TEACHERS' LIVED EXPERIENCES NURTURING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-REGULATED LEARNING TO ADDRESS ACADEMIC OUTCOMES FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH LOW READING ACHIEVEMENT: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

by

Kimberly Mazie Wilson

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 transcendental phenomenological study was to examine teachers' lived experiences nurturing the development of self-regulated learning to address academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement. The two conceptual frameworks that guided this study were Zimmerman's self-regulated learning, derived from Bandura's social cognitive theory, and Duke and Cartwright's active view of reading. These frameworks both provided contributing factors of self-regulatory skills for improved learning and reading outcomes. The research method used for this study was qualitative, and the design was transcendental phenomenology. Using the qualitative method gave a voice to the participants' lived experiences. It captured their in-depth accounts through semi-structured interviews, teachers' letters of advice, and focus groups. The study included 10 participants, certified in general or special education, who worked with high school students with a reading disability. The development of themes emerged using the data analysis processes outlined by Moustakas and yielded five themes: (a) challenges, (b) building relationships, (c) differentiated instruction, (d) fostering motivation and engagement, and (e) strategy instruction. The results indicated that the participants helped high school students with low reading achievement develop self-regulated learning by building relationships, making content accessible, and giving choices to demonstrate knowledge and teaching strategies, all of which aided high school students in using self-regulatory skills for improved academic performance.

Keywords: self-regulated learning, reading disability, active view of reading

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Dedication

To my living hope, Jesus Christ, the one who was, who is, and who is to come. Lord, I give you all the glory and honor for completing this dissertation, as I would not have finished without the leading and guiding of the Holy Spirit. Thank you for filling me with knowledge, wisdom, and understanding to pursue this doctoral journey.

I dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Raymond, who always stands on the Word of God as the final authority. Thank you for believing in me and encouraging me through this entire process. I appreciate all the sacrifices you made for our family and for being by my side cheering me on. I love you so very much.

To my children, Naomi, and Nathan, you pushed me and constantly reminded me not to give up. Thank you for your patience and understanding when I had to skip some family outings to work on my paper. I love you both very much, and I pray you always lean and depend on God as you navigate this life.

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My parents have always been supportive from day one. Thank you for being there for me and loving me unconditionally. I would not be the person I am today without your love and support. I love you, Mom and Dad.

Dr. Gail Collins is a fantastic chair. When I faced a health challenge, she prayed with me. She also motivated me and responded promptly to my questions and paper edits. Dr. Keafer, my committee member, helped confirm that I chose the right topic. She complimented my writing, results, and findings, which boosted my confidence.

I want to shout out the Just a Sister Away (JASA) Liberty University cohort group. This amazing group of ladies is phenomenal and a true blessing. This group helped push me to finish as their kind words echoed loudly in my ears, "You got this."

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List of Abbreviations

Central Question (CQ)

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Educational for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA)

International Dyslexia Association (IDA)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

Orton-Gillingham (OG)

Self-Regulated Learning (SRL)

Sub-Question (SQ)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Students must have a solid foundation in reading to meet grade-level standards across all academia; however, students with low reading achievement face challenges that complicate school success (Sanders et al., 2019). This study examined how teachers nurture the development of self-regulated learning that improves academic performance among high school students with reading deficiencies. Chapter One begins with the background that includes a discussion of the historical, social, and conceptual frameworks for this study. Next, the problem statement, purpose statement, and the study's significance are discussed, and lastly, Chapter One concludes with a discussion about the research questions, essential definitions, and chapter summary.

Background

Before the No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002) mandates, schools districts across the states were not required to target academic outcomes for students with disabilities on state assessments; therefore, getting an accurate picture of grade-level proficiency was difficult (Gilmour et al., 2019; Schulte et al., 2016). With the establishment of NCLB (2002), followed by Individual With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015), these laws have forced school districts to demonstrate efforts to close the achievement gap and improve academic outcomes for disadvantaged and low-achieving students (Aron & Loprest, 2012; Darling-Hammond, 2007). Moreover, schools are now held accountable for the educational results of students with learning disabilities (Gilmour et al., 2019; Stebbins et al., 2012). Even with these efforts to close the achievement gap, students with reading deficits struggle to meet grade-level standards and are at risk of academic failure and school dropout (Phillips & Odegard, 2017; Sanders et al., 2019; Witzel & Mize, 2018). Therefore, these students

need academic support to experience educational success in school and beyond (Duke & Cartwright, 2021; García-Pérez et al., 2021; Sanders et al., 2019).

Historical Context

In the 1940s and 1950s, the term "brain-injured" was used to label children who demonstrated a delay in learning to read, write or spell (Kirk, 1977, p. 23; Strauss & Werner, 1941). Kirk, who was opposed to labeling children, used the term learning disability to describe individuals with delays in language, speech, reading, and communication (Kirk, 1977; Kirk & Bateman, 1962). Learning disability became the preferred language to use by parents, educators, and state and government officials, and in 1968 the National Advisory Committee on Handicapped Children defined children with specific learning disabilities as a means to gain federal support for children with learning challenges (Kirk, 1968, 1977). The profound definition contributed to Congress passing the Children with Specific Learning Disabilities Act of 1969. This law described learning disabilities and allocated funds for service programs for students with learning disabilities (Alnaim, 2016; Hallahan & Mercer, 2002; Zumeta et al., 2014).

In 1975, learning disabilities were included in the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA), P.L. 94-142, to ensure a free and appropriate public education for all students with a disability and for them to receive specialized instruction through an individualized education plan (Aron & Loprest, 2012; Gilmour et al., 2019; Grigorenko et al., 2020; Kirk, 1977). However, even with this federal policy, students with disabilities were not counted in testing, and schools were not held accountable for their lack of progress with grade-level proficiency, as this made it difficult to get a clear picture of growth in reading achievement and establish gaps across grade levels (Schulte et al., 2016). The EAHCA (1975) was reauthorized as the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Amendments of 1997,

granting students access to curriculum standards and participation in state testing (Gilmour et al., 2019). In addition, IDEA sought to improve the development of appropriate assessments for better academic outcomes and support students aging out of special education (Aron & Loprest, 2012; Gilmour et al., 2019).

NCLB (2002), formerly the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, challenged schools to incorporate more rigorous standards to improve student outcomes for all students. With this law, school districts were held accountable for state testing participation and academic achievement of students with disabilities (Darling-Hammond, 2007). Moreover, to continue receiving funds from the government, schools had to report their performance and show efforts to close the achievement gap (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Gilmour et al., 2019). At the time of heightened concerns surrounding NCLB (2002) accountability requirements, the reauthorization of IDEA (2004) mandated that students with a learning disability have access to the general curriculum in an inclusive setting and provided specially designed instruction to meet their academic needs (Cook & Rao, 2018; Gilmour et al., 2019). The federal ordinance put a greater demand on schools to assess students with disabilities on the same grade-level standards as other students to adequately measure academic progress within the school year (Aron & Loprest, 2012; Brown et al., 2018; Gilmour et al., 2019).

NCLB (2002) aimed to close the achievement gap and increase educational achievement for students with disabilities and other disadvantaged subgroups (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Heise, 2017). Under NCLB (2002), schools were required to demonstrate proficiency for all students, including those with learning disabilities, by 2014 (Heise, 2017). This impossible mandate led Congress in 2015 to replace NCLB with the ESSA, an initiative spearheaded by the Obama Administration (Heise, 2017). In addition, ESSA (2015) requires high-level instruction

for all students for career and college readiness. The education law also grants states the power to create, assess, and measure academic standards for all students to close achievement gaps and maintain accountability for reporting and assessing all students (Heise, 2017; McGuinn, 2016).

Social Context

Students with reading disabilities face challenges accessing the curriculum (Gilmour et al., 2019). According to Hock et al. (2017), students who read below the expected grade level cannot understand the rigorous material they engage in across content areas in school. In addition, if students struggle with reading comprehension, they are likely to experience deficits in decoding, language comprehension, or reading fluency, as well as phonological processing and working memory (Azizifar et al., 2019; Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Johnston, 2019; Snow, 2018). A deficit in phonological processing impedes the normal development of skills to decode and read printed words (Liam & Oei, 2015). Poor working memory does not allow the student to store information correctly, and the loss of data becomes an obstacle to learning (Alloway & Carpenter, 2020; Schunk, 2016). Not all students who have a reading disability are impacted in the same way as the severity may differ; however, with these deficits, students with low reading achievement are not able to demonstrate reading proficiency or meet grade-level expectations (Azizifar et al., 2019; Johnston, 2019; Snowling et al., 2020).

Reading deficiencies hinder academic outcomes across all content areas for students in high school, as proficient reading ability is vital for a student's educational success at the high school level (Felmlee et al., 2018; Sanders et al., 2019; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2022). In addition, reading difficulties can potentially lower a student's motivation, and other research has shown that below-average reading achievement is linked to a student's poor motivation to excel academically at the high school level (Guthrie et al., 2013; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2022).

Moreover, other studies have associated self-regulation skills with positive outcomes and increased achievement for students with learning deficits as students become active participants in their learning process through metacognitive skills, motivation skills, and strategy use (Johnson et al., 2023; Sanders et al., 2019; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2022; Zimmerman, 1989, 1990a, 1990b).

Students with low reading achievement deal with self-esteem and self-worth issues and are exposed to increased stigmatization, peer withdrawal, and repeated failures (Alloway & Carpenter, 2020). In addition, studies report suicidal ideation, school dropout, depression, and incarceration among students with reading difficulties (Alloway & Carpenter, 2020; Peltier et al., 2020). Students who drop out of school face unemployment, lower wages, or inadequate education attainment (Felmlee et al., 2018; Williams et al., 2021).

Conceptual Framework Context

Over a period of 20 years, Zimmerman (1986, 1989, 1990a, 1990b, 2002, 2008) has examined how students become masters of their learning through self-regulatory processes. Self-regulated learning (SRL) is a concept used by Zimmerman to describe students who play an active role in their learning processes (Zimmerman, 1989). Zimmerman was one of the first authors of SRL to introduce an inclusive definition of SRL at the American Educational Research Association's yearly meeting in 1986 (Panadero, 2017; Zimmerman, 1986, 2008). Zimmerman featured his thorough explanation of the SRL in a special issue of *Contemporary Educational Psychology* as it created content for improving student achievement through SRL strategies (Zimmerman, 1986, 1990a, 1990b). According to Zimmerman (1986), students demonstrate SRL when they are metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally active participants in their own learning. The strategies that Zimmerman outlines in his account of SRL

are linked to academic achievement and essential to fostering academic success for students with learning disabilities (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2022; Zimmerman, 1990a, 1990b).

More than a hundred studies have used the simple view of reading, first developed by Gough and Tunmer (1986), to guide their research and justify variances affecting reading comprehension, either decoding or language comprehension (Catts, 2018). The simple view of reading holds that strong reading occurs when decoding skills and language abilities are strong and for 35 years offered educators a formula and coherent instructional practices for reading success (Austin et al., 2017; Duke & Cartwright, 2021; Snow, 2018; Tunmer & Hoover, 2019). However, decoding (word recognition) and language comprehension are complex cognitive capacities to the extent that reading is complex (Savage et al., 2015; Tunmer & Hoover, 2019). In addition, a student with a reading disability demonstrates challenges in decoding and comprehending words read, therefore adding to the dynamic capabilities of reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986). Therefore, explicit skills-based reading instruction is needed to help students with reading disabilities (Al Otaiba et al., 2018; Peng & Goodrich, 2020).

According to Duke and Cartwright (2021), the simple view of reading explains the science of reading to educators to steer instructional approaches. The science of reading highlights explicit instruction and has proven effective (Peng & Goodrich, 2020). However, the active view of reading model by Duke and Cartwright (2021) expands the simple view of reading. It proposes that active self-regulatory processes play a critical role in reading, instruction, word recognition, and language comprehension (Duke & Cartwright, 2021). The active self-regulation component in the active view of reading includes executive functioning skills, motivation and engagement, and strategy use, as each contributes to the reading process (Duke & Cartwright, 2021). Executive functioning skills reference three areas: cognitive

flexibility, working memory, and inhibitory control. Motivation and engagement predict readability, and strategy use refers to reading strategies that assist readers with decoding, the meaning of words, and comprehension of a text (Duke & Cartwright, 2021). The three features in the active view of reading are adaptable to improve reading, learning, and academic performance for struggling readers (Duke & Cartwright, 2021; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990).

The active self-regulation component of the active view of reading includes constructs of Zimmerman's SRL (Duke & Cartwright, 2021; Zimmerman, 1986, 1990a, 1990b). Based on research, each piece—metacognitive, motivation, and strategy use—contributes to a student's academic achievement (Johnson et al., 2023; Zimmerman, 1990a, 1990b). In addition, Johnson et al. (2023) noted that SRL is linked to academic achievement and success in school. With this in mind, this study extended the knowledge of all three components of SRL to examine how the use of SRL influences the reading ability of high school students with reading challenges (Kesuma et al., 2021).

Problem Statement

The problem is that students with low reading achievement are at a higher risk of low academic performance, academic failure, and school dropout than proficient readers (Development Services Group, 2019; Sanders et al., 2019; Williams et al., 2021). Low reading achievement vaticinates poor school outcomes and high school dropout for struggling readers (Hock et al., 2017; Williams et al., 2021). In 2019, 10.7% of students with a disability dropped out of high school compared to 4.7% without a disability (National Center of Education Statistics, 2021). Students with reading difficulties are challenged with adequately accessing the curriculum as it hinders student engagement and academic performance (Gilmour et al., 2019). Proficient reading skills are essential for postsecondary and social ventures, and students who

struggle with reading will likely lack the competencies linked with success in school and beyond (Johnson et al., 2023; Sanders et al., 2019).

According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2022), only 33% of fourth-grade public school students and 31% of eighth-grade public school students are proficient in reading. In America's public school system, 2.4 million students have a learning disability and score below the expected grade level in reading (Al Dahhan et al., 2021; Alloway & Carpenter, 2020; Al Otaiba et al., 2018). Other reports indicated that 67% of students with learning disabilities are not proficient in reading comprehension (Al Otaiba et al., 2018; Spencer et al., 2019). Specific to North Carolina, only 12% of students with learning disabilities read at or above grade level (NAEP, 2022). Quantitative research has shown that evidence-based reading interventions and direct instruction support students with reading impairments (Azizifar et al., 2019; J. Daniel et al., 2021; Spear-Swerling, 2019). However, missing from qualitative research is how teachers integrate self-regulation skills for more excellent outcomes in school for students at risk of academic failure due to reading challenges (Duke & Cartwright, 2021; Johnson et al., 2023).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to examine teachers' lived experiences with nurturing the development of SRL to address academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement. Gilmour et al. (2019) defined low reading achievement as a reading disability. Zimmerman (1986, 1990a, 1990b) defined SRL as the systematic use of metacognitive skills, motivation, and learning strategies to achieve academic goals. Based on the conceptual frameworks for this study, using SRL and the active view of reading has shown that self-regulation in the classroom is central to academic performance and

has positive school outcomes for struggling readers (Duke & Cartwright, 2021; Johnson et al., 2023; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990).

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study stands on the following three perspectives: empirical, conceptual, and practical. First, research shows a significant achievement gap between students with and without disabilities and that students with low reading achievement struggle to meet grade-level standards (Al Otaiba et al., 2018; Gilmour et al., 2019). Second, soft reading skills predict low academic achievement, school dropout, and undeveloped job readiness skills (Main et al., 2020; Williams et al., 2021). Therefore, studying teachers' experiences with the development of SRL can improve access to the curriculum for those students at risk of academic failure. Third, the collected data could benefit transition teams, special and general education teachers, and school leaders with strategies to successfully help struggling readers graduate.

Empirical Perspectives

This study contributes to the current empirical literature by providing data on how teachers nurture the development of SRL in students with reading deficits to improve academic outcomes. A few studies have explored SRL and its effect on reading comprehension (Kavani & Amjadiparvar, 2018; Nejabati, 2015; Sanders et al., 2019). For example, Nejabati's (2015) study and Kavani and Amjadiparvar's (2018) study explored the effect of teaching SRL strategies on English foreign language students' reading comprehension. In addition, Sanders et al. (2019) examined other studies that investigated the effectiveness of self-regulated strategy development and instructional approach designed to improve reading comprehension in students with disabilities. Research has shown that reading instruction contributes to gains in reading, especially for students in primary grades (Azizifar et al., 2019; Miciak et al., 2018; Wanzek et

al., 2018; Worthy et al., 2018). However, the effectiveness of reading instruction in high school is limited. This study aims to voice teachers' experiences using instructional approaches to improve academic outcomes for high school students with learning challenges (Main et al., 2020).

Conceptual Perspectives

The simple view of reading conceptualizes the art of reading and the capacities of reading proficiency. Gough and Tunmer (1986), authors of the simple view of reading, proposed that reading comprehension is determined by two distinct but related skills: decoding and language comprehension (Smith et al., 2021; Tunmer & Hoover, 2019). Both abilities are essential, each having a unique role in the success of reading comprehension (Lonigan et al., 2018). Students with a reading disability can have decoding or comprehension deficits, impacting reading proficiency (Al Otaiba et al., 2018; Catts, 2018; Ferraz et al., 2018; Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Snowling et al., 2020). Duke and Cartwright's (2021) active view of reading progressed the science of reading beyond decoding and language comprehension as crucial contributors to reading outlined in the simple view of reading. The active view of reading model encompasses three contributors to reading—word recognition, language comprehension, and active self-regulation, and when taught together, "each has shown to improve a student's reading achievement" (Duke & Cartwright, 2021, p. 26). Proficient readers must demonstrate the ability to extract and erect knowledge of the language used in the printed text, and for high school students, reading comprehension is the core to academic and graduation success (Austin et al., 2017; Smith et al., 2021; Tunmer & Hoover, 2019).

In 2000, Zimmerman developed a cyclical model of self-regulation that, at each level, explained the connection of metacognitive and motivational processes in three phases:

forethought, performance, and self-reflection (Bembenutty, 2008; Panadero, 2017; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2022). The breakdown of each step provided guidance for interventions to be used to target student learning and improve academic performance through the development of self-regulatory skills (Bembenutty, 2008). Students with learning disabilities are likely to struggle academically, experience low levels of motivation and achievement in content areas, and demonstrate poorer self-regulatory skills than students without a learning disability (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2022). Therefore, the development of self-regulatory skills is beneficial for high school students with reading deficits as it enhances learning and academic outcomes (Guthrie et al., 2013; Main et al., 2020; Panadero, 2017). According to Schunk and DiBenedetto (2022), "students who use self-regulatory skills are apt to feel efficacious about learning and performing well" (p. 38). High school students with low reading achievement need acquired skills to experience success beyond high school (Johnson et al., 2023; Sanders et al., 2019). Therefore, both the active view of reading and SRL have connecting factors that improve student learning (Duke & Cartwright, 2021; Zimmerman, 1990a, 1990b).

Practical Perspectives

This study may help educators in secondary schools understand what is needed to improve more significant school outcomes for students with a reading disability. Teachers are essential in fostering SRL through which students use metacognition, motivation, and engagement to improve school performance (Sava et al., 2020). Furthermore, SRL skills predict academic performance and satisfaction in the workplace (García-Pérez et al., 2021). In addition, developing SRL in students with low reading skills allows for active participation in their education for better access to the curriculum (Șuteu, 2021).

Research Questions

Duke and Cartwright's (2021) active view of reading proposed that the components of active self-regulation—motivation and engagement, executive function skills, and strategy use—contribute to reading success. Therefore, the central question and the three sub-questions were derived from Zimmerman's description of SRL and Duke and Cartwright's account of active self-regulation, a feature in the active view of reading.

Central Research Question

How do teachers nurture the development of self-regulated learning to address academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement?

Sub-Question One

How do teachers nurture metacognitive flexibility to address academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement?

Sub-Question Two

How do teachers nurture motivation and engagement to address academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement?

Sub-Question Three

How do teachers nurture learning strategies to address academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement?

Definitions

1. *Active view of reading* – A key feature of the model is that it explicitly lists contributors to reading-and-potential causes of reading difficulty—within, across, and beyond the broad categories of word recognition and language. A second feature of the active view reading model is that it depicts word recognition and language comprehension as

overlapping and explicitly identifies processes that bridge these constructs. A third feature of the active view of reading is the inclusion of active self-regulation and its placement influencing word recognition, bridging processes, and language comprehension (Duke & Cartwright, 2021, pp. 32–33).

2. *Language Comprehension* – The ability to extract and construct literal and inferred meaning from linguistic discourse represented in speech and word recognition (Tunmer & Hoover, 2019).
3. *Self-Regulated Learning* – Students can be described as self-regulated to the degree that they are metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally active participants in their own learning (Zimmerman, 1989).
4. *Simple View of Reading* – Reading equals the product of decoding and comprehension. The model is captured in the formula R = D x C, where D = decoding, C = comprehension, and R = reading (Duke & Cartwright, 2021; Gough & Tunmer, 1986).
5. *Specific Learning Disabilities* – A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, and spell. Dyslexia is a specific learning disability (Brown et al., 2018).

Summary

High school students with a learning disability in reading are at risk of school failure, low academic performance, and school dropouts. In addition, they struggle to demonstrate proficiency with grade-level standards, which impacts academic success (Denton et al., 2013; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2022). However, SRL strategies enhance academic achievement for struggling learners (Johnson et al., 2023; Williams et al., 2021; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001).

This transcendental phenomenological study examined how teachers nurture the development of SRL to address academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement. Chapter One provided the background for this study, including the historical, conceptual, and social contexts, problem, and purpose statement. Next, the significance of the study was discussed from empirical, conceptual, and practical perspectives, and the chapter concluded with research questions and definitions of terms used in the study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to examine teachers' lived experiences with nurturing the development of self-regulated learning (SRL) to address academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement. SRL and the active view of reading are the two conceptual frameworks that guided this study and are discussed in the first section as it brings relevance to the phenomenon. Subsequent literature on reading disability and its impact on student performance is synthesized. A gap in the literature became evidence and provided a need for the study.

Conceptual Framework

In the mid-1980s, theory and research on SRL surfaced to explore how students become masters of their learning processes (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001). Previous perspectives on SRL focused on the students' learning abilities at home and school; however, it shifted to students using strategies to improve their learning outcomes (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001). According to Zimmerman (1990a), "students' use of self-regulated strategies" is essential in their academic achievement (p. 7). SRL has implications for learning and academic success among high school students with low reading achievement (Johnston, 2019; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2022; Zimmerman, 1990a; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001). Two conceptual frameworks guided this study. Zimmerman's (1986) SRL and Duke and Cartwright's (2021) active view of reading processes provided an understanding of the critical role of self-regulatory skills in student achievement, particularly for high school students with reading deficits.

Zimmerman's Self-Regulated Learning

Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory impacted the conception of Zimmerman's (1986) SRL processes for academic achievement (Zimmerman, 2008; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001). Self-regulation is multifaceted as it has many cognitive processes to self-regulate: self-observation, judgment, and self-reflection (Bandura, 1991; Cleary & Zimmerman, 2004). Self-regulation is a self-directive process wherein students convert cognitive abilities into academic skills to enhance academic performance (Zimmerman, 2002). Many definitions of SRL have emerged based on researchers' perspectives; however, a commonality is that self-regulated learners actively participate in their learning (Zimmerman, 1986, 1990a, 1990b). SRL, defined by Zimmerman (1986), includes the processes wherein students are metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally active participants in their learning processes. With these self-regulation strategies, students can systematically use them to achieve their academic goals (Zimmerman, 1986, 1990a, 1990b).

The conceptual development of SRL has expanded since its inception in the 1980s (Zimmerman, 1986, 1989, 1990a, 1990b). SRL contributed to educational psychology by promoting how students can use self-directive cognitive processes for learning (Panadero, 2017; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001; Zimmerman, 1990a, 1990b). Research has grown exponentially on SRL strategies and their impact on academic achievement (DiBenedetto, 2018; Malik & Parveen, 2019; Zimmerman, 1990b; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001). Zimmerman (2000) developed a three-phase cyclical model of self-regulation from Bandura's (1986) model of self-regulation to understand the relation of self-regulatory skills to attaining academic goals (Cleary & Zimmerman, 2004). This self-regulatory structure of forethought, performance, and self-

reflection is used in education to define and describe a self-regulated learner (Zimmerman, 2000).

According to Zimmerman (2000), self-regulation refers to "self-generated thoughts, feelings, and behaviors" formed for the attainment of one's personal goals (p. 14). Self-regulated learners have heightened self-awareness, self-efficacy, and dedication to attain academic goals (Cleary & Zimmerman, 2004; Zimmerman, 1990a, 1990b; Zimmerman et al., 1992). Self-regulated learners set goals, plan, self-reflect, and self-motivate (Cleary & Zimmerman, 2004). They are resourceful, responsible, engaged, proactive, and metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally active participants in their learning (Zimmerman, 1986, 1989, 1990a, 1990b; Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1988). In addition, self-regulated learners are responsive to environmental demands (D. L. Butler & Schnellery, 2015). They use self-regulatory components to maximize their learning experience (Zimmerman, 1986, 1989, 1990a, 1990b). Therefore, self-regulated learners possess the skills to actively engage in reading processes for better academic outcomes (Zimmerman, 1990a, 1990b).

Active View of Reading

Duke and Cartwright (2021) developed the active view of reading model to reflect the role of active self-regulatory processes in reading. The active view of reading derives from the simple view of reading, a conceptual framework introduced by Gough and Tunmer (1986) to explain the science of reading. According to Gough and Tunmer (1986), reading comprehension (the ability to understand the printed text) is determined by two components: decoding (ability to recognize printed text) and language comprehension (the ability to understand spoken language (Tunmer & Hoover, 2019). Decoding and comprehension deficits are usually evident in students with a reading disability as these are both necessary for reading (Catts, 2018; Ferraz et al., 2018;

Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Snowling et al., 2020). Both abilities are essential, with each one having a unique role in reading comprehension success (Lonigan et al., 2018).

The simple view of reading assisted with the classification and understanding of reading disabilities as it provided a model for being a skilled reader (Catts, 2018; Lonigan et al., 2018). Based on the simple view of reading model, a reading disability manifests itself in three ways: inability to decode, inability to comprehend, or both (Catts, 2018; Gough & Tunmer, 1986). Gough and Tunmer (1986) described the first being dyslexia, the second hyperlexia, and the third garden variety reading disability (Catts, 2018; Gough & Tunmer, 1986). This discovery through the simple view of reading brought clarity and direction in delivering explicit instruction to students who struggled in decoding, comprehension, or both (Snow, 2018). The simple view of reading provides readers and researchers with an understanding of the variations in reading comprehension (Nation, 2019). In addition, it is a valuable tool for descriptions of skills in reading and classifying types of readers so educators can distinguish between good and poor readers (Catts, 2018; Nation, 2019; Silverman et al., 2013).

Duke and Cartwright (2021) contended, based on Gough and Tunmer's (1986) simple view of reading, that reading difficulties have caused within and beyond weaknesses in decoding and language comprehension. Based on research, decoding (word recognition) and language comprehension are not separate processes described in the simple view of reading, and other factors, like vocabulary, fluency, and content knowledge, impact reading ability (Duke & Cartwright, 2021; Hoover & Tunmer, 2020). According to Duke and Cartwright (2021), proficient readers actively participate in their learning. Skilled readers check themselves for understanding, engage in a text, maintain motivation, and apply strategies to assist in the reading process (Duke & Cartwright, 2021). To extend research findings in reading, Duke and

Cartwright (2021) developed the active view of reading to reflect research on many contributors to reading that bridge decoding and language comprehension and three vital advances of active self-regulation: executive functioning skills, motivation and engagement, and strategy use. These interactions vaticinate all of Zimmerman's SRL processes, reading, and self-regulation (Duke & Cartwright, 2021; Zimmerman, 1986, 1990a, 1990b).

Related Literature

Despite schools' laws, mandates, and efforts, approximately six million secondary students in the United States struggle to read at grade level (Young et al., 2019). More importantly, students with a specific learning disability in reading are not proficient in reading and perform below their expected grade level compared to their non-disabled peers (Gilmour et al., 2019; Witzel & Mize, 2018). Students with reading impairments need explicit, systematic, and cumulative instruction to strengthen their reading deficits while accessing grade-level standards (Austin et al., 2017; Phillips & Odegard, 2017; Spear-Swerling, 2019). In addition, high school students with reading deficits need support to improve academic outcomes (Al Otaiba et al., 2018; Guthrie et al., 2013; Main et al., 2020). This section will discuss a learning disability, types of reading disabilities, reading impairments, reading interventions, and current literature about SRL and its impact on student performance.

Definition of Specific Learning Disability

Of all the students in public schools in the United States, 13% are identified as having a disability and receive special education services through IDEA (2004), and 34% are identified as having a specific learning disability (Peltier et al., 2020). Under IDEA (2004), a specific learning disability is a disorder that impacts one or more basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using spoken or written language, which presents challenges in listening,

thinking, reading, writing, spelling, or mathematics. It also includes conditions such as dyslexia (Brown et al., 2018; Gilmour et al., 2019). The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (5th ed.; American Psychiatric Association, 2013) describes a specific learning disability as a neurodevelopmental disorder that presents with impairments of reading (dyslexia), mathematics (dyscalculia), or written expression (dysgraphia; Alloway & Carpenter, 2020). According to D. L. Butler and Schnellery (2015), "Learning disabilities have consistently been conceptualized as specific processing problems intrinsic to an individual that interfere with performance" (p. 94).

Learning disabilities are evident in low achievement and inadequate responses to instruction/intervention (Fletcher et al., 2018) and exclude factors like intellectual disabilities, culture, socioeconomic status, or emotional disturbance (Fletcher et al., 2018; Gartland & Strosnider, 2018; IDEA, 2004). There are 13 disability categories where students may qualify for special education services, and a specific learning disability is one of the categories under IDEA (2004). Students with a learning disability are likely to demonstrate strengths and weaknesses that impact learning, and some may present with deficits in one academic area or multiple areas (Gartland & Strosnider, 2018). The National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (2018) reported different learning disabilities, such as reading, writing, and math; however, approximately 15% of school-aged children in the United States identify with having reading disabilities (Al Dahhan et al., 2021).

Types of Reading Disabilities

According to Gough and Tunmer (1986), three types of reading disabilities describe poor readers: dyslexia, hyperlexia, and garden reading disability. In the origination of the simple view of reading, Gough and Tunmer (1986) referred to dyslexia as the inability to decode, hyperlexia

as the inability to comprehend, and garden reading disability as the inability to decode and understand. Word-level and text-level reading disabilities are other terms for dyslexia and hyperlexia (Fletcher et al., 2018; Stevens et al., 2021). The words have evolved through the years; however, each reading disability impedes a student's ability to become a proficient reader.

Dyslexia

Dyslexia was identified as a reading disability over 100 years ago, and the known term at that time was *word blindness* (Azizifar et al., 2019; Fletcher et al., 2018). However, in 1887, a German physician named Berlin produced the term "dyslexia" to define a learning disability in reading (Alnaim, 2016). Gough and Tunmer (1986) categorized dyslexia as poor decoding skills. Other research studies have linked difficulties with decoding, word recognition, and spelling to dyslexia. Ferraz et al. (2018) characterized dyslexia as difficulties recognizing words correctly or fluently and poor spelling and decoding skills due to a possible phonological deficit. According to Johnston (2019), dyslexia is a neurobiological disorder that affects both phonological processing and working memory and a neurological language-based learning disability that affects some processes in the brain that are needed for a person to be successful in reading. Snowling et al. (2020) described dyslexia as difficulty in learning to decode and spell words and read fluently. Today, word-level reading disability is interchangeably used for dyslexia and described as being neurobiological in origin with deficits in word reading (accurately or fluently), spelling, and decoding (Fletcher et al., 2018; Odegard et al., 2020; Stevens et al., 2021).

ESSA (2015) identifies dyslexia as a specific learning disability, and with having a word-level reading disability, students can receive special education services in the areas not limited to basic reading, reading fluency, and written expression (Alloway & Carpenter, 2020; Stevens et

al., 2021; Witzel & Mize, 2018). In the past, dyslexia required a medical diagnosis for students to receive services in school; however, the passing of state laws brought awareness and actions to school districts (Snowling et al., 2020). As of April 2018, 41 states passed laws to bring awareness through screenings, treatment, and teacher training for dyslexia (Worthy et al., 2018). More laws are being written in the United States to help students get accommodations, remediation, and interventions to help them succeed in school (Johnston, 2019). Some states have teacher preparation programs that teachers must attend to provide information about identification and intervention for dyslexia (Worthy et al., 2018). In 2017 the North Carolina House and Senate voted to require the state's education code to include a definition of dyslexia and for the Department of Public Instruction to provide teacher training specific to identification and strategies for students with dyslexia (Witzel & Mize, 2018).

The state laws encourage using a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) to identify students with a reading disability like dyslexia. According to Witzel and Mize (2018), an "MTSS approach ensures that students are assessed for specific needs and interventions are focused directly on these needs" (p. 36). This model replaces identifying students with a learning disability based on the discrepancy. Still, with this, it would be based on a student's inadequate response to the tiers of intensive interventions, and it is up to districts to determine the processes through the tiered system. The student response to instruction and intervention data drives educational decisions and determines which direction is most appropriate for students not responding to the intensive intervention (Fien et al., 2021).

Dr. Samuel Torry Orton, an American professor of neurology and neuropathology, studied children with severe reading problems (i.e., dyslexia) who appeared bright and concluded that dyslexia stemmed from a delay in language development, which could be remediated

("Samuel Torrey Orton," 1969). Therefore, Orton defined dyslexia as a language-based learning disability because the students he studied experienced difficulties with language skills like spelling, writing, and pronunciation (International Dyslexia Association, 2017). Dr. Orton showed great interest in reasons for reading failure and its association with language-processing difficulties, which led him to develop principles for remediation ("Samuel Torrey Orton," 1969; Sayeski et al., 2019). Orton and his colleague Gillingham worked together to create an approach to reading to target language elements and facilitate automaticity in decoding and encoding language through explicit, multisensory, systematic, and sequential instructional practices (Alnaim, 2016; Sayeski et al., 2019).

The International Dyslexia Association (IDA, 2017), formerly known as the Orton Society, was founded in 1949 to further the work started by Dr. Orton. It is an organization that provides resources for teachers who educate those with dyslexia. The IDA (2017) is joined with memberships by thousands of individuals and their families. According to the information provided by IDA (2017), students with dyslexia require a different instructional approach that will complement their learning needs, as direct instruction should be explicit, intensive, and focused on the structure of language.

Hyperlexia

Silberberg and Silberberg (1967) initially used the word *hyperlexia* to describe readers with advanced word-recognition skills but poor comprehension skills. Further studies by Silberberg and Silberberg revealed that these readers could read words above their grade level but could not conceptualize the meaning of written words (Murdick et al., 2004; Silberberg & Silberberg, 1971). The simple view of reading classified hyperlexia as readers with good word recognition and decoding skills but poor listening and comprehension skills (Gough & Tunmer,

1986; Macdonald et al., 2022; Spear-Swerling, 2010). Hyperlexia is also associated with language impairments and developmental disorders like autism (Macdonald et al., 2022; Murdick et al., 2004; Nation, 1999; Richman & Wood, 2002; Silberberg & Silberberg, 1971). In addition, it is defined as a reading comprehension disorder, and under IDEA (2004) a reading comprehension disorder is identified as a specific learning disability (Fletcher et al., 2018; Macdonald et al., 2022).

A reading comprehension disorder is also known as a specific reading comprehension deficit/disability or text-level reading disabilities (Fletcher et al., 2018; Landi & Ryherd, 2018). According to Fletcher et al. (2018), "the specificity of specific reading comprehension disability emerges because they are not due to word-level problems" (p. 192). Students identified with a specific comprehension deficit are often not associated with reading problems as they demonstrate solid word recognition skills (Spencer et al., 2019); about 10% of school-aged children have reading comprehension difficulties with no deficits in their decoding skills (Landi & Ryherd, 2018; Spencer et al., 2019). Within the conceptual framework of the simple view of reading, reading comprehension deficits are directly related to listening and language comprehension challenges and impact an individual's overall reading ability (Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Spencer et al., 2019).

Catts et al. (2006) conducted a two-part study based on the simple view of reading classification system and eighth-grade reading achievement. It included 57 poor comprehenders, 27 poor decoders, and 98 typical readers. The authors reviewed language comprehension and phonological processing based on eighth-grade performances in the first study. In the second study, the authors examined language comprehension, word recognition, phonological processing, and reading comprehension with kindergarten, second-grade, and fourth-grade

participants. The results favored the simple view of reading as the poor comprehenders with adequate phonological processing had difficulties in language comprehension. The poor decoders scored well on language comprehension but had deficits in phonological processing (Catts et al., 2006). Therefore, symptoms associated with hyperlexia affect a student's ability to extract meaning from written words and present as poor comprehension skills (Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Macdonald et al., 2022; Spencer et al., 2019).

Garden Variety Reading Disability

In the simple view of reading model, garden variety disability refers to poor decoding and linguistic comprehension or mixed deficit (Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Spencer et al., 2019). This group of readers has difficulties with decoding and comprehension but experiences broader challenges of understanding, like weaknesses in vocabulary, listening comprehension, working memory, and slow word reading (Spear-Swerling, 2010). These challenges will be seen in students in the early grades, according to Spear-Swerling (2010), and have a negative impact on reading.

Reading Deficits

Reading deficits impede learning to read and acquiring reading skills (Moats, 2019). The deficiencies that impact students with a reading disability are word reading (decoding), reading fluency, reading comprehension, phonological processing, and working memory (Azizifar et al., 2019; Johnston, 2019). Not all students with a reading disability are impacted similarly, as the severity may differ (Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Tunmer & Hoover, 2019). Still, the challenges result in reading below the expected grade level and not being proficient in reading (Azizifar et al., 2019; Johnston, 2019).

Decoding Skills

Decoding can be defined as the ability to apply knowledge of letter sounds to read words accurately (Collins et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2019). According to the simple view of reading, good decoding skills allow access to word meaning by accurately and rapidly recognizing words (Foorman et al., 2020; Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Hoover & Tunmer, 2020). Students with poor decoding skills are not proficient with word recognition and often have challenges applying letter-sound correspondence rules (Ferraz et al., 2018; Gough & Tunmer, 1986;). Letter-sound parallels are essential to decoding, and robust decoding determines students' ability to read nonsense words (Gough, 1996; Gough & Tunmer, 1986). In a study by Foorman et al. (2020), the authors used nonsense words to measure decoding abilities among students in Grades 5 through 9. Within this study, Foorman et al. (2020) concluded that decoding skills predict a student's ability to read a text with understanding. Therefore, "decoding is critical to reading" (Wang et al., 2019, p. 387).

Reading Fluency

Reading fluency is an essential reading skill defined by reading a text with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression (Azizifar et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2017; Silverman et al., 2013). According to J. Lee and Yoon (2017), "reading fluency is defined as the ability to read text quickly and accurately with few miscues and little effort" and read with expression and articulation (p. 213). Students with reading disabilities experience challenges with reading fluency due to inadequate word recognition and slow reading, and about 74% of students who struggle in the area of reading fluency in elementary school continue in high school to read below grade level (Azizifar et al., 2019; J. Lee & Yoon, 2017; O'Connor, 2018;). Fluent readers read at an appropriate rate to process words and extract meaning from a text (O'Connor, 2018).

However, students with reading disabilities with a low reading rate are at risk of not extracting meaning from a complex written text and are likely to face academic failures (Silverman et al., 2013; Young et al., 2019).

Reading Comprehension

Reading aims to extract and establish meaning from various texts (Smith et al., 2021). Reading comprehension, the highest-level reading process, is the product of decoding and language comprehension based on the simple view of reading and the foundation of academic success (Austin et al., 2017; Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Smith et al., 2021). According to Kelso et al. (2022), decoding, reading printed words, language comprehension, and understanding words in speech are vital for reading comprehension (Nation, 2019). Some readers identified as poor comprehenders can read accurately and automatically but struggle with comprehending what they read (Kelso et al., 2022). Fletcher et al. (2018) noted that students with a specific reading comprehension disability present with a discrepancy in word reading and comprehension. Good comprehension skills reflect a student's ability to read accurately and quickly to extract meaning from a text (Fletcher et al., 2018; Singh et al., 2021). Students who lack adequate comprehension skills are not proficient in reading and encounter poor academic success in school and beyond (Spencer et al., 2019; Young et al., 2019).

Phonological Processing

Phonological processing is linked to decoding, reading fluency, and writing skills and comprises phonemic awareness, phonological memory, and rapid naming (Ferraz et al., 2018; Matejko et al., 2023). It is an acclaimed feature of a reading disability (i.e., dyslexia; Broggi et al., 2019; Ferraz et al., 2018). According to Peng and Goodrich (2020), phonological processing is the ability to identify and manipulate sounds of oral language and effectively retrieve the

naming of letter sounds. Meisinger et al. (2022) contributed phonological processing to developing proper word reading skills. However, students with deficits in phonological processing have "difficulty with rapid naming, auditory short-term memory, and articulation speed" (Johnston, 2019, p. 339). In addition, they also experience challenges with manipulating individual sounds (phonemic awareness), spelling, and encoding (Al Otaiba et al., 2018; Ferraz et al., 2018; Johnston, 2019; Meisinger et al., 2022).

Working Memory

Working memory predicts learning and is vital to academic success (Broggi et al., 2019; Gray et al., 2019). Working memory involves cognitive processes that hold information briefly, essential when performing reading tasks (Alloway & Carpenter, 2020; Gray et al., 2019; Johnston, 2019; Peng & Goodrich, 2020). Research has linked working memory to academic achievement (Alloway & Carpenter, 2020; Donolato et al., 2019; Gray et al., 2019). On the other hand, research has shown that students with reading disabilities have poor working memory compared to students without reading disabilities and perform lower on academic tasks (Broggi et al., 2019; M. Daniel et al., 2022; Gray et al., 2019). According to Alloway and Carpenter (2020), poor working memory impacts the ability to store information correctly, and the lost data become an obstacle to learning.

A study conducted by M. Daniel et al. (2022) found that adolescents with a learning disability in reading and math demonstrated low working memory capacity compared to their counterparts without a learning disability. Alloway and Carpenter (2020) discovered working memory deficits among children with learning disorders and its impact on academic achievement. Students with reading disorders such as dyslexia have deficits in working memory that "can cause them to inaccurately remember a long string of instructions" (p. 339). Further,

deficits in working memory affect the reading process (M. Daniel et al., 2022; Johnston, 2019; Peng & Goodrich, 2020).

Reading Instruction

The reading process is multiplex, as reading proficiently involves many skills like decoding, understanding vocabulary, or comprehension (Main et al., 2023; Southward & Goo, 2019). Therefore, effective reading instruction for students with reading disabilities is pivotal to increased reading outcomes (Collins et al., 2020; Main et al., 2023). According to the National Reading Panel (2000), students who struggle with reading benefit from explicit and systematic reading instruction that targets five essential components to reading achievement: phonemic awareness, phonics, oral reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. With these components embedded within reading instructional approaches, struggling readers can receive support in developing reading skills (Main et al., 2023).

Structured Literacy

Structured literacy is an evidence-based instruction recommended for students with a reading disability. It is structured to address the weaknesses in decoding and phonological skills because it is done explicitly and systematically (Spear-Swerling, 2019). According to Moats (2019), “Structured literacy teaching is the most effective approach for students who experience unusual difficulty to read and spell” (p. 9). The features of structured literacy approaches include (a) teaching sounds, letter-sound relationships, syllable patterns, morphemes, word meaning, sentence, paragraph, and text structure literacy in a specific, well-ordered, and systematic manner; (b) progressive practice and continuous review of elements; (c) heavy teacher–student interaction with methods being taught; (d) using specific examples and non-examples; (e)decodable textbooks and materials; and (f) immediate feedback and prompts (Spear-Swerling,

2019).

According to the IDA (2017), the structured literacy approach is an effective reading instruction for students who experience deficits in decoding, word recognition, language, and spelling. The key is for the instruction to be explicit, systematic, and cumulative. Explicit means the teacher is direct and clear when providing guiding practices. Systematic is where the teacher teaches concepts logically following a planned scope and sequence of previously taught skills. Finally, cumulative is an ongoing review of learned skills to ensure students develop automaticity (Collins et al., 2020; Moats, 2019; Spear-Swerling, 2019). Therefore, using structured literacy approaches like Orton-Gillingham and Wilson Reading System can contribute to the success of students with a reading disability as they make progress in achieving grade-level standards (Moats, 2019; Shanahan, 2020).

Orton-Gillingham Approach. In the early 1920s, Orton provided guidelines for remediating individuals with language processing problems (Kirby, 2018). He advocated for phonics instruction for individuals with dyslexia because their ability to learn to read required "explicit and systematic phonetic instructional approaches employing multisensory techniques to develop word reading" (Al Otaiba et al., 2018, p. 832). In 1937, Orton worked closely with a woman named Ana Gillingham, an educator and psychologist, to create an approach to reading "that explicitly taught students' elements of language and facilitated students' automaticity in applying this knowledge to decoding (reading) and encoding (spelling) of language" (Sayeski et al., 2019, p. 241). The Orton-Gillingham (OG) approach or principles are widely used in schools across the United States to address reading disabilities and require training for teachers to implement this language-based approach to reading instruction (Sayeski et al., 2019; Stevens et al., 2021).

The OG approach is not a curriculum or program; it is an explicit, multisensory, structured, diagnostic, and prescriptive approach to teaching reading, decoding, and spelling when these skills are not quickly learned by those with dyslexia (Bautista, 2019; Sayeski & Zirkel, 2021; Stevens et al., 2021). Sayeski et al. (2019) described the features of OG as follows: (a) direct, systematic, incremental, and cumulative lessons; (b) cognitive explanations; (c) diagnostic and prescriptive methods; (d) linguistics-based instruction, and multisensory engagement and all components align with National Reading Panel (2000). This literacy approach has been studied and can positively impact reading outcomes (Stevens et al., 2021).

Wilson Reading System. In 1988, Barbara Wilson developed the Wilson Reading System, initially focusing on students with dyslexia in Grades 2 through 12 (Duff et al., 2016; Stebbins et al., 2012). The foundational principles of this reading program stemmed from the OG approach, as it uses a multisensory approach and 12 steps to teach phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (Duff et al., 2016). This system is a well-developed program used with both general and special education students. It helps students connect sounds and words using visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile senses (Duff et al., 2016; Stebbins et al., 2012).

Stebbins et al. (2012) monitored the effectiveness of the Wilson Reading System with 20 fourth- and fifth-grade students with reading deficits. They received direct instruction four times a week for 45 minutes outside the general education setting. The results rendered gains in reading comprehension and overall essential reading (word decoding, reading fluency). Duff et al. (2016) studied the Wilson Reading System with 51 students from six schools receiving special education services. The purpose of the study was to provide schools with information on

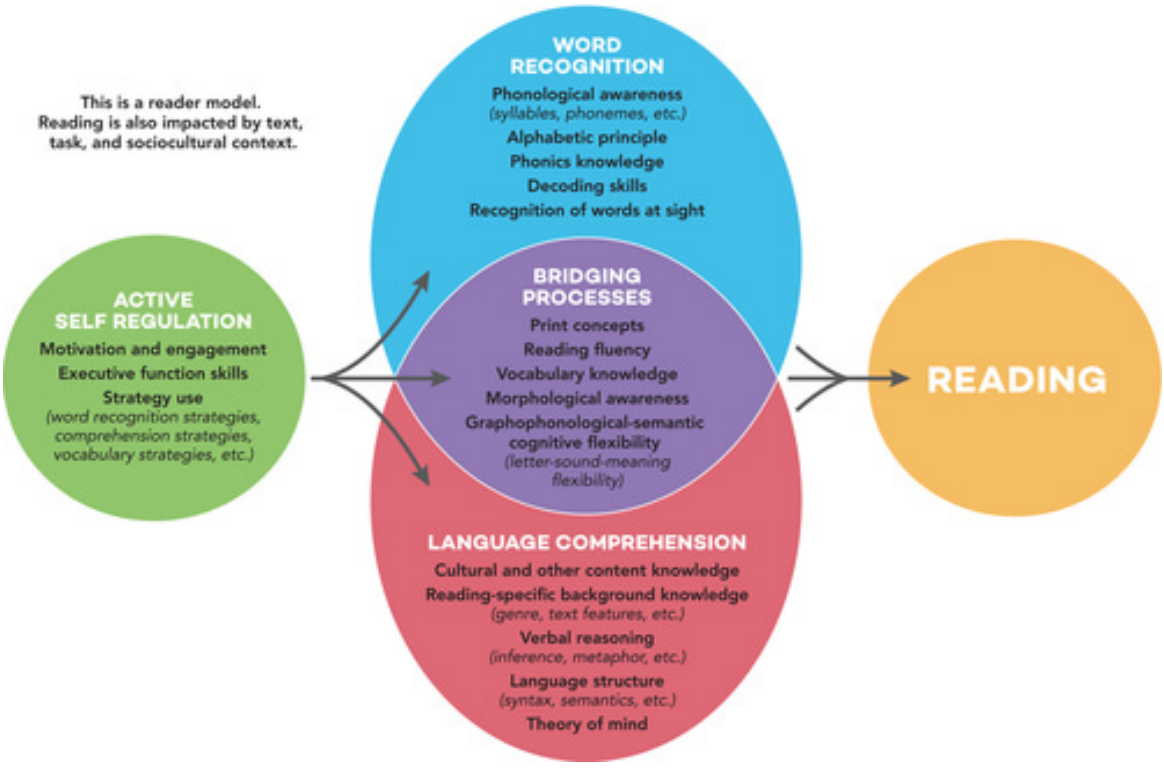
how to evaluate a reading intervention program. Using curriculum-based measurement data, the authors of this study revealed that students showed growth in their reading over time.

Active View of Reading Model

The active view of reading identifies a wider array of reading components for reading proficiency and targets for intervention. It is an alternative to the Simple View of Reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986), presents with various cognitive skills beyond decoding and language comprehension, and incorporates self-regulation into the reading process. Figure 1 uses Duke and Cartwright's (2021) active view of reading model to show the components that contribute to the reading process and to highlight critical facets of skilled reading.

Figure 1

Active View of Reading Model



Note. From "The Science of Reading Progresses: Communicating Advances Beyond the Simple View of Reading," by N. K. Duke and K. B. Cartwright, 2021, *Reading Research Quarterly,*

56(10), p. S33 (https://doi.org/10.1002/rrq.411). Copyright 2021 by Wiley Periodicals LLC on behalf of International Literacy Association. CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

The features of the active view of reading include word recognition and language comprehension, bridging processes, and the integration of active self-regulation, which encompasses motivation, engagement, executive functioning skills, and strategy use. Duke and Cartwright (2021) expanded the simple view of reading by Gough and Tunmer (1986) to list potential causes of reading challenges beyond word recognition and language comprehension. On the other hand, word recognition, language comprehension, and active self-regulation contribute to reading success (Duke & Cartwright, 2021). Duke and Cartwright (2021) contended that each construct within the bridging process influences both word recognition and language comprehension and plays a role in developing good readers. In addition to obtaining word recognition and language comprehension, students must learn to self-regulate to engage in the different processes essential for reading (Duke & Cartwright, 2021).

Word Recognition and Language Comprehension

According to the simple view of reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986), reading comprehension stemmed from two constructs: decoding and linguistic comprehension, as these terms were the foundation of the model. The authors described decoding as the ability to read printed words rapidly and accurately and linguistic comprehension as explaining the meaning of spoken words (Burns et al., 2023; Gough & Tunmer, 1986). However, in the active view of reading, Duke and Cartwright (2021) used the words *word recognition* and *language comprehension* to reflect the science of reading more comprehensively.

In the active view of reading, word recognition encompasses (a) comprehension of sound and letter associations, (b) knowledge of sound-letter relations, (c) phonological and phonemic

awareness, (d) decoding, and (e) sight recognition. Tunmer and Hoover (2019) described word recognition in the cognitive foundations' framework as "the ability to read words accurately and quickly and … derive automatically a representation from printed input that allows access to the appropriate entry in the mental lexicon" (p. 85). According to Bhattacharya (2020), individuals who fail to read words fluently and accurately often present a weakness in phonological awareness, an essential factor in word recognition. Language comprehension has been defined by Foorman et al. (2020) and Tunmer and Hoover (2019) as the ability to derive meaning, both literal and inferred, from units of language represented in spoken words. However, in the active view of reading, language comprehension consists of (a) cultural and other content knowledge, (b) language structure, (c) text structure, (d) theory of mind, and (e) verbal reasoning (Burns et al., 2023; Duke & Cartwright, 2021). Hoover and Tunmer (2020) stated that for an individual to understand spoken language, they must have phonological knowledge, which is crucial in developing word recognition.

Bridging Processes

The active view of reading model depicts vocabulary, reading fluency, and morphological awareness as components that bridge word recognition and language comprehension and its relevance in the prediction of reading (Burns et al., 2023; Duke & Cartwright, 2021). Vocabulary knowledge allows the reader to understand the meaning of words, and with adequate skills in phonemic awareness and letter-sound correspondences, the reader can extract meaning from the texts (Bhattacharya, 2020; Burns et al., 2023; Duke & Cartwright, 2021; Main et al., 2023). Furthermore, reading fluency entails reading words with automaticity and accuracy (Burns et al., 2023). Also, reading fluency involves word recognition and semantic and syntactic knowledge (Duke & Cartwright, 2021). According to Duke and Cartwright (2021),

awareness of these components that bridge word recognition and language comprehension is crucial for intervention implementation and reading instruction.

Lastly, morphological awareness is not mentioned in the simple view of reading but is found to influence reading ability (Burns et al., 2023; Duke & Cartwright, 2021). Morphological awareness is the awareness and knowledge of units in language, and skilled readers use it to break down words to construct meaning (Duke & Cartwright, 2021). According to J. w. Lee et al. (2023), morphemes are the foundation of word recognition and language comprehension components depicted in the active view of reading model. A study by J. w. Lee et al. (2023) found that morphological awareness is essential in phonological awareness, vocabulary, word reading, fluency, spelling, and reading comprehension. This study supports Duke and Cartwright's (2021) claims that morphological awareness contributes to reading through word recognition and language comprehension. In addition, morphology enhances the development of reading, spelling, and vocabulary and can impact reading achievement for struggling readers (Berthiaume et al., 2018; Duke & Cartwright, 2021).

Active Self-Regulation

Self-regulation is a vital skill associated with academic development over time and competencies in areas such as sustained attention, cognitive flexibility, and applying strategies for specific content knowledge (Johnson et al., 2023). Moreover, self-regulation improves learning outcomes as students use self-regulation skills to engage in goal-directed tasks actively (Johnson et al., 2023). The active view of reading integrates self-regulation as a component of reading processes (Burns et al., 2023; Duke & Cartwright, 2021). Active self-regulation is central to improving reading outcomes for students with reading challenges and occurs within

the reading process through executive function skills, motivation and engagement, and strategy use (Capin et al., 2023; Duke & Cartwright, 2021).

Executive Function Skills. Duke and Cartwright (2021) and Miciak et al. (2019) defined executive function skills as cognitive processes that permit learners to complete academic tasks, such as reading. Reading processes are complex and depend on higher-level thinking skills to acquire meaning from a text (Duke & Cartwright, 2021; Miciak et al., 2019). However, poor executive function skills lead to low reading achievement (Duke & Cartwright, 2021). Duke and Cartwright (2021) attribute three executive function skills to reading success: working memory, cognitive flexibility, and inhibitory control (Burns et al., 2023; Duke & Cartwright, 2021). These skills advance word recognition, language comprehension, and reading comprehension skills and play a significant role in reading development (Burns et al., 2023; Duke & Cartwright, 2021).

Motivation and Engagement. According to Duke and Cartwright (2021), motivation involves a student's active participation in reading, interest in reading, belief in reading success and challenges, and value of reading. A motivated student is a motivated learner who demonstrates adequate levels of engagement to ensure academic success (C. M. Butler & De La Paz, 2021; Moseki & Schulze, 2019). Engagement is linked to reading achievement and improved school completion among high school students at risk of dropping out (Duke & Cartwright, 2021; Williams et al., 2021). However, in the active view of reading model, motivation facilitates engagement (Burns et al., 2023; Duke & Cartwright). In addition, motivation and engagement predict reading ability and are susceptible to instruction (Burns et al., 2023; Duke & Cartwright, 2021).

Strategy Use. Duke and Cartwright (2021) stated that reading strategies are widely known as a critical component of active self-regulation. Reading strategies are vital to enhancing reading skills and target decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension difficulties (Burns et al., 2023; Duke & Cartwright, 2021). According to Kavani and Amjadiparvar (2018), effective reading strategies can contribute to a student's ability to comprehend complex text and reduce comprehension difficulties. Moreover, with developed self-regulation skills, students can independently use learned strategies and apply them while reading (Capin et al., 2023).

The active view of reading model moves beyond the scope of decoding and language comprehension as proposed in the simple view of reading. It provides a comprehensive model of contributing constructs to reading proficiency (Duke & Cartwright, 2021). There are 18 constructs outlined in the active view of reading, and research has shown that each one individually improves reading (Burns et al., 2023; Duke & Cartwright, 2021). However, since only the component terms within active self-regulation apply to this research study, the other components are not discussed. Duke and Cartwright (2021) developed a reading model to display multi-dimensional processes for reading challenges and targets for intervention (Burns et al., 2023). It can bring attention to other components affecting reading ability (Burns et al., 2023). Therefore, professionals can use the active view of reading model to identify specific weaknesses that struggling readers are experiencing and implement effective interventions to address their deficits to improve academic success (Burns et al., 2023; Duke & Cartwright, 2021).

Reading Interventions for High School Students

Based on NCLB guidelines, schools are responsible for using research-based interventions to improve reading deficits in students (Sayeski & Zirkel, 2021). The earlier the implementation of interventions, the greater the chance for academic success and increased

reading skills (Main et al., 2023; Wanzek et al., 2018). Receiving reading interventions in primary grades or at the onset of reading difficulties impacts reading outcomes positively (Wanzek et al., 2018). In addition, research has proven the effectiveness of reading interventions with struggling readers as they are essential to students' reading achievement (Wanzek et al., 2018; Young et al., 2019).

Students who struggle with reading beyond primary grades need effective reading interventions since reading challenges on a secondary level are different and more acute (Solis et al., 2022; Southward & Goo, 2019; Wanzek et al., 2018). At the high school level, reading materials are more complex, and the acquisition of vocabulary, background knowledge, and comprehension are essential for learning concepts taught (Bhattacharya, 2020; Southward & Goo, 2019). Therefore, some high school students with low reading achievement cannot read complex words that results in them not being able to adequately access the curriculum (Bhattacharya, 2020). Studies on the effectiveness of reading interventions on high school students with reading disabilities are slim; nevertheless, interventions are essential to academic success (J. Daniel et al., 2021; Main et al., 2023; Southward & Goo, 2019). According to J. Daniel et al. (2021), reading interventions can improve reading outcomes for high school students with reading deficits.

Miciak et al. (2018) found that reading interventions at the high school level can change the trajectory of low reading skills. Southward and Goo (2019) conducted a study on a reading intervention for high school students with a learning disability in basic reading. The high school students demonstrated increased correctly read words per minute with practiced and unpracticed passages. Young et al. (2019) witnessed increased reading comprehension and oral reading fluency scores among secondary students with learning disabilities when given reading support.

Lastly, Main et al. (2023) investigated the effectiveness of a direct instructional program in a secondary school with students with reading deficits. After 3 years of implementation, the students demonstrated improvements in reading. Interventions for high school students are vital to improving deficits in phonological processing, word recognition, working memory, reading fluency, and reading comprehension (Azizifar et al., 2019). Johnston (2019) reported that the most effective approaches for reading interventions are explicit, systematic, and cumulative. Al Otaiba et al. (2018) reported findings from other studies to indicate that direct and systematic instruction helps reduce reading challenges. Therefore, reading interventions benefit high school students with low reading achievement (McBreen & Savage, 2022; Solis et al., 2022; Spear-Swerling, 2019).

Self-Regulated Learning and Academic Achievement

Kesuma et al. (2021) described SRL as a proactive process of learning as students used various modalities to acquire academic skills. SRL is a direct link to academic achievement and promotes the development of self-regulation skills (Johnson et al., 2023; Sava et al., 2020; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2022; Șuteu, 2021). Self-regulation skills are essential to a student's ability to engage in their learning process and to achieve specific academic goals (C. M. Butler & De La Paz, 2021). A study conducted by Malik and Parveen (2019) found a relationship between academic achievement and self-regulation, and according to Kesuma et al. (2021), "self-regulation skills are needed by students to solve the problems encountered in learning" (p. 1286). SRL features such as self-efficacy, motivation, and metacognition can powerfully shape academic achievement (Buono et al., 2020; C. M. Butler & De La Paz, 2021; Zimmerman et al., 1992).

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to one's perceptions and beliefs about their capacity to perform a given task (Kesuma et al., 2021; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2022; Zimmerman, 2000). Self-efficacy is a crucial component of self-regulation as it determines persistence, effort, and achievement (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2022; Zimmerman, 1989). Self-efficacy increases when a student demonstrates the ability to achieve an intended outcome (C. M. Butler & De La Paz, 2021)—higher self-efficacy powers confidence, perseverance through challenging tasks, active engagement in learning, and goal attainment (C. M. Butler & De La Paz, 2021; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2022; Zimmerman, 1989). According to Vukman et al. (2018), self-efficacy relates to a student's "systems of beliefs" that they have the abilities necessary for achieving goals (p. 586). Furthermore, self-efficacy drives willpower, motivation, goal setting, and learning strategies (C. M. Butler & De La Paz, 2021; Malik & Parveen, 2019; Zimmerman, 1989).

Motivation

Motivation fuels the components and processes of SRL (Kavani & Amjadiparvar, 2018; Malik & Parveen, 2019; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990). C. M. Butler and De La Paz (2021) stated that "the development and application of self-regulation requires an adequate level of motivation" (p. 354). Motivation influences an individual's interest in learning, academic performance, and goal orientation (Moseki & Schulze, 2019; Pintrich, 1999). Highly motivated students meet challenges with persistence and use diverse strategies to experience academic success (C. M. Butler & De La Paz, 2021). In addition, motivation impacts goal-setting on-task behaviors and improves reading achievement (Essa, 2022; McBreen & Savage, 2022).

Metacognition

Metacognition is a self-regulatory process that can lead to academic achievement (Zhu & Doo, 2022). Self-regulated learners use metacognitive skills to establish goals, maintain motivation, and adapt learning strategies to maximize their learning experience (García-Pérez et al., 2021; Kesuma et al., 2021; Zhu & Doo, 2022). Metacognition refers to a learner's awareness of their strengths and weaknesses in the learning process while using various learning strategies to achieve learning outcomes (Essa, 2022; Zhu & Doo, 2022). According to Șuteu (2021), students who exercise metacognition and SRL skills can experience high motivation and academic performance compared to students who do not utilize these processes.

Self-Regulated Learning and Students with Learning Disabilities

SRL strengthens academic achievement in subjects like reading and mathematics (Moseki & Schulze, 2019; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2022). However, students identified with specific learning disabilities do not exhibit well developed self-regulatory skills and as a result often have low self-efficacy beliefs compared to students without learning disabilities (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2022). According to Schunk and DiBenedetto (2022), students with learning disabilities do poorly in reading and/or math, and lack the essential skills necessary for school success. Johnson et al. (2023) reported that students with learning disabilities often have challenges with self-regulatory processes that put them at risk for academic failure. Therefore, deficits in the functions of SRL, like self-efficacy, motivation, or cognitive skills, create barriers to student learning (C. M. Butler & De La Paz, 2021; Johnson et al., 2023; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2022).

SRL involves interactive processes that require active participation, and students with learning disabilities who demonstrate challenges with self-efficacy are less likely to engage in

learning tasks with effort and persistence (Essa, 2022; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2022). Low self-efficacy can emerge when students with learning difficulties have unsuccessful academic experiences or their perceptions about their capabilities to carry out a specific task (C. M. Butler & De La Paz, 2021; Johnson et al., 2023; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2022). Several studies have examined the role of self-efficacy and found that students with learning disabilities demonstrated lower levels of self-efficacy compared to students without a learning disability (Commodari et al., 2022; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2022; Vukman et al., 2018). Self-efficacy is essential in self-regulation and learning because it is the engine for students' confidence to engage in activities (C. M. Butler & De La Paz, 2021).

Motivation is another essential component of self-regulation after self-efficacy (C. M. Butler & De La Paz, 2021; Moseki & Schulze, 2019). When students believe in themselves and their abilities, they become motivated to achieve academic goals (Johnson et al., 2023). On the other hand, students with learning disabilities are less likely to persist through complex tasks, attain goals, or use strategies because of low motivation (C. M. Butler & De La Paz, 2021; Kausik & Hussain, 2023). According to Kausik and Hussain (2023), low motivation and low self-efficacy affect academic achievement and engagement with learning tasks. Furthermore, students with learning disabilities are not as tenacious with academic studies and motivated compared to students without learning disabilities (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2022; Szenczi et al., 2018).

Lastly, motivation assists cognitive ability and student engagement (C. M. Butler & De La Paz, 2021). Moreover, if a learner lacks motivation (Johnson et al., 2023; Moseki & Schulze, 2019), it can impact their ability "to manifest an active motivational, metacognitive, and behavioral verification of their learning" (Avram et al., 2021, p. 690). According to Moseki and

Schulze (2019), self-regulated learners use metacognitive skills to set goals and cognitive skills to carry out academic tasks. However, students with a learning disability lack cognitive features of self-regulation, including attention, working memory, executive functioning, and processing information, and "often lack strategic approaches to navigate complex learning tasks" (Johnson et al., 2023, p. 3). These deficits have an impact on student learning, especially reading acquisition among students with learning difficulties (Johnson et al., 2023; McBreen & Savage, 2022). Above all, self-regulation skills are essential to performing learning tasks and reading achievement, and students with disabilities need support to build academic self-regulation skills for school success (Denton et al., 2021; Kesuma et al., 2021; Sanders et al., 2019; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2022).

Self-Regulation in Reading

Students with reading disabilities experience deficits in either word reading or reading comprehension (Denton et al., 2021; Kesuma et al., 2021; Solis et al., 2022). According to Schunk and DiBenedetto (2022), reading is linked to academic success and achievement across content areas, and challenges in reading can lower a student's motivation. However, self-regulation advances learning outcomes and reading achievement (Avram et al., 2021; Denton et al., 2021; Kesuma et al., 2021). In reading, self-regulation is a cognitive approach to applying strategies before, during, and after reading (Capin et al., 2023; Kesuma et al., 2021). Self-regulated learners use metacognitive strategies such as goal-setting, planning, self-monitoring, and self-reflection to regulate and control their learning process (Buono et al., 2020; García-Pérez et al., 2021; Zhu & Doo, 2022). Moreover, struggling readers can use these SRL strategies to perform reading tasks (Avram et al., 2021; Buono et al., 2020; García-Pérez et al., 2021; Tse et al., 2022).

Metacognitive Strategies

Metacognitive strategies are higher-order self-regulated strategies and the most vital skills to use during complex reading tasks (Buono et al., 2020; Tse et al., 2022). Zhang and Zou (2022) found that metacognitive strategies can assist with task completion, procrastination, and self-regulation during learning tasks. Metacognitive strategies comprise planning, monitoring, and evaluating. They are embedded in Zimmerman's cyclical model of SRL: forethought (planning, goal setting), performance control (monitoring), and self-reflection (evaluating; Essa, 2022; Mohammadi et al., 2022; Tse et al., 2022; Zimmerman, 2000). Planning consists of goal setting and choosing an appropriate strategy for goal attainment before reading; monitoring happens periodically during reading to check for understanding of the text; and evaluation occurs after reading and entails self-reflection of the entire learning process (Mohammadi et al., 2022; Tse et al., 2022; Zimmerman, 2000). All three strategies support reading achievement; therefore, students who learn to regulate their learning can successfully apply these strategies to obtain better academic success (Mohammadi et al., 2022; Tse et al., 2022).

Self-Regulation Instruction

Applying SRL strategies does not happen automatically, especially for students with reading disabilities, as most lack self-regulation skills (Johnson et al., 2023; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2022; Tse et al., 2022). According to Johnson et al. (2023), "self-regulatory skills need to be explicitly taught to students with learning disabilities" (p. 10). Likewise, Mohammadi et al. (2022) stated that high school students need support with developing better self-regulation skills to enhance their acquisition of metacognitive strategies. In addition, self-regulation instruction reinforces strategy use, goal setting, monitoring of progress, and reflection on task performance (Capin et al., 2023; Johnson et al., 2023).

Summary

Self-regulated learners are active participants in their learning process. Self-regulated learners systematically use metacognitive, motivational, and behavioral strategies to achieve their targeted academic goals. Zimmerman's SRL highlights the processes necessary for improved self-regulation skills and academic achievement. Self-regulation is a key component of academic success. However, students with low reading achievement lack self-regulation skills and are at risk of academic failure. The active view of reading depicts all the components contributing to reading success, including active self-regulation. Active self-regulation comprises executive functioning, motivation and engagement, and strategy, which are all linked to academic achievement. Duke and Cartwright (2021) developed the active view of reading model to show all the factors that predict reading ability and malleable instruction. Educators who recognize a reading deficit can effectively instruct students with a specific reading challenge. As students with reading disabilities face difficulties with the reading process, support with building self-regulation skills has proven to be an effective means to improve reading skills and academic outcomes.

The research has highlighted that structured literacy approaches are relevant and beneficial to students with reading disabilities, along with using SRL strategies. Research has also shown that students with reading disabilities struggle with self-efficacy, motivation, executive function skills, and metacognition, which impact academic performance. However, SRL can increase motivation, self-efficacy, and reading achievement. The research shows a gap in teachers' experiences with developing SRL to improve academic performance for students with learning disabilities. This study aims to fill the gap by giving voice to teachers' experiences with developing SRL among high school students with low reading achievement.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to examine teachers' lived experiences with nurturing the development of self-regulated learning (SRL) to address academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement. Chapter Three begins with a description and rationale of the research design. Next, I discuss the setting, participants, researcher positionality, procedures, and the data collection plan including the data analysis process. Finally, this chapter concludes with an explanation of trustworthiness, ethical considerations, and a chapter summary.

Research Design

The qualitative research design permits the researcher to explore the problem in depth through individual experiences rather than results from various studies (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To empower and give a voice to lived experiences of teachers who nurtured the development of SRL to address academic outcomes among high school students with reading challenges, a qualitative design was used (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Research Method

A research study that uses a qualitative research method examines a social or human situation through the lenses of the participants in their natural settings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). For this study, I employed teachers' experiences of addressing academic outcomes for high school students with reading deficits through a qualitative research method. I used a qualitative research design because as a researcher it was my desire to get an understanding of teachers' experiences who are working with students with low reaching achievement that are at risk of

academic failure and school dropout. I used descriptive narratives from semi-structured interviews to provide detailed information about the studied area (Rutberg & Bouikidis, 2018).

Research Design

A phenomenology describes an individual's perception of their lived experience with a problem (Moustakas, 1994). It is a term that derived from Kant's writings around 1765 as its ideas are planted in philosophy (Moustakas, 1994). Therefore, I adopted a phenomenological design to unveil the phenomenon experienced by teachers who are attempting to share their experiences. Moustakas (1994) noted that a phenomenon is what becomes visible from one's consciousness and its Greek word *phaensthai* means to appear, to show itself, or to flare up. I used the phenomenological design to capture an in-depth account of teachers' experiences with nurturing the development of SRL.

Research Approach

A transcendental phenomenology permits the researcher to set aside any prejudgments about the problem (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). I used a transcendental approach because it allowed me to focus on the knowledge of the teachers' lived experiences without inserting my bias (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas (1994) explained a process known as *epoché* which means "to refrain from judgement" and ordinary perceptions of things (p. 33). With this process, *epoché* allows for preconceived notions and personal convictions of the researcher to cease and to view the phenomenon with an open mind. I used a researcher's reflexive journal to record any biases and procedures conducted throughout this study. Transcendental means getting through the fluff to the purity of an individual's self-importance concerning their perception of their lived experiences (Moustakas, 1994).

Research Questions

Central Question

How do teachers nurture the development of self-regulated learning to address academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement?

Sub-Question One

How do teachers nurture metacognitive flexibility to address academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement?

Sub-Question Two

How do teachers nurture motivation and engagement to address academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement?

Sub-Question Three

How do teachers nurture learning strategies to address academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement?

Setting and Participants

For this study I used both purposeful and criterion sampling to select the setting and participants. Purposeful sampling is used in qualitative research as it allows the researcher to intentionally select participants and sites that will purposefully provide an understanding of the phenomenon in the study, and criterion sampling is used to select cases that meet the intended study's criteria and have experience with the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Setting

This research study limited the participants to teachers in North Carolina. I did not use a particular school district or site for this study. I used social media platforms to recruit teachers in North Carolina who had experience teaching high school students with reading difficulties.

Participants

For the participants, I purposefully chose general and special education teachers with experience working with high school students with a reading disability because their experiences contributed to the development of both conceptual frameworks used in this study. I used purposeful and criterion sampling to select potential participants to understand how reading deficits are addressed among high school students with low reading achievement. Purposeful sampling is "strategically selecting information-rich cases to study, cases that by their nature and substance will illuminate the inquiry question being investigated" (Patton, 2015, pp. 264–265). In addition, criterion sampling is used when the researcher selects participants who meet a criterion of importance (Patton, 2015).

The participants in this study were teachers with a minimum of 5 years of experience working with high school students with a reading disability. The general education teachers taught English, science, history, or health, and the special education teachers taught or supported students in reading in an inclusion or resource setting. I selected five general education teachers and five special education teachers to have a sample size of 10 for this study. I also used snowballing to recruit enough participants. Snowball sampling is used when the researcher asks participants to refer others who know the phenomenon (Patton, 2015). I asked selected participants to refer at least two individuals they knew with 5 years of experience working with high school students with low reading achievement.

Researcher Positionality

As a special education teacher, I have witnessed the challenges faced by students with reading deficits. I know firsthand how teachers often lack confidence in educating students with a reading disability and implementing strategies to support them in the classroom. As a result,

many of my students dealt with low self-esteem and poor self-worth, and an “I can’t” attitude became their reality. On the other hand, I’ve witnessed students with learning differences succeed in school because they were empowered and equipped by teachers to handle their academic challenges. The study is essential in understanding how teachers nurture the develop SRL for high school students with low reading achievement to address educational outcomes. In this section, I discuss the lenses through which I positioned myself as a researcher in this transcendental phenomenological study.

Interpretive Framework

The interpretive framework allows the researcher to situate their study in philosophies that govern their belief system. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), a researcher’s paradigm lies in how they view the world and their place in it. One of my worldviews aligns with that of social constructivism, which I chose to guide this study. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), social constructivism seeks to understand and establish the meaning of the world through multiple realities. I described and interpreted the findings of each participant through the lens of social constructivism and created a reality or truth of the phenomenon by gleaning an in-depth and rich source of data from the participants.

Philosophical Assumptions

Philosophical assumptions are rooted in a researcher’s mind; therefore, their beliefs and assumptions guide the research study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). My realities, insight, and values provide an understanding of my chosen approach to data analysis for this transcendental phenomenological study. In the following sections, I elaborate on my ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions as they clarify my stance and viewpoint in the study.

Ontological Assumption

Ontology stems from two Greek words: "being" and logia, "study" combined; it means the study of being or existence (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In a phenomenological study, ontology helps to understand the phenomenon's reality through various perspectives and conceptualized truths. In addition, it generates the question, what is the nature of reality? (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). My sentiment of the nature of reality settles in various views of reality, with one being that of Aristotle. According to Gutek (2011), "Aristotle said that the purpose of education is to cultivate, to develop, and to exercise each child's potentiality to be fully human" (p. 58). In 2012, I started a summer enrichment camp called Empowering Minds. Through this experience of working with young people with academic challenges, I discovered my purpose. My God-given purpose is to empower and equip the minds of young people so that they can become lifelong learners. Subjectively, I view reality in that humans are God's workmanship, his masterwork, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them (*New King James Bible*, 1982, Ephesians 2:10). Ontological assumption embraces the idea of multiple realities (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To understand how teachers use SRL to address academic outcomes, I collected data for this transcendental phenomenological study through semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and letters to capture different views of the problem. As a result, the themes emerged from each participant's perspective.

Epistemological Assumption

Proverbs 18:15 in the *King James Bible* (1969/2017) states "the heart of the prudent getteth knowledge; and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge." Therefore, I was able to understand the phenomenon by hearing each participant's voice. Furthermore, according to Creswell and Poth (2018), an epistemological assumption means gaining knowledge through the

participants' experiences where the participants work. Therefore, the interviews and focus groups provided a better insight into the phenomenon through the participants' perspectives from whence they work.

Axiological Assumption

When a researcher voices their values in research, this is an axiological assumption (Creswell & Poth, 2018). My values are rooted in the Bible. Through the word of God, the purpose is revealed and made manifest. I believe every human being was created in the image of God and born with a goal inside of them. I work with students with various disabilities, and their challenges impact school success. However, I believe students can succeed in school with proper support and instruction. Reading is an essential life skill and a skill necessary for learning. Therefore, I am passionate about seeing students reach their full potential despite their learning differences. Furthermore, I value empowering students and equipping them with adequate tools to achieve.

Researcher's Role

My role as the human instrument in this transcendental phenomenology study consisted of obtaining approval to collect data, distributing and receiving consent forms, conducting interviews, reviewing teacher's letters, and facilitating focus groups (Patton, 2015). In addition, I collected and analyzed the data from each participant in the study. As an educator in special education, I have worked with high school students with various disabilities in both an inclusion and resource setting. However, I refrained from judgment and preconceived notions as I interpreted the experiences of individuals who have worked with high school students with reading disabilities.

Procedures

In the procedures section, I outlined reasonable and extensive steps for conducting this study so that other studies could replicate the study from the said descriptions. First, I explained permissions and information about securing Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. Then, I discussed the recruitment plan, which included soliciting participants through a recruitment flyer, recruitment letter, screening survey, and obtaining consent forms.

Permissions

Permissions were not required to recruit participants on my personal social media platforms. Therefore, before recruiting participants, IRB approval from Liberty University was obtained (Appendix A). Once I acquired approval from IRB, I conducted a pilot study. The first two individuals who consented to the study participated in the pilot study. The pilot study allowed me to practice using the data collection methods and ensure that the collected data would answer the research questions. After completing the pilot study, I adjusted the wording of one of the interview questions and then continued with the recruitment and data collection procedures. I used and included the data collected from the pilot study with my findings.

Recruitment Plan

After I acquired IRB approval, I uploaded the recruitment flyer on social media to include my personal Instagram and Facebook page and the NC Teachers United Facebook page (see Appendix B) with a hyperlink to the recruitment letter (see Appendix C). The recruitment letter had a hyperlink to the screening survey (see Appendix D) as the questions on the survey helped me select participants that matched my criteria for participation in the study. Based on the screening survey, the selected individuals were sent an acceptance email (see Appendix E) with a hyperlink to the Consent form (see Appendix F) and a DocuSign to sign electronically. After I

received the first two signed consent forms, I used these two participants to conduct a pilot study and made minor tweaks to one of the interview questions. Then, I proceeded with finalizing the remaining participants and data collection.

Data Collection Plan

Multiple data sources characterize qualitative research and allow the researcher to gather themes across all data sources (Creswell & Poth, 2018). For this transcendental phenomenological study, I collected data through interviews, teacher letters of advice, and focus groups. Using these data sources afforded an in-depth examination of teachers' lived experiences with nurturing the development of SRL among high school students with low reading achievement and established triangulation that strengthened the findings.

Individual Interviews

Interviews are considered the primary source of data collection in qualitative research (Patton, 2015). They allow the researcher to enter into the participants' thinking and are the central interaction between the interviewer and interviewee (Patton, 2015). According to Creswell and Poth (2018), interviews help the researcher gain knowledge and understanding of the participants' viewpoint and unveil "their lived world" (p. 164). Interviews are a way to find out what is on a person's mind to capture their stories (Patton, 2015), so first, I collected data through interviews. The semi-structured interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams. Semi-structured interviews allow the questions to be adapted if the responses lead in a different direction (Patton, 2015). I utilized the 10 interview principles and skills outlined by Patton (2015) for high-quality interviewing and to create a space for the participants to tell their stories freely. The principles and skills are as follows: (a) ask open-ended questions that are relevant, clear, and focused; (b) listen carefully to interviewee's responses and follow up with clarifying

probes when appropriate; (c) observe the interviewees and make adjustments as needed; (d) show a great deal of interest while being empathic; (e) make transitions to help guide them through the process. I was prepared with the questions and attentive throughout the interview process (Patton, 2015). Each question addressed either the central question (CQ) of my research study or one of the three sub-questions (SQ) All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed through Microsoft Teams.

Individual Interview Questions (Appendix G)

1. Please tell me about yourself, your educational background, and career through your current position. CQ
2. Describe your decision to pursue a career in education and to work with high school students. CQ
3. Describe your experience working with students with a learning disability. CQ
4. Describe your challenges working with high school students with reading deficits. CQ
5. Describe how you create opportunities for high school students with low reading skills to develop planning and monitoring skills. SQ1
6. Describe the methods you use to help students with low reading skills to extract information from a text reading to understand and learn the material. SQ1
7. Describe how you help students gain knowledge in a given subject area. SQ1
8. Describe the instructional approaches you use to foster reading motivation. SQ2
9. Describe your challenges with motivating high school students with low reading deficits. SQ2
10. Describe successful practices you use working with high school students experiencing academic failures due to low reading achievement. SQ3

11. Describe how you integrate strategies for learning and thinking. SQ3
12. What else would you like to add to our discussion of your experiences working with high school students with reading deficits? SQ3
13. My goal is to seek an understanding of how teachers nurture the development of self-regulated learning to address academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement. You will be given a prompt and asked to write a letter of advice to another educator.

The interview questions were open-ended, clear, and precise (Patton, 2015). Each interview question aligned with the central question or sub-questions and was developed to focus on the three processes of SRL that were defined by Zimmerman (1986, 1990a, 1990b). According to Zimmerman (1989) students are self-regulated learners when "they are metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally active participants in their own learning process" (p. 329). Questions 1 and 2 served as the ice-breaker to establish rapport with the participants (Patton, 2015). Questions 3 and 4 were knowledge questions (Patton, 2015), designed to gauge an understanding of the teachers' experiences working with students with a reading disability. Questions 5 through 7 focused on how teachers nurture metacognitive flexibility through planning, organizing, seeking information and acquiring knowledge (Zimmerman, 1990a, 1990b, 2008). Questions 8 and 9 specifically targeted motivation and methods used to increase motivation among high school students with low reading deficits. Questions 10 and 11 targeted the use of learning strategies that assist students with optimizing their learning (Zimmerman, 1986, 1990a, 1990b), and Question 12 created an opportunity for the teachers to elaborate more about their experiences working with students with reading deficits.

Question 13 concluded the interview session by explaining the letter of advice to the participants and getting their thoughts on writing the letter of advice.

Individual Interview Data Analysis Plan

The data from the interview session were transcribed, saved on a digital file under a pseudonym, and reviewed by the participant to check for accuracy through member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Once I received the responses from the participants, I did bracketing, horizonalization, and clustering. These are steps of phenomenological reduction outlined by Moustakas (1994) that include listing specific and relevant statements made by each participant in search of patterns or emerging concepts. Next, I examined the data by developing preliminary codes for each transcript, looking for keywords, phrases, and similar ideas. Coding in qualitative analysis is a word or short phrase assigned to capture the language embedded in interview transcriptions or documents (Saldaña, 2021).

Teacher Letter of Advice

Patton (2015) suggested using letters to analyze patterns across interview questions. The letters of advice aimed to obtain more insight into how teachers address academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement. These documents provided me with the authentic thoughts of each participant as they may have felt more comfortable writing their thoughts. I asked each participant to reflect on their experiences working with high school students with reading deficits and write a letter of advice to another teacher.

Teacher Letter of Advice Instructions (Appendix H)

The instructions for the teacher letter of advice are as follows:

When you hear the term self-regulated learning, what comes to mind? For me what comes to mind is stability in learning. Zimmerman (1986, 1990a, 1990b) described self-regulated

learning as the systematic use of metacognitive skills, motivation, and learning strategies to achieve academic goals. Think about your experiences working with high school students with a reading disability. Reflect on learning strategies and instructional practices. Think about their struggles with meeting grade level expectations and the risks of academic failure. Considering all this, write a letter to another educator who teaches high school students with reading deficits and who may be struggling with how to help those with a reading deficit. What advice would you give the teacher?

Teacher Letter of Advice Data Analysis Plan

I followed the same process as the interview analysis plan mentioned by Moustakas (1994). First, the letters were saved on a digital file under a pseudonym. Then, I coded each letter, highlighting keywords, instructional approaches, and language used.

Focus Groups

Focus group sessions were the last of the data collection methods. All participants were invited to the scheduled focus group sessions and nine of the 10 participants participated in one of the three focus group sessions. The questions derived from the commonalities in interviews and the teacher's letter of advice. The sessions were held virtually via Microsoft Teams and were audio-recorded and transcribed.

Focus Group Questions (Appendix I)

1. In the letter, you commented on … Please describe your experience.
2. In the letter, you listed strategies that you use. Please describe the method that has been most effective for ...
3. Describe how special and general education teachers in your building collaborate to develop strategies for students experiencing academic failures due to low reading

achievement.

4. Describe challenges with meeting academic needs for high school students with low reading achievement in your building.
5. I noticed in the data I've collected thus far that a common theme is … What can you add to this?
6. Another common theme I noticed is … what are your thoughts about this theme?

The focus group questions align with the central question and are follow up questions to the data collection. Question 1 explored the participants sentiments about SRL and its impact on learning. Question 2 explored the participants' instructional practices and the practices that have been most effective when working with high school students with reading deficits. Question 3 focused on how general and special education teachers collaborate in the participant's school building to address academic outcomes for high school students who have a learning disability. Question 4 explored specific and realistic challenges that teachers face meeting academic needs for high school with low reading achievement. Questions 5 and 6 explored thoughts and feelings about commonalities found among other teachers when working with high school students with reading challenges.

Focus Group Data Analysis Plan

The focus group responses were transcribed, saved digitally, and checked to ensure accuracy through member checking. Next, I followed the same process as the interview and teacher letter of advice analysis plan. Then, I made notes of emerging concepts or ideas to establish the preliminary codes from the focus group data.

Data Synthesis

After analyzing all three data sources, I synthesized the collected information using the processes described by Moustakas (1994). Moustakas (1994) outlined these processes as *epoché*, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis. First, I examined all data collected through interviews, letters of advice, and focus groups using *epoché*; I assessed the data from a stance of obtaining new knowledge without prejudices or inclination. In addition, I used my researcher's reflexive journal to record biases that surfaced throughout the data analysis process. Second, I bracketed relevant information from the participant's responses and categorized them into preliminary codes. Next, I used horizonalization to identify commonalities or patterns in all three data sources and developed final codes. I manually recorded and organized them on giant Post-it notes. Lastly, I used clustering to derive the themes and subthemes and textual descriptions to thoroughly describe similar or different themes or concepts from the participant's experiences with the phenomenon. In addition, I created a table and placed it in the results section of Chapter Four to show the final codes from all three data sources and the themes and subthemes.

Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) related trustworthiness to the data's validity and findings. Trustworthiness encompasses credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this section, the four criteria for trustworthiness are used to describe and strengthen the validity of this study.

Credibility

Credibility is a criterion in qualitative research that assesses the quality of the study's findings through accurate descriptions of the participant's point of view and the truth of the

phenomenon (Court, 2017). I achieved credibility in these ways: (a) data triangulation, (b) member-checking, and (c) prolonged engagement. I undertook triangulation through multiple data collection methods. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), using multiple sources will improve the creditability of the findings and interpretations. Therefore, I used individual interviews, teachers' letters of advice, and focus groups. As I report the findings of this study, I noted the participant's name and the data collection source that will provide further evidence of the triangulation to be used in this study. Each source provided many measures of how teachers nurture the development of SRL to address academic outcomes among high school students with low reading achievement and strengthened the validity of the study.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that member checks are essential for establishing credibility and should occur continuously. Member checking happened by having participants review transcriptions of their part in the data collection to ensure accuracy. Another marker for credibility that I used was prolonged engagement. Prolonged engagement occurred through interviews and focus group sessions by attending to facial expressions and body language, to check for misguided information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Also I audio-recorded the interview and focus group sessions so the information could be reviewed multiple times.

Transferability

Transferability refers to providing in-depth descriptions of each case so that the data and findings can be transferable to future research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I used thick descriptions to contextualize the study of each participant's experiences addressing academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement. For example, understanding how teachers nurture the development of SRL is viable to developing pathways for academic success for high school students who struggle with reading. Another way

to ensure transferability is through an audit trail (see Appendix J), as it allows another researcher to replicate my study. In qualitative research, an audit trail describes how the researcher collected data, extracted strategies, and made decisions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I created a list of tasks completed in this study, such as acquiring IRB approval and consent from participants, as well as the completion of each data collection method.

Dependability

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), dependability refers to the extent to which research findings are consistent and replicable. I achieved dependability through peer debriefing, which refers to a peer who plays the "devil's advocate" and provides the researcher with catharsis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 308). Peer debriefing keeps the researcher honest and open to questions about the methodologies, interpretations, and meanings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I had two individuals, not associated with my study, review the data and findings to determine if they agreed with the established themes or concepts gathered from the participants.

Confirmability

Confirmability is where findings are enlightened by the respondents (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I employed researcher's reflexivity to ensure confirmability by explaining my biases, temperament, and conjectures before undertaking this research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I kept a researcher's reflexive journal (see Appendix K) and recorded information, as needed, about myself as the human instrument conducting this research and the methods as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985). I also included my thoughts as I collected and analyzed data.

Ethical Considerations

To ensure ethical considerations are upheld, I obtained formal consent from each participant and provided a detailed rationale of the study to include the process of the study.

Each participant understood that their role was voluntary and free to withdraw from the study at any time. To guarantee confidentiality, the participants and any schools named by the participants were assigned pseudonyms. Also, electronic data will be stored on a password-locked computer and then erased after 3 years, and the letters will be stored in a locked file cabinet and then shredded after 3 years (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To further sustain ethical considerations, I discussed the potential risks of participating in the study, which were minimal, and benefits, including understanding how to address academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement.

Summary

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to examine teachers' lived experiences with nurturing the development of SRL to address academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement. This qualitative research design captured teachers' perspectives on the social situation through semi-structured interviews, letters of advice, and focus groups. I analyzed all three data sources to find repeated patterns and themes through initial coding, memoing, categorizing, and organizing. I used *epoché*, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis to find commonalities among the data sources. The data was collected and analyzed using pseudonyms and safely secured to ensure the participants' privacy.

I strengthened the trustworthiness of this study through credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. I conducted member checking to check for accuracy. I included an audit trail to ensure that another researcher could replicate my study. I also utilized peer briefing to keep me honest about the study, and I kept a reflexive journal to record my explanations of bias and conjectures.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to examine teachers' lived experiences with nurturing the development of self-regulated learning (SRL) to address academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement. Chapter Four begins with a brief description in tabular form and short paragraphs of the participants. Next, is a discussion of the development of the themes and subthemes through data analysis outlined by Moustakas (1994). This is followed by textual descriptions of the participants' responses from individual interviews, teacher letters, and focus groups. Finally, this chapter incorporates the research question responses and concludes with a chapter summary.

Participants

The 10 participants in the study were all high school teachers who have experience working with high school students with reading deficits. I used social media platforms and snowballing to recruit participants. I purposefully selected general education teachers and special education teachers who worked in North Carolina and had at least 5 years of experience working with high school students with a reading disability. The general education teachers taught English, science, history or health, and the special education teachers taught or supported reading in an inclusion or resource setting. Criterion sampling was also used to find participants. Table 1 describes the participants.

Table 1

Teacher Participants

Pseudonym	Classification	Highest Degree Earned	Content Area/Teach/Support
Amy	Special Ed Teacher	Masters	English, Science, History
Barbara	General Ed Teacher	Bachelors	English
Cassandra	Special Ed Teacher	Bachelors	English
Donna	Special Ed Teacher	Masters	English, Science, History
Ebony	Special Ed Teacher	Bachelors	English, Civics, Economics
Faith	Special Ed Teacher	Masters	English
Grace	General Ed Teacher	Masters	English
Hope	General Ed Teacher	Bachelors	English, Theatre
Ivy	General Ed Teacher	Masters	Health
Jasmine	General Ed Teacher	Masters	Biology

Amy

Amy is a special education teacher who works with adjudicated juveniles within the Department of Public Safety. Before relocating to North Carolina, Amy taught pre-kindergarten to second grade for 14 years in the private education sector in New York. Amy credits her first-grade teacher, Ms. Monroe, for fostering her love for learning and education, and because of her,

she wanted to be a teacher. Amy reported that in her current position, she works with many students who have reading deficits, and she candidly expressed it is because they have not been attending school. Amy was excited to share that she just finished earning an Education Specialist degree in Educational Leadership.

Barbara

Barbara is an English Teacher who teaches Grades 9–12 in a rural school district. She has been teaching at the high school level for 8 years. While attending a 4-year state college in New York, she earned her English and special education degree simultaneously. Barbara relocated to North Carolina to teach in middle school, but she said, “I was kind of bamboozled by the principal who needed a ninth-grade teacher.” She experimented and was happy that she did. She stated, “I am much happier in the high school and don’t think I would ever go back.”

Cassandra

Cassandra is a special education teacher with 29 years of experience. She knew in high school that she wanted to be a special education teacher because her favorite thing to do was to work with the Special Olympics. When she moved to North Carolina, she started teaching junior high, then transitioned to high school. She said, “I love high school kids.” Cassandra has a certification in English. She stated:

> I got my add-on English because we had so many students with disabilities that were having a hard time passing English 1, 2, 3, and 4 through high school. So, I went back and got that so that I could teach a kind of a blended class that moved a little slower for our students with disabilities.

Her responses were authentic and came from a place of passion and dedication for the profession.

Donna

Donna's educational background started with anthropology and religion but later switched to education. Education was not her initial love when she graduated. She began substituting and working with some students with academic and behavioral issues. She said,

> I worked with them, and they were tough cases to kind of get to, but when I did make some headway, I thought, you know, this is something I really like. It's a challenge, and I felt like I was helping someone.

Donna has a master's degree in special education and a certification in reading K–12. She chose to work with high school students as she said, "It's kind of like the last ditch effort that we have to make changes or help them make changes or give them strategies and resources to move forward."

Ebony

Ebony is a special education teacher at a high school in North Carolina, where she has been for 20 years. She teaches students who are on the occupational course of study and supports general education teachers in an inclusion classroom. Ebony was lively and energetic and had much to say about her experiences working with students with disabilities. The passion in her voice was evident when she spoke about her students. With a sociology degree and retail expertise, Ebony felt more qualified to teach a business class. However, the school needed a special education teacher, so she took the position. She said:

> I had no idea what I was doing. I never taught an education class. I didn't know what an IEP was; I didn't know any teachers in my life. I just kind of got thrown in at sink or swim. I can't imagine doing anything different now.

Ebony credits a retiring co-worker for showing her how to teach special education.

Faith

Faith received her bachelor's degree in special education in 1995. She started teaching immediately after earning her degree and later earned a master's degree in special education. Faith reported wanting to be a teacher and work with kids with disabilities because of her best friend. She said, "My very best friend when I was growing up had a learning disability, and I don't know, I just would help her with things and just always found it interesting." She taught elementary for 2 years, 1 year in a middle school, and is now in her 26th year in high school. She concluded, "They offered me a high school position, so I took it and really did love it and just stayed in high school ever since."

Grace

Grace is an English teacher who teacher Grades 9–12 in a charter school. She has been teaching for over 22 years, and her passion for teaching came from her mother, who was also a teacher. She started her career as a seventh-grade teacher but later taught high school students. She even taught English to dual-enrollment students at a community college. Grace shared the following about her experience working with high school students. She said, "I've worked with students with learning disabilities since day one, even when I didn't know I was working with students with disabilities." Grace also shared that she had to take a year off from teaching when her mother got sick, and she had to go back to Florida to care for her.

Hope

Hope is a theatre and English teacher with 13 years of high school experience. At an early age, she knew she wanted to be a teacher and decided to go into theatre education while in high school. Her first job out of college was both a theatre and English position; therefore, she became certified in English. Hope said that "every class I have had has had students in it with

different reading abilities" and she loves teaching all her classes. Her responses were short but precise and to the point. However, at the end of the interview, she made a profound statement:

> Every student seems to have a different challenge, whether it's a reading deficit or something else. I don't really feel like it is much different in dealing with those students with reading deficits than it is with any other student; it's just a different type of challenge.

Ivy

Ivy is a ninth-grade health and physical education teacher and mentor for students who perform below grade-level standards. She has a master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction and is entering her 10th year of teaching. Ivy's personality was vibrant, and I could hear her passion for students with disabilities. She said, "I absolutely love them. They challenge me." Ivy shared many techniques she utilizes in class to help students with low reading achievement succeed and access the curriculum. She excitedly expressed, "If I can impact them in as many areas as possible before they become an adult, and obviously, I want them to go on and be successful with whatever they decide after high school."

Jasmine

Jasmine has a degree in elementary education, special education, and a certification in biology. After graduating, she secured a position as a high school special education teacher and fell in love with teaching high school. Jasmine later transitioned to teaching students who were on the occupational course of study. She did that for 8 years. Jasmine went to high school general education biology for a year, then to middle school resource teaching science, and now she teaches biology online. Her goal for high school students with reading deficits is "to get them to believe in themselves or utilize tools they have at their disposal."

Results

The theme development and research question responses are presented in this section. The results derived from individual semi-structured interviews, teacher letters of advice, and focus group sessions. Each data source was individually analyzed to identify commonalities and patterns among all three data sources. Then, *epoché* and phenomenological reduction outlined by Moustakas (1994) were completed to develop the themes and subthemes. In addition, the responses to the research questions emerged from the major themes and subthemes.

Theme Development

The themes and subthemes emerged from the participants' experience working with high school students with reading disabilities. Each participant provided rich information about nurturing the development of SRL to address academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement. The analysis of the data yielded five main themes and 11 subthemes.

Participants expressed challenges among students in accessing grade-level material and experiencing low self-esteem. Despite the challenges, the participants discussed the importance of building positive teacher–student relationships, building rapport, and bridging the assistance with relationships. Participants shared interests in differentiation of instruction in regard to providing choices to demonstrate knowledge and to make accommodations, fostering motivation and engagement regarding finding relevant and meaningful materials and incentivizing. Lastly, the participants discussed strategy instruction regarding metacognitive strategies and incorporating technology. All of the participants' quotes given in this manuscript, including grammatical errors in speech and/or writing, are presented verbatim to accurately depict their voices. Table 2 includes the codes, major themes, and subthemes.

Table 2

Theme Development

Codes	Subthemes
Major Theme 1: Challenges	
Low reading skills, cannot read at rate to keep up, struggle to read independently	Accessing grade-level material
Self-esteem, discouraged, beaten down, frustrated, lack of confidence, feel beaten down	Low self-esteem
Major Theme 2: Building Relationships	
Getting to know students, building rapport, form relationships	Building rapport
Positive teacher–student relationships, build relationships, conference with students, organic relationships	Positive teacher–student relationships
Impact motivation, willingness to put forth effort, willingness to engage in learning, work for you, willing to open up and try things, advocate for themselves, willing to ask for help, asking students questions	Bridging the assistance with relationships
Major Theme 3: Differentiated Instruction	
Give choices, provide choice to demonstrate what they know, differentiated instruction, modify assignments, provide choices	Provide choices to demonstrate knowledge
Making accommodations, break down information, read aloud, model reading process, use graphic organizers	Make accommodations
Major Theme 4: Fostering motivation and engagement	
Find relevant content, finding things that are culturally relevant, find material that are an interest to them, related to their interest, finding what students want to read, creating interest, pick topic of student's interest	Finding relevant and meaningful materials
Incentivizing, working toward graduation, competition, reminding them about graduation, creating fun, creating engagement	Incentivizing

Codes	Subthemes
Major Theme 5: Strategy Instruction	
Practice annotation skills, chunking, context clues, highlighting, strategy instruction, working on metacognitive strategies, pre-teaching/reinforcing vocabulary	Metacognitive strategies
Technology, apps, Discovery Ed, Lexile levels, IXL, Chromebooks, AI tools	Incorporating technology

Challenges

All participants expressed their challenges working with high school students with reading deficits. This common theme echoed among the participants focused on the students' challenges with reading and their impact on accessing grade-level material and low self-esteem among the students. Barbara shared in her interview:

> What we're asking them to do is so challenging to them [in] that not only are they disabled readers, but they're hesitant readers, so it's kind of like a two-headed monster. Not only is the comprehension difficult, but the buy-in isn't there.

During her interview, Hope shared, "Like teaching a junior and senior English class where you know a good percentage of my students have a third grade reading ability has been really challenging."

Accessing Grade-Level Material. Research has shown that students with reading disabilities meet challenges accessing the curriculum and comprehending the rigorous material (Gilmour et al., 2019; Hock et al., 2017). High school students with low reading achievement are reading below their expected grade level and have challenges with engaging with text written on a high school level. Jasmine, certified in special education and biology, stated in her interview, "It's hard, especially at the high school level to be exposing them to text that's written for a ninth

and 10th grader when they can only read on a first- or second-grade level." The students' low reading skills pose a problem with their ability to read and understand independently.

Faith expressed in her interview two reasons why students have trouble accessing the grade level material: (a) "they can't read it at a rate that's quick enough to keep up with the pace" and (b) "they really struggle to read it independently and comprehend what they are reading." Even with reading challenges and disabilities, high school students must demonstrate proficiency on English state exams and have adequate access to the grade level material. As an English teacher, Hope understands the challenges of teaching grade level standards to students with reading deficits. In her interview, Hope shared challenges with "trying to find content that's relevant to them and keep them on track with the other standards that we need to address while finding content that they can actually read and understand."

Low Self-Esteem. Students with low reading achievement deal with self-esteem issues, challenging teachers to engage them in learning (Alloway & Carpenter, 2020). All the participants witnessed self-esteem issues among high school students with reading deficits. Cassandra shared in her interview, "The self-esteem with high school kids is what makes it the most difficult for them." Cassandra also shared the difficulty being that "they've already given up because they think, well, I can only read on a fourth-grade level, and I'm not going to get any better than that."

High school students with reading difficulties are embarrassed and do not want others to know they need help. In her interview, Donna expressed some behavioral challenges "where they don't want other kids to know they have issues." Ivy expressed in her interview that "watching them get frustrated and watching their lack of confidence in class has been a big challenge." In the teacher's letter of advice written by Cassandra, she noted that "students with reading

disabilities are already frustrated with their inability to decode and comprehend the way that their non-disabled peers do."

Building Relationships

Participants agreed that the most successful approach to nurturing the development of SRL among high school students with low reading achievement is through building relationships. Barbara emphasized in the focus group, "I agree about building relationships … and I would add like building them like organically." In the teacher letter of advice, Faith asserted, "There's a term Relationship over Rigor. Rigor is important but relationships are equally important, if not more." Building relationships with students is a critical component to improving academic success.

Positive Teacher–Student Relationships. With positive teacher–student relationships, teachers can create safe spaces for students to have positive learning experiences. In her interview Cassandra offered:

> I think the biggest thing is having a relationship with kids where they understand what they're doing in your classroom. That this classroom is a safe space for them to learn and to make mistakes if that's what comes of it.

Amy noted in her letter that "a positive teacher–student relationship can significantly impact their motivation and willingness to engage in learning." High school students with reading disabilities have many challenges, but teachers who form solid relationships with them can yield a level of respect that lessens these challenges within the classroom. Barbara gave this advice to a teacher in her letter:

> I challenge you to form relationships with these students. You will be SHOCKED to see the extra perseverance that a student who likes and respects you will put forth … I

> encourage you to look into the research on teacher–student relationships and their effect size in the classroom.

Building Rapport. Building rapport with students was voiced among most of the participants. Hope linked it to building confidence, and Faith linked it to building trust. Through her teacher letter, Hope encouraged "getting to know those individual students and finding what they're strong in to build their confidence in that and use their strength to their advantage." Faith, in her letter, stated that "building rapport and relationship is very important as without it, it's really difficult to get students to trust you enough to open up." Grace emphasized in her letter that "building a rapport with them the first day is crucial."

Both Amy and Ivy connected student performance to building rapport. Amy expressed in one of the focus group sessions:

> I think initially, before getting students to complete any kind of work is just basically like building a rapport with them. So, I find even some of the most difficult assignments or some of the most reluctant kids, depending on the rapport that you have, and especially if its positive student–teacher interaction, they are willing to work with you and for you.

In her letter Ivy said, "The biggest thing is to build rapport with students, this is going to explain how well they are going to do in your class."

Bridging the Assistance with Relationships. Teachers can use relationships with students to improve their learning outcomes. Cassandra pointed out in her interview that "it's a lot about relationships because even my kids who were the most struggling readers, if you have a relationship with them, and they want to do well for you, kids do well for the teachers they like." In addition, Cassandra referenced that "there's evidence out there that kids do better on test for teachers that they like because they want to please those teachers and they want those teachers to

be proud of them." In one of the focus group sessions, Hope shared that she has dealt with many students who will shut down when they cannot read something and will avoid the task instead of asking for assistance. However, Hope expressed that "the more I can build relationships with them … the more they're willing to work harder and to put in that effort."

Also, connecting with students can yield a level of self-advocacy for them to ask for help or advocate for what they need. Ebony prefers connecting with students to teach them how to advocate for themselves. In one of the focus group sessions, she excitedly expressed, "I really encourage getting to know my students to try to teach them how to advocate for what they need." In her letter, she gave the following advice:

> As you teach students with reading deficits, try your best to create a connection with each of your students that you teach. When you have a connection, they will work for you and come to you when they need help.

Donna, in the focus group session, agreed with Ebony about "getting the kids to advocate for themselves"; she posed her response with a question, "How do we get them to ask for help or ask for it in a way that's not going to kind of polarize them from their peers?" Donna shared that she instructs her students to advocate for themselves by telling the teacher what they need. For example, if they require extra time on an assignment, they must say that to the teacher.

Differentiated Instruction

High school students with reading deficits are challenged with acquiring reading skills, resulting in not being proficient in reading and accessing grade-level material (Azizifar et al., 2019; Moats, 2019). Therefore, another component to nurturing the development of SRL that all participants expressed was differentiated instruction. Two participants used the term differentiate while the others alluded to it. In her interview, Donna stated, "I've changed the learning or the

instructional presentation." In her letter of advice, Amy wrote, "Differentiate your instruction by providing varied materials, activities, and assessments." In addition, Grace noted, "I implement differentiated instruction."

Provide Choices to Demonstrate Knowledge. Amy noted in her letter that "students with low reading achievement may have diverse learning needs"; therefore, providing choices to demonstrate knowledge "ensures that each student can access the content at their level." Cassandra shared in her interview that teachers should change methods to match the students' learning styles. For example, if the student needs "to make a TikTok video to remember these terms, then do that because they're learning from that" or "if it's to make up a dance or a song about something that's going to help them." Grace expressed in her interview that she gives students choices to "express learning through an artistic form or explaining it through spatial or through music even." She also shared with a teacher through the letter that she gives "students choices in how to show comprehension based on learning styles."

Ivy and Jasmine both communicated in one of the focus group sessions that they use technology for students to demonstrate their learning and access text at their level. Jasmine referred to using a transcript from a Discovery Ed video "to make like a closed reading passage," which is a way "of adapting materials to make them more accessible." Ivy also mentioned Discovery Ed videos, but in her interview, she stated, "We use technology. We use apps. We do a lot of Kahoots. I know that's a big one for my high school students right now."

Make Accommodations. Using accommodations is another way for students with reading disabilities to access content and complete reading assignments. Ivy utilizes graphic organizers to assist her struggling readers in class. She stated in her letter:

> Graphic organizers should be in every teacher's class. It can be digital, printed out, it could be they draw it up. Graphic organizers allow readers with deficits to break the information up and it helps them feel more confident about what they're talking about or what they're discussing.

When asked in one of the focus group sessions to describe the method that has been the most effective, Ivy strongly replied with "what I found is graphic organizers" as with them "they can break down any of the information whether it's a story, whether it's a novel, whether it's a problem, whether it's just bringing elements out of certain stanzas, that's what I found the most successful."

Jasmine, Barbara, and Faith discussed reading aloud in their teacher's letter of advice. Jasmine shared that she uses read-aloud with high school students with reading disabilities "to help them feel successful with higher level content when they have difficulty accessing the content on their own." She provided this helpful tip: "Show the students your mistakes when you are reading out loud. I sometimes get flustered when I am reading out loud. I show my inner thinking process to students when this happens." Barbara emphasized:

> Do not be afraid to read out loud to high school students!!! In this age of state tests, ACT scores, and school rankings, there is a lot of emphasis placed on students reading quickly and independently and, in turn, being able to answer comprehension questions. But, I have found that struggling readers really benefit from a teacher reading with/to them.

Lastly, Faith suggested that "with reading do read aloud but also have them access a computer program to read it aloud to them" as this "helps them be more independent with that in the future if they need it."

Fostering Motivation and Engagement

Motivation is essential to self-regulation and contributes to student engagement with learning tasks (C. M. Butler & De La Paz, 2021). The participants in this study have shared experiences with the plight of motivating high school students with low reading deficits. All of them have expressed that students are less likely to engage in learning tasks if they are not interested or find no relevance in them. In the interview, Ivy said, “If they lack interest, they’re less motivated to complete assignments or turn in assignments.” Jasmine shared in her interview that “It’s hard in a content level class in a high school to get the motivation for reading,” and Amy said, “They’re just not motivated with the content” so its best “to make the content culturally relevant or in a way that is relevant to them where they can see how it affects their everyday life.”

Finding Relevant and Meaningful Material. Hope shared that she motivates her students by finding relevant content. She expressed in her interview that “if you can find things that are more of interest to them, they’re gonna be a lot more motivated to complete the assignments with it.” Integrating relevant topics into lessons that students are interested in can promote learning. Grace expressed in her interview, “I think you have to tailor your lessons to what they’re engaged in, what they’re interested in,” and once you know their interests, “just fuse and incorporate them into the lesson plan.” Cassandra stated in her interview, “I try to find things that are relevant, that are culturally relevant because kids learn better if they like what they are learning about.”

Asking students about their interests can help with fostering reading motivation. In one of the focus group sessions, Faith shared a practical approach she used to motivate reading among students by “sitting and talking with each one of them” and asking them, “What are you

interested in and what do you like?" She asserted, "If we can find something at all related to their interests, then they'll get some of that necessary practice that they avoid as much as they possibly can in high school." Hope also shared in the focus group session that she selects texts that match students' interests and then lets them choose. She explained, "The fact that they get to choose something is often enough of a motivating factor because they feel like they have a lot more buy-in by having that choice."

Incentivizing. Students with learning disabilities are not as motivated compared to students without learning disabilities, and offering incentives could boost a student's confidence and motivation (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2022). Barbara incentivizes by reminding juniors and seniors of the end result. She shared in her interview:

> I like incentivizing kids with "I know you don't love English, but graduation is at the end." It really is easy with juniors and seniors to push that you are so close to being done, and I care about you finishing and how proud you will be of yourself.

On the other hand, Grace is incentivizing with competition and choices. Grace said, "Incentivizing them is a big deal in such a way they're in competition with others makes a difference, I've noticed." During her interview, she also shared that she gives the students choices with their work "so that they have some sort of stake and have some sort of autonomy in their education."

Strategy Instruction

All the participants described methods they have used with high school students with reading deficits, and all shared how they teach or model strategies specific to reading. In reading, self-regulation is a cognitive approach to applying methods before, during, and after reading, and students with reading disabilities need strategies to be explicitly taught (Capin et al., 2023;

Johnson et al., 2023; Kesuma et al., 2021). Jasmine shared in her interview that she teaches reading skills "explicitly," and Faith expressed, "I do strategy instruction where we're talking about using context clues, using structural clues all the ways to attach trying to figure out what something is saying." In the teacher's letter of advice, Faith noted, "Do direct teaching of the strategies that they need … helping them figure out how they are going to understand a text that's not read-aloud and practice how to accomplish it."

Teaching strategies to students with low reading achievement can assist them with reading and understanding text. Donna wrote in her letter, "We can teach strategies and plan engaging activities to help them with their deficits." Some strategies she found beneficial were "teaching prefixes/suffixes/roots/families and pre-teaching/reinforcing vocabulary." Amy shared in her interview that she pre-teaches vocabulary to get "them to understand the meaning of certain words," as well as teaching them how to decode and use context clues to understand.

Metacognitive Strategies. For reading tasks that are complex for struggling readers, most participants said they incorporate strategies to guide them in the reading process. Donna expressed in her interview that "working on metacognitive strategies ... have been useful for some students." Metacognitive skills comprise planning, monitoring, and evaluating and are essential for complex reading tasks (Buono et al., 2020; Tse et al., 2022). Barbara, Cassandra, Ebony, Faith, Ivy, and Jasmine named strategies such as chunking and annotating. In her letter of advice, Barbara stated, "Another strategy that I LOVE when working with students with reading deficits is chunking. This literally means breaking a larger text into smaller, more manageable chunks." In a focus group session, she reiterated this by saying, "Chunking is the most effective at the high school level." Ivy stated in her letter, "If you have any student that struggles with reading and you know this, you need to break the information up for them. You must break the

information up for them." To help students self-regulate during large reading assignments, Faith uses chunking to make sure they understand the text, and Cassandra, in her interview, said she "teaches them to chunk material" by "blocking off things."

Annotating was another strategy used by the participants. Jasmine stated in her letter that she models annotation when reading so that the students can rely on this skill when reading independently. In her interview, Faith said, "We do annotate where they learn how to go in and write to the side of something, what those key ideas are, really focusing in on what are the key ideas that are being communicated." However, Ebony reinforces annotating to keep students actively engaged in a reading task. Barbara associated annotating with self-monitoring. In her interview, she said:

> I'm a big annotate the text person. Setting up kids to first underline things that you thought were really, really important, draw a question mark next to something you have to revisit or you weren't sure about. So, annotating the text is really great because it's like a self-monitoring for the student.

Incorporating Technology. Students who learn to regulate their learning can successfully apply strategies to obtain better academic success, with technology being one of those strategies (Mohammadi et al., 2022; Tse et al., 2022). Amy wrote in her letter, "Incorporate technology to make the learning experience more interactive and accessible." To better engage the students with learning, Ivy expressed in her interview that "technology has been the biggest plus" as students use it to understand the content. When they use apps, she said, "They are so much more intrigued." Ebony teaches students to utilize technology in the classroom as a way for them to communicate and collaborate with their teachers. In her interview, she said, "If they are embarrassed to ask a question in the classroom, email the teacher … so they are

communicating somehow what they need." Grace and Hope shared that they use school-based programs that allow you to change Lexile levels to help students on different reading levels apply strategies. Hope stated in her interview, "I can give the same content to students with different reading abilities, and we can still have the same kind of class discussion on what we just read."

Research Question Responses

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to examine teachers' lived experiences with nurturing the development of SRL to address academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement. The participants provided rich details of the shared phenomenon through semi-structured interviews, teachers' letters of advice, and focus groups. The study used one central question and three sub-questions to describe the teachers' lived experiences. The responses to the research questions are discussed below.

Central Research Question

How do teachers nurture the development of self-regulated learning to address academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement? The objective of the central question was to examine the experiences of teachers nurturing the development of SRL to address academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement. According to Zimmerman (1989), students are self-regulated learners when "they are metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally active participants in their own learning process" (p. 329). All participants have at least 5 years of experience working with high school students with reading disabilities, and the overall theme from their experiences is building relationships. The participants shared that building relationships and rapport with students motivates learning. Cassandra expressed in her interview that to combat students' negative perception of their

reading ability, “the biggest thing is having a relationship.” Amy shared in the teacher’s letter of advice, relationships with students “can significantly impact their motivation and willingness to engage in learning.”

Sub-Question One

How do teachers nurture metacognitive flexibility to address academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement? This sub-question examined how teachers nurture metacognitive flexibility through planning, organizing, seeking information, and acquiring knowledge (Zimmerman, 1990a, 1990b, 2008). All participants described strategies taught or modeled for students to utilize before, during, and after reading. Therefore, the overall theme that emerged was strategy instruction with metacognitive strategies as a subtheme. For high school students with reading deficits to acquire the skills they need in reading to succeed in high school, Faith stated in her interview, “I think its best we have some real strategy instruction because we want them to build those reading skills.” In her interview, Donna expressed a need to “work on metacognitive strategies” to build those skills. She advised in her letter to “model pre/during/post metacognitive skills, where students make predictions, checking for understanding.”

Participants discussed chunking as one of the strategies to assist students with planning and monitoring skills. Barbara described chunking in her letter as “breaking a larger text into smaller, more manageable chunks.” During the focus group, she stated:

> Our kids are asked to read longer texts.… So having where they must stop and summarize throughout or stop and like apply some sort of learning throughout, like chunking, has been the single most effective thing I’ve found in my practice.

In her interview, Cassandra said that when students must read lengthy texts, she teaches them how to "do things in chunks."

Sub-Question Two

How do teachers nurture motivation and engagement to address academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement? This sub-question examined methods to increase motivation and engagement among high school students with low reading deficits. The participants acknowledged that students with low reading skills are not motivated to read and do not want to read. Cassandra said in her interview, "They will come into class and tell you flat out that they hate to read, and they don't want to read." To foster motivation and engagement, the participants agreed that finding relevant and meaningful material helps to motivate students to read, especially when it is related to their interest. Ivy allows her students "to do their own research" on a topic of their interest and for them "to find a scholarly article that they feel compelled to read." Donna shared in her interview that when she found out that one of her students liked graphic novels, she found those books. She said,

> And next thing I know, I hear this kid read three books in one night and is excited. So, trying to find something that they like to get them to think about books that they could read outside of school.

Sub-Question Three

How do teachers nurture learning strategies to address the academic outcomes of high school students with low reading achievement? This sub-question examined the use of learning strategies that assist with optimizing learning experiences for high school students with low reading achievement. For students with reading challenges to apply previously taught learning strategies on a level that is most effective for them, they need differentiated instruction. Amy

noted that differentiated instruction allows learners to demonstrate their knowledge through "varied materials, activities, and assessments." In her interview, she discussed a successful practice she uses. She said, "Offering multiple methods of assessment and not using one way to assess if a student is learning, instead of a written project, maybe a presentation." The participants agreed that having choices to demonstrate knowledge helps optimize the learning experience for students with low reading achievement. Grace shared in the letter how she gives options based on their learning preferences, and she said, "For example, if a student is more artistic and visual learner, then he/she may create artwork to demonstrate comprehension, with minimal text explanation."

Summary

This chapter included thick descriptions of teachers' experiences with the phenomenon. Five themes emerged from the data analysis of the participants' responses to one-on-one interview questions, teacher letters of advice prompt, and the focus group questions. The themes are (a) challenges, (b) building relationships, (c) differentiated instruction, (d) fostering motivation and engagement, and (e) strategy instruction. The themes correlated with the central question and the three subthemes. They provided insight into how teachers nurture the development of SRL to address academic outcomes for high school with low reading achievement.

The results determined that teachers acknowledge the challenges of working with high school students with reading deficits. However, they teach, model, and integrate various strategies, methods, and practices to make the curriculum content accessible for high school students with low reading achievement to experience academic success.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

This transcendental phenomenological study aimed to examine teachers' lived experiences with nurturing the development of self-regulated learning (SRL) to address academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement. This chapter begins with the interpretation of the study's thematic findings. Next, I discuss theoretical and methodological implications as well as implications for policy and practice. Then, the chapter concludes with limitations and delimitations, recommendations for future research, and a conclusion.

Discussion

This section discusses the study's findings in light of the developed themes which emerged through data analysis, viewed through the lens of the two supporting conceptual frameworks. First, I summarize the five themes, followed by my interpretations of the study's findings. Next, theoretical and methodological aspects and implications for practice or policy are discussed. Lastly, this section conveys the limitations, delimitations, and recommendations for research. Quotes from the participants are embedded to support my interpretations of the study's findings.

Summary of Thematic Findings

The themes found during the data analysis processes Moustakas (1994) outlined were used to interpret the study's findings and are discussed below. The data collected from the one-on-one interviews, teachers' letters of advice, and focus group sessions revealed five major themes, which are as follows: (a) challenges, (b) building relationships, (c) differentiated instructions, (d) fostering motivation and engagement, and (e) strategy instruction. The

interpretations align with the two conceptual frameworks that guided this study: Zimmerman's SRL and Duke and Cartwright's active view of reading.

The major theme, "Challenges," had two subthemes: accessing grade-level material and low self-esteem. Each participant expressed at least one challenge working with high school students with reading deficits, but most shared challenges with students accessing grade-level material. The teachers discussed how the students' low reading skills make it difficult for them to read text written above their reading level. When reading is challenging for a student, the participants also shared their challenges in helping to bolster confidence in areas such as a student's low self-esteem. They described students as feeling beaten down and frustrated as they struggled to take part in reading tasks.

"Building Relationships" was another major theme found within the data to nurture the development of SRL. The subthemes that emerged from building relationships were positive teacher–student relationships, building rapport, and bridging assistance with relationships. The participants expressed the importance of positive teacher–student relationships and getting to know the students to create confidence and trust and improve learning outcomes. They discussed how building those relationships with students could create positive learning experiences for them as they ask and receive the assistance they need.

The major theme, "Differentiated Instruction," includes providing choices to demonstrate knowledge and make accommodations. The participants implied that differentiated instruction complements students' learning styles and caters to their learning differences. The participants shared that they allow the students to choose a way to present their knowledge based on their learning preferences. For example, they can create a PowerPoint presentation to demonstrate what they know instead of writing a report. They also described making accommodations, like

using graphic organizers and read-aloud, to access the reading material and complete assignments due to low reading skills.

"Fostering Motivation and Engagement" was the next major theme from the findings. The two subthemes within this theme were finding relevant and meaningful materials and incentivizing. This study revealed that to improve reading motivation among high school students with low reading achievement, one must discover materials or topics related to student interest. The participants shared that students were quicker to engage in reading activities that appealed to their interests and when the materials are on their reading level. The participants discussed how they used incentives such as competitions with games to motivate and engage students in learning experiences.

Lastly, the major theme, "Strategy Instruction," encompasses metacognitive strategies and incorporating technology. Each participant emphasized strategy instruction to support those students with reading deficits. They described methods they have utilized to assist students with the reading process and agreed that they must be modeled and taught explicitly. They also expressed incorporating technology as a way for the students to apply reading strategies to leveled or on grade-level text.

Interpretation of Findings

After reviewing the study's findings, I discovered three critical elements to nurturing the development of SRL among high school students with low reading achievement. I carefully analyzed and reviewed all the data collected through interviews, teachers' letters of advice, focus group sessions, and reexamined the empirical literature reported in Chapter Two of this dissertation. Through analysis of all the data, it was evident that self-efficacy, motivation, and

metacognition matter as they contribute to improving academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement.

Self-Efficacy Matters

Self-efficacy refers to a person's perception and beliefs about their capacity to perform a given task. It determines persistence, effort, and achievement and increases when a student demonstrates the ability to achieve an intended outcome (C. M. Butler & De La Paz, 2021; Kesuma et al., 2021; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2022; Zimmerman, 1989, 2000). The findings of this study revealed that high school students with reading deficits are reluctant readers who struggle with accessing grade-level material. The participants described students as "discouraged," "beaten down," and "frustrated" as they encountered challenges with assessments like the English 2 exam. The teachers understood that the students' dislike for reading and belief that they were not good readers led to task avoidance and lack of effort. As I listened to the teachers describe their experiences working with high school students with reading disabilities, it was apparent that the teachers witnessed a lack of academic confidence and students' negative perceptions about their capabilities to complete a reading task. Therefore, the teachers were aware of the students' educational needs and made efforts to meet them at their academic level.

The teachers adapted the material and instruction to increase self-efficacy, effort, and task completion. I found it interesting that the teachers understood their students' plight to read and comprehend text above their reading level. Therefore, the teachers provided students with a text they could read and choices to demonstrate content acquisition. The teachers believed that providing students with alternatives to demonstrate their knowledge was a way for them to experience academic success.

Motivation Matters

Motivation influences an individual's interest in learning, academic performance, and goal attainment (Essa, 2022; McBreen & Savage, 2022; Moseki & Schulze, 2019; Pintrich, 1999). After I reviewed the transcripts from the interview and focus group sessions, along with the teachers' letters of advice, it was evident that motivation matters when students with low reading skills must read a given text, especially when they have little interest in the topic. The teachers realized that students who lack motivation fail to complete and turn in assignments. Engaging students in reading tasks was a challenge for the teachers, and they had to discover ways to foster reading motivation, like creating interest.

Creating interest encompasses finding materials that interest students, asking them about topics they are interested in reading, and allowing them to choose a topic of interest. The teachers found that creating interest is essential as students are more likely to engage in tasks when interested in the content. Barbara shared that students "are not going to do things they are not interested in." Teachers found it beneficial to ask students about their interests and what they would like to learn and incorporate their interests into their lessons. Another aspect of motivation matters that I discovered is creating connectivity. The teachers noticed increased motivation when content or text connected to everyday life skills, like finding a job, applying for an apartment, or how to start a business. Also, when students connect with their favorite athlete, content creator, or movie star through literature or documentary, they feel motivated. I concluded that motivation matters for students with low reading achievement to engage in learning actively.

Metacognition Matters

The last interpretation I found through the data analysis process was metacognition and how metacognition matters when students with low reading achievement read higher-level text.

Metacognition refers to a learner's awareness of their strengths and weaknesses in the learning process while using various learning strategies to achieve learning outcomes (Essa, 2022; Zhu & Doo, 2022). This study revealed that students are aware of their weaknesses in reading, and they need strategy instruction to assist them in the reading process. When reading more extended texts, students often forget what they read after the first paragraph; therefore, they are taught how to use different techniques to help them. I discovered that teachers were knowledgeable about reading strategies and the ones they deemed most effective, like breaking down paragraphs into small chunks to help students stop and think about what they read. Barbara stated, "Having where students must stop and summarize throughout or stop and like apply some sort of learning throughout like chunking has been the single most effective thing I have found in my practice." Amy found "teaching them how to use context clues" most successful when students must read independently.

Another way to cultivate metacognition is by having the students work in a group or with a partner. Each person has a role and a part in the group discussion or activity where students with reading challenges must use learned strategies to complete the given task. Hope shared in her interview that she groups students with reading disabilities with groups that will challenge them and help them. She said she incorporates many "discussion-based strategies where they can learn to think about their ideas." Lastly, I found that the teachers provided choices to students to build on their strengths in the learning process. The students could either watch a video or listen to an audio to gain an understanding of a topic. Ivy shared that "every learner learns differently." Therefore, allowing students options build on their strengths.

Implications of the Conceptual Framework and Empirical Literature

This section discusses the implications that this study found on the conceptual framework and empirical literature previously discussed in Chapter Two. This section begins with a discussion of the two conceptual frameworks that were relevant to this study. This is then followed by several empirical implications that emerged from the findings and are discussed below.

Conceptual Framework

The two conceptual frameworks guiding this study were Zimmerman's (1986) SRL and Duke and Cartwright's (2021) active view of reading. Both frameworks provided an understanding of the role of self-regulatory skills in academic success for high school students with reading disabilities.

Zimmerman's Self-Regulated Learning Implications. Research has shown that SRL is linked to academic achievement, and students with learning disabilities lack self-regulatory skills, hindering academic success (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2022; Zimmerman, 1990a, 1990b). Therefore, I chose to include Zimmerman's SRL as one of the two conceptual frameworks to support this study. This framework helped me to examine how teachers nurture the development of SRL to address academic outcomes for high school students with reading deficits. Zimmerman's (1986) SRL comprises three components students use to actively engage in the learning process: metacognition, motivation, and behavior. Zimmerman explained that all three of the components help to maximize a student's learning experience (Zimmerman, 1986, 1989, 1990a, 1990b). The problem in this study was that students with low reading achievement are at higher risk of low academic performance, academic failure, and school dropout than proficient readers and their reading challenges make it difficult to adequately access the curriculum

(Development Services Group, 2019; Gilmour et al., 2019; Sanders et al., 2019; Williams et al., 2021). The findings showed that teachers utilized various instructional techniques to nurture SRL development for high school students with reading deficits. Low reading skills are the primary factor that prevents high school students from meeting and assessing grade-level content, which impacts the students' use of self-regulatory skills without the support of the teachers. Therefore, the teachers relied heavily on positive teacher–student relationships to foster motivation and engagement and increase self-efficacy. Barbara described students as "hesitant readers" who are unsure about their reading capabilities, which keeps them from engaging in learning tasks.

I found that teachers explicitly taught reading strategies to help students with deficits to enhance their students' metacognitive skills so that they learn to check for understanding and make predictions while reading. For the students to effectively use learning strategies during academic tasks, the teachers thought it was necessary to differentiate instruction by incorporating methods that accommodated the students' learning styles and provided choices to demonstrate knowledge. On the other hand, the data also showed that the teachers were aware of the students' challenges with low self-esteem, reading grade level texts, and interest. They were also conscious of the need to assist students with self-regulation before, during, and after reading complex content.

Duke and Cartwright's Active View of Reading Implications. Duke and Cartwright (2021) developed the active view of reading model to reflect the role of active self-regulation in reading. Active self-regulation incorporates executive function skills, motivation and engagement, and strategy use as necessary factors within the reading process that can improve reading outcomes for students with reading challenges. Executive function skills permit learners to complete tasks, increase motivation that involves students' participation and interest in

reading, and stimulate strategy use to enhance reading skills (Capin et al., 2023; Duke & Cartwright, 2021). To support the role of self-regulation in reading, I chose the active view of reading as the second framework. The study revealed that high school students with reading deficits have difficulty reading grade-level material, and the teachers had to find creative ways to assist the students in the reading process. Through finding content on students' reading levels, the teachers had success with motivation and engagement when students had to read. When teachers found topics of the students' preferred interest, the students could complete tasks that would have otherwise been avoided. To help with students' reading skills and the reading process, the teachers taught or modeled strategies such as chunking and annotating, which also aided task completion.

Empirical Implications

There has been limited research on the impact of reading instruction among high school students with reading disabilities despite the achievement gap for students with low reading achievement who are not proficient in reading and struggle to meet grade-level standards (Al Otaiba et al., 2018; Gilmour et al., 2019). Several empirical implications of this study can shed light on developing SRL for high school students with reading deficits for academic success. Schunk and DiBenedetto (2022) found that students with learning disabilities do not have well-developed self-regulatory skills and often have low self-efficacy beliefs. Other researchers such as C. M. Butler and De La Paz (2021) and Kausik and Hussain (2023) discovered that students with learning challenges do not persist through complex tasks or use strategies because of low motivation and low self-efficacy, which affect engagement with learning tasks. Moreover, it is also noted in the empirical literature that reading strategies are

vital to active self-regulation, strengthening reading skills, and targeting vocabulary and comprehension difficulties (Burns et al., 2023; Duke & Cartwright, 2021).

The data from this study corroborate the empirical literature. When the teachers described their challenges working with high school students with low reading achievement, they pointed out that the students lacked motivation, were discouraged, and did not believe in their capabilities to read; this impacted the students' level of engagement and academic performance. However, to develop SRL where the high school students were active in learning and in the reading process, the teachers differentiated instruction, created interest, and explicitly taught reading strategies, all of which supported students in utilizing the three components of SRL and active self-regulation. On the other hand, what I found significant, and an extension of previous research, is how building strong relationships with students with reading disabilities can aid in developing SRL. The teachers emphasized getting to know the students and connecting with them to foster reading motivation, content engagement, work completion, and strategy use because students with disabilities have experiences with academic failures in high school as the demands are more significant, which creates a barrier to learning.

In this study, participants voiced their experiences working with high school students with reading disabilities and the successful practices they use. They said building rapport with high school students is necessary for positive academic outcomes. As result, this study answers the central research question related to how teachers nurture the development of SRL to address academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement.

Implications for Policy or Practice

The findings of this transcendental phenomenological study revealed one implication for policy and two for practice. The results showed how teachers nurture the development of SRL

for high school students with reading disabilities to experience academic success. I provided detailed and thick descriptions of participants' experiences developing SRL, allowing readers to judge transferability and help other teachers foster SRL.

Implications for Policy

Based on my analysis of this study's data, it may be beneficial for school districts to embed ongoing mentoring programs for teachers who teach high school students with learning disabilities. Mentoring programs may focus on assisting teachers with finding innovative ways to motivate high school students with low reading skills to enhance students' graduation completion. In these programs, all teachers could acquire knowledge from experts in the field about how to use practical strategies to help their high school students with low reading achievement access the curriculum adequately. In addition, the mentoring programs can act as a resource for teachers who teach high school students with reading deficits to become more skilled in developing SRL and to bolster students' engagement for successful learning outcomes.

Implications for Practice

The experiences articulated by the teachers of this study led me to conclude that high school students with low reading achievement need support with developing self-regulatory skills. Each teacher highlighted the importance of building relationships to get students to utilize SRL. While building relationships with students is vital to SRL, it may also be effective for all teachers who work with high school students with reading disabilities to consider building a rapport with their students from day one. The teachers in this study intentionally constructed relationships with their students by asking about their interests and strengths to use in building their confidence to pursue reading even when it is difficult. All teachers need to be aware of how their meaningful acts, like the teachers in this study used to build relationships, would be

beneficial to help teachers develop SRL to address academic outcomes for high school students with reading challenges.

Another implication for practice is making lessons meaningful for high school students with low reading skills. Meaningful lessons mean incorporating relevant materials based on students' interests and reading levels. The data showed that the teachers were likelier to engage students in reading when the students were given a text that they could read and comprehend. To increase academic outcomes among high school students with low reading achievements, it would be beneficial for teachers to make conscious decisions about creating meaningful lessons to increase task completion, motivation, and engagement.

Limitations and Delimitations

There were limitations and delimitations in this study. Limitations are potential weaknesses I, the researcher, had no control over. Delimitations refer to the decisions I purposefully made to ensure participants could effectively contribute to the needs of this study.

Limitations

The limitations of this study were related to participant participation. I sought to secure 12 participants but encountered challenges with recruitment through social media platforms. I also used snowballing to recruit participants. Although 16 potential candidates completed the screening survey, four did not respond to reminders to complete the consent form. One person returned the consent document but decided not to participate, and one completed the interview but was unresponsive to reminders about the teacher letter; therefore, I could not use the interview responses in the data collection. For the study, 10 teachers participated in the data collection; however, one of the participants did not participate in one of the scheduled focus group sessions due to prior obligations. Another limitation was that this study only included high

school teachers from North Carolina. After recruiting the first two participants, I realized I could have broadened my scope to the surrounding states, adding more richness to the study.

Delimitations

The delimitations set boundaries in this study so I could capture accurate accounts of the shared phenomenon. One delimitation was that the study involved teachers teaching or supporting high school students with reading disabilities for at least 5 years. To understand how teachers develop SRL to address academic outcomes among high school students with reading disabilities, participants had to be teaching or supporting students in reading. They had to have done so for a minimum of 5 years. Participants in this study were general and special education teachers with 8–29 years of experience teaching or supporting high school students with low reading achievement in English, science, history, or health, all of which encompass extensive reading. Working with high school students with low reading achievement who are at risk of academic failure has challenges; therefore, participants having 5 or more years of experience in this support area gives the participants a better understanding of teaching high school students with reading disabilities. In addition, with at least 5 years of experience, the participants have greater insight into the most effective development of SRL for high school students with low reading skills.

Another delimitation was my choice to use a transcendental phenomenological study design over the hermeneutic phenomenological design. I had experience working with high school students with reading disabilities and shared the same phenomenon. To give an authentic voice to the lived experiences of the problem, I chose the phenomenological design to capture an in-depth account of teachers developing SRL to address academic outcomes for high school students with reading challenges. In addition, I selected a transcendental phenomenological

method over the hermeneutic phenomenological design because it allowed me to focus on the knowledge of teachers' lived experiences without inserting my bias (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994).

Recommendations for Future Research

Considering the study findings, limitations, and delimitations, this section discusses the recommendations for further research. The participants were selected from North Carolina and not from a particular school district. Future research may broaden the scope of recruiting participants and not limit the study to one geographical location. The findings revealed how teachers relied on relationships as one of the supports to developing SRL to address academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement.

A narrative study of high school students with reading disabilities might be appropriate to understand their views on the significance of having a positive teacher–student relationship and how it improves their academic outcomes. SRL helps improve academic achievement, and students who lack self-regulatory skills need assistance developing these skills. Therefore, exploring the teacher–student relationship from the lens of high school students with reading challenges can help other high school teachers who teach students with reading disabilities to build relationships with students to foster SRL.

Another recommendation would be to explore Duke and Cartwright's active view of reading among high school students as the model outlines components, including the essential role of active self-regulation that contributes to skilled reading. This model also serves as an instructional framework for teachers to identify which element within the active view of reading needs to be explicitly taught to improve reading skills among struggling readers (Duke & Cartwright, 2021). With limited research on reading instruction at the high school level, further

studies on the active view of reading could offer insightful practices for teachers who teach high school students with low reading achievement to improve academic success.

The last recommendation would be to consider a quantitative study to examine the outcomes of high school English exams for high school students with reading disabilities after teachers have explicitly taught reading strategies that teachers in this study found successful. Researchers such as Young et al. (2019) and Main et al. (2023) found that reading skills among high school students increase when provided with reading interventions. Therefore, a quantitative study could provide measurable data on reading outcomes and expand the research on the effectiveness of reading instruction for high school students with low reading achievement.

Conclusion

This transcendental phenomenological study gave readers insight into the lived experiences of teachers who have nurtured the development of SRL to address academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement. The data collected through semi-structured interviews, teachers' letters of advice, and focus groups captured participants' voices. They told their stories of challenges working with high school students with reading deficits as students struggle with low esteem and reading grade-level material. The findings revealed that to develop SRL for high school students with low reading skills, teachers used differentiated instruction to make content accessible, incentives to foster motivation and engagement, and strategy instruction to help students read. Most importantly, teachers contributed to building relationships with students as the key ingredient to developing SRL.

The literature and the teachers in this study concur that self-efficacy, motivation, and metacognition matter when establishing SRL to address learning outcomes for high school

students with reading disabilities. Teachers could be more skilled in this support area when an ongoing structure targeting the development of acquired skills has been implemented. This plan should include mentoring programs that focus on using components outlined by Zimmerman's SRL and Duke and Cartwright's active view of reading to improve academic achievement for high school students with low reading achievement. It will help teachers find creative ways for students to engage in their learning and increase learning outcomes actively. On the other hand, practices should be meaningful, like building rapport with students and constructing purposeful lessons reflecting students' interests to decrease task avoidance and increase task completion. Possible implications for expanding this study would be utilizing participants who are high school students with low reading achievement to get insight into the importance of positive teacher–student relationships that contribute to their academic success. In conclusion, students with reading deficits have substandard reading skills that impact meeting grade-level standards; however, teachers who accommodate learning differences can develop SRL to address academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement and help them to access the curriculum for better academic success.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

November 6, 2023

Kimberly Wilson
Gail Collins

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY23-24-600 Teachers Lived Experiences Nurturing the Development of Self-Regulated Learning to Address Academic Outcomes for High School Students with Low Reading Achievement: A Phenomenological Study

Dear Kimberly Wilson, Gail Collins,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:
The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

For a PDF of your exemption letter, click on your study number in the My Studies card on your Cayuse dashboard. Next, click the Submissions bar beside the Study Details bar on the Study details page. Finally, click Initial under Submission Type and choose the Letters tab toward the bottom of the Submission Details page. Your information sheet and final versions of your study documents can also be found on the same page under the Attachments tab.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,
G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP
Administrative Chair
Research Ethics Office

Appendix B: Recruitment Flyer for Teacher Participants

Research Participants Needed

Teachers' Lived Experiences with Nurturing the Development of Self-Regulated Learning to Address Academic Outcomes for High School Students with Low Reading Achievement: A Phenomenological Study

- Are you a general or special education teacher who teaches 9-12 grades?
- Have you taught students with learning disabilities for at least 5 years?

If you answered **yes** to each of the questions listed above, you may be eligible to participate in a research study.

The purpose of this research study is to examine teachers' lived experiences with nurturing the development of self-regulated learning to address academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement.

Participants will be asked to be interviewed, participate in a focus group, and write a mock letter of advice to a first-year teacher who does not have experience working with high school students with low reading achievement but is interested in learning effective practices. The participants will also be asked to review transcribed interview and focus group questions for accuracy. Interviews and focus groups should take 45-60 minutes, letter writing 30 minutes, and review of interview and focus group transcripts 15 minutes. Your name and/or other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

Benefits may include understanding how to address academic outcomes for high school students with reading deficits who are at risk of academic failure.

Participants will be compensated for participating in this study. At the conclusion of the interview, letter of advice, focus group and review of your transcripts, participants will receive a $25 Amazon gift card.

If you would like to participate, please click here to read a recruitment letter with more information and a link to a screening survey to help me select participants that match my study criteria. If you would like to participate please complete the screening survey within 5 days. After you have completed the survey, you will receive an email from me within 2 days explaining the next step.

Kimberly Wilson, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Please contact her at [redacted] or [redacted] for more information.

Appendix C: Recruitment Letter for Teacher Participants

Dear Future Participant:

As a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to be able to describe in detail the practices of teachers addressing academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement, and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be a certified teacher and have at least five years of experience working with high school students with a reading disability. Participants, if willing, will be asked to be interviewed, participate in a focus group, and write a mock letter of advice to a first year teacher who does not have experience working with high school students with low reading achievement but are interested in learning effective practices. The participants will also be asked to review transcribed interview and focus group questions for accuracy. Interviews and focus groups should take 45-60 minutes, letter writing 30 minutes, and review of interview and focus group transcripts 15 minutes. Your name and/or other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, please click here to take a screening survey to help me select participants that match my study criteria. If you would like to participate, please complete the screening survey within 5 days. After you have completed the survey, you will receive an email from me within 2 days explaining the next step.

At the conclusion of the interview, letter of advice, focus group, and review of transcripts participants will receive a $25 Amazon gift card.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Wilson
Ph.D candidate
[redacted]

Appendix D: Screening Survey for Future Participants

Are you currently teaching?
Yes
No

Are you a teacher with at least 5 years of experience in a high school?
Yes
No

Are you a teacher with experience teaching high school students with learning disabilities in reading?
Yes
No

Are you familiar with IEP accommodations?
Yes
No

Are you certified in secondary education or special education?
certified in secondary (9-12) English, Science, or History
certified in special education (General curriculum) K-12
Both

Specify the content area you teach/or support (ex. Biology)

Your answer

Degree: What is the highest degree you hold?
Bachelors
Masters
Doctorate

Do you have your National Boards?
Yes
No

Do you have any other certifications or license?(please specify below)
Your answer

Which day(s) work best for one-on-one interview and focus group with others?

Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday
Saturday
Sunday

What timeframe works best for you to interview and participate in a focus group?
9 a.m. to 12 p.m.
12 p.m. to 3 p.m.
3 p.m. to 6 p.m.
6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Please provide a preferred email address to use for communication about this study?

Appendix E: Emails for Acceptance and Non Acceptance of Participants

Dear Future Participant

Congratulations! You have been selected to participate in a research study that seeks to understand how self-regulated learning strategies can be used to strengthen academic outcomes in high school students with low reading achievement.

If you wish to continue with the study, a signed consent form is required. Please click the link below to read the consent form thoroughly. Then use the attached Docusign to sign and return the consent form within 5 days. Once I receive the signed consent, you will be an active participant in this study. Thank you for helping me complete this research.

Consent form

Sincerely

Kimberly Wilson

Greetings

Thank you for taking time to fill out the screening survey for my research. Your time was greatly appreciated; however, no further assistance is needed from you at this time. Again, thank you for sharing your time.

Sincerely

Kimberly Wilson

Appendix F: Consent Form for Teachers

Consent

Title of the study:

Teachers' Lived Experiences with Nurturing the Development of Self-Regulated Learning to Address Academic Outcomes for High School Students with Low Reading Achievement: A Phenomenological Study

Kimberly Wilson, a doctoral student in the School of Education at Liberty University is conducting this study.

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be a certified general and/or special education teacher in North Carolina currently teaching high school students with an identified learning disability in reading. Taking part in this research study is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study is to examine teachers lived experiences with nurturing the development of self-regulated learning to address academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:
1. Participate in an in-depth semi-structured interview that is expected to be between 45-60 minutes long. Audio recording will take place during the interview to ensure accuracy with transcriptions.
2. Write a letter of advice to a high school teacher who teaches students with a reading disability that are at risk of academic failure. This will take about 30 minutes.
3. Participate in a one-hour focus group session with other special and general education teachers who are a part of this study. Audio recording will take place during the session to ensure accuracy with transcriptions.
4. Review the transcriptions from your interview and participation in the focus group session for accuracy. This will take about 15 minutes.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. However, you may benefit from participating in a collaborative conversation during the focus group with other general and/or special education teachers who work with high school students with low reading achievement.

Benefits to society may include understanding how to address academic outcomes for high school students with reading deficits and are at risk of academic failure.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify an individual. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential using pseudonyms.
- Interviews and focus groups will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.
- Data collected from you may be used in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is reused or shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed beforehand.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted, and all hardcopy records will be shredded.
- Interview and focus groups will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will be compensated for participating in this study. At the conclusion of the interview, letter of advice, focus group and review of your transcripts participants will receive a $25 Amazon gift card.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Kimberly Wilson. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at [redacted] or [redacted]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Gail Collins, at [redacted].

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

_____
Printed Subject Name

_____
Signature & Date

Appendix G: Interview Questions for Participants

1. Please tell me about yourself, your educational background, and career through your current position. CQ
2. Describe your decision to pursue a career in education and to work with high school students. CQ
3. Describe your experience working with students with a learning disability. CQ
4. Describe your challenges working with high school students with reading deficits. CQ
5. Describe how you create opportunities for high school students with low reading skills to develop planning and monitoring skills. SQ1
6. Describe the methods you use to help students with low reading skills to extract information from a text reading to understand and learn the material. SQ1
7. Describe how you help students gain knowledge in a given subject area. SQ1
8. Describe the instructional approaches you use to foster reading motivation. SQ2
9. Describe your challenges with motivating high school students with low reading deficits. SQ2
10. Describe successful practices you use working with high school students experiencing academic failures due to low reading achievement. SQ3
11. Describe how you integrate strategies for learning and thinking. SQ3
12. What else would you like to add to our discussion of your experiences working with high school students with reading deficits? SQ3
13. My goal is to seek an understanding of how teachers nurture the development of self-regulated learning to address academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement. You will be given a prompt and asked to write a letter of advice to

another educator. What are your initial thoughts on writing a letter of recommendation to another educator and what challenges do you foresee with writing this letter?

Appendix H: Teacher Letter Instructions

Dear Educators

When you hear the term self-regulated learning, what comes to mind? For me what comes to mind is stability in learning. Zimmerman (1986, 1990) described self-regulated learning as the systematic use of metacognitive skills, motivation, and learning strategies to achieve academic goals. Think about your experiences working with high school students with a reading disability. Reflect on learning strategies, and instructional practices. Think about their struggles with meeting grade level expectations and risks of academic failure. Taking all this into consideration, write a letter to another educator who teaches high school students with reading deficits and who maybe struggling with how to help those who have a reading deficit. What advice would you give the teacher?

Please email your letter of advice by [] at [redacted]. If you have any questions don't hesitate to ask me. Thank you for your time and assistance in helping me describe how teachers nurture the development of self-regulated learning to address academic outcomes for high school students with low reading achievement.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Wilson

Appendix I: Focus Group Questions

1. In the letter, you commented on.… Please describe your experience.
2. In the letter, you listed strategies that you use. Please describe the method that has been most effective for ...
3. Describe how special and general education teachers in your building collaborate to develop strategies for students experiencing academic failures due to low reading achievement.
4. Describe challenges with meeting academic needs for high school students with low reading achievement in your building?
5. I noticed in the data I've collected thus far that a common theme is … What can you add to this?
6. Another common theme I noticed is … what are your thoughts about this theme?

Appendix J: Audit Trail

Audit Trail

Date.	Task
April 20, 2023	Contacted Admins from the teacher Facebook page. I received notice from the admin that approval is not needed to post the recruitment flyer
October 5, 2023	Defended proposal, granted approval.
October 9, 2023	Started IRB application.
October 12, 2023	Submitted application for IRB approval.
November 6, 2023	Received IRB approval letter.
November 13, 2023	Began recruiting participants, posted flyer on NC Teacher Facebook page and other social media platforms.
November 30th-December 2nd	Conducted pilot study with the first two participants, made minor changes as needed, member checking.
January 23, 2024	Completed data collection, finished member checking.
February 1, 2024	Completed Data Analysis

Appendix K: Reflexive Journal

Reflexive Journal

Date	Entry
March 2022	When asked to think about a topic of interest, I knew I wanted to focus on reading in some capacity. This topic was a personal interest because, working as a special educator, I saw students struggle because of low reading skills. So, I wanted to do all I could to ensure that the students that I worked with increased their reading skills. I initially focused on the impact of teachers' structured literacy approaches to address reading proficiency. I focused on this because I knew the impact of evidence-based practices on reading achievement. I worked with an elementary student with dyslexia using structured literacy approaches, and the student made tremendous gains. This led to my decision to explore reading proficiency.
July 2022	After several revisions and careful thought, I shifted my focus to high school students as this population is not studied enough. I changed my title to How do teachers nurture the development of self-regulated learning to address academic outcomes for high school students with low reaching achievement (multiple case study). I planned to use three different high schools in a school district. High school students with reading disabilities are overlooked and sometimes mishandled. They don't always receive the support needed to be successful in school. At this stage, they need to learn strategies or skills that will assist them beyond high school. My bias is that high school teachers who teach students with reading challenges don't spend enough time teaching strategies.
March 2023	As I started seeking district approval to conduct my research, I began to think about the strenuous guidelines to conduct research in my school district, and if I met all of them, it was not a guarantee that I would have been approved. Therefore, I changed from a Multiple Case Study to a transcendental phenomenological study where I would recruit participants from social media and not through a school district. Although I am biased, I presume this change will yield similar results.
November/December 2023	No one seemed interested after the first 2 weeks of recruiting on social media, posting on my personal and teachers' Facebook pages. So, I decided to post daily on the teachers' Facebook page by getting up early and posting on the page. When I received my first two participants, I was excited and nervous at the same. As I continued to post daily, the participants were asked to share with colleagues who matched the criteria. As I pondered the recruitment process, I could not help but think

	if I had made the right decision to limit the participants to North Carolina. I was asked the question, do participants have to teach in North Carolina? I thought about modifying the setting to widen the search for participants.
January 2024	Data collection has been interesting. Transcriptions have been taxing but insightful at the same time. I'm learning a lot about the participants and their dedication to students with reading challenges. Hearing the passion in their voices and describing their measures to support their students is fantastic. To be honest, I didn't think high school teachers were this invested; however, I've been proven wrong. When reading their letters, I can feel the compassion. I'm glad to finally be at this stage of data collection and interpreting the data. It's an incredible feeling, but I'm uncertain about the data analysis process.
February 2024	Upon completion of data collection, I dived right into data analysis, manually recording the codes and themes on giant Post-it notes. I know some individuals used a program to organize their themes, but I'm glad I did it manually, as it helped me engage more with the data. I have spent weeks writing Chapters 4 and 5. It has been a love/hate thing as I struggled to get my thoughts on paper. However, having the Post-it notes on my walls has helped me stay focused on the data.