resolved or unresolved tensions and contradictions; a technique that yields a standard of judgment that cannot be easily dismissed in favor of the currently popular, sentimental, and simple. (p. 607)

Beginning close reading requires individuals to break a reading passage into manageable sections (New York State Education Department, 2011). "Close readers pay attention to features

such as the way sentences are constructed, the imagery that is used, semantics, cultural implications, structural importance, any emerging themes, and the view of the world the author offers” (Lassonde, 2009, p. 2). These components can be a sentence, paragraph, or entire passage (Rex, 2000). Paul and Elder (2004) argue:

To read well, in addition to having these understandings, students must be able to identify the big picture within a text, to determine the key ideas within the text early on, and to see the scaffolding that connects all the ideas within the text. (p. 36)

Having close reading presented to them in this manner, students master it using a few, good, purposefully selected reading passages, instead of multiple, unrelated reading passages (Elder & Paul, 2004b). According to the New York State Education Department (2011), close reading should encompass several days of connection with text to help students reach full understanding of it. Reading an informational passage one time does not provide students with the in-depth literary knowledge necessary to understand an author’s purpose (Monk, 2011). “The phrase ‘close reading’ may seem to imply primary emphasis on the text itself, but the examination of text occurs within and gains significance only when it is embedded in inquiry, engages with theory, and generates an argument that is useful to other readers” (Bass & Linkon, 2008, p. 247).

During close reading, students need to examine five tasks thoroughly—reading, vocabulary, sentence syntax, discussion, and writing (Monk, 2011). By analyzing sentence structure, vocabulary, and an author’s word choices, students develop important critical thinking skills necessary to meet Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practice, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010; New York State Education Department, 2011). “Instruction that focuses on preparing students to take required



examinations tends to reflect a one-right-answer or main idea model of reading that contradicts current findings in research that substantiate more engaging approaches to literacy instruction” (Lassonde, 2009, p. 12).

Smyth (2004) found that close textual analysis allows students to synthesize knowledge instead of leaving knowledge chunks compartmentalized. Knowledge chunks are isolated bits of information that a reader left unconnected to previous learning, either through life experience or other literary texts. Richards (2001) reinforces this point by stating, “It has always been found far more easy to divide experience into good and bad, valuable and the reverse, than to discover what we are doing when we make the division” (p. 33). Educators must remember that these tasks are not taught in isolation; each task must be incorporated into the elements of the other complimentary tasks.

### **Reading Process during Close Reading**

During this portion of close reading, students read a passage without prior knowledge development. On completion of the initial reading, students reread the passage with an adult or members of their classroom (Monk, 2011; New York State Education Department, 2011). Repeated reading helps students become more familiar with the passage, and identify key words and portions of the passage more readily.

The structure towards which the reader is working to converge in his/her mind is a complex one—a heterogeneous assemblage of values, meanings, and interpretations—however it is one that is at the same time unique to that reader and specifically ending in one total experience. (Hellstrom, 2011, p. 327)

According to Lutz et al. (2006), students must engage with learning, which requires four components—behavioral, cognitive, affective, and social involvement. Although students

require balance among these four aspects of engagement, close reading focuses on cognitive and social components. Having students engage in cognitive and social learning allows them to expand their minds to promote literary criticism. “Becoming critically literate means that we do not passively accept information imparted by others, but rather that we question the source of the ideas, examine who is represented and who is marginalized, and then take action” (McLaughlin, 2012, p. 438).

Repeated reading is a strategy incorporated in close reading to foster improved reading comprehension to focus on text-based details and key ideas (Lassonde, 2009; Shanahan et al., 2012). According to Musti-Rao et al. (2009), students who participate in peer repeated reading strategies improve oral fluency, but a majority does not achieve proficiency benchmark goals. Hawkins et al. (2011) support this finding; students who participate in repeated reading programs record higher reading fluency than students not in the program. Silber and Martens (2010) suggest that repeated reading programs help students when they face unfamiliar passages; students are able to achieve improved comprehension rates on familiar and unfamiliar passages after practicing repeated reading. According to Fisher and Frey (2014a), students enjoy text more when using close reading versus single reading. Using grade-level-appropriate, complex texts helps students achieve this success. Fisher and Frey (2014a) state:

In addition, the texts used were more closely aligned with their ability to think and discuss, rather than just read independently or with minimal scaffolding. Students were able to see their progress as they read and discussed a single text for an extended period. (p. 374)

When working with difficult texts, educators must give students multiple opportunities to read and manipulate them. By helping students define vocabulary, chunk text, and identify the

purpose of paragraphs and sections, students are able to discuss texts and achieve necessary comprehension. Depending on the degree of difficulty of text, educators might need to read it more than once to students, and allow them to reread it themselves (Fisher & Frey, 2015).

Repeated readings stem from the text complexity that students encounter during reading. For student growth in reading comprehension and critical thinking, educators must expose and challenge students with text that stretches their cognitive development and engagement (Lutz et al., 2006). “Just as it’s impossible to build muscle without weight or resistance, it’s impossible to build robust reading skills without reading challenging text” (Shanahan, Fisher, & Frey, 2012, p. 58). Educators must build this reading muscle slowly; developing this reading skill takes time, patience, and commitment. Using their professional judgment, educators should expose students to increasingly harder texts over a period that allows students to be successful. “Text selected for close reading requires a moderately high degree of teacher support through questioning, discussion, and repeated readings, and thus will stretch comprehension skills” (Fisher & Frey, 2015, p. 58). Using text that is slightly higher than students’ instructional level will help expand their abilities, and minimize frustration with text.

As students face more challenging passages, as required in the Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practice, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010; New York State Education Department, 2011), students benefit from repeated readings to evaluate and analyze text critically. By starting students with developmentally appropriate or slightly easier texts, students build necessary mental muscle to help them face more complex texts over time, and by taking the time to reread texts, students build vocabularies and understand an author’s purpose of including particular words, phrases, and sentences.

When students read text, their goal is to comprehend the meaning an author is trying to convey. “Comprehension in reading is the process by which people who read derive meaning through interacting with text” (Maggart & Zintz, 1992, p. 248). For students to comprehend a reading passage, they must spend time with that passage. A quick read through a passage does not produce results that a student desires. Students must learn to reread passages to gain a more thorough understanding and have text become an intimate part of learning (Monk, 2011; Routman, 2003; Tovani, 2000). Educators cannot simply provide students with complex reading passages and expect them to read them repeatedly to obtain necessary understanding; students require purposeful instruction to equip them with tools and strategies to comprehend a passage (Fisher & Frey, 2012). Comprehension skills are most effective when current information “is connected to a reader’s background knowledge and prior experience” (Tovani, 2000, p. 64).

For students to use their comprehension skills effectively, they must be able to relate a passage to preexisting schemata (Beltramo & Stillman, 2015; Maggart & Zintz, 1992). By carefully comparing new information with existing schemata, students begin to understand a passage (Fisher & Frey, 2012; Fountas & Pinnell, 2001; Routman, 2003; Tovani, 2000). “Students’ background knowledge, including developmental, experiential, and cognitive facts, influences their ability to understand the explicit and inferential qualities of a text” (Shanahan et al., 2012, p. 61). Close reading requires that students reread passages to gain clarification, and once students grasp text, close reading requires students to reflect on a passage and determine how it relates to other texts and authentic situations they experienced that are similar to the text (Tovani, 2000). This process builds a vaster and stronger knowledge base.

### **Vocabulary**

In a close-reading passage, several words are either bold-faced or underlined. If underlined, the students are provided with a working definition of the word as it relates to the passage. The students are most likely unable to determine the meaning of these words from the text. Bold-faced words are challenge words of which students must be able to determine their meanings from the text; students must use context clues and the passage to determine the definition of the word. They need to closely reread the sentences around the word to understand the vocabulary term.

Hawkins et al. (2011) argue that intentional vocabulary previewing provides students with the means to comprehend a reading passage better. Understanding difficult vocabulary permits students to determine the meaning an author is trying to convey. “Students’ ability to comprehend a piece of text depends on the number of unfamiliar domain-specific words and new general academic terms they encounter” (Shanahan et al., 2012, p. 59). Silber and Martens (2010) suggest that students learn key words from passages through multiple exposures to the work in the context of the passage.

As students become familiar with various texts, they face several unfamiliar words. Being able to understand printed words demonstrates growth of a student’s reading ability. “Growth in the ability to recognize words in print is one of the basic skills in learning to read” (Maggart & Zintz, 1992). Before students can learn to think, comprehend, and infer information critically about text, they must understand the words and terminologies used in a passage. According to Shanahan et al. (2012), concepts are imbedded into words and phrases that readers must use to make sense of text. If the vocabulary is limited, readers have a difficult time understanding an author’s purpose. During close reading, educators must proactively use these words in context for the students, provide necessary meanings for difficult, abstract terminology,

and discuss these words during reading instruction (Monk, 2011). According to Haager and Vaughn (2013), students must build vast knowledge of higher-level vocabulary, and develop strategies to determine the meanings of unfamiliar words.

Students must decipher difficult words through context clues in a passage. Requiring use of context clues for vocabulary-building helps students strengthen their working vocabularies and provides them with the skills to read, analyze, comprehend, and infer text closely. Through this instruction, McLaughlin (2012) finds that students require a variety of strategies to unlock both definitional and contextual meanings of unfamiliar words. “Effective vocabulary instruction usually provides a rich exploration of word meanings, in which students do more than just copy dictionary definitions—they consider synonyms, antonyms, categories, and specific examples for the words under study” (Shanahan et al., 2012, p. 61). To prevent students from simply copying definitions, educators must work with students to ensure they know how to use context clues. Educators must take the time to model use of context clues. As students become more familiar with higher-level vocabulary, the words become part of their everyday use and improve their ability to use close reading with other texts. Lassonde (2009) found that students who can understand text vocabulary envision the literary work to increase comprehension and critical evaluation. According to Lehman and Roberts (2014), “Teaching students to read in this careful way involves helping them to acquire the vocabulary for talking about text. The more specific your language, the more you focus your attention and your thinking” (p. 11).

### **Sentence Syntax**

For the sentence syntax portion of close reading, students reread predetermined passages. With the increased demand for higher-level reading, students must be aware of the demanding sentence structure, and educators must help students extract meaning from that portion of text.

“If a reader cannot derive meaning from the individual sentence that make up a text, that is going to be a major obstacle in text-level comprehension” (Scott, 2009, p. 184). To help students achieve success with this area, educators must instruct students on how to extract meaning; they must provide detailed instruction on the use of context clues for individual words and sentences. Educators must model how sentences provide meaning to other sentences in different parts of text.

According to McKoon and Ratcliff (2007), meaning exists in the “interaction among all the parts of a sentence with each other, with contextual information, and with the general knowledge of the comprehender” (p. 270). Students must understand why a sentence was included in a passage, and how the meaning affects the text (Monk, 2011). Students particularly must understand that longer sentences are likely to contain several phrases and clauses that convey ideas that are vital to a passage (Shanahan et al., 2012). Since this portion of close reading is passage specific, only two or three key sentences and phrases are used.

Sentence syntax affects individual ability to read and understand a passage (Hagoort, 2003). When language agreements are violated, Hagoort (2003) found that people determine sentences to be unacceptable, a conflict that poses an interesting scenario for students during close reading exercises. Students must understand how words relate in a sentence to extract meaning from a passage. McKoon and Ratcliff (2007) identify prepositions and their relationships with text and real-world information as stumbling blocks for readers, and students’ text comprehension decreases depending on verb tense. Scott (2009) finds that prepositions, sentence embeddings, sentence element order, and distance between elements influence sentence comprehension. Regarding close reading of informational texts, Scott (2009) identifies the

complexities of texts and the difficulties they pose to elementary students with reading-comprehension impairments.

Eckstein and Friederici (2006) suggest that a passage's prosody influences the processing of sentence syntax. Understanding this phenomenon helps educators foster critical thinking about sentence syntax with students. Gamlin (1971) supports memory improvement through sentence syntax; understanding syntax fosters increased short- and long-term memories. Gordon, Hendrick, Johnson, and Lee (2006) found that noun phrases can impede memory storage based on whether a noun phrase is a specific name or description, and additionally express concern that linear placement of a verb and noun in a phrase can create deficiencies in memory recall. They consider placement by a separation of one word to multiple words, and incorporating this component in close reading improves comprehension among students.

## **Discussion**

In this portion of the process, an educator creates dialogue with students to discuss text. The students are allowed to use the text to search for evidence that supports their answers (Monk, 2011; New York State Education Department, 2011). Educators must create questions that require students to draw conclusions about an author's purpose, make connections between portions of text and other, similar texts, and cause students to infer information about the passage (Boyles, 2012/2013). The forum should not be a lecture or solely a question-and-answer session. The educator must create rich conversations with students about the current text. Most importantly, the educator must relate a passage to the students' lives to create lasting connections (Beltramo & Stillman, 2015; Maggart & Zintz, 1992). Lehman and Roberts (2014) explain that students "are often surprised by how simple their initial ideas about a character now appear and



by how they now better understand what the text is trying to say because they took a bit of extra time to look closely” (p. 22). According to Richards (2001):

The common avoidance of all discussion of the wider social and moral aspects of the arts by people of steady judgment and strong heads is a misfortune, for it leaves the field free for folly, and cramps the scope of good critics unduly. (p. 30)

“If the competent are to refrain because of the antics of the unqualified, an evil and a loss which are neither temporary nor trivial increase continually” (Richards, 2001, p. 30). Hellstrom (2011) supports this point by stating, “What new criticism leaves open is the way that literary creativity is also a social function, namely one that is embedded in the communicative act between a sender and a receiver” (p. 325).

Since literary creativity and criticism fall into a social function, it is necessary for all individuals involved to foster critical analysis within the entire group. If small portions of individuals do not contribute to the critique, the group suffers from loss of insight into text. If some individuals lack the necessary cognitive skills or capabilities to participate in the critique, the group is responsible for helping these individuals. By taking the time to help less-competent individuals learn to analyze text critically, a new perspective is added to the group by these individuals. As stated in 1 Corinthians 12:24-26,

But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

Hawkins et al. (2011) emphasize that students participating in repeated reading programs improve reading and oral comprehension. Oddo et al. (2010) report that peer, repeated readings

stimulate passage discussions to improve reading comprehension. Kelly (1990) found that student responses improve when students are permitted to respond to oral questioning during classroom discussions. By taking the time to reread passages and texts, students understand text thoroughly, and these students demonstrate their knowledge and comprehension by providing in-depth, detailed evidence from text to support their thinking and peer discussions.

When students use critical thinking skills, they read a passage and formulate their own ideas about the main idea of the text and the author's purpose, and through this process, they begin to relate this new information to previous learning and knowledge they possess. According to McLaughlin (2012), these connections bridge the gap between current and new knowledge. On receiving this information, students mold their thoughts to digest the passage for meaning. "Everything about reading is directed toward making meanings that are infused with active curiosity, emotion, and satisfaction" (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001, p. 322).

Educators play a role during this skill development. For students to understand text, educators must ask thought-provoking questions that challenge the students' thinking. These questions should require students to search a passage for text-based evidence to support their claims. The questions should cause students to relate their current reading to prior passages, and draw conclusions based on this information (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). Shanahan et al. (2012) argue that students who can interpret authors' patterns have a greater opportunity to decipher meanings hidden within text. "While it might be essential for students to recall information from a text, developing responses require that they go beyond literal meaning" (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001, p. 290). Close reading requires students to search passages for text-based answers and learn to support their responses with these text details. Bizzocchi and Tanenbaum (2012) found

that close reading allows video game designers to discuss and design authentic gaming situations that balance a player's choice, and the overall narrative and purpose of the game.

Besides social constructivism development between student interactions (McLaughlin, 2012), students need to engage in discussions with educators to promote academic growth. Through interactions, students participate in active modeling to develop necessary communication skills. "Dialogue encouraged students to focus on the written feedback provided, and to move on in the learning process by revising their own performance, rather than simply moving onto the next task" (Smyth, 2004, p. 373). Having the opportunity for self-reflection in a controlled environment allows students to take necessary educational risks to foster critical thinking and evaluation.

### **Writing**

During the final portion of close reading, students perform a writing task about the passage, which includes paraphrasing, explaining connections in the text, and/or evaluating the position of the author.

The main way of creating such imagery is through metaphoric and metonymic association, however again, the new critic would have pointed out that symbolic divergence from the theme can only be temporary, and must eventually offer a clear path towards the center of meaning of the text. (Hellstrom, 2011, p. 324)

For this section, students use their own words to explain the meaning of the answer to a question, and they must be engaged to provide critical responses and evaluations (Lassonde, 2009). The evidence they use must be text-based from the passage (Beltramo & Stillman, 2015; Monk, 2011; New York State Education Department, 2011; Valbuena, 2014).

Beyond paraphrasing, students must respond critically to questions that test their inferential skills, which represent a bridge between a reader's knowledge and text (Maggart & Zintz, 1992). These skills allow students to form connections to everyday life through authentic, meaningful, and personal ways (Lassonde, 2009). Through these skills, students can use foreshadowing, prediction, logic, and reasoning skills to find answers to discussions and writing questions prompted by an educator (New York State Education Department, 2011). These higher-order thinking skills require students to analyze text critically for meaning and understanding (Dodson, 2012).

During close reading, students must draw inferences from reading. They must apply this information not only to literal, text-based questions, but also to questions that require thought and a working knowledge of the meaning of a passage (Tovani, 2000). Smyth (2004) argues:

As for developing students' learning, low stake assessments of student responses (verbal or written on my part) can help bolster individuals' confidence through positive feedback, act as immediate building bridges for assisting student ideas to develop, and corrective guides on any points that a student may be going astray on. (p. 374)

Using inference-based questions during discussion and writing sections achieves a two-fold goal of stretching students' reading abilities and adhering to the Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practice, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). "Readers must use the text to support their thinking" (Tovani, 2000, p. 99).

Kelly (1990) argues, "Responding to literature promoted students' ability to connect their prior knowledge and experiences with the text, and encouraged personal response to literature"

(p. 469). Helou, Lai, and Sterkin (2007) focus on written communication with peer reading and editing, finding that students are more readily able to answer discussion prompts thoroughly and with clear written expression through use of peer editing. Since close reading involves use of peer reading and group discussions, peer editing is a necessary component that stimulates students' writing ability. Lehman and Roberts (2014) discuss, "Reading for evidence that reveals social issues, power, gender, and so on allows students to begin forming not just ideas, but interpretations of their texts" (p. 30). Lassonde (2009) emphasizes this concept when students make connections with peers and their lives. Close reading requires students to discuss material and perform a writing task. Radcliffe and Stephens (2009) suggest that students contribute more to their writing when they can relate to the task personally, and provide more in-depth responses when presented with authentic writing tasks.

### **Benefits**

Reutzel, Fawson, and Smith (2008) and Rex (2000) argue that scaffolding and interactive skills through close reading increase critical thinking and comprehension. By using close reading in authentic situations, students transfer the idea that close reading is not an isolated activity (Beltramo & Stillman, 2015; Fang & Wei, 2010). The personal reflection aspect of close reading enables students to move beyond impressionist reading and deepen their text and literary understanding (Elder & Paul, 2004a; Valbuena, 2014). According to Gewertz (2012), close reading allows teachers to "guide students back through the reading in a hunt for answers and deeper understanding" (p. 6).

Educators who incorporate close reading have the ability to intertwine reading, vocabulary, sentence syntax, comprehension, and writing. In isolation, these components can be taught to students with a missing element, but when they are implemented as a cohesive unit,

students process meaning, increase comprehension, and improve academic achievement. Efforts to increase this academic achievement can be fostered through peer reading, discussions, and writing activities. According to Lassonde (2009), students who implement the strategies of close reading across their curricular demands perform proficiently on high-stakes tests, and improve their literary lives. Adlington and Wright (2013) found that close reading through a virtual-learning environment improves performance on examinations. Although more research is needed to help students engage in deeper learning and move away from surface learning, participants found that the study's close reading exercises prepared them for examination questions (Adlington & Wright, 2013).

Close reading provides a means for students to learn to read and comprehend increasingly complex text. By understanding more difficult texts, students are better prepared to meet challenges in college and everyday work (Valbuena, 2014). Such students possess the ability to analyze and evaluate the purpose and objective of text critically, and use this information productively to further their education and lives (Beltramo & Stillman, 2015).

### **Motivating Students and Implementing Close Reading**

Motivating, inspiring, and engaging students during their education demands the attention of every educator. Countless hours of lesson planning and professional development have been poured into close reading in the hope that students' academic success will increase. "Motivation has frequently made the difference between learning that was temporary and superficial and learning that was permanent and internalized; therefore, educators need to understand what motivates children" (Corcoran & Mamalakis, 2009, p. 137). Unfortunately, many students lack the intrinsic motivation required to achieve these high standards and the rigors of high-stakes

testing. Administrators and educators must turn to methods such as close reading to bridge this void.

Incorporating literary criticism through close reading allows educators to motivate students to achieve academic success. As students apply close reading, they begin to see success across curricular subjects and higher scores on state tests. Harris and Harris (2010) state, “If you always do what you’ve always done, you will always get what you’ve always gotten” (p. 107). This attempt to speak to students’ self-efficacy and self-determination has influenced and motivated many students to strive for excellence. Even with implementation of a variety of reading programs, many students do not possess the necessary drive and strategies to be successful. When faced with this circumstance, it becomes the school community’s responsibility to find an alternative to educate the vastly growing unsuccessful student body. Stanley, Joiner, and Jones (2004) outline seven practices that influence an organization. Looking at education as a necessary organization, administrators and educators need to analyze how these principles can improve their organizations and classroom teachings. As an organization improves, students reap the benefits of the educational transformation and experience success in areas that were unsuccessful in the past. The seven practices include clarify the win, think steps not programs, narrow the focus, teach less for more, listen to outsiders, replace yourself, and work on it (Stanley et al., 2004).

### **Clarify The Win**

Most educators define a “win” as enabling students to learn. Teachers plan and work every day to promote this inner urgency to obtain desired knowledge. To develop this drive, educators create strategies to engage students, pique interest, and spark motivation.

Consequently, students view educators as a major factor to increase or decrease motivation (Corcoran & Mamalakis, 2009; Garza & Garza, 2010). According to High and Andrews (2009):

Student engagement drives students toward success or, if absent, a lack of engagement leaves students idling or even going in reverse. All good teachers know that more learning takes place when students are actually engaged in the curriculum. (p. 58)

By creating more engaging curricula and lessons, improvements can be seen in students' abilities to read, write, and comprehend (Bartosh, Ferguson, Tudor, & Taylor, 2009). As students develop interests in their learning, they increase necessary psychological developments and intrinsically motivated behaviors (Carmichael, Callingham, Watson, & Hay, 2009). This intrinsic drive and psychological development cause students to be engaged in their work. High and Andrews (2009) state:

Engaging work is motivating work—the kind of work that will feel more like play and get the students 'in the zone.' The zone is that magical place where basketball players make three-pointers look easy, pitchers are 'living on the black' of home plate's edges, and students are so absorbed in the task that they forget to check the clock. (p. 62)

Regarding close reading, educators must clarify the win by strategically choosing reading passages that stretch students' reading and comprehension abilities. By following state and federal standards such as The Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practice, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010), educators can select the most appropriate skills necessary to make their students college- and career-ready. This planning allows educators to focus, and students understand the necessary component that is being taught.



**Think Steps, Not Programs**

In many educational contexts, attempts to correct or improve curricula cause school personnel to adopt the latest program to increase academic success. Unfortunately, these programs do not provide the one component needed—the ability to increase learning. Administrators and educators must step back and identify the steps, not the programs that will work to create more engagement and intrinsic motivation. Educators must create and establish an environment that allows students to feel confident and engaged (Corcoran & Mamalakis, 2009). Once this environment exists, educators need to incorporate strategic pedagogies that foster these perceptions (Carmichael et al., 2009; Clayton & Ardito, 2009). By implementing lessons into curricula of high interests, students become more engaged and understand the purpose of their education (Bartosh et al., 2009; Bauleke & Herrmann, 2010; Carmichael et al., 2009; Martin & Dowson, 2009). Bauleke and Herrmann (2010) argue that student participation and learning improve when critical questioning is intertwined with real-life experience and curricula materials. Students retain more information, achieve high success, and maintain educational motivation when their emotional, behavioral, cognitive, and affective learning components are stimulated (Bartosh et al., 2009; Bauleke & Herrmann, 2010; High & Andrews, 2009).

**Narrow The Focus**

Narrowing your focus means “creating environments as distinctive brands” (Stanley et al., 2004, p. 108). Regarding education, administrators and educators need to decide what is relevant for students’ education. High and Andrews (2009) argue, “Students who understand the importance of the lessons will not feel they are being assigned busy work. When students understand the relevance lessons can have for their futures, they are more likely to engage in

even the most tedious lessons” (p. 59). Even with increased demands of high-stakes testing on curricula development, educators can provide necessary tools to improve learning. Corcoran and Mamalakis (2009) stress that curricula must focus on being made “personal, meaningful, and relevant to the students (p. 138). Carmichael et al. (2009) find that students become more excited and interested with focused activities. Unfocused and uninteresting activities produce boredom and disengagement. Practical tools that narrow the focus and maintain the importance of lessons include preparation, redirection, and reinforcement (Clayton & Ardito, 2009). By focusing curricula, educators and students develop a sense of community that instills the motivation to succeed and work to benefit the entire group. One positive attribute occurs when students understand each other on personal and cognitive levels (Bauleke & Herrmann, 2010). Through these interactions, students freely express their views and ideas that they developed. Since literary criticism allows students to dissect text, students can offer insight that relates to their thoughts, feelings, and emotions. As they incorporate close-reading strategies, students find text-based support for their responses. By diving beneath the literary surface and literal meanings, these text-based responses allow students to gain deeper understanding of text and its application to their lives.

### **Teach Less for More**

With the recent infusion of high-stakes testing, administrators and educators focus on teaching vast amounts of material to all students. Amrein and Berliner (2003) argue, “They have found that high-stakes tests cause teachers to take greater control of the learning experiences of their students, denying their students opportunities to direct their own learning” (p. 32). Occasionally, the quantity of information is overwhelming and overloads students. When this bombardment of information occurs, students are filled with boredom from increasingly

mundane activities (Carmichael et al., 2009, p. 72). It is the responsibility of educators to move students past this stage to initiate learning.

Students need to be taught how to take ownership of their learning. “Ownership increases the likelihood that young people will approach the knowledge and skills to be learned as active, critical, thoughtful investigators, rather than as passive receptors (or rejecters)” (Clayton & Ardito, 2009, p. 54). Through use of experiences and strategic pedagogical strategies, educators increase interest and ownership among students (Carmichael et al., 2009). Incorporating close reading, educators stimulate students’ curiosity by inspiring students to search a passage and apply their findings to other literary works and real-world lessons, activities, and assessments. Clayton and Ardito (2009) suggest, “When knowing comes through a meaning-making process then knowledge and knower are intimately connected; indeed, in order to know something deeply is to make it your own” (p. 54). Consequently, as students play an active, engaging role in their education, educators begin to understand their role as teacher and not a constant lecturer.

### **Listen to Outsiders**

If you are surrounded long enough by people who think like you think, you will become more and more certain that’s the best way to think. Over time you find yourself inclined to completely disregard the concerned voices of those positioned on the outside. (Stanley et al., 2004, p. 140)

Administrators and educators too often use strategies and methods with which they are comfortable to educate students. Regarding academic and curricula material, these individuals have the best answers to develop necessary pedagogical strategies. As new, research-based strategies and data-driven instruction are reported, their motivation to change current approaches

is limited. Unfortunately, school administration and faculty members have ignored reading strategies such as close reading.

Motivation is traditionally viewed as a personality trait, but research demonstrates “that motivation is significantly determined by structural and contextual factors” (Yair, 2000, p. 194). Educators have discovered that when students experience real-life situations and engage with activities outside of the classroom, student motivation and their attitudes and feelings toward school, learning, and their achievement improve (Bartosh et al., 2009; High & Andrews, 2009). Longo (2010) emphasizes that students who take more responsibility for their education develop motivation through stimulated creativity. Students demand relevant, real-life experiences during which they can apply knowledge, develop thought processes, and increase academic success (Bauleke & Herrmann, 2010; Carmichael et al., 2009; High & Andrews, 2009). Applying this motivational factor to close reading, students develop a voice and means to express thoughts. Close reading allows students the opportunity to engage in literary discussions that contain limited preconceived notions about text. These discussions do not follow a prescribed outline by an educator; the educator and students move literary discussions along by diving deep into text to find meaning.

### **Replace Yourself**

Educators want to teach and train students to become life-long learners. By instilling knowledge in students, teachers ensure continuation of future generations. “When you attempt to hold on, you encourage your organization to be built around a personality; when you strategically replace yourself, you allow your organization to be driven by a vision” (Stanley et al., 2004, p. 158). Every school district has a mission statement that desires and promotes the education of students. As teachers train students to replace the next generation of scholars,

workers, and citizens, they maintain the vision, not only of their designated district, but the vision and goals of state and federal education departments. Students benefit from democratic classrooms that honor their opinions and promote authorship opportunities that permit them to express their knowledge in various contexts (Clayton & Ardito, 2009; High & Andrews, 2009). Hence, lifelong learners will replace the lifelong learners of the current time.

### **Work on It**

The final strategy to improve student achievement requires administrators and educators to work continually on the previous six strategies. Initially, students developed a desire to perform in school, but through close reading, students begin to see the value and importance of learning. Students will look back on their educational experiences and realize that their learning stimulated their emotions, caused personal connections to their learning, and prompted further engagement in future endeavors (Bauleke & Herrmann, 2010). For educators to develop and progress these effective strategies, communication within grades, buildings, and the entire district needs to occur. Turner, Warzon, and Christensen (2011) argue that teachers have few opportunities to collaborate and discuss best practices needed to foster motivation of a student body. Lingo, Barton-Arwood, and Jolivette (2011) suggest that teachers must find the means to collaborate to ensure student improvement in academics. To guarantee that collaboration occurs, educators must “schedule consistent times to break away from the battle and assess your plan as well as your performance” (Stanley et al., 2004, p. 174). During discussion groups, educators can unpack the Common Core State Standards and discuss the best means to facilitate close-reading lessons to cover these skills.

### **Biblical Perspective**

Christians are called by God to obey His commands and follow His Word. The only way Christians can learn His Word and commands is by reading and understanding the Scriptures. Inside the Bible, God provides guidance concerning how to live and glorify His name on earth. Christians must diligently search the Scriptures and move beyond the literal surface meaning of the Bible to gain true understanding of God's purpose for His people. In John 5, the Pharisees confront Jesus for working on the Sabbath Day. Responding to their accusations, Jesus states, "You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life" (John 5:39-40). Since the Pharisees settled for the surface meaning of the text, they missed the concept of Christ's redemptive work. The only means by which the Pharisees could understand this message was to have the Holy Spirit open their hearts to the Word, read the Scriptures, and search for the truth hidden within. Similarly, educators must help students search their texts to understand deeper meanings of literature and not settle for surface meanings.

Although many people read the Scriptures, these people forget the next crucial stage. In Revelation 1:3, John writes, "Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near." Simply reading God's Word does not allow a Christian to understand the text; through close analysis and study, a Christian can hide the meaning in their hearts. Through constant study, believers are able to follow the words of the Psalmist; "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (Psalm 119:11). Through these words, David was able to understand the word of the Lord deeply and be declared a man after God's own heart.

Students need to understand that deep meaning can be extracted from literature when they read text closely and understand the words, sentences, and phrases an author uses.

Throughout the Bible, God commands the people to follow so they can remain within His circle of blessing. In the parables, Jesus Christ taught the disciples and people how to enter eternal life. These parables were given to the people to help them glean deep spiritual meaning and not rely on literal surface meanings. However, the disciples were unready for the solid, spiritual food given to them. When the Holy Spirit opened their eyes and hearts to the words and meanings in the Scriptures, they were able to understand the teachings of Christ better. In an educational context, students are able to unlock the meanings hidden within text when educators enlighten students on the meanings of vocabularies and the purpose of sentences in a passage.

Educators must remember that humans are image-bearers of God (Genesis 1:26). As image-bearers, students are active, purposeful learners; they are rational, conceptual, and creative problem-solvers. Students must have opportunities to make meaningful decisions, use and not just possess knowledge, and connect learning with life experiences. Since students are image-bearers of God, chaotic learning does not meet their needs. Close reading provides the student with a plan to help them understand meaning and improve critical thinking. Jeremiah similarly writes, “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11).

### **Conclusion**

With the recent adoption of the Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practice, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010, p. 10), educators must determine the most effective teaching method to prepare students for state exams, make them college- and career-ready, and provide reading strategies to ensure reading success for lifelong learning. “The goal is to teach students to reread text to acquire knowledge, develop fluency and reinforce their use of text evidence whenever possible” (Valbuena, 2014, p. 82). By

engaging students in text that relates to their personal lives, culture, and issues of student importance, educators can grab the attention of young minds and use close reading to open doors of learning to all students (Beltramo & Stillman, 2015). Through readings, discussions, and evidence gathering, students develop necessary communication skills that close reading provides. Close reading outlines five tasks that educators must implement to strengthen the critical reading abilities of students. These five tasks achieve the necessary means to meet anchor standards of the Common Core.

Richards (2001) espouses literary criticism; if readers focus on the entire passage, they extract more meaning and are better critical readers. If readers experience the literature, they can create personal connections and meanings from passages. Following a literary criticism approach allows a reader to read text closely and move beyond characteristics of a traditional critic (West, 2000). This movement is the desire of the New York State Department of Education (2011). It is the state's goal to change thought processes and work ethics of students to prepare them for future endeavors. In the words of the National Governors Association Center for Best Practice, Council of Chief State School Officers (2010):

To be ready for college, workforce training, and life in a technological society, students need the ability to gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, and report on information and ideas, to conduct original research in order to answer questions or solve problems, and to analyze and create a high volume and extensive range of print and non-print texts in media forms old and new. (p. 4)

Implementing these standards through literary criticism transforms the way students think, work, and interact with peers, adults, and literary works. Using a new criticism theoretical framework through literary criticism to implement close reading allows educators the



opportunity to engage students in literary discussions that stimulate thinking and create meaning. Close reading provides educators with an approach to simplify text to allow deeper understanding and conversation. This attempt to analyze text thoroughly permits students to strengthen critical thinking skills to improve reading comprehension. According to Gibbons and Gray (2004):

Critical thinking is the systematic application of critical thinking skills to real life situations that can only be learned and refined through practice within a particular discipline, through doing and reflecting on what we have done and why we did it that way. (p. 20)

Close reading provides an avenue for students to improve critical thinking skills and increase reading comprehension (Valbuena, 2014). “Students who engage in critical literacy become open-minded, active, strategic readers who are capable of comprehending text at deeper levels” (McLaughlin, 2012, p. 439).

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study is to determine whether implementing close reading in elementary school English language arts classes improves student achievement. Since the New York State Education Department (2011) adopted the Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practice, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010) and requires implementation of close reading, teachers must rework curricula to incorporate this instruction process. The researcher analyzed data to determine whether students exhibit more reading achievement when instructed through close reading and non-close reading models.

Close reading requires a student to interact deeply and intimately with text (Lehman & Roberts, 2014; Paul & Elder, 2003). Teachers do not provide in-depth background knowledge about texts and authors (Richards, 2001). Students are required to use repeated reading techniques to derive meaning (Lassonde, 2009; Monk, 2011). Students must break sentence syntax down, understand the need for vocabulary, and create inferences and conclusions that relate to other texts (McKoon & Ratcliff, 2007; McLaughlin, 2012; Shanahan et al. (2012). Students are also required to demonstrate knowledge through writing exercises during which they must paraphrase and respond to questions that require text-based answers from multiple sources of information (Hellstrom, 2011; Lassonde 2009). For this study, non-close reading instructional models followed procedures outlined by the close-reading model. These models might have incorporated aspects of close reading, but did not integrate the five components of close reading to help students become literary critics.

### **Research Design**

Regarding student achievement through close reading, an *ex-post facto*, causal-comparative study design was used (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007; Katz & Carlisle, 2009). This design was best since participants already completed state testing, and the researcher analyzed the data. The researcher compared data among schools that used and did not use close reading. To determine which schools used close reading fully, the researcher categorized schools that adopted the New York State ELA Modules as schools that used the close reading model, schools that adapted the New York State ELA Modules as schools that partially used close reading, and schools that did not use the New York State ELA Modules as schools that did not use close reading.

Using testing data from the 2013, 2014, and 2015 school years, the New York State ELA exam results were compared among all schools in the Broome-Tioga BOCES region, based on the years that schools used close reading completely (i.e., adopted), the years it partially used close reading (i.e., adapted), or used a non-close reading approach (i.e., did not use the modules). All efforts were made to compare schools with similar socioeconomic statuses, and student populations. Broome-Tioga BOCES organizes its data according to the region's socioeconomic status. By using this information, schools with similar free or reduced lunch percentages, family median income, and parental education were compared. Districts with similar ethnic races were analyzed together. After data were collected, they were analyzed for each participating school to determine whether each student cohort had increased success with reading instruction. On completion of analysis, increased student reading achievement among adopted, adapted, and non-module use schools was compared.

**RQ1:** According to testing data from the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) Exam from 2013 through 2015, did schools in the Broome-Tioga BOCES region

experience increases in the number of proficient students when comparing schools that adopted, adapted, or did not use the New York State English Language Arts Modules?

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 3 English Language Art classes increases students' proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 3 English Language Art classes does not increase students' proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 4 English Language Art classes increases students' proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 4 English Language Art classes does not increase students' proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 5 English Language Art classes increases students' proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 5 English Language Art classes does not increase students' proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>4</sub>:** Student cohorts increase reading proficiency scores over a given period when adopting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in comparison to schools

that only adapted or did not use the New York State English Language Arts Modules as measured by the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>04</sub>:** Student cohorts do not increase reading proficiency scores over a given period when adopting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in comparison to schools that only adapted or did not use the New York State English Language Arts Modules as measured by the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**RQ2:** According to testing data from the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) Exam from 2013 through 2015, did schools in the Broome-Tioga BOCES region increase the number of highly proficient students in comparison to schools that adopted, adapted, or did not use the New York State English Language Arts Modules?

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 3 English Language Art classes increases students' highly proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 3 English Language Art classes does not increase students' highly proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 4 English Language Art classes increases students' highly proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 4 English Language Art classes does not increase students' highly proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 5 English Language Art classes increases students' highly proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 5 English Language Art classes does not increase students' highly proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>4</sub>:** Student cohorts increase reading highly proficiency scores over a given period when adopting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in comparison to schools that only adapted or did not use the New York State English Language Arts Modules as measured by the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>04</sub>:** Student cohorts do not increase reading highly proficiency scores over a given period when adopting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in comparison to schools that only adapted or did not use the New York State English Language Arts Modules as measured by the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

### **Participants**

A purposeful, convenience sampling was used to select participants, who were chosen based on their proximity to the researcher, availability of data, and cooperation of the school district. The study included 10 school districts in one region of New York State, with a focus on grades 3, 4, and 5. Over the three-year period, 6,040 students completed the exams in these 10 school districts. In Grade 3, schools that adapt the modules completed 1065 exams; schools that adopt the modules completed 720 exams; and schools that did not use the modules completed 214 exams. In Grade 4, schools that adapt the modules completed 1033 exams; schools that

adopt the modules completed 763 exams; and schools that did not use the modules completed 213 exams. In Grade 5, schools that adapt the modules completed 1294 exams; and schools that adopt the modules completed 738 exams. All general and special education students participated in the study, with ages ranging from 8 to 12 years. Students from all ethnic backgrounds, and students with special needs, were included.

### **Setting**

The study was conducted in New York State, and in each district, grades 3, 4, and grade 5 were located in elementary schools. The New York State ELA exams were administered in a classroom, gymnasium, or cafeteria, depending on available space. The students had received disparate instructional methods in their English Language Arts classes. Since 2013 and implementation of the Common Core Assessments, students should be receiving some form of reading instruction using close reading (New York State Education Department, 2013). Prior to this time, the students might not have received reading instruction using close reading.

For post-testing, the students completed the assessment in their school districts. The students were given the assessment at the regularly scheduled time. Students with individual education plans (IEP), and students with 504 plans, received standard accommodations permitted under state guidelines. According to the New York State ELA exam, special education students are permitted scribes and extended time. However, these students cannot have passages or questions read aloud. To verify that students received proper accommodations permitted for the exam, educators were required to sign a waiver explaining that no additional accommodations were given to the students, except those outlined in the instructional material.

### **Instrumentation**

Participants completed a post-test—the New York State ELA Exam—administered over three days. The total amount depended on the grade level. For grade 3, students read five passages and completed 30 multiple-choice questions on day 1. On day 2, the same students read one passage and completed seven multiple-choice questions, and then read two more passages to complete two short-response questions and one extended-response question. On day 3, the students read three passages, completed five short-response questions, and completed one extended-response question.

For Grade 4, students read five passages and completed 30 multiple-choice questions on day 1. On day 2, they read one passage and completed seven multiple-choice questions, and completed two more reading passages and answered three short-response questions and one extended-response question. On day 3, they read three passages, answered five short-response questions, and completed one extended-response question.

For Grade 5, students read six passages and completed 42 multiple-choice questions on day 1. On day 2, they read one passage and answered seven multiple-choice questions, and then read two more passages to complete three short-response questions and one extended-response question. On day 3, they read three passages, answered five short-response questions, and completed one extended-response question.

The short-response questions required students to make a claim and support it with evidence from a passage or text that they read. Responses to these questions could usually be answered in two or three complete sentences. The extended-response question was in essay format; students made a claim and elaborated on the topic using evidence from the passages. This response required two or three paragraphs.



Each day of the exam was timed. For grade 3, the students had 70 minutes to complete each day of the exam. Grade 4 students had 70 minutes to complete each portion of the exam, and grade 5 students had 90 minutes. If a student did not finish during the allotted period, each question left blank was marked incomplete. Blank questions affected students' final scores.

Regarding the reliability of the 2013 New York State English Language Arts Exam, Pearson (2013) found the exam to have a reliability of 0.90 to 0.92, according to Cronbach's alpha and Feldt-Raju coefficient tests. Pearson (2013) used these tests for reliability since the exam tests a single group on one occasion, and the New York State Exam has a multiple-item format. Grades 3 and 4 scored lowest on reliability, but this outcome was expected since they are the first two grades in the testing series.

The validity of the New York State English Language Arts exam was examined and found satisfactory (Pearson, 2013). The exam was validated for construct and content validity. For construct validity, the exam was assessed for internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) and unidimensionality.

Factor analyses related to the Grades 3-8 Common Core ELA and Mathematics Tests indicated that the ratio of the variance accounted for by the first factor to the remaining factors was sufficiently large to support the claim that the ELA and mathematics test were essentially unidimensional. (Pearson, 2013, p. 19)

Content validity was assessed using a three-prong approach. First, the New York State Testing Program (NYSTP) created an exam that aligned with the Common Core. Then, several New York State Educators constructed part of the exam, reviewed field test results, and provided input for development of a scoring rubric (Pearson, 2013). Finally, an external evaluation provided by the Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO) found that the NYSTP

created an examination that exceeded Standards for Educational & Psychological Testing (Pearson, 2013). HumRRO also determined that NYSTP measured the Common Core to the intended depth of knowledge (Pearson, 2013).

Pearson (2014) found the 2014 New York State ELA Exam to have a reliability of 0.88 to 0.92 according to the Cronbach's alpha and Feldt-Raju coefficient tests. Pearson (2014) decided to use these tests for reliability since the exam tests a single group on one occasion and the New York State Exam has a multiple-item format. Grades 3 and 4 scored the lowest on the test for reliability. However, this outcome was expected since they are the first two grades in the testing series and these exams contain the fewest points. The validity of the New York State English Language Arts exam was examined and found satisfactory (Pearson, 2014). The exam was validated for construct and content validity. For construct validity, the exam was examined for internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) and unidimensionality. Similar to the 2013 exam, content validity was assessed using a three-prong approach. First, the New York State Testing Program (NYSTP) created an exam that aligned with the Common Core. Then, several New York State educators constructed part of the exam, reviewed field test results, and provided input into development of a scoring rubric (Pearson, 2014). Finally, an external evaluation provided by Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO) found that the NYSTP created an examination that exceeded the Standards for Educational & Psychological Testing (Pearson, 2014).

### **Procedures**

Before conducting the study, the researcher submitted an Internal Review Board (IRB) packet and received approval for the study. On approval by the committee, the researcher sent a survey to elementary school principals throughout the Broome-Tioga BOCES region to identify

schools that adopted, adapted, or chose not to work with the New York State ELA Modules. The survey was sent electronically. After one month, the survey was redistributed to school districts that did not respond to the first mailing. A third mailing was sent one month later to schools that still did not respond to the survey.

Once the surveys were collected, the schools were separated into three categories: adopted (used the ELA modules), adapted (used portions of the ELA modules), or did not use the modules. Within each group, schools were organized by population size and socioeconomic status, allowing schools of similar size to be compared. Gender was not a criterion used during analysis since scores indicated only the proficiency score of the entire building. The next step was to analyze exam scores for each district, obtained from the New York State Education (2015) website. Scores from previous years are accessible from the site, and such scores were used to track the progress of cohorts in the school districts to determine increases and decreases in proficiency scores by instructional method.

### **Data Analysis**

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to compare treatment means. This statistical analysis is the most appropriate tool to compare means between close-reading and non-close reading treatments. The ANOVA was used to analyze null hypothesis 1, 2, and 3 for each research question. Using post-test mean scores reduces the possibility of a Type II error. To determine statistical significant between mean scores, the researcher compared  $F$  statistics. If the  $p$  value exceeded the critical value, the researcher rejected the null hypotheses. The critical value was  $p < .05$ . To examine the means of the subgroups for null hypothesis 4 for each research question, the researcher used ANOVAs. This statistical tool was used to analyze the

amount of between-group variance in participants' scores in comparison to within-group variance (Gall et al., 2007).

### **Assumptions**

In January 2010, the New York State Department of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards. After adoption, the department introduced the Shifts for Students, including balancing informational and literary text, knowledge in the disciplines, staircase of complexity, text-based answers, writing from sources, and academic vocabulary (New York State Education Department, 2013). These shifts were used to update the New York State English Language Arts Exam. According to the New York State Department of Education (2013), "In English Language Arts, these shifts will be characterized by an intense focus on complex, grade-appropriate nonfiction and fiction texts that require rigorous textual analysis, the application of academic language, and other key college- and career-readiness skills" (p. 1). Educators in New York State should possess intimate knowledge of the Common Core and Instructional Shifts. According the department, school districts were able to prepare educators through professional development. Besides professional development, the department created a website at [engageny.org](http://engageny.org), on which educators and parents can view videos and presentations about changes to the New York State Tests. The ELA Modules are posted on the site, and by posting them, parents have access to materials educators are using and can reinforce these skills at home.

## CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

This chapter summarizes the statistical data of student achievement in comparison to the close reading method used during instruction. School districts chose to adopt, adapt, or did not use the New York State ELA Modules, which focus on close reading. The research questions for this study focus on students who achieved proficient or highly proficient scores on the New York State ELA Exam. The research questions and null hypotheses were:

**RQ1:** According to testing data from the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) Exam from 2013 through 2015, did schools in the Broome-Tioga BOCES region experience increases in the number of proficient students when comparing schools that adopted, adapted, or did not use the New York State English Language Arts Modules?

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 3 English Language Art classes increases students' proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 3 English Language Art classes does not increase students' proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

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**H<sub>3</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 5 English Language Art classes increases students' proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 5 English Language Art classes does not increase students' proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>4</sub>:** Student cohorts increase reading proficiency scores over a given period when adopting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in comparison to schools that only adapted or did not use the New York State English Language Arts Modules as measured by the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>04</sub>:** Student cohorts do not increase reading proficiency scores over a given period when adopting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in comparison to schools that only adapted or did not use the New York State English Language Arts Modules as measured by the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**RQ2:** According to testing data from the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) Exam from 2013 through 2015, did schools in the Broome-Tioga BOCES region increase the number of highly proficient students in comparison to schools that adopted, adapted, or did not use the New York State English Language Arts Modules?

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 3 English Language Art classes increases students' highly proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 3 English Language Art classes does not increase students' highly proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 4 English Language Art classes increases students' highly proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 4 English Language Art classes does not increase students' highly proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 5 English Language Art classes increases students' highly proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 5 English Language Art classes does not increase students' highly proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>4</sub>:** Student cohorts increase reading highly proficiency scores over a given period when adopting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in comparison to schools that only adapted or did not use the New York State English Language Arts Modules as measured by the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>04</sub>:** Student cohorts do not increase reading highly proficiency scores over a given period when adopting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in comparison to schools that only adapted or did not use the New York State English

Language Arts Modules as measured by the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

## Results

### Research Question One

A one-way ANOVA was used to examine whether student achievement of a proficient score on the New York State ELA Exam was a function of the close reading teaching method they received. The independent variable represented the three types of methods: 1) adopt, 2) adapt, and 3) did not use. The dependent variable was students' achievement of a proficient score on the New York State ELA Exam. Appendix A shows the means and standard deviations for each of the three groups for grades 3, 4, and 5.

### Null Hypothesis One

An alpha of .05 was used for all analyses. The test for homogeneity of variance was significant [*Levene F* (2, 27) = 22.390,  $p < .05$ ]. Levene's Test acknowledges a difference when comparing proficient achievement scores to the close reading models (Appendix B). The Brown-Forsythe Test of Equality of Means was used, and a p-value greater than .05 was found, identifying no difference between close reading and students achieving a proficient score on the exam (Appendix C). The test of normality was met for this sample, according to the Shapiro-Wilk test (Appendix D). A one-way ANOVA of student scores and close reading (Appendix E) did not reveal a statistically significant main effect [ $F(2, 27) = 3.230, p > .05$ ], indicating that all three close reading methods resulted in similar proficiency scores. Therefore, the data failed to reject the null hypothesis.

*Post-hoc* comparisons that evaluated pairwise differences among group means were conducted using the Tukey HSD test, since equal variances were met. Tests revealed significant



pairwise differences between the mean scores of adopt and did not use, adopt and adapt, and adapt and did not use (Appendix F).

### **Null Hypothesis Two**

An alpha of .05 was used for all analyses. The test for homogeneity of variance was significant [*Levene F* (2, 27) = 14.399,  $p < .05$ ]. Levene's Test acknowledges a difference when comparing proficient achievement scores to the close reading models (Appendix B). The Brown-Forsythe Test of Equality of Means was used, and a  $p$ -value greater than .05 was found, identifying no difference between close reading and students achieving a proficient score on the exam (Appendix C). The test of normality was met for this sample, according to the Shapiro-Wilk test (Appendix D). A one-way ANOVA of student proficient scores and close reading (Appendix E) revealed a significant main effect [ $F(2, 27) = 3.775, p < .05$ ], suggesting that all three close reading methods resulted in not obtaining similar scores. Therefore, the data rejected the null hypothesis.

*Post-hoc* comparisons that evaluated pairwise differences among group means were conducted using the Tukey HSD test, since equal variances were met. Tests revealed significant pairwise differences between mean scores of adopt and did not use, and adapt and did not use. In comparison, adopt and adapt did not differ from the other close reading media (Appendix F).

### **Null Hypothesis Three**

An alpha of .05 was used for all analyses. A test for homogeneity of variance was significant [*Levene F* (1, 28) = 15.551,  $p < .05$ ]. Levene's Test acknowledges a difference when comparing proficient achievement scores to the close reading models (Appendix B). The Brown-Forsythe Test of Equality of Means was used, and a  $p$ -value greater than .05 was found, identifying no difference between close reading and students achieving a proficient score on the

exam (Appendix C). A test of normality was met for this sample, according to the Shapiro-Wilk test (Appendix D). A one-way ANOVA of student proficient scores and close reading (Appendix E) revealed a significant main effect [ $F(1, 28) = 5.642, p < .05$ ], suggesting all three close reading methods resulted in not obtaining similar student proficient scores. Therefore, the data rejected the null hypothesis.

#### **Null Hypothesis Four**

An alpha of .05 was used for all analyses. A one-way, repeated-measures ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the null hypothesis that there is no change in participant proficiency when instructed using close reading methods: adopt ( $N=2$ ) and adapt ( $N=7$ ). Appendix G shows descriptive statistics for student cohorts according to close reading method used during instruction. Results of an ANOVA suggest no change in proficient scores (Wilks' Lambda = .524,  $F(2,6) = 2.728, p > .05, \eta^2 = .476$ ). Thus, statistical evidence failed to reject the null hypothesis.

#### **Research Question Two**

A one-way ANOVA was used to examine whether student achievement of a highly proficient score on the exam was a function of close reading method. The independent variable was the three types of close reading methods: 1) adopt, 2) adapt, and 3) did not use. The dependent variable was student achievement of a highly proficient score on the exam. Appendix A shows means and standard deviations for each of the three groups for grades 3, 4, and 5.

#### **Null Hypothesis One**

An alpha of .05 was used for all analyses. A test for homogeneity of variance was significant [ $Levene F(2, 27) = .198, p > .05$ ]. Levene's Test acknowledges that there was no difference when comparing highly proficient achievement scores to close reading method

(Appendix B). The Brown-Forsythe Test of Equality of Means was used, and a  $p$ -value greater than .05 was found, suggesting no difference between close reading and students achieving a highly proficient score on the exam (Appendix C). A test of normality was met for this sample, according to the Shapiro-Wilk test (Appendix D). A one-way ANOVA of student proficient scores on the exam and close reading (Appendix E) did not reveal a significant main effect [ $F(2, 27) = 3.230, p > .05$ ], suggesting all three close reading methods resulted in similar student highly proficient scores. Therefore, the data failed to reject the null hypothesis.

*Post-hoc* comparisons that evaluated pairwise differences among group means were conducted using the Tukey HSD test, since equal variances were met. Tests revealed pairwise differences between mean scores of adopt and did not use, adopt and adapt, and adapt and did not use (Appendix H).

### **Null Hypothesis Two**

An alpha of .05 was used for all analyses. A test for homogeneity of variance was significant [ $Levene F(2, 27) = 1.019, p > .05$ ]. Levene's Test acknowledges that there is no difference when comparing highly proficient achievement scores to the close reading models (Appendix B). The Brown-Forsythe Test of Equality of Means was used, and a  $p$ -value greater than .05 was found, suggesting no difference between close reading and students achieving a highly proficient score on the exam (Appendix C). A test of normality was met for this sample, according to the Shapiro-Wilk test (Appendix D). A one-way ANOVA of student proficient scores on the exam and close reading (Appendix E) did not reveal a significant main effect [ $F(2, 27) = 3.230, p > .05$ ], suggesting that all three close reading methods resulted in similar student highly proficient scores. Therefore, the data failed to reject the null hypothesis.

*Post-hoc* comparisons that evaluated pairwise differences among group means were conducted using the Tukey HSD test, since equal variances were met. Tests revealed pairwise differences between the mean scores of adopt and did not use, adopt and adapt, and adapt and did not use (Appendix H).

### **Null Hypothesis Three**

An alpha of .05 was used for all analyses. A test for homogeneity of variance was significant [*Levene F* (2, 27) = .007,  $p > .05$ ]. Levene's Test acknowledges that there is no difference when comparing highly proficient achievement scores to the close reading models (Appendix B). The Brown-Forsythe Test of Equality of Means was used, and a  $p$ -value greater than .05 was found, suggesting no difference between close reading and students achieving a proficient score on the exam (Appendix C). A test of normality was met for this sample, according to the Shapiro-Wilk test (Appendix D). A one-way ANOVA of student proficient scores on the exam and close reading (Appendix E) revealed a significant main effect [ $F(1, 28) = 5.642, p < .05$ ], suggesting that all three close reading methods resulted in not obtaining similar student highly proficient scores. Therefore, the data rejected the null hypothesis.

### **Null Hypothesis Four**

An alpha of .05 was used for all analyses. A one-way, repeated-measures ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the null hypothesis that there is no change in high proficiency when instructed using close reading methods: adopt ( $N=2$ ), adapt ( $N=7$ ), or did not use ( $N=1$ ). Appendix G shows descriptive statistics for the student cohorts according to the close reading method used during instruction. Results of an ANOVA suggest a change in proficient levels (Wilks' Lambda = .726,  $F(2,6) = 7.940, p < .05, \eta^2 = .726$ ). Therefore, the statistical evidence rejected the null hypothesis.

### **Additional Analysis**

The focus of this study was on close reading and its effect on student achievement, but other areas in this study require attention, including teacher training, gender, general education students versus students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students versus students who are not economically disadvantaged. These areas were examined statistically to determine whether they influenced student achievement.

#### **Teacher Training**

A one-way ANOVA was used to examine whether student achievement of a proficient score on the exam was a function of teacher training. The independent variable was four types of training: 1) 1-3 days, 2) more than 1 week, 3) teacher responsibility, and 4) curriculum needs. The dependent variable was student achievement of a proficient score on the exam. Appendix I shows means and standard deviations for each of the four groups for grades 3, 4, and 5. An alpha of .05 was used for all analyses.

Regarding grade 3, the test for homogeneity of variance was not significant [*Levene F* (3, 26) = 1.845,  $p > .05$ ]. Levene's Test acknowledges that there is no difference when comparing proficient achievement to teacher training (Appendix J). The Brown-Forsythe Test of Equality of Means was used, and the  $p$ -value was greater than .05, suggesting no difference between teacher training and students achieving a proficient score on the exam (Appendix K). A test of normality was not met, according to the Shapiro-Wilk test. A one-way ANOVA of student proficient scores on the exam and teacher training (Appendix L) did not reveal a significant main effect [ $F(3, 26) = 1.253, p > .05$ ], suggesting all four teacher trainings resulted in similar student proficient scores. The following tests suggest no increase in proficient scores when comparing teacher training.

For grade 4, a test for homogeneity of variance was not significant [*Levene F* (3, 26) = 2.564,  $p > .05$ ]. Levene's Test acknowledges no difference when comparing proficient achievement to teacher training (Appendix J). The Brown-Forsythe Test of Equality of Means was used, and a  $p$ -value greater than .05 was found, suggesting no difference between teacher training and students achieving a proficient score on the exam (Appendix K). A test of normality was not met, according to the Shapiro-Wilk test. A one-way ANOVA of student proficient scores on the exam and teacher training (Appendix L) did not reveal a significant main effect [ $F(3, 26) = 0.97, p > .05$ ], suggesting that all four teacher trainings resulted in similar student proficient scores. The following tests suggest no increase in proficient scores when comparing teacher training.

When evaluating grade 5 proficient scores and teacher training, a test for homogeneity of variance was not significant [*Levene F* (3, 26) = 2.14,  $p > .05$ ]. Levene's Test acknowledges no difference when comparing proficient achievement and teacher training (Appendix J). The Brown-Forsythe Test of Equality of Means was used, and a  $p$ -value greater than .05 was found, suggesting no difference between teacher training and students achieving a proficient score on the exam (Appendix K). A test of normality was not met, according to the Shapiro-Wilk test. A one-way ANOVA of student proficient scores on the exam and teacher training (Appendix L) did not reveal a significant main effect [ $F(3, 26) = .588, p > .05$ ], suggesting that all four teacher trainings resulted in similar student proficient scores. The following tests suggest no increase in proficient scores when comparing teacher training.

A one-way ANOVA was used to examine whether student achievement of a highly proficient score on the exam was a function of teacher training. The independent variable was four types of training: 1) 1-3 days, 2) more than 1 week, 3) teacher responsibility, and 4)

curriculum needs. The dependent variable was student achievement of a proficient score on the exam. Appendix I shows means and standard deviations for each of the four groups for grades 3, 4, and 5. An alpha of .05 was used for all analyses.

In grade 3, a test for homogeneity of variance was not significant [*Levene F* (3, 26) = 1.544,  $p > .05$ ]. Levene's Test acknowledges no difference when comparing highly proficient achievement and teacher training (Appendix J). The Brown-Forsythe Test of Equality of Means was used, and the  $p$ -value was greater than .05, suggesting no difference between teacher training and students achieving a highly proficient score on the exam (Appendix K). A test of normality was not met, according to the Shapiro-Wilk test. A one-way ANOVA of student proficient scores on the exam and teacher training (Appendix L) did not reveal a significant main effect [ $F(3, 26) = 1.594$ ,  $p > .05$ ], suggesting that all four teacher trainings resulted in similar student highly proficient scores. The following tests suggest no increase in highly proficient scores when comparing teacher training.

For grade 4, the test for homogeneity of variance was not significant [*Levene F* (3, 26) = 12.647,  $p < .05$ ]. Levene's Test acknowledges a difference when comparing highly proficient achievement to teacher training (Appendix J). The Brown-Forsythe Test of Equality of Means was used, and a  $p$ -value less than .05 was found, suggesting a difference between teacher training and students achieving a highly proficient score on the exam (Appendix K). The test of normality was not met, according to the Shapiro-Wilk test. A one-way ANOVA of student proficient scores on the exam and teacher training (Appendix L) revealed a significant main effect [ $F(3, 26) = 1.529$ ,  $p > .05$ ], suggesting that all four teacher trainings resulted in similar student highly proficient scores. The following tests suggest no increase in highly proficient scores when comparing teacher training.

When comparing grade 5 highly proficient scores and teacher training, the test for homogeneity of variance was not significant [*Levene F* (3, 26) = 4.211,  $p < .05$ ]. Levene's Test acknowledges no difference when comparing highly proficient achievement and teacher training (Appendix J). The Brown-Forsythe Test of Equality of Means was used, and a  $p$ -value greater than .05 was found, suggesting no difference between teacher training and students achieving a highly proficient score on the exam (Appendix K). The test of normality was not met, according to the Shapiro-Wilk test. A one-way ANOVA of student proficient scores on the exam and teacher training (Appendix L) did not reveal a significant main effect [ $F(3, 26) = 0.874, p > .05$ ], suggesting that all four teacher trainings resulted in similar student highly proficient scores. The following tests suggest no increase in highly proficient scores when comparing teacher training.

### **Gender**

A one-way ANOVA was used to examine whether student achievement of a proficient or highly proficient score on the exam was a function of close reading regarding student gender. The independent variable was three types of close reading methods: 1) adopt, 2) adapt, and 3) did not use. The dependent variable was student achievement of a proficient or highly proficient score on the exam, separated by gender. Appendix M shows means and standard deviations for each of the three groups for males and females. An alpha of .05 was used for all analyses.

Regarding male proficient scores and close reading method, the test for homogeneity of variance was not significant [*Levene F* (2, 87) = 29.97,  $p < .05$ ]. Levene's Test acknowledges a difference when comparing male proficient achievement and close reading (Appendix N). The Brown-Forsythe Test of Equality of Means was used, and a  $p$ -value less than .05 was found, suggesting a difference between close reading and male students achieving a proficient score on the exam (Appendix O). The test of normality was not met, according to the Shapiro-Wilk test



(Appendix P). A one-way ANOVA of male student proficient scores on the exam and close reading (Appendix Q) revealed a significant main effect [ $F(2, 87) = 6.34, p < .05$ ], suggesting all three close reading methods did not result in similar male proficient scores. The following tests suggest an increase in male proficient scores when instructed through close reading.

*Post-hoc* comparisons that evaluated pairwise differences among group means were conducted using the Tukey HSD test, since equal variances were met. Tests revealed pairwise differences between mean scores of adopt and adapt. In comparison, adopt and did not use, and adapt and did not use, did not differ (Appendix R).

Regarding male highly proficient scores and close reading methods, the test for homogeneity of variance was significant [*Levene*  $F(2, 87) = 2.667, p > .05$ ]. Levene's Test acknowledges no difference when comparing male highly proficient achievement and close reading (Appendix N). The Brown-Forsythe Test of Equality of Means was used, and a  $p$ -value greater than .05 was found, suggesting no difference between close reading and male students achieving a proficient score on the exam (Appendix O). The test of normality was not met, according to the Shapiro-Wilk test (Appendix P). A one-way ANOVA of male student highly proficient scores on the exam and close reading (Appendix Q) did not reveal a significant main effect [ $F(2, 87) = 1.94, p > .05$ ], suggesting that all three close reading methods resulted in similar male highly proficient scores. The following tests suggest no increase in male highly proficient scores when instructed through close reading.

Regarding female proficient scores through close reading methods, the test for homogeneity of variance was not significant [*Levene*  $F(2, 87) = 31.71, p < .05$ ]. Levene's Test acknowledges a difference when comparing female proficient achievement and close reading (Appendix N). The Brown-Forsythe Test of Equality of Means was used, and a  $p$ -value less than

.05 was found, suggesting a difference between close reading and female students achieving a proficient score on the exam (Appendix O). The test of normality was not met, according to the Shapiro-Wilk test (Appendix P). A one-way ANOVA of female student proficient scores on the exam and close reading (Appendix Q) revealed a significant main effect [ $F(2, 87) = 9.69, p < .05$ ], suggesting that all three close reading methods did not result in similar female proficient scores. The following tests suggest an increase in female proficient scores when instructed through close reading.

*Post-hoc* comparisons that evaluated pairwise differences among group means were conducted using the Tukey HSD test, since equal variances were met. Tests revealed pairwise differences between mean scores of adopt and adapt. In comparison, adopt and did not use, and adapt and did not use, did not differ (Appendix R).

When comparing female highly proficient scores and close reading methods, the test for homogeneity of variance was significant [ $Levene F(2, 87) = 0.56, p > .05$ ]. Levene's Test acknowledges no difference when comparing female highly proficient achievement and close reading (Appendix N). The Brown-Forsythe Test of Equality of Means was used, and a p-value greater than .05 was found, suggesting no difference between close reading and female students achieving a proficient score on the exam (Appendix O). The test of normality was not met, according to the Shapiro-Wilk test (Appendix P). A one-way ANOVA of female student highly proficient scores on the exam and close reading (Appendix Q) did not reveal a significant main effect [ $F(2, 87) = 1.29, p > .05$ ], suggesting that all three close reading methods resulted in similar female highly proficient scores. The following tests suggest no increase in female highly proficient scores when instructed through close reading.

### **General Education and Students with Special Needs**

A one-way ANOVA was used to examine whether student achievement of a proficient or highly proficient score on the exam was a function of close reading regarding students in general education or classified as a student with special needs. The independent variable was three types of close reading methods: 1) adopt, 2) adapt, and 3) did not use. The dependent variable was student achievement of a proficient or highly proficient score on the exam, separated by type of education. Appendix S shows means and standard deviations for each of the three groups for general education and students with special needs. An alpha of .05 was used for all analyses. Not all schools reported which students were part of general education and which were classified as special-needs students.

Regarding general education student proficient scores and close reading methods, the test for homogeneity of variance was significant [*Levene*  $F(2, 47) = 7.97, p < .05$ ]. Levene's Test acknowledges a difference when comparing general education student proficient achievement and close reading (Appendix T). The Brown-Forsythe Test of Equality of Means was used, and a p-value less than .05 was found, suggesting a difference between close reading and general education students achieving a proficient score on the exam (Appendix U). The test of normality was not met, according to the Shapiro-Wilk test (Appendix V). A one-way ANOVA of general education student proficient scores on the exam and close reading (Appendix W) revealed a significant main effect [ $F(2, 47) = 18.46, p < .05$ ], suggesting that all three close reading methods resulted in different general education student proficient scores. The following tests suggest an increase in general education student proficient scores when instructed through close reading.

*Post-hoc* comparisons that evaluated pairwise differences among group means were conducted using the Tukey HSD test, since equal variances were met. Tests revealed significant

pairwise differences between mean scores of adopt and adapt, adopt and did not use, and adapt and did not use (Appendix X).

When comparing general education student highly proficient scores and close reading methods, the test for homogeneity of variance was significant [*Levene*  $F(2, 47) = 1.75, p > .05$ ]. Levene's Test acknowledges no difference when comparing general education student highly proficient achievement and close reading (Appendix T). The Brown-Forsythe Test of Equality of Means was used, and a  $p$ -value greater than .05 was found, suggesting no difference between close reading and general education students achieving a highly proficient score on the exam (Appendix U). The test of normality was not met, according to the Shapiro-Wilk test (Appendix V). The one-way ANOVA of general education student highly proficient scores on the exam and close reading (Appendix W) did not reveal a significant main effect [ $F(2, 47) = 1.42, p > .05$ ], suggesting that all three close reading methods resulted in similar general education student highly proficient scores. The following tests suggest an increase in general education highly proficient scores when instructed through close reading.

Regarding students with special needs proficient scores and close reading methods, the test for homogeneity of variance was significant [*Levene*  $F(2, 47) = 3.34, p < .05$ ]. Levene's Test acknowledges a difference when comparing students with special needs proficient achievement and close reading (Appendix T). The Brown-Forsythe Test of Equality of Means could not be used because at least one group had a zero variance (Appendix U). The test of normality was not met, according to the Shapiro-Wilk test (Appendix V). A one-way ANOVA of students with special needs proficient scores on the exam and close reading (Appendix W) did not reveal a significant main effect [ $F(2, 47) = 0.522, p > .05$ ], suggesting that all three close reading methods resulted in similar students with special needs proficient scores. The following

tests suggest no increase in students with special needs proficient scores when instructed through close reading.

When comparing students with special needs highly proficient scores and close reading methods, the test for homogeneity of variance was not significant [*Levene*  $F(2, 47) = 1.75, p > .05$ ]. Levene's Test acknowledges no difference when comparing students with special needs highly proficient achievement and close reading (Appendix T). The Brown-Forsythe Test of Equality of Means could not be used because at least one group had a zero variance (Appendix U). The test of normality was not met, according to the Shapiro-Wilk test (Appendix V). A one-way ANOVA of students with special needs highly proficient scores on the exam and close reading (Appendix W) did not reveal a significant main effect [ $F(2, 47) = 0.387, p > .05$ ], suggesting that all three close reading methods resulted in similar students with special needs highly proficient scores. The following tests suggest no significant increase in students with special needs highly proficient scores when instructed through close reading.

### **Socioeconomic Status**

A one-way ANOVA was used to examine whether student achievement of a proficient or highly proficient score on the exam was a function of close reading regarding student socioeconomic status (SES). The independent variable was three types of close reading methods: 1) adopt, 2) adapt, and 3) did not use. The dependent variable was student achievement of a proficient or highly proficient score on the exam, separated by SES. SES was listed as economically disadvantaged or not economically disadvantaged. Appendix Y shows means and standard deviations for each of the three groups for SES. An alpha of .05 was used for all analyses.

Regarding disadvantaged student proficient scores and close reading methods, the test for homogeneity of variance was not significant [*Levene F* (2, 87) = 44.94,  $p < .05$ ]. Levene's Test acknowledges a difference when comparing disadvantaged student proficient achievement and close reading (Appendix Z). The Brown-Forsythe Test of Equality of Means was used, and a  $p$ -value less than .05 was found, suggesting a difference between close reading and disadvantaged students achieving a proficient score on the exam (Appendix AA). The test of normality was not met, according to the Shapiro-Wilk test (Appendix BB). A one-way ANOVA of disadvantaged student proficient scores on the exam and close reading (Appendix CC) revealed a significant main effect [ $F(2, 87) = 15.48, p < .05$ ], suggesting that all three close reading methods resulted in similar disadvantaged student proficient scores. The following tests suggest an increase in disadvantaged student proficient scores when instructed through close reading.

*Post-hoc* comparisons evaluated pairwise differences among group means, conducted using the Tukey HSD test since equal variances were met. Tests revealed significant pairwise differences between the mean scores of adopt and adapt, and adopt and did not use. The adopt and did not use comparison was slightly over a  $p$ -value of .05 ( $p = .055$ ). The comparison of adapt and did not use buildings revealed no difference (Appendix DD).

Regarding disadvantaged student highly proficient scores and close reading methods, the test for homogeneity of variance was not significant [*Levene F* (2, 87) = 15.95,  $p < .05$ ]. Levene's Test acknowledges a difference when comparing disadvantaged student highly proficient achievement and close reading (Appendix Z). The Brown-Forsythe Test of Equality of Means was used, and a  $p$ -value less than .05 was found, suggesting a difference between close reading and disadvantaged students achieving a highly proficient score on the exam (Appendix AA). The test of normality was not met, according to the Shapiro-Wilk test (Appendix BB). A

one-way ANOVA of disadvantaged student highly proficient scores on the exam and close reading (Appendix CC) revealed a significant main effect [ $F(2, 87) = 5.097, p < .05$ ], suggesting all three close reading methods resulted in similar disadvantaged student highly proficient scores. The following tests suggest an increase in disadvantaged student highly proficient scores when instructed through close reading.

*Post-hoc* comparisons evaluated pairwise differences among group means, conducted using the Tukey HSD test since equal variances were met. Tests revealed pairwise differences between mean scores of adapt and did not use. Adopt and did not use, and adopt and adapt, comparisons revealed no differences (Appendix DD).

When comparing not disadvantaged student proficient scores and close reading methods, the test for homogeneity of variance was not significant [ $Levene F(2, 87) = 4.51, p < .05$ ]. Levene's Test acknowledges a difference when comparing not disadvantaged student proficient achievement and close reading (Appendix Z). The Brown-Forsythe Test of Equality of Means was used, and a  $p$ -value less than .05 was found, suggesting a difference between close reading and not disadvantaged students achieving a proficient score on the exam (Appendix AA). The test of normality was not met, according to the Shapiro-Wilk test (Appendix BB). A one-way ANOVA of not disadvantaged student proficient scores on the exam and close reading (Appendix CC) revealed a significant main effect [ $F(2, 87) = 2.847, p < .05$ ], suggesting that all three close reading methods did not result in similar not disadvantaged student proficient scores. The following tests suggest an increase in not disadvantaged student proficient scores when instructed through close reading.

*Post-hoc* comparisons evaluated pairwise differences among group means, conducted using the Tukey HSD test since equal variances were met. Tests revealed pairwise differences

between mean scores of adopt and adapt ( $p < .05$ ). Comparisons of adopt and did not use, and adapt and did not use, revealed no difference (Appendix DD).

Comparing not disadvantaged highly proficient scores and close reading methods, the test for homogeneity of variance was not significant [*Levene*  $F(2, 87) = 0.16, p > .05$ ]. Levene's Test acknowledges no difference when comparing not disadvantaged students highly proficient achievement and close reading (Appendix Z). The Brown-Forsythe Test of Equality of Means was used, and a  $p$ -value less than .05 was found, suggesting a difference between close reading and not disadvantaged students achieving a highly proficient score on the exam (Appendix AA). The test of normality was not met, according to the Shapiro-Wilk test (Appendix BB). A one-way ANOVA of not disadvantaged student highly proficient scores on the exam and close reading (Appendix CC) revealed a significant main effect [ $F(2, 87) = 0.596, p > .05$ ], suggesting that all three close reading methods did not result in similar not disadvantaged students highly proficient scores. The following tests suggest no increase in not disadvantaged students highly proficient scores when instructed through close reading.



## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Discussion**

This study examines the effect close reading has on student achievement. Student achievement is defined as a student receiving a proficient or highly proficient score on the New York State ELA Exam. Close reading was evaluated using three instruction methods from the New York State ELA modules—adopt, adapt, or did not use. Statistical analyses assessed grades 3, 4, and 5, and data were collected from student cohort results from 2013 through 2015. The researcher examined the effects teacher training had on student achievement, and how subgroups performed using close reading, including gender, socioeconomic status, and general education students versus students with special needs.

Participants resided in the Southern Tier of New York, and belonged to the Broome-Tioga BOCES region. Electronic surveys were distributed to thirty-five building principals in the region. Ten surveys were returned for an approximate 30% response rate. Nine school districts encompassed multiple elementary settings, and only four of those districts had at least one building principal respond. Two districts had two building principals respond. The low rate of returned surveys is discussed later in this chapter, under the limitations and future recommendations sections.

The survey used to gather close reading instruction methods consisted of four questions. Question 1 asked how grade 3 teachers in the school building taught using the ELA modules. Results showed that two buildings adopted the modules, seven buildings adapted the modules, and one building did not use them. Question 2 asked how grade 4 teachers in the building taught using the ELA modules. Results showed that two buildings adopted the modules, seven buildings adapted the modules, and one building did not use them. Question 3 asked how grade

5 teachers in the building taught using the ELA modules. Results showed that two buildings adopted the modules and eight adapted them. The building that did not use the ELA modules in grades 3 and 4 decided to adapt modules for grade 5.

New York ELA Exam results were retrieved from each school's report card, published online by the New York State Education Department. Report cards did not provide individual student data; they reported total number of students that received scores of 1, 2, 3, or 4. Scores of 3 and 4 represented students who scored proficiently or highly proficiently. Scores of 1 and 2 were below proficiency. On the report card, information was displayed based on gender, SES, general education students and students with special needs, and ethnic background. Ethnic backgrounds were ignored in this study since the majority of schools failed to report ethnic data. All schools reported gender and SES data. The majority of schools did report data related to general education students and students with special needs.

Question 4 asked about the degree of teacher training regarding close reading that was received by teachers in individual buildings. Choices for this question included 1-3 days, more than 1 week, teacher responsibility, and per curriculum needs. Results showed that five buildings had 1-3 days of close reading training, one building had more than 1 week of training, two buildings made training the teachers' responsibility, and two building held training per curriculum needs. Of five buildings that had 1-3 days of close reading training, one building adopted the modules and three adapted them. The building that split between did not use and adaptation had 1-3 days of close reading training. The building that provided more than 1 week of close reading training adopted the modules. The two buildings in which teachers were responsible for close reading training decided to adapt the modules, and the two buildings that held close reading training depending on curriculum needs adapted the ELA modules.

In this chapter, the researcher discusses the results of each research question and the four hypotheses, and examines statistical results of close reading regarding gender, SES, and general education students and students with special needs. Finally, the researcher examines implications and limitations of the study, and provides recommendations for future research on close reading teaching methods.

This quantitative study focuses on the effect of close reading on student achievement in grades 3, 4, and 5. Two research questions were used to examine student achievement.

**RQ1:** According to testing data from the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) Exam from 2013 through 2015, did schools in the Broome-Tioga BOCES region experience increases in the number of proficient students when comparing schools that adopted, adapted, or did not use the New York State English Language Arts Modules?

**RQ2:** According to testing data from the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) Exam from 2013 through 2015, did schools in the Broome-Tioga BOCES region increase the number of highly proficient students in comparison to schools that adopted, adapted, or did not use the New York State English Language Arts Modules?

Each research question had four hypotheses. The first focused on grade 3, the second on grade 4, and the third on grade 5. Hypothesis four focused on student cohorts and their progress from grade 3 in 2013 to grade 5 in 2015.

### **Research Question One Hypothesis One**

For research question one, the first hypothesis and null hypothesis were:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 3 English Language Art classes increases students' proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 3 English Language Art classes does not increase students' proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

According to a one-way ANOVA, a difference existed between buildings that adopted and did not use the modules, and buildings that adapted and did not use the modules (Appendix EE). Since more buildings that responded to the surveys adapted the modules than did not use and adopt the modules, a percentage of proficient scores was used to compare results.

When comparing buildings that adapted and did not use the ELA Modules in 2013, buildings that adapted the modules had 22% of students receive a proficient score. In 2014, buildings that adapted the modules had 25% of students receive a proficient score. In 2015, buildings that adapted the modules and buildings that did not use the modules each had 21% of students receive a proficient score. Overall, buildings that adapted the ELA modules had a 23% rate of students receiving a proficient score, and buildings that did not use the modules had a 24% rate. These percentages suggest that buildings that adapted the modules did not perform better than buildings that did not use the modules.

Comparing buildings that adopted and did not use the ELA Modules in 2013, buildings that adopted the modules had a 21% rate of student proficient scores, and buildings that did not use the modules had a 32% rate. Comparing results from 2014, buildings that adopted the modules performed better. In 2015, buildings that adopted the modules had a 15% rate of student proficient scores, and buildings that did not use the modules had a 21% rate. Overall, buildings that adopted the modules had a 19% rate, and buildings that did not use the modules had a 24% rate.

Evaluating these results regarding hypothesis one, buildings that adapted the modules did not experience an increase in student proficient scores over buildings that did not use the modules. However, adapting the modules outperformed adopting them, and buildings that adopted the modules performed lowest, demonstrating that buildings that adopted the modules did not increase student proficient scores on the exam.

### **Research Question One Hypothesis Two**

For research question one, hypothesis two and the null hypothesis were:

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 4 English Language Art classes increases students' proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 4 English Language Art classes does not increase students' proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

A one-way ANOVA for this hypothesis regarding proficient scores for Grade 4 produced a statistical difference between buildings that adopted and adapted the modules. Appendix FF shows percentages for each close reading method for this hypothesis. When composing the data, more buildings responded to adapting the modules than those that adopted or did not use them.

In 2013, grade 4 buildings that adapted the modules showed a 17% proficient score rate, in comparison to 22% from buildings that did not use the modules. For 2014, buildings that adapted the modules produced 19% proficient scores, in comparison to 20% from buildings that did not use them. Comparing results from 2015, buildings that adapted the modules performed slightly better at 20% proficiency. Overall, buildings that adapted the modules did not experience an increase in proficient scores over buildings that did not use them.

A statistical difference was found between buildings that adopted and buildings that adapted the modules. According to 2013 data, buildings that adapted the modules had a 17% proficiency rate versus the 15% rate for buildings that adopted the modules. In 2014, buildings that adapted the modules achieved a 19% rate of proficient scores, and buildings that adopted the modules achieved only 12%. In 2015, buildings that adapted the modules had a 20% rate, in comparison to 14% for buildings that adopted the modules. Statistically, buildings that adapted modules experienced an increase in proficient scores over buildings that adopted them.

Another statistical difference was found between buildings that adopted and did not use the modules. In 2013, 15% of the buildings that adopted the modules achieved a proficient score, and buildings that did not use the modules achieved 22%. Comparing 2014 results, buildings that adopted the modules achieved only a 12% proficiency rate, in comparison to 20% for buildings that did not use the modules. For 2015, buildings that adopted the modules achieved only 14% proficient scores, and buildings that did not use the modules had 36%. These data show that buildings that adopted the modules did not experience an increase versus buildings that did not use them.

Overall, buildings that adapted the modules had a higher rate of achieving a proficient score in comparison to buildings that adopted or did not use the modules. Buildings that did not use the modules experienced a higher success rate of achieving a proficient score versus buildings that adopted the modules. These data support the hypothesis that adapting modules allows students to achieve more proficient scores on the exam. However, adopting the modules does not guarantee more proficient scores in comparison to not using them.

### **Research Question One Hypothesis Three**

For research question one, the third hypothesis and null hypothesis were:

**H<sub>3</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 5 English Language Art classes increases students' proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 5 English Language Art classes does not increase students' proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

According to the one-way ANOVA performed for this hypothesis, there exists a difference among close reading groups. Since there were only two close reading groups for grade 5, a *post-hoc* test could not be conducted to determine whether this difference existed. On closer review of the testing data provided by the New York State Report Cards, there was a statistical difference between buildings that adapted and buildings that adopted the modules (Appendix GG). During each of the years, buildings that adapted achieved a proficient score four to five times as much as buildings that adopted the modules. Statistically, these data demonstrate that adapting the modules increased student achievement of proficient scores on the exam versus buildings that adopted the modules.

#### **Research Question One Hypothesis Four**

For research question one, the fourth hypothesis and null hypothesis were:

**H<sub>4</sub>:** Student cohorts increase reading proficiency scores over a given period when adopting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in comparison to schools that only adapted or did not use the New York State English Language Arts Modules as measured by the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>04</sub>:** Student cohorts do not increase reading proficiency scores over a given period when adopting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in comparison to schools

that only adapted or did not use the New York State English Language Arts Modules as measured by the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

To test this hypothesis, a one-way, repeated measures ANOVA was performed. Since none of the participating buildings used the close reading method or did not use the modules, this ANOVA focused on buildings that adopted and adapted the modules. Appendix HH shows a breakdown of results for each building, and its corresponding close reading method.

Statistically, the data show that student cohorts that were instructed through adapting the modules achieved a higher proficient score than student cohorts instructed through adoption. The difference in percentage was 4%, where adapting the modules was 19% and adopting the modules 15%. All cohort data were consistent, except for building 6. When these data were removed from groups that adapted the modules, the overall percentage was still 17%. This percentage was still higher than for student cohorts that adopted the module. According to the hypothesis, student cohorts that adopted the modules should have increased the proficiency rate over the three-year period versus cohorts that adapted the modules, but this did not occur, so hypothesis four was not supported.

### **Research Question Two Hypothesis One**

For research question two, hypothesis one and the null hypothesis were:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 3 English Language Art classes increases students' highly proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 3 English Language Art classes does not increase students' highly proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.



According to the one-way ANOVA performed for this hypothesis, a statistical difference was observed between buildings that adopted and did not use the modules, and buildings that adapted and did not use the modules (Appendix II). Since more buildings that responded to the surveys adapted the modules than did not use and adopted the modules, a percentage of proficient scores was used to compare results.

Comparing 2013 results, buildings that adapted the modules received a highly proficient rate of 3%, and buildings that did not use the modules received 4%. In 2014, buildings that adapted modules performed 3% better than buildings that did not use the modules. For 2015, buildings that did not use the modules had a 6% rate of highly proficient scores, and buildings that adapted the modules had only a 3% rate. Overall, these two close reading methods were equal, with a 3% rate of students achieving a highly proficient score.

Regarding the second ANOVA comparison between buildings that adopted and did not use the modules, findings favored buildings that did not use the modules. In 2013, buildings that did not use the modules had a 4% rate of highly proficient scores, and buildings that adopted the modules had only a 2% rate. For 2014, buildings that did not use the modules had no students receiving a proficient score, and buildings that adopted the modules had a 2% rate. Highly proficient rates for 2015 showed buildings that did not use the modules at 6% and buildings that adopted the modules at 4%. Overall, buildings that did not use the modules had a 3% rate of highly proficient scores, and buildings that adopted the modules had a 1% rate.

Buildings that adapted and did not use the modules performed equally, with the exception of 2014 results. Statistically, these results show that buildings that adapted the modules did not experience an increase in highly proficient scores over buildings that did not use the modules. However, if the number of buildings that did not use the modules were equal to the buildings that

adapted, the result could have been different. More research between these groups is needed to verify results. In response to the comparison between buildings that adopted and did not use, results show that buildings that did not use the modules outperformed buildings that adopted. These data suggest that adopting the modules did not increase highly proficient scores on the exam.

### **Research Question Two Hypothesis Two**

For research question two, the second hypothesis and null hypothesis were:

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 4 English Language Art classes increases students' highly proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 4 English Language Art classes does not increase students' highly proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

According to the one-way ANOVA that was performed for this hypothesis, a statistical difference was observed between among buildings that adopted, adapted, and did not use the modules (Appendix JJ). From subsequent pairwise comparisons, data support a difference among all three close reading methods. Since more buildings that responded to the surveys adapted the modules than did not use and adopt the modules, a percentage of proficient scores were used to compare results.

In 2013, buildings that adapted the modules achieved higher proficient scores than those that used the other two close reading methods. Buildings that adapted achieved a highly proficient score than buildings that adopted. For 2014, buildings that did not use the modules increased from 3% in 2013 to 17% in 2014. In 2015, buildings that adapted achieved an 11%

highly proficiency rate. Buildings that adopted achieved 4% and buildings that did not use the modules achieved 19%.

Overall for Grade 4, buildings that did not use the modules achieved a total percentage of 11% highly proficiency rate. Buildings that adapted achieved 7%, and buildings that adopted only 5%. These data do not support the hypothesis that adapting or adopting produces more highly proficient scores, or that adapting outperforms adoption.

### **Research Question Two Hypothesis Three**

For research question two, the third hypothesis and null hypothesis were:

**H<sub>3</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 5 English Language Art classes increases students' highly proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** Adopting or adapting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in grade 5 English Language Art classes does not increase students' highly proficient achievement on the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

When the ANOVA was performed for this hypothesis, a difference was found between the two close reading groups. As with the third hypothesis from research question one, not enough groups were included to perform the test to determine whether a difference was observable. Appendix KK shows results for this hypothesis. According to the data, students achieved a highly proficient score when their buildings adapted the modules. Buildings that adopted the modules scored 3% below buildings that adapted. Statistically, buildings that adapted for grade 5 experienced a slight increase with achieving a highly proficient score than buildings that adopted.

### **Research Question Two Hypothesis Four**

For research question two, the fourth hypothesis and null hypothesis were:

**H<sub>4</sub>:** Student cohorts increase reading highly proficiency scores over a given period when adopting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in comparison to schools that only adapted or did not use the New York State English Language Arts Modules as measured by the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

**H<sub>04</sub>:** Student cohorts do not increase reading highly proficiency scores over a given period when adopting the New York State English Language Arts Modules in comparison to schools that only adapted or did not use the New York State English Language Arts Modules as measured by the New York State English Language Arts Exam.

According to the fourth hypothesis, student cohorts instructed through adoption achieve highly proficient scores more than cohorts instructed through adaptation (Appendix LL). Statistically, the data support that cohorts instructed through adapting outperform the other cohorts. Student cohorts taught through adaptation had an overall percentage of 6% of the sample receiving a highly proficient score, and cohorts taught through adoption had a percentage of only 3%. These data do not support the hypothesis that student cohorts instructed through adoption outperform those taught through adaptation.

Building 6 experienced a higher proficiency rate than the other cohorts. When data were removed regarding adaptation, the overall percentage of achieving a highly proficient score dropped to 3%. This percentage is equal to the adoption cohort. However, these data do not support the hypothesis that adopting the modules increases highly proficient scores on the exam.

### **Additional Statistical Findings**

In this section, the researcher investigates statistical findings from four additional areas, and their relationships with the close reading methods. These areas include teacher training, gender, general education and students with special needs, and SES. The goal of these statistics is to determine whether there exist more influences to students receiving a proficient or highly proficient score on the exam other than the close reading methods.

### **Teacher Training**

Beyond the two research questions and four hypotheses, teacher training on close reading was a question asked on the survey. The researcher wanted to determine whether there were differences between teacher training and close reading methods. A one-way ANOVA was performed to identify these differences. The ANOVA determined that there was no statistical difference in proficient scores received by students depending on the type of training their educators received. The same procedure was conducted for students who received a highly proficient score, and a similar outcome was observed; there was no difference between teacher training and the close reading methods used. Therefore, teacher training did not affect students receiving a proficient or highly proficient score on the exam.

### **Gender**

For the subgroup gender and the effect close reading had on students achieving a proficient or highly proficient score, a one-way ANOVA was performed to determine whether a difference occurred between the groups. The ANOVA found a mean difference between buildings that adapted and those that adopted the modules for both males and females. There was no difference found between male and female students regarding receiving a highly proficient score. To analyze where this difference occurred, gender proficient scores were

compared within grades 3, 4, and 5 individually. Cohort data were used to find difference between male and female proficiency rates from using close reading methods.

Comparing results for male proficient scores in grade 3, buildings that adapted the modules outperformed buildings that adopted them (Appendix MM). However, the data show a difference between buildings that adapted the modules and those that did not use them across years of data. This difference was not observable from the ANOVA. The researcher therefore concluded that this difference did not show in the ANOVA because grade 5 did not have participants who did not use the modules. Without those data, the ANOVA did not find a difference between the means. From an educator's perspective, there exists a difference between buildings that did not use the modules and buildings that adapted or adopted them.

Regarding female proficient scores for grade 3, buildings that adapted and adopted the modules were close concerning their percentages. With their overall percentages close—25% for buildings that adapted and 21% for those that adopted—there was no grounds to determine whether one method increased females achieving a proficient score on the exam. In 2013, buildings that adopted the modules had a greater percentage than those that adapted. However, in 2014 and 2015, buildings that adapted outperformed those that adopted. These two methods do not suggest an increase over buildings that did not use the modules. In response to the statistical difference, the researcher found that the difference lies within specific years, not overall proficiency rates of females in grade 3.

According to the one-way ANOVA, a statistical difference exists between buildings that adapted and adopted the modules for males achieving a proficient score. In grade 4, buildings that adapted the modules experienced a 4% to 12% increase in proficiency rate over those that adopted (Appendix NN). Overall, male proficient scores had a 7% difference between the two

groups. These data support that there was an increase in male student proficient scores for buildings that adapted versus those that adopted.

Buildings that did not use the modules had various proficiency rates between 2013 and 2015. In 2013, buildings that did not use the modules did not perform as well as those that adapted. However, data from 2014 suggest that the two groups were statistically similar. In 2015, buildings that did not use the modules did not perform as well as those that adapted. Overall, buildings that did not use the modules did not experience an increase over those that adapted. However, buildings that did not use the modules had a greater proficiency rate over those that adopted. These data support that buildings that adopted the modules did not increase male proficient scores versus those that did not use the modules.

Regarding female students in grade 4, buildings that adapted and adopted the modules had similar overall proficiency rates. During individual years, each group experienced greater proficient scores over their counterpart. These data did not support the idea that either close reading method produces an increase in female proficient scores versus the other. When these two close reading methods were compared to buildings that did not use the modules, buildings that did not use the modules outperformed the others. For female students, the data support the idea that more proficient scores occur when female students were not taught using the modules.

In reference to male proficient scores in grade 5, buildings that adapted and adopted the modules experienced similar proficiency rates (Appendix OO), but female proficient scores were inconsistent between 2013 and 2015. When overall percentages were compared, buildings that adapted the modules experienced an increase in proficient scores versus those that adopted.

From data on building cohorts, buildings that adapted the modules experienced a slight increase versus those that adopted (Appendix PP). Male proficient scores showed a 4% increase,

favoring buildings that adapted. A similar result was found for female students. Since the proficiency rates were close, the researcher determined that buildings that adapted experienced a slight increase versus buildings that adopted.

### **General Education and Students with Special Needs**

From the ANOVA performed regarding general education students and their scores, a difference was observed between two close reading methods. These methods were buildings that adopted and adapted, and those that adopted and did not use the modules. To determine where this difference existed, both comparisons were analyzed according to grade level. General education students were not analyzed since several buildings did not provide sufficient data for 2013 through 2015.

For grade 3, buildings that did not use the modules produced more proficient scores than those that used other close reading methods (Appendix QQ). However, results suggest only a slight increase. Buildings that did not use the modules did not increase proficient scores. However, buildings that did not use the modules did not report data for 2015. Without that data, results might be skewed in favor of that close reading method. More research is needed to resolve this comparison.

Buildings that adapted experienced an increase in general education proficient scores versus buildings that adopted. This increase occurred in 2013, 2015, and overall. Buildings that adopted slightly outperformed those that adapted in 2014. Since the difference was slight, the researcher concluded that adapting produces only a slight increase in proficient scores for general education students.

The ANOVA uncovered another difference between buildings that adopted and those that did not use the modules. Data from 2013 and the overall percentage favored buildings that did



not use the modules. Adopting the modules produced more proficient scores in 2014. In 2015, no comparison was possible since incomplete data existed for buildings that did not use the modules. Adopting modules did not produce an increase in general education proficient scores when compared to buildings that did not use the modules.

For grade 4, adapting the modules achieved more general education proficient scores than the other close reading methods did (Appendix RR). When comparing buildings that adopted the modules, adapting produced a slight increase in proficient score. These results suggest that adapting does not increase proficient scores for general education students. Choosing to not use the modules increased general education proficient scores versus adoption. Again, data were incomplete for buildings that did not use the modules.

For grade 5, buildings that adapted the modules experienced a slight increase in proficient scores versus buildings that adopted (Appendix SS). For 2013, 2015, and overall percentages, buildings that adapted produced more proficient scores. In 2014, the proficiency rate was approximately the same for buildings that adapted, achieving 24% proficiency, and those that adopted, achieving 25%. From these results, buildings that adapted the modules did not increase general education proficient scores.

One important finding concerns special needs students. This subgroup produced only 16 proficient scores among all grades and across all years under study. These results must make educators and administrators question whether close reading is the best reading approach for these students. Close reading might be effective for these students, but the rigors of the Common Core might be overwhelming to these students. More research is needed to determine the effectiveness of close reading for special needs students.

### **Socioeconomic Status**

A one-way ANOVA was performed to determine whether there were differences among close reading methods between economically disadvantaged students and students not economically disadvantaged. The ANOVA analyzed these two groups according to the number of proficient and highly proficient scores students achieved with these groups. For this subgroup, all buildings reported SES data. The researcher investigated the mean statistical differences between buildings that adopted and adapted the modules for the economically disadvantaged proficient score group. Buildings that adopted versus did not use the modules had a  $p$ -value of .055. Since this value is close to the .05 alpha, these two methods were assessed for differences in proficient scores. Economically disadvantaged highly proficient scores showed a difference between buildings that adapted and those that did not use the modules.

When comparing the mean difference between buildings that adopted and adapted the modules for economically disadvantaged student proficient scores, the ANOVA did not suggest a difference. To determine the location of the difference, the researcher compared data for grades 3, 4, and 5. Student cohort data from 2013 through 2015 were analyzed to assess differences between proficient scores.

For grade 3, buildings that adopted the modules outperformed those that did not use them by 4% in 2013 (Appendix TT). Buildings that did not use the modules achieved a 3% increase over those that adopted, and a 7% increase over buildings that adapted. This difference suggests that grade 3 buildings that did not use the modules experienced an increase over buildings that adapted, and a slight increase over those that adopted. Buildings that adopted produced a slight increase in proficient scores over those that adapted.

During 2014, buildings that adapted the modules experienced a 7% increase in proficiency over buildings that adopted and did not use the modules, a result opposite to that

observed for 2013. More research is needed to determine why these close reading methods were in opposition across years.

During 2015, another switch occurred. Buildings that did not use the modules outperformed the two other methods by 9%. This result suggests an increase in proficient scores from buildings that did not use the modules. Since the number of buildings that did not use the modules was low, the researcher assessed whether results were similar if the cells were equal in size. Overall for grade 3, buildings that did not use the modules experienced an increase in disadvantaged student proficient scores versus buildings that used the other close reading methods.

Over the three-year period in Grade 4, buildings that adapted the modules slightly outperformed those that adopted the modules (Appendix UU). These data do not support the idea that either close reading method increases economically disadvantaged student proficient score. However, buildings that did not use the modules outperformed those that used the other close reading methods in 2013, 2014, and overall. The only exception occurred in 2015, when buildings that did not use the modules and adapted had an equal percentage. As in Grade 3, buildings that did not use the modules experienced an increase in economically disadvantaged student proficient scores in comparison to those that used the other close reading methods.

In Grade 5, buildings that adapted experienced a slight increase over those that adopted (Appendix VV). For 2013 and 2015, buildings that adapted produced a greater proficiency rate. In 2014, buildings that adopted outperformed those that adapted by 3%. Overall, a slight increase in disadvantaged student proficient scores for buildings that adapted did not support that this method improves proficient scores.

Analyzing data for economically disadvantaged students, a similar result was obtained between buildings that adapted and adopted (Appendix WW). Overall, only a slight increase between the two methods favored buildings that adapted. These data did not support the research hypotheses that adopting or adapting increases economically disadvantaged student proficient scores.

Regarding economically disadvantaged students, a difference was found between buildings that adapted and those that did not use. Comparing the three grade levels over all three years, the only difference observed occurred in grade 4 (Appendix XX). Buildings that did not use the modules outperformed those that adapted by 10%. For grade 3, both close reading methods produced equal results (Appendix YY). Since there were no buildings in 2015 that did not use the modules, more research is required to determine whether proficiency score increases would continue. Buildings that adapted and adopted did not experience an increase in economically disadvantaged highly proficient scores (Appendices XX, YY, ZZ, and AAA).

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to determine whether close reading, instructed through adopting, adapting, or choosing not to use the New York State ELA Modules, increases student achievement of receiving a proficient or highly proficient score on the New York State ELA Exam. The researcher compared results over a three-year period, 2013 through 2015, for grades 3, 4, and 5. Building, student cohorts were analyzed to determine the success of close reading methods over this period. The researcher analyzed data for increases in proficient and highly proficient scores for four subgroups: 1) teacher training, 2) gender, 3) general education students and students with special needs, and 4) SES. To determine whether differences occurred among these close reading methods, a one-way ANOVA was performed for each close reading method,

for each grade, and for the four subgroups. For the student cohorts, a repeated-measures ANOVA was performed.

Results for the various groups and subgroups suggested some differences. The researcher found slight differences among close reading methods for each grade level, teacher training, gender, education track, and SES. Data supported that one close reading method occasionally increased student achievement on the exam, but overall, the three close reading methods performed nearly the same across the study. The percentages of proficient scores lied largely within the 5% to 10% range for each of the methods, and 3% to 4% for highly proficient scores. These ranges did not suggest statistical differences between groups. The concern for this study does not lie in what the statistical data show; it lies in what the statistical data do not show. The purpose of the study was to determine which close reading methods produce more proficient or highly proficient scores. All research on close reading discusses the positive influence it has on instruction. Although statistical data were collected regarding proficient and highly proficient scores, this information does not tell the whole story. The highest percentage of proficient scores for any close reading group or subgroup ranged from 25% to 30%. That leaves 70% to 75% of the student body not achieving success on these exams. A question remains: does close reading improve student achievement?

Mentioned earlier, research suggests and demonstrates the success of close reading. Tinkle, Atias, McAdams, and Zukerman (2013) praise the close reading method for the strong writing improvement it offers to students. “By concentrating on close reading, we invite students to learn transferable skills: the critical analysis of texts, the presentation of evidence, the correct use of disciplinary terms, and the ability to frame questions for research and analysis” (Tinkle et al., 2013, p. 526). Fisher and Frey (2014) discuss improvements participants made when they

used close reading to slow readers to increase reading knowledge. Loh-Hagan and Bickel (2014) argue that close reading should be pushing for higher-level thinking from students as they work with text. According to Linderholm et al. (2008), Lassonde (2009), and Boyles (2012/2013), close reading is an excellent reading approach to investigate, question, and think deeply about academic and scholarly writing.

Regarding the current study, the researcher asks why the close reading methods produced low percentages of proficient and highly proficient scores, and higher below-proficient scores. Most of the limited research on the topic examines middle school, high school, and college students; few focus on elementary students and their success with close reading. This discrepancy might explain why the percentages for proficient and highly proficient scores were so low in this study. To gain a better picture of the success of close reading, this study should be extended to examine individual cohorts as they progress through middle and high school. Early elementary years are building blocks for the intense and complex texts that middle and high school students will face. If the research is correct, close reading helps these students become college- and career-ready.

Another area of concern involves students with special needs. General education students achieved the majority of proficient and highly proficient scores in this study. Students with special needs achieved only 16 proficient or highly proficient scores over the three-year period in all three grades. The educators in this study need to evaluate whether the close reading methods are the most effective means for students with special needs. Little scholarly research exists that assesses the best practices of close reading to help students with special needs read and write at grade level so they can be successful on state-mandated exams.

Regards teacher training of close reading, the ability of students to achieve a proficient or highly proficient score had no bearing on teacher training. One point to note is that buildings that did not use the modules generally had higher proficient and highly proficient rates than those that used the other close reading methods. Since the ELA modules have designed lessons and move at a rapid pace, perhaps buildings that did not use the ELA modules had more freedom to slow close reading to ensure students had as thorough an understanding as could be achieved. By lessening the content burden and allowing students to investigate text in more detail, students begin to learn and develop a thirst for learning (Carmichael et al., 2009; Clayton & Ardito, 2009; Hinchamn & Moore, 2013; Turner & Danridge, 2014). “All effective instruction in reading must ultimately attend to the question of significance” (Neuman, Gilbertson, & Hutton, 2014, p. 74).

By the end of grade 4, buildings that did not use the modules produced 17% proficient scores and 11% highly proficient scores. In 2013, this close reading method had 24% proficient scores and 3% highly proficient scores. If personal student information available, it might have been possible to determine whether several of the 2013 proficient scores became the 2014 highly proficient scores. Unfortunately, that data are unavailable, and grade 5 data are unavailable since the building adapted the modules.

When a school adapts the ELA modules, portions of the document are used to supplement learning. Evident in buildings that did not use the modules, buildings that adapted the modules reported higher proficient and highly proficient scores than buildings that adopted. According to Fisher and Frey (2014) and High and Andrews (2009), students are more engaged in learning when they view a task as meaningful and not busy work. By adapting the modules, the educator selects only meaningful and necessary material for students.

This study espouses close reading best practices. Results suggest that prescribed, state department of education material might not produce the best results. Student achievement is not guaranteed by following this prescribed formula; it lies in the hands of the educator and how that person presents close reading text to students while motivating them to become lifelong learners.

### **Implications**

With extremely limited research focusing on close reading and student achievement through the Common Core State Standards, this study begins work on this topic. By examining best practices among three close reading methods, educators can determine the most effective means to help educate students. Educators can also identify a more successful close reading method if their methods are achieving desired results. According to Woodard and Kline (2015), “research shows that knowledge and meaning are created in interactions between readers and texts, but the CCSS [Common Core State Standard] for ELA emphasize how close reading helps readers locate knowledge, evidence, and meaning within a text” (p. 247). The current study begins to unlock this puzzle by identifying which methods help with student achievement. When students become proficient and highly proficient with text analyses, they create meaningful interactions with text. As they experience more success with creating this meaning, their achievement increases over time. Analyzing the effects of close reading at the elementary level allows educators to focus on how to improve instruction over the next several years so students are college and career ready. Knowing that middle school, high school, and college require close reading success, determining the best practices to instruct using close reading benefits students’ academic careers, and it helps educators hone their skills to prepare future generations of students.



Another implication concerns the effect of close reading on subgroups. Students with special needs experiences limited success with close reading, and adopting the modules was not the most beneficial approach for males in grade 3. Throughout the entire study, students with disabilities rarely achieved a proficient or highly proficient score. This raises two questions: Is close reading the best reading method to help these students be successful? Since these students struggle academically, is it fair to require these students to take the exams? In the state of New York, special needs students cannot have the exam read to them even if it is part of their Individual Education Plan (IEP). During the school year, these students are helped with this modification, and then at testing time it is taken away. When this modification is removed, the students do not achieve the proficiency level that they experienced throughout the school year. By identifying where instruction fails student subgroups, educators can diversify instruction to meet the needs of their students so their success and achievement can increase.

This study begins a conversation on prescribed teaching documents from state education departments. In this study, buildings that did not use the modules achieved more proficient or highly proficient scores, and buildings that adapted the modules outperformed the adopting group. When educators have the freedom to use material to meet the needs of their students, and do not feel compelled to use prescribed material, student achievement increases because educators give ownership to the students to further their understanding with no mandated timeframe. Having the ability to slow readers allows for deeper and more meaningful text interactions.

In this study, students from Building 6 achieved more success with proficient and highly proficient scores than most other buildings in the study. Educators need to take a close look at the instructional practices of these educators and recognize Building 6's strengths and how it

could improve others' areas of concern. Since this building adapted the modules, it would be wise to analyze additional materials that are being used for student instruction and how these materials supplement the ELA modules.

The main focus needs to revolve around student achievement. This study showed student improvement through the use of adoption, adaption, and not using the ELA modules. This study highlighted which methods demonstrated more success when compared. However, this study recognized that over 70% of the students in each close reading method are not achieving proficient and highly proficient scores. Attention needs to focus on this problem. One could argue that teacher training might be a factor. In the statistical analysis, the data showed the amount of teacher training did not show a significant increase in proficient or highly proficient scores.

Areas of focus that might help to improve the students' achievement include student reading development and the actual New York State ELA Exam. In regards to the student reading development, educators need to ask if the students are prepared for the exam and to meet the intense reading demands of the Common Core. Are students reading on grade level? Is their fluency rate and vocabulary appropriate for the grade level exam? Can the students comprehend the passages, questions, and directions that are on the exam? These are questions that need to be addressed for the students to find success on the exam. If students do not meet the grade level appropriate benchmarks for reading level, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, then schools need to take the appropriate actions to help these students meet these demands.

Furthermore, the actual New York State ELA Exam needs to be re-evaluated each year if so many students are not achieving proficient or highly proficient scores. Determination needs to be made about the appropriateness of the reading passages, question demands, and the

responses. Additionally, the reading passages need to be grade level appropriate for the students. Consideration for students that are not reading on grade level needs to be factored into the type, length, and reading ability of the passages. Questions on the exam need to appropriately reflect the demands and intent of the Common Core. Students at these grade levels do not need to have misleading questions. These questions need to be clear so the students know actually what is being asked of them to receive credit. Finally, each multiple-choice question has four responses that are close in wording and correctness. Students need to be able to critically analyze choices to determine the best result. However, students in grades 3, 4, and 5 are still learning these skills. Creators of the exam should consider having two of the responses being close in nature, and not all four for the majority of the questions.

Since a portion of the ELA exam questions have been released, a good strategy for educators is to expose their students to these questions. By allowing students to view the previous years' questions, students can prepare themselves for the intensity of the reading passages, the wording of the questions, and the critically reading skills needed to sift through the multiple-choice responses. Just as in repeated reading, when students have multiple exposure to these exams their confidence and preparedness should increase. Working with students on these passages and questions, educators can help their students understand the exam expectations and tailor instruction to help students improve deficient skills.

### **Limitations**

Students in New York State public schools take the New York State English Language Arts Exam beginning in grade 3, and each district is required to instruct students according to the Common Core State Standards. However, not all learning environments are replicas of each other. If students transfer between districts or move to a different school building within a

district, they might not receive the same instruction or cover the same material between the learning environments. One school might use the ELA Modules and another might not, and schools might complete the modules in a different order. Students experiencing these situations will exhibit gaps in their learning. The students will not perform as well as possible, and provide inaccurate representations of their abilities and the educator's teaching ability.

Besides students' histories with the New York State English Language Arts Exam, another limitation concerns maturation. "Students might become stronger, more cognitively able, more self-confident, or more independent" (Gall et al., 2007, p. 385). As students mature, their abilities change drastically from one year to the next. With sudden cognitive and self-confidence development, students' results, though positive, show dramatic improvements. This improvement might be misinterpreted as a previous year's educator not performing as well as a current educator. Interpretation of data needs to be verified from multiple sources of student information.

Although maturation deals with positive improvements on assessments in research, consideration needs to be given to opposite situations. Many students face family dynamics that hinder their ability to learn in the classroom. These dynamics include divorce, medical conditions, and incidents of bullying at school, at home, and in the community. Negative influences of this nature can cause a student to perform below expectations or lower than previous years. Again, multiple sources of information need to be used to determine the effectiveness of an educator as compared to external influences.

Another limitation is a student's ability to read grade-level material. Educators need to recognize that if students cannot read material independently, they cannot pass an exam that contains higher-level text (Jones, 2009). According to Jones (2009), students who read orally

below 100 words per minute in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade struggle to meet classroom and state reading assessment expectations. Fluency is a vital component of reading and needs to be considered when using close reading with struggling readers.

Since the progress of student cohorts are being analyzed, the mobility of students in and out of a cohort needs to be recognized. Students might move away from a school district and leave their cohorts. Since this study focuses only on district scores, not individual scores, the researcher was unable to determine which students entered or left their cohorts. Students might have joined other cohorts and consequently improved or lowered a district's scores.

Not all principals responded to the surveys. The survey was sent on four occasions, along with personal e-mails and face-to-face conversations. Reasons for lack of survey responses included district policy about responding to dissertation studies, not wanting building information exposed in professional works, or forgetting to complete the survey. By having limited response, not all close reading groups were represented. Absent equal representation, the data might have produced results that do not represent buildings in the regions to which they belong.

School districts provided training on close reading to their teachers. However, the training might not have been as intense as the teachers needed, and the teachers might not have been willing to leave past practices to embrace the new, close reading initiative. There was no guarantee that each teacher experienced the same intense training.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

1. Future research should incorporate more school buildings from different regions. By surveying multiple school buildings across the state, research can begin to identify trends regarding close reading and its effectiveness on student achievement.

2. Research should focus on subgroups and their experiences with close reading. To be conducted properly, studies should use both quantitative and qualitative data. Along with exam scores, it would be helpful to understand students' frustrations and personal successes with close reading.
3. A qualitative study concerning how educators instruct using adopt, adapt, and did not use close reading methods of the ELA modules should be conducted. Assessing instructional strategies of these methods will focus research on similarities and differences, and where changes can be made to improve student achievement.
4. A study should be conducted that examines building individual cohorts' success with close reading over a 5- to 7-year period. By focusing on 5 to 7 years, information about a student cohort could be gathered starting with grade 3 and ending with grade 8 or 9. A study of this magnitude and dedication would allow researchers to assess whether close reading prepares students for college and careers.
5. A study about the construction, implementation, and recreation of the state exam would allow educators to determine how much the exam influences student achievement. The study should evaluate the reliability and validity of the exams, how the tests were created, and why they were changed during a student's educational career. Student achievement might depend on the rigors or leniency of the exam, not the close reading method used during instruction.

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## **APPENDICES**

## Appendix A

*Means and Standard Deviations of Close Reading Proficient and Highly Proficient Scores by Grade*

		<i>Close Reading</i>	<i>Means</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Grade 3	Proficient	Adopt	23.00	18.99	6
		Adapt	11.52	6.15	21
		Did Not Use	17.00	10.67	3
	Highly Proficient	Adopt	1.67	1.63	6
		Adapt	1.43	1.53	21
		Did Not Use	2.33	2.08	3
Grade 4	Proficient	Adopt	17.17	11.95	6
		Adapt	9.05	4.69	21
		Did Not Use	13.67	3.21	3
	Highly Proficient	Adopt	6.00	3.03	6
		Adapt	3.62	4.02	21
		Did Not Use	4.60	4.37	3
Grade 5	Proficient	Adopt	18.17	15.27	6
		Adapt	9.83	4.6	24
	Highly Proficient	Adopt	4.50	4.41	6
		Adapt	3.63	4.753	24

## Appendix B

*Test for Homogeneity of Variance for Proficient and Highly Proficient Scores*

		<i>F</i>	df1	df2	<i>p</i>
Grade 3	Proficient	22.39	2	27	0.000
	Highly Proficient	0.198	2	27	0.821
Grade 4	Proficient	14.39	2	27	0.000
	Highly Proficient	1.01	2	27	0.374
Grade 5	Proficient	15.51	1	28	0.000
	Highly Proficient	0.007	1	28	0.936

## Appendix C

*Brown-Forsythe Robust Tests of Equality of Means for Proficient and Highly Proficient Scores*

		<i>F</i>	<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>	<i>p</i>
Grade 3	Proficient	1.84	2	6.77	0.230
	Highly Proficient	0.33	2	5.32	0.733
Grade 4	Proficient	2.525	2	6.38	0.156
	Highly Proficient	2.09	2	3.47	0.254
Grade 5	Proficient	1.75	2	5.23	0.241
	Highly Proficient	0.18	2	8.17	0.680

## Appendix D

*Shapiro-Wilk Test for Normality of Independent Variable for Proficient and Highly Proficient Scores*

			<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Grade 3	Proficient	Adopt	0.877	6	0.256
		Adapt	0.941	21	0.231
		Did Not Use	0.942	3	0.537
	Highly Proficient	Adopt	0.920	6	0.505
		Adapt	0.836	21	0.002
		Did Not Use	0.923	3	0.463
Grade 4	Proficient	Adopt	0.869	6	0.221
		Adapt	0.933	21	0.159
		Did Not Use	0.871	3	0.298
	Highly Proficient	Adopt	0.902	6	0.389
		Adapt	0.696	21	0.000
		Did Not Use	0.942	3	0.537
Grade 5	Proficient	Adopt	0.844	6	0.140
		Adapt	0.918	24	0.053
	Highly Proficient	Adopt	0.925	6	0.539
		Adapt	0.729	24	0.000

Note. Grade 5 samples only used adopt and adapt close reading methods.

## Appendix E

*Analysis of Variance for Close Reading of Proficient Scores and Highly Proficient Scores*

			SS	df	MS	F	p
Grade 3	Proficient	Between Groups	637.73	2	318.86	3.23	.055
		Within Groups	2665.24	27	98.71		
	Highly Proficient	Between Groups	2.23	2	1.11	.434	.652
		Within Groups	69.143	27	2.56		
Grade 4	Proficient	Between Groups	329.01	2	164.51	3.77	.036
		Within Groups	1176.45	27	43.57		
	Highly Proficient	Between Groups	103.29	2	51.65	3.08	.062
		Within Groups					
Grade 5	Proficient	Between Groups	333.33	1	333.33	5.64	.025
		Within Groups	1654.17	28	59.08		
	Highly Proficient	Between Groups	3.67	1	3.67	.167	.686
		Within Groups	617.12	28	22.04		

## Appendix F

*Tukey HSD Post-Hoc Results of Student Proficiency by Close Reading Method*

						95% Confidence	Interval
	(I) Close Reading	(J) Close Reading	<i>M</i> Diff (I-J)	<i>SD</i>	<i>p</i>	Lower	Upper
Grade 3	Adopt	Adapt	11.48	4.6	0.08	0.07	22.88
		DNU	6	7.03	0.63	-11.42	23.42
	Adapt	Adopt	-11.48	4.6	0.08	-22.88	-0.07
		DNU	-5.48	6.13	0.69	-20.68	9.73
	DNU	Adopt	-6	7.03	0.63	-23.42	11.42
		Adapt	5.48	6.13	0.69	-9.73	20.68
Grade 4	Adopt	Adapt	8.12	3.06	0.04	0.54	15.7
		DNU	3.5	4.69	0.76	-8.07	15.07
	Adapt	Adopt	-8.12	3.07	0.04	-15.7	-0.54
		DNU	-4.62	4.07	0.52	-14.72	5.48
	DNU	Adopt	-3.5	4.69	0.76	-15.07	8.07
		Adapt	4.62	4.07	0.52	-5.48	14.72

*Note.* The mean difference was significant at the .05 level. The dependent variable was student proficient score.

## Appendix G

Means and Standard Deviations of Close Reading Proficient and Highly Proficient Scores by Student Cohorts

		Close Reading	Mean	SD	n
2013	Proficient	Adopt	25.00	24.04	2
		Adapt	12.29	8.48	7
	Highly Proficient	Adopt	2.00	2.828	2
		Adapt	1.43	1.718	7
2014	Proficient	Adopt	14.5	14.85	2
		Adapt	9.86	4.52	7
	Highly Proficient	Adopt	7.00	5.65	2
		Adapt	3.71	4.71	7
2015	Proficient	Adopt	15.5	13.43	2
		Adapt	7.86	4.06	7
	Highly Proficient	Adopt	2.50	3.53	2
		Adapt	3.57	6.08	7



## Appendix H

*Tukey HSD Post-Hoc Results of Student Highly Proficient by Close Reading Method*

Grade	(I) Close Reading	(J) Close Reading	<i>M</i> Diff (I-J)	<i>SD</i>	<i>p</i>	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower	Upper
Grade 3	Adopt	Adapt	0.24	0.74	0.95	-1.6	2.07
		Did not use	-0.67	1.13	0.83	-3.47	2.14
	Adapt	Adopt	-0.24	0.74	0.95	-2.07	1.6
		Did not use	-0.91	0.99	0.64	-3.35	1.54
	Did Not Use	Adopt	0.67	1.13	0.83	-2.14	3.47
		Adapt	0.91	0.99	0.64	-1.54	3.35
Grade 4	Adopt	Adapt	2.48	1.89	0.4	-2.22	7.17
		Did not use	-3.33	2.89	0.49	-10.51	3.84
	Adapt	Adopt	-2.48	1.89	0.4	-7.17	2.22
		Did not use	-5.81	2.53	0.07	-12.07	0.45
	Did Not Use	Adopt	3.33	2.89	0.49	-3.84	10.51
		Adapt	5.81	2.53	0.07	-0.45	12.07

*Note.* The dependent variable is highly proficient student score.

## Appendix I

Mean and Standard Deviation of Student Proficient and Highly Proficient Scores by Teacher Training

			<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Grade 3	Proficient	1-3 Days	18	17.17	1.626
		More than 1 Week	3	6.33	12.316
		Teacher Responsibility	6	12.00	4.726
		Curriculum Needs	3	10.33	7.024
	Highly Proficient	1-3 Days	18	2.06	1.626
		More than 1 Week	3	0.67	1.155
		Teacher Responsibility	6	1.00	1.549
		Curriculum Needs	3	0.67	0.577
Grade 4	Proficient	1-3 Days	18	12.83	8.528
		More than 1 Week	3	6.67	2.309
		Teacher Responsibility	6	9.83	4.491
		Curriculum Needs	3	8.00	1.732
	Highly Proficient	1-3 Days	18	5.89	5.212
		More than 1 Week	3	3.67	0.577
		Teacher Responsibility	6	2.83	0.983
		Curriculum Needs	3	1.33	1.528
Grade 5	Proficient	1-3 Days	18	12.83	10.211
		More than 1 Week	3	6.67	1.155
		Teacher Responsibility	6	11.33	3.83
		Curriculum Needs	3	8.67	2.517
	Highly Proficient	1-3 Days	18	4.78	5.6
		More than 1 Week	3	1.00	1.732
		Teacher Responsibility	6	2.17	1.472
		Curriculum Needs	3	4.00	2.646

## Appendix J

Test of Homogeneity of Variance of Proficient and Highly Proficient Scores by Teacher Training

		<i>F</i>	<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>	<i>p</i>
Grade 3	Proficient	1.845	3	26	0.164
	Highly Proficient	1.544	3	26	0.227
Grade 4	Proficient	2.564	3	26	0.076
	Highly Proficient	12.647	3	26	0.000
Grade 5	Proficient	2.140	3	26	0.119
	Highly Proficient	4.211	3	26	0.015

## Appendix K

## Brown-Forsythe Robust Tests of Equality of Means for Teacher Training of Proficient and Highly Proficient Scores

		<i>F</i>	<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>	<i>p</i>
Grade 3	Proficient	2.755	3	14.868	0.079
	Highly Proficient	2.477	3	12.785	0.108
Grade 4	Proficient	2.873	3	25.759	0.058
	Highly Proficient	5.93	3	21.16	0.004
Grade 5	Proficient	2.094	3	24.799	0.127
	Highly Proficient	2.443	3	16.248	0.101

## Appendix L

## Analysis of Variance for Teacher Training of Proficient and Highly Proficient Scores

			SS	df	MS	F	p
Grade 3	Proficient	Between Groups	417.14	3	139.04	1.253	0.311
		Within Groups	2885.83	26	110		
	Highly Proficient	Between Groups	11.089	3	3.696	1.594	0.215
		Within Groups	60.278	26	2.318		
	Proficient	Between Groups	151.47	3	50.49	0.97	0.422
		Within Groups	1354	26	52.078		
Grade 4	Highly Proficient	Between Groups	83.256	3	27.752	1.529	0.231
		Within Groups	471.944	26	18.152		
	Proficient	Between Groups	126.33	3	42.11	0.588	0.628
		Within Groups	1861.17	26	71.58		
	Highly Proficient	Between Groups	56.856	3	18.952	0.874	0.467
		Within Groups	563.944	26	21.69		
Grade 5	Proficient	Between Groups	126.33	3	42.11	0.588	0.628
		Within Groups	1861.17	26	71.58		
	Highly Proficient	Between Groups	56.856	3	18.952	0.874	0.467
		Within Groups	563.944	26	21.69		
	Proficient	Between Groups	126.33	3	42.11	0.588	0.628
		Within Groups	1861.17	26	71.58		

## Appendix M

*Mean and Standard Deviation of Proficient and Highly Proficient Scores by Gender*

		<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Male Proficient	Adopt	18	8.89	7.514
	Adapt	66	4.86	3.022
	Did not use	6	6.83	3.656
	Total	90	5.8	4.567
Male Highly Proficient	Adopt	18	2	2
	Adapt	66	1.21	1.893
	Did not use	6	2.5	3.271
	Total	90	1.46	2.04
Female Proficient	Adopt	18	10.56	8.075
	Adapt	66	5.36	3.218
	Did not use	6	8.5	2.588
	Total	90	6.61	4.994
Female Highly Proficient	Adopt	18	2.06	2.071
	Adapt	66	1.71	2.467
	Did Not Use	6	3.33	2.805
	Total	90	1.89	2.424

## Appendix N

*Test of Homogeneity of Variances of Proficient and Highly Proficient Scores  
by Gender*

	<i>F</i>	<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>	<i>p</i>
Male Proficient	29.967	2	87	0.00
Male Highly Proficient	2.667	2	87	0.075
Female Proficient	31.712	2	87	0.00
Female Highly Proficient	0.557	2	87	0.575

## Appendix O

*Brown-Forsythe Robust Tests of Equality of Means of Proficient and Highly Proficient Scores by Gender*

	<i>F</i>	<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>	<i>p</i>
Male Proficient	3.929	2	23.868	0.034
Male Highly Proficient	1.117	2	9.727	0.366
Female Proficient	6.607	2	22.279	0.006
Female Highly Proficient	1.216	2	13.347	0.327



## Appendix P

*Shapiro-Wilk Test for Normality of Independent Variable of Proficient and Highly Proficient Scores by Gender*

	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Male Proficient	0.86	90	0.00
Male Highly Proficient	0.734	90	0.00
Female Proficient	0.867	90	0.00
Female Highly Proficient	0.726	90	0.00

## Appendix Q

*Analysis of Variance for Close Reading of Proficient and Highly Proficient Scores by Gender*

		<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Male Proficient	Between groups	236.02	2	118.01	6.336	0.003
	Within groups	1620.38	87	18.63		
Male Highly Proficient	Between groups	15.79	2	7.90	1.938	0.15
	Within groups	354.53	87	4.08		
Female Proficient	Between groups	404.172	2	202.09	9.686	0.00
	Within groups	1815.22	87	20.87		
Female Highly Proficient	Between groups	15.08	2	7.54	1.292	0.28
	Within groups	507.81	87	5.84		
	Total	522.89	89			

## Appendix R

*Tukey HSD Post-hoc Results of Gender Proficient and Highly Proficient Score by Close Reading Methods*

	(I) Close Reading	(J) Close Reading	<i>M</i> Diff ( <i>I-J</i> )	<i>SD</i>	<i>p</i>	95% Confidence Interval	
						<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>
Male Proficient	Adopt	Adapt	4.03	1.15	0.002	1.29	6.76
		DNU	2.06	2.03	0.572	-2.8	6.91
	Adapt	Adopt	-4.03	1.15	0.002	-6.76	-1.29
		DNU	-1.97	1.84	0.535	-6.36	2.42
	DNU	Adopt	-2.06	2.03	0.572	-6.91	2.8
		Adapt	1.97	1.84	0.535	-2.42	6.36
Male Highly Proficient	Adopt	Adapt	0.79	0.54	0.311	-0.49	2.07
		DNU	-0.5	0.95	0.859	-2.77	1.77
	Adapt	Adopt	-0.79	0.54	0.311	-2.07	0.49
		DNU	-1.29	0.86	0.298	-3.34	0.76
	DNU	Adopt	0.5	0.95	0.859	-1.77	2.77
		Adapt	1.29	0.86	0.298	-0.76	3.34
Female Proficient	Adopt	Adapt	5.19	1.22	0.000	2.3	8.09
		DNU	2.06	2.15	0.607	-3.08	7.19
	Adapt	Adopt	-5.19	1.22	0.000	-8.09	-2.3
		DNU	-3.14	1.95	0.247	-7.78	1.51
	DNU	Adopt	-2.06	2.15	0.607	-7.19	3.08
		Adapt	3.14	1.95	0.247	-1.51	7.78
Female Highly Proficient	Adopt	Adapt	0.34	0.64	0.855	-1.19	1.88
		DNU	-1.28	1.14	0.503	-3.99	1.44
	Adapt	Adopt	-0.34	0.64	0.855	-1.88	1.19
		DNU	-1.62	1.03	0.262	-4.08	0.84
	DNU	Adopt	1.28	1.14	0.503	-1.44	3.99
		Adapt	1.62	1.03	0.262	-0.84	4.08

## Appendix S

*Mean and Standard Deviation for Proficient and Highly Proficient Scores by Education*

		<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
General Proficient	Adopt	10	28	14.40
	Adapt	36	10.61	5.37
	Did not use	4	15.5	6.86
	Total	50	14.48	10.49
General Highly Proficient	Adopt	10	4.9	3.41
	Adapt	36	3.56	4.46
	Did not use	4	7.25	6.80
	Total	50	4.12	4.51
Special Proficient	Adopt	10	0.2	0.42
	Adapt	36	0.25	0.50
	Did not use	4	0.00	0.00
	Total	50	0.22	0.47
Special Highly Proficient	Adopt	10	0.00	0.00
	Adapt	36	0.06	0.23
	Did not use	4	0.00	0.00
	Total	50	0.04	0.20

## Appendix T

## Test of Homogeneity of Variances of Proficient and Highly Proficient Scores by Education

	<i>F</i>	<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>	<i>p</i>
General Proficient	7.972	2	47	0.001
General Highly Proficient	1.75	2	47	0.185
Special Proficient	3.34	2	47	0.044
Special Highly Proficient	1.748	2	47	0.185

## Appendix U

*Brown-Forsythe Robust Tests of Equality of Means of Proficient and Highly Proficient for Education*

	<i>F</i>	<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>	<i>p</i>
General Proficient	10.916	2	12.812	0.002
General Highly Proficient	0.988	2	5.372	0.431
Special Proficient				
Special Highly Proficient				

*Note.* Robust test could not performed for Special Proficient and Special Highly Proficient since at least one group had zero variance.

## Appendix V

*Shapiro-Wilk Tests of Normality for Proficient and Highly Proficient Scores by Education*

	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
General Proficient	0.847	50	0.00
General Highly Proficient	0.806	50	0.00
Special Proficient	0.514	50	0.00
Special Highly Proficient	0.198	50	0.00

## Appendix W

*Analysis of Variance for Proficient and Highly Proficient Scores by Education*

		<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
General Proficient	Between groups	2370.92	2	1185.46	18.46	0.00
	Within groups	3017.55	47	64.2		
General Highly Proficient	Between groups	56.74	2	28.37	1.42	0.252
	Within groups	938.54	47	19.97		
Special Proficient	Between groups	0.23	2	0.12	0.522	0.597
	Within groups	10.35	47	0.22		
Special Highly Proficient	Between groups	0.031	2	0.02	0.387	0.681
	Within groups	1.89	47	0.04		



## Appendix X

*Tukey HSD Post-hoc Results of Proficient and Highly Proficient Scores by Education*

						95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower	Upper
General Proficient	Adopt	Adapt	17.39	2.86	0.00	10.46	24.32
		DNU	12.5	4.74	0.03	1.03	23.97
	Adapt	Adopt	-17.39	2.86	0.00	-24.32	-10.46
		DNU	-4.89	4.22	0.48	-15.11	5.33
	DNU	Adopt	-12.5	4.74	0.03	-23.97	-1.03
		Adapt	4.89	4.22	0.48	-5.33	15.11
General Highly Proficient	Adopt	Adapt	1.34	1.6	0.68	-2.52	5.21
		DNU	-2.35	2.64	0.65	-8.75	4.05
	Adapt	Adopt	-1.34	1.6	0.68	-5.21	2.52
		DNU	-3.69	2.36	0.27	-9.39	2.01
	DNU	Adopt	2.35	2.64	0.65	-4.05	8.75
		Adapt	3.69	2.36	0.27	-2.01	9.39
Special Proficient	Adopt	Adapt	-0.05	0.17	0.95	-0.46	0.36
		DNU	0.2	0.28	0.75	-0.47	0.87
	Adapt	Adopt	0.05	0.17	0.95	-0.36	0.46
		DNU	0.25	0.25	0.57	-0.35	0.85
	DNU	Adopt	-0.2	0.28	0.75	-0.87	0.47
		Adapt	-0.25	0.25	0.57	-0.85	0.35
Special Highly Proficient	Adopt	Adapt	-0.06	0.07	0.72	-0.23	0.12
		DNU	0	0.12	1.00	-0.29	0.29
	Adapt	Adopt	0.06	0.07	0.72	-0.12	0.23
		DNU	0.06	0.11	0.86	-0.20	0.31
	DNU	Adopt	0	0.12	1.00	-0.29	0.29
		Adapt	-0.06	0.11	0.86	-0.31	0.20

## Appendix Y

*Mean and Standard Deviation for Proficient and Highly Proficient Scores by SES*

		<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Disadvantaged Proficient	Adopt	18	9.17	7.906
	Adapt	66	3.38	2.352
	Did not use	6	7.17	1.472
	Total	90	4.79	4.672
Disadvantaged Highly Proficient	Adopt	18	1.11	1.231
	Adapt	66	0.58	0.878
	Did not use	6	2.17	3.545
	Total	90	0.79	1.32
Not Disadvantaged Proficient	Adopt	18	10.28	7.482
	Adapt	66	6.67	5.275
	Did not use	6	8.17	4.535
	Total	90	7.49	5.854
Not Disadvantaged Highly Proficient	Adopt	18	2.94	2.532
	Adapt	66	2.33	3.497
	Did not use	6	3.67	3.83

## Appendix Z

*Test of Homogeneity of Variances of Proficient and Highly Proficient Scores by SES*

	<i>F</i>	<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>	<i>p</i>
Disadvantaged Proficient	44.94	2	87	0.000
Disadvantaged Highly Proficient	15.95	2	87	0.000
Not Disadvantaged Proficient	4.51	2	87	0.014
Not Disadvantaged Highly Proficient	0.16	2	87	0.851

## Appendix AA

*Brown-Forsythe Robust Tests of Equality of Means for Proficient and Highly Proficient Scores  
by SES*

	<i>F</i>	<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>	<i>p</i>
Disadvantaged Proficient	9.536	2	19.349	0.001
Disadvantaged Highly Proficient	1.236	2	6.263	0.353
Not Disadvantaged Proficient	2.624	2	26.48	0.091
Not Disadvantaged Highly Proficient	0.606	2	12.436	0.561

## Appendix BB

*Shapiro-Wilk Tests of Normality of Independent Variable for Proficient and Highly Proficient Scores by SES*

	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Disadvantaged Proficient	0.749	90	0.00
Disadvantaged Highly Proficient	0.609	90	0.00
Not Disadvantaged Proficient	0.884	90	0.00
Not Disadvantaged Highly Proficient	0.725	90	0.00

## Appendix CC

*Analysis of Variance for Proficient and Highly Proficient Scores by SES*

		<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Disadvantaged Proficient	Between groups	510.13	2	255.06	15.487	0.00
	Within groups	1432.86	87	16.47		
Disadvantaged Highly Proficient	Between groups	16.26	2	8.128	5.097	0.008
	Within groups	138.73	87	1.595		
Not Disadvantaged Proficient	Between groups	187.38	2	93.69	2.847	0.063
	Within groups	2863.11	87	32.91		
Not Disadvantaged Highly Proficient	Between groups	13.38	2	6.69	0.596	0.553
	Within groups	976.94	87	11.23		

## Appendix DD

*Tukey HSD Post-hoc Results of Proficient and Highly Proficient Scores by SES*

	(I) Close Reading	(J) Close Reading	<i>M</i> Diff (I-J)	<i>SD</i>	<i>p</i>	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower	Upper
Disadvantaged Proficient	Adopt	Adapt	5.79	1.08	0.00	3.21	8.36
		DNU	2	1.91	0.55	-2.56	6.56
	Adapt	Adopt	-5.79	1.08	0.00	-8.36	-3.21
		DNU	-3.79	1.73	0.08	-7.91	0.34
	DNU	Adopt	-2	1.91	0.55	-6.56	2.56
		Adapt	3.79	1.73	0.08	-0.34	7.91
Disadvantaged Highly Proficient	Adopt	Adapt	0.54	0.34	0.25	-0.27	1.34
		DNU	-1.06	0.6	0.19	-2.47	0.36
	Adapt	Adopt	-0.54	0.34	0.25	-1.34	0.27
		DNU	-1.59	0.54	0.01	-2.87	-0.31
	DNU	Adopt	1.06	0.6	0.19	-0.36	2.47
		Adapt	1.59	0.54	0.01	0.31	2.87
Not Disadvantaged Proficient	Adopt	Adapt	3.61	1.53	0.05	-0.03	7.25
		DNU	2.11	2.7	0.72	-4.34	8.56
	Adapt	Adopt	-3.61	1.53	0.05	-7.25	0.03
		DNU	-1.5	2.45	0.81	-7.33	4.33
	DNU	Adopt	-2.11	2.7	0.72	-8.56	4.34
		Adapt	1.5	2.45	0.81	-4.33	7.33
Not Disadvantaged Highly Proficient	Adopt	Adapt	0.61	0.89	0.77	-1.51	2.74
		DNU	-0.72	1.58	0.89	-4.49	3.04
	Adapt	Adopt	-0.61	0.89	0.77	-2.74	1.51
		DNU	-1.33	1.43	0.62	-4.74	2.07
	DNU	Adopt	0.72	1.58	0.89	-3.04	4.49
		Adapt	1.33	1.43	0.62	-2.07	4.74

## Appendix EE

*Number of Grade 3 Proficient Scores by Close Reading Method*

Year	Close Reading	Proficient Scores	Total Tests	Percentage
2013	Adapt	86	387	22%
	Adopt	50	237	21%
	Did not use	25	77	32%
2014	Adapt	85	335	25%
	Adopt	55	256	21%
	Did not use	11	66	17%
2015	Adapt	71	343	21%
	Adopt	33	227	15%
	Did not use	15	71	21%
Total	Adapt	242	1065	23%
	Adopt	138	720	19%
	Did not use	51	215	24%



## Appendix FF

*Number of Grade 4 Proficient Scores by Close Reading Method*

Year	Close Reading	Proficient Scores	Total Tests	Percentage
2013	Adapt	63	377	17%
	Adopt	41	275	15%
	Did not use	15	69	22%
2014	Adapt	69	372	19%
	Adopt	29	249	12%
	Did not use	16	80	20%
2015	Adapt	58	284	20%
	Adopt	33	239	14%
	Did not use	10	64	16%
Total	Adapt	190	1033	18%
	Adopt	103	762	13%
	Did not use	37	213	17%

## Appendix GG

*Number of Grade 5 Proficient Scores by Close Reading Method*

Year	Close Reading	Proficient Scores	Total Tests	Percentage
2013	Adapt	86	439	20%
	Adopt	11	242	5%
2014	Adapt	87	440	20%
	Adopt	11	267	4%
2015	Adapt	69	415	17%
	Adopt	5	229	2%
Total	Adapt	242	1294	19%
	Adopt	27	738	4%

## Appendix HH

*2013 to 2015 Building Student Cohort Proficient Scores*

		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total Exams	Proficient %
Adapt	Building 1	22	18	15	183	30%
	Building 2	5	11	4	111	18%
	Building 3	7	3	4	220	6%
	Building 4	7	8	9	131	18%
	Building 5	17	10	6	182	18%
	Building 6	24	11	11	146	32%
	Building 8	4	8	6	119	15%
	Total	86	69	55	1092	19%
Adopt	Building 9	8	4	6	177	10%
	Building 10	42	25	25	538	17%
	Total	50	29	31	715	15%

## Appendix II

*Number of Grade 3 Highly Proficient Scores by Close Reading Method*

Year	Close Reading	Proficient Scores	Total Tests	Percentage
2013	Adapt	10	387	3%
	Adopt	4	237	2%
	Did not use	3	77	4%
2014	Adapt	9	335	3%
	Adopt	5	256	2%
	Did not use	0	66	0%
2015	Adapt	12	343	3%
	Adopt	1	227	4%
	Did not use	4	71	6%
Total	Adapt	31	1065	3%
	Adopt	10	720	1%
	Did not use	7	215	3%

## Appendix JJ

*Number of Grade 4 Highly Proficient Scores by Close Reading Method*

Year	Close Reading	Proficient Scores	Total Tests	Percentage
2013	Adapt	22	77	6%
	Adopt	12	275	4%
	Did not use	2	69	3%
2014	Adapt	26	372	7%
	Adopt	14	249	6%
	Did not use	14	80	17%
2015	Adapt	26	284	9%
	Adopt	10	239	4%
	Did not use	12	64	19%
Total	Adapt	74	1033	7%
	Adopt	36	763	5%
	Did not use	23	213	11%

## Appendix KK

*Number of Grade 5 Highly Proficient Scores by Close Reading Method*

Year	Close Reading	Proficient Scores	Total Tests	Percentage
2013	Adapt	23	439	5%
	Adopt	11	242	5%
2014	Adapt	30	440	7%
	Adopt	11	267	4%
2015	Adapt	35	415	8%
	Adopt	5	229	2%
Total	Adapt	88	1294	7%
	Adopt	27	738	4%

## Appendix LL

*2013 to 2015 Building Student Cohort Highly Proficient Scores*

		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total Exams	Proficient %
Adapt	Building 1	2	2	4	183	4.0%
	Building 2	1	2	1	111	4.0%
	Building 3	0	1	0	220	0.0%
	Building 4	0	4	1	131	4.0%
	Building 5	1	3	2	182	3.0%
	Building 6	5	14	17	146	25.0%
	Building 8	1	0	0	119	0.1%
	Total	10	26	25	1092	6.0%
Adopt	Building 9	0	3	0	177	2.0%
	Building 10	4	11	5	538	4.0%
	Total	4	14	5	715	3.0%

## Appendix MM

*Grade 3 Gender Proficient Scores by Close Reading Methods*

		Male	Total	%	Female	Total	%
2013	Adapt	39	202	19%	47	185	25%
	Adopt	21	129	16%	29	108	27%
	Did not use	13	40	33%	4	30	13%
2014	Adapt	44	182	24%	41	153	27%
	Adopt	25	119	21%	30	137	22%
	Did not use	4	30	13%	7	36	19%
2015	Adapt	33	169	20%	38	174	22%
	Adopt	16	112	14%	17	115	15%
	Did not use	9	35	26%	6	36	23%
Total	Adapt	136	553	25%	126	512	25%
	Adopt	62	360	17%	76	360	21%
	Did not use	26	105	25%	25	109	23%



## Appendix NN

*Grade 4 Gender Proficient Scores by Close Reading Methods*

		Male	Total	%	Female	Total	%
2013	Adapt	35	182	19%	28	195	14%
	Adopt	18	138	13%	23	137	17%
	Did not use	4	34	12%	11	35	31%
2014	Adapt	34	196	17%	35	176	20%
	Adopt	18	134	13%	11	115	10%
	Did not use	7	42	17%	9	38	24%
2015	Adapt	30	153	20%	28	131	21%
	Adopt	9	114	8%	24	125	20%
	Did not use	4	28	14%	6	36	17%
Total	Adapt	99	531	19%	91	502	18%
	Adopt	45	386	12%	58	377	15%
	Did not use	21	130	16%	24	101	24%

## Appendix OO

*Grade 5 Gender Proficient Scores by Close Reading Methods*

		Male	Total	%	Female	Total	%
2013	Adapt	35	233	15%	51	206	25%
	Adopt	17	139	12%	8	103	8%
2014	Adapt	42	216	19%	33	223	15%
	Adopt	25	137	18%	28	130	22%
2015	Adapt	33	223	15%	36	192	19%
	Adopt	11	121	10%	20	108	19%
Total	Adapt	110	672	16%	147	622	24%
	Adopt	53	397	13%	56	341	16%

## Appendix PP

*Gender Cohort Proficient Scores by Close Reading Method*

		Male	Total	%	Female	Total	%
Adapt	Building 1	29	107	27%	26	76	34%
	Building 2	6	53	11%	14	58	24%
	Building 3	10	125	8%	4	95	4%
	Building 4	3	68	4%	21	63	34%
	Building 5	12	89	13%	21	93	23%
	Building 6	25	73	34%	21	73	34%
	Building 8	11	63	17%	7	56	13%
	Total	96	578	17%	114	514	22%
Adopt	Building 9	6	105	6%	12	72	17%
	Building 10	44	279	16%	48	259	19%
	Total	50	384	13%	60	331	18%

## Appendix QQ

*Grade 3 General Education Proficient Scores by Close Reading Methods*

		Proficient Scores	Total	Percentage
2013	Adapt	67	188	36%
	Adopt	41	153	27%
	Did not use	25	68	37%
2014	Adapt	27	114	24%
	Adopt	45	165	27%
	Did not use	11	50	22%
2015	Adapt	34	153	22%
	Adopt	32	160	20%
	Did not use	NA	NA	NA
Total	Adapt	128	455	28%
	Adopt	118	478	25%
	Did not use	36	126	29%*

*Note.* The total for the did not use method does not include data from 2015.

## Appendix RR

*Grade 4 General Education Proficient Scores by Close Reading Methods*

		Proficient Scores	Total	Percentage
2013	Adapt	29	166	17%
	Adopt	32	184	17%
	Did not use	NA	NA	NA
2014	Adapt	65	253	26%
	Adopt	29	215	13%
	Did not use	16	71	23%
2015	Adapt	23	103	22%
	Adopt	25	151	17%
	Did not use	10	54	19%
Total	Adapt	117	522	22%
	Adopt	86	550	16%
	Did not use	26	124	21%*

*Note.* The total for the did not use method does not include data from 2013.

## Appendix SS

*Grade 5 General Education Proficient Scores by Close Reading Methods*

		Proficient Scores	Total	Percentage
2013	Adapt	49	185	26%
	Adopt	6	50	12%
2014	Adapt	47	200	24%
	Adopt	45	177	25%
2015	Adapt	41	189	22%
	Adopt	25	147	17%
Total	Adapt	137	574	24%
	Adopt	76	374	20%

## Appendix TT

*Grade 3 Disadvantaged Student Proficient Scores by Close Reading Methods*

		Proficient Scores	Total	Percentage
2013	Adapt	23	215	11%
	Adopt	27	176	15%
	Did not use	8	44	18%
2014	Adapt	34	182	19%
	Adopt	22	177	12%
	Did not use	5	42	12%
2015	Adapt	21	192	11%
	Adopt	18	161	11%
	Did not use	8	40	20%
Total	Adapt	78	589	13%
	Adopt	67	514	13%
	Did not use	21	126	17%

## Appendix UU

*Grade 4 Disadvantaged Student Proficient Scores by Close Reading Methods*

		Proficient Scores	Total	Percentage
2013	Adapt	21	206	10%
	Adopt	21	185	11%
	Did not use	7	46	15%
2014	Adapt	24	200	12%
	Adopt	14	180	8%
	Did not use	9	45	20%
2015	Adapt	20	152	13%
	Adopt	16	170	9%
	Did not use	6	46	13%
Total	Adapt	65	558	12%
	Adopt	51	535	10%
	Did not use	16	91	18%



## Appendix VV

*Grade 5 Disadvantaged Student Proficient Scores by Close Reading Methods*

		Proficient Scores	Total	Percentage
2013	Adapt	29	240	12%
	Adopt	7	154	5%
2014	Adapt	30	249	12%
	Adopt	28	181	15%
2015	Adapt	24	224	11%
	Adopt	12	166	7%
Total	Adapt	83	713	12%
	Adopt	47	501	9%

## Appendix WW

*Disadvantaged Student Cohort Proficient Scores by Close Reading Method*

		Proficient Scores	Total	Percentage
Adapt	Building 1	8	54	15%
	Building 2	6	54	11%
	Building 3	10	187	5%
	Building 4	13	88	15%
	Building 5	19	123	15%
	Building 6	6	28	21%
	Building 8	4	54	7%
	Total	66	588	11%
Adopt	Building 9	9	138	7%
	Building 10	44	384	11%
	Total	53	522	10%

## Appendix XX

*Grade 4 Disadvantaged Student Highly Proficient Scores by Close Reading Methods*

		Proficient Score	Total	Percentage
2013	Adapt	5	206	2.0%
	Adopt	3	185	2.0%
	Did not use	0	46	0.0%
2014	Adapt	5	200	3.0%
	Adopt	5	180	3.0%
	Did not use	3	45	7.0%
2015	Adapt	7	152	5.0%
	Adopt	3	170	2.0%
	Did not use	9	46	20.0%
Total	Adapt	17	558	3.0%
	Adopt	11	535	2.0%
	Did not use	12	91	13.0%

## Appendix YY

*Grade 3 Disadvantaged Student Highly Proficient Scores by Close Reading Methods*

		Proficient Scores	Total	Percentage
2013	Adapt	1	215	0.4%
	Adopt	1	176	0.6%
	Did not use	1	44	2.0%
2014	Adapt	2	182	1.0%
	Adopt	2	177	1.0%
	Did not use	0	42	0.0%
2015	Adapt	1	192	0.5%
	Adopt	0	161	0.0%
	Did not use	0	40	0.0%
Total	Adapt	4	589	0.7%
	Adopt	3	514	0.6%
	Did not use	1	126	0.8%

## Appendix ZZ

*Grade 5 Disadvantaged Student Highly Proficient Scores by Close Reading Methods*

		Proficient Scores	Total	Percentage
2013	Adapt	3	240	1.0%
	Adopt	2	154	1.0%
2014	Adapt	9	249	4.0%
	Adopt	3	181	2.0%
2015	Adapt	5	224	2.0%
	Adopt	1	166	0.6%
Total	Adapt	17	713	2.0%
	Adopt	6	501	1.0%

## Appendix AAA

## Disadvantaged Student Cohort Highly Proficient Scores by Close Reading Method

	Proficient Scores	Total	%
Adapt			
Building 1	0	54	0.0%
Building 2	0	54	0.0%
Building 3	1	187	0.0%
Building 4	3	88	3.0%
Building 5	3	123	2.0%
Building 6	4	28	14.0%
Building 8	0	54	0.0%
Total	11	588	2.0%
Adopt			
Building 9	1	138	0.7%
Building 10	6	384	2.0%
Total	7	522	1.0%