A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF THE ALABAMA READING INITIATIVE-PROJECT FOR ADOLESCENT LITERACY

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ABSTRACT

A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF THE ALABAMA READING INITIATIVE-PROJECT FOR ADOLESCENT LITERACY

Michael Kent Merold

This study describes the initial year of the Alabama Reading Initiative-Project for Adolescent Literacy (ARI-PAL). The ARI-PAL was developed in response to a growing concern over the state of literacy instruction in Alabama's secondary schools after the 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress revealed that 77 percent of the state's fourth-graders and 78 percent of the state's eighth-graders were reading below proficiency.

In the spring of 2006, the Alabama Reading Initiative launched the ARI-PAL with three primary purposes. The first purpose was to build highly successful adolescent literacy demonstration sites by making research-based local education authority (LEA) investments in adolescent literacy efforts and by concentrating the available ARI secondary resources in a small number of schools. A second purpose for the ARI-PAL was to develop advocacy and to secure funding for implementing the ARI into more secondary schools. The third purpose for the ARI-PAL was to increase the effectiveness of the ARI secondary model by making it compatible with the latest research on adolescent literacy instruction.

The results of this study explain the experiences of the 14 ARI-PAL schools and provide recommendations for other secondary schools interested in strengthening the reading and writing skills of their students. To address the purpose of this study, the following research questions were explored:

1. Did the students participating in the ARI-PAL program in 14 selected Alabama schools increase their achievement as measured by SAT-10?
2. Using descriptive data from site visits and educators' experiences, what were the perceived successes and challenges of the ARI-PAL program during the first year of implementation?

SAT-10 data were analyzed to determine if the ARI-PAL model was successful in positively impacting the reading achievement of students in the participating schools. To document the implementation and challenges to the implementation of the ARI-PAL model, site visit forms designed to provide weekly anecdotal data on progress in each school were analyzed. Areas addressed in the site visit reports included instructional leadership, the administration of formal and informal assessments, reading intervention for struggling readers, implementation of strategic teaching in the content area classrooms, and professional development.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation was a case study of the first implementation year of the Alabama Reading Initiative – Project for Adolescent Literacy (ARI-PAL). The study was based primarily upon the experiences of 14 secondary schools in Alabama that partnered with the Alabama State Department of Education to develop a model for addressing the literacy needs of adolescents. This first chapter of the dissertation presents the background of the study and defines the problem and its significance. The data used in Chapter One to establish the relevance of the problem were the same data Alabama State Department of Education officials used in the spring of 2006 as the rationale for the establishment of the ARI-PAL.

Statement and Relevance of the Problem

This section provides data that were reviewed prior to the implementation of ARI-PAL beginning in the spring of 2006. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2003), there were 8 million struggling readers in grades 4 through 12 in schools across our nation. Almost half of all African-American and Hispanic eighth graders lacked the prerequisite knowledge and reading skills that are fundamental for proficient work at their grade level. Only 13 percent of African-American and Hispanic eighth graders read at or above proficiency level, demonstrating competency over challenging subject matter, including subject-matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real-world situations, and analytical skills appropriate to the subject matter (Grigg, Daane, Jin, & Campbell, 2003). However, weak adolescent literacy skills

were a problem not just for minorities. The average percentage of all students meeting fourth and eighth grade National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading proficiency standards was less than 50 percent in every state. Only 35 percent of twelfth graders in public schools read at or above grade level with 27 percent reading "below basic," meaning that they were unable to understand or to make interpretations about text (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2005).

The President's Commission of Excellence in Special Education (2002) reported that approximately one-third of the 6 million students receiving special education services in the United States have not learned to read. Regardless of whether students were identified as eligible for special education services or not, most at-risk adolescents never received the intensive reading instruction they need. Only about 20 percent of the approximately 16,000 school districts in the United States employed reading specialists to work with struggling adolescent readers (Quality Education Data, 2004).

Students that displayed poor reading skills in the middle grades faced even tougher challenges as they entered high school. Every school day, more than 3,000 students dropped out of high school (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2003). Among developed countries, the United States ranked 17th in high school graduation rates (Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development, 2006). Only 70 percent of high school students graduated on time with a regular diploma, and fewer than 60 percent of African-American and Latino students did so (Black Alliance for Educational Options, 2002). The lowest high school graduation rates were concentrated in "majority minority" and urban districts (Orfield, Losen, & Wald, 2004). The most commonly cited reason for students dropping out of high school was that they lacked the literacy skills needed to keep up with the high school curriculum (Kamil, 2003). This observation was supported by data indicating that the lowest-achieving 25 percent of students were 20 times more likely to drop out of high school than students in the highest achievement quartile (Carnevale, 2001).

Students who dropped out of school discovered that finding meaningful employment was a challenge. The United States has developed a knowledge-based economy that requires better educated, highly literate, and technologically fluent high school graduates (Carnegie Corporation of New York, 2004). The number of unskilled jobs in this country is steadily decreasing with the 25 fastest declining professions having lower than average literacy demands (Barton, 2000). Nearly two-thirds of new jobs in this decade will require some postsecondary education, and the fastest growing jobs have the highest literacy and education demands (Carnevale and Derochers, 2004). According to 2001 national census data, 42 percent of 16- to 24-year olds who failed to graduate from high school or earn a general equivalency diploma reported no employment income that year. The Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (2005) reported that only 4 in 10 adults who dropped out of high school were employed.

Dropouts who found employment often found themselves stuck in low-paying jobs and in need of public assistance. Dropouts were three times more likely to face poverty and receive public assistance than were high school graduates (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2002). The average annual income for a high school dropout in 2004 was $16,485 compared to $26,156 for a high school graduate, a difference of $9,671 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2005). According to a 2001 report of the Coalition of Juvenile Justice, the nation was drained of more than $200 billion in lost earnings and taxes because of America's high dropout rate. The long-term impact of the high school dropout rate on the nation's economy is significant. If the students who dropped out of the class of 2006 had graduated, the nation's economy would have benefited from an additional $309 billion in income over their lifetimes. The over 12,000 students who dropped out of Alabama high schools in 2006 will cost the state's economy over $3 billion over their lifetimes (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2007).

More alarming for dropouts is the prospect of incarceration. According to the Coalition for Juvenile Justice (2001), 82 percent of prison inmates were school dropouts,

many of whom were unable to read. More than one-third of all juvenile offenders (median age 15.5 years old) read below the fourth-grade level. If the male graduation rate were increased by only five percent, the nation would see an annual savings of $4.9 billion in crime-related costs (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2006).

Many students graduating from high schools in the United States do so without ever acquiring the literacy skills necessary for postsecondary education or meaningful employment. A recent study of high school juniors and seniors taking the ACT college entrance exam found that only half of the students were ready for college-level reading assignments in core subjects like math, history, science, and English (ACT, 2006).

Almost 40 percent of high school graduates lacked the reading and writing skills that employers seek and almost a third of high school graduates who enroll in college required remediation (Greene & Winters, 2005). Annually, $1.4 billion is spent to provide remedial education to college students who have recently completed high school (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2006). The odds of students entering college unprepared for the rigor of college-level assignments succeeding academically were poor. College students who enrolled in a remedial reading course were 41 percent more likely to drop out of college and only 17 percent earned a bachelor's degree within eight years (NCES, 2004).

In Alabama the number of struggling readers is staggering. Data from the 2005 administration of the Stanford Achievement Test-Tenth Edition (SAT-10) identified 205 middle schools (31%) with over half their students reading below proficiency. The disaggregated data indicate that in 443 middle schools (66%) over half of the African-American and Hispanic students were reading below proficiency. The 2005 NAEP results for Alabama students were just as alarming, with 77% of fourth graders and 78% of eighth graders reading below proficiency (NAEP, 2005).

When it comes to reading, African-American students in Alabama were underachieving at an alarming rate. African-American fourth graders scored 20 points below the state average and 31 points below the national average in reading on the 2005

NAEP. Eighth-grade African-American students did not fare much better, scoring 17 points below the state average and 27 points below the national average in reading. As sub-groups on the 2005 NAEP, African-American students in both fourth and eighth grades in Alabama scored lower in reading than any other group in the United States (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2005). Many of these students attended high poverty schools, which tend to be staffed by teachers who are less experienced, less qualified, and more likely to leave than their counterparts at more affluent schools.

The Alabama State Department of Education launched the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) in 1998 to improve the literacy skills of Alabama students. This researcher became involved with the initiative shortly after its inception and served as a coordinator for the secondary component of the ARI until the spring of 2008. Although the ARI was a K-12 initiative from its inception, the focus was on developing reading proficiency in elementary school students, with an emphasis on K-3. Despite the focus on early literacy skills, the number of secondary schools participating in the ARI grew steadily, and by 2002 approximately 135 middle and high schools had completed ARI training. Unfortunately, because of budget constraints, follow-up support for ARI secondary schools was limited to monthly visits from ARI regional staff. Since the majority of the ARI state and regional staff had elementary education backgrounds, the training and support provided to secondary ARI schools varied very little from the training provided to elementary ARI schools. Periodic visits to ARI secondary schools by ARI state and regional staff revealed very little evidence that ARI training was being implemented in classrooms.

In 2002, in an effort to make ARI training more effective for secondary schools, the Alabama State Department of Education created a five-member team to work exclusively with secondary schools involved in the ARI. Each of these ARI staff members was responsible for supporting approximately thirty secondary schools. The professional development provided to the ARI secondary schools changed significantly with more emphasis being placed on training teachers to provide instruction in vocabulary,

comprehension, and writing skills as they taught their content material. While the professional development was generally well accepted by secondary educators, lack of follow-up support made it difficult to establish and sustain efforts to improve adolescent literacy.

In the spring of 2005, the Alabama State Department of Education partnered with thirteen school systems in Alabama to write an application for the Striving Readers Grant. The proposal outlined a plan to provide reading intervention to struggling readers and implement research-based literacy strategies across the curriculum in eight schools. However, the experimental design required by the grant, which would have withheld reading intervention from some students identified as struggling readers, was of concern to many of the stakeholders involved in the project. Shortly before the deadline to submit the Striving Readers proposal, ARI administrators decided not to pursue the grant.

In the spring of 2006, the ARI launched the Project for Adolescent Literacy (ARI-PAL) with three primary purposes. The first purpose was to build highly successful adolescent literacy demonstration sites by making research-based LEA investments in adolescent literacy efforts and by concentrating the available ARI secondary resources in a small number of schools that had any combination of grades four through nine. A second purpose for the ARI-PAL was to develop advocacy for and to secure funding for implementing the ARI in more secondary schools. The third purpose for the ARI-PAL was to increase the effectiveness of the ARI secondary model by making it compatible with the latest research and what we had learned through our training and support of 135 secondary schools.

All school systems in Alabama were invited to submit proposals to participate in ARI-PAL. Twenty-five systems submitted proposals and 14 schools were selected to become ARI-PAL schools. Professional development for ARI-PAL faculties began in the spring of 2006 and is ongoing.

Purpose of the Study

In order to address the adolescent literacy problem, the Alabama State Department of Education launched the Alabama Reading Initiative Project for Adolescent Literacy in the spring of 2006, and 14 middle schools began implementation during the 2006-2007 school year. The purpose of this descriptive study was to describe the initial year of the ARI-PAL thoroughly. Consequently, the results of this study explain the experiences of the 14 ARI-PAL schools and provide recommendations for other secondary schools interested in strengthening the reading and writing skills of their students. To address the purpose of this study, the following research questions were explored:

1. Do the students participating in the ARI-PAL program in 14 selected Alabama schools increase their achievement as measured by SAT-10?
2. Do the students participating in the ARI-PAL program in 14 selected Alabama schools increase their Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE) scores?
3. Using descriptive data from site visits and educators' experiences, what were the perceived successes and challenges of the ARI-PAL program during the first year of implementation?

In this study, a descriptive approach was used to analyze and explain the initial year of ARI-PAL implementation. To determine if student achievement in reading changed within ARI-PAL schools, scores on the SAT-10 and Alabama Reading and Math Test (ARMT) from 2006 were compared to scores on these same measures in 2007. Schools were placed into one of three groups based on whether reading achievement increased, decreased, or showed no significant change.

In order to study program implementation and how closely the ARI-PAL model matched the model-in-use, detailed descriptive information was gathered using weekly site visit reports from ARI-PAL regional staff members and data from periodic walk-throughs conducted by school administrators. Implementation data were categorized as

pertaining to one of the following components: school leadership, assessment, reading intervention, or strategic teaching. Implementation information was then compared to achievement data to determine if the level of implementation of these components impacted student achievement.

Definitions

Alabama reading initiative –project for adolescent literacy (ARI-PAL). ARI-PAL is a project launched by the Alabama Reading Initiative to improve the literacy skills of students in grades four through nine. The original pilot, which began during the 2006-2007 school year, included fourteen middle schools located throughout Alabama.

National assessment of educational progress (NAEP). NAEP is a nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America's students know and can do in various subject areas. Assessments are conducted periodically in mathematics, reading, science, writing, the arts, civics, economics, geography, and U.S. history. These assessments follow the frameworks developed by the National Assessment Governing Board and use the latest advances in assessment methodology.

Stanford achievement test, tenth edition (SAT-10). SAT-10 is a multiple-choice assessment designed to help educators find out what students know and are able to do. The reading subtests reflect a balanced developmental curriculum. At appropriate levels, the subtests measure phonemic awareness, decoding, phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Strategic teaching. Strategic teaching is the process of incorporating purposeful planning, connected strategies, and explicit instruction to maximize the understanding and retention of content material. Strategic teaching incorporates before, during, and after reading strategies as well as a variety of vocabulary development and writing strategies.

Striving readers. Striving readers are adolescent readers who can decode with a reasonable amount of fluency and have little need for such instruction but require

instruction in strategies that will help them comprehend varied, content-rich, academic texts.

Struggling readers. Struggling readers are students who are at least two years behind grade level in reading and often need instruction in decoding and fluency.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concerns about the literacy skills of secondary students in the United States have prompted a number of individuals and organizations to analyze the research on adolescent literacy. The purpose of this review is to identify components of effective adolescent literacy instruction that have a solid research base. Articles selected for review were published after 2000 and focused on adolescent literacy instruction.

This review first provides a summary of nine bodies of research published after the year 2000 and then describes the major themes across the nine bodies of research.

Summaries of Recent Research on Adolescent Literacy

Academic Literacy Instruction for Adolescents: A Guidance Document from the Center on Instruction Study

The Florida Center for Reading Research at Florida State University conducted a review and analysis of a number of recent documents produced by scholars and organizations as they considered the research literature on adolescent literacy (Torgesen et al, 2007). The following documents were included in their review:

1. Adolescent literacy: A position statement. International Reading Association (1999).
2. Adolescent literacy and the achievement gap: What do we know and where do we go from here? Carnegie Corporation of New York (2003).
3. Adolescent literacy resources: Linking research and practice. Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University (2002).

4. Adolescents and literacy: Reading for the 21st century. Alliance for Excellent Education (2003).
5. Effective literacy instruction for adolescents. National Reading Conference
6. (2001).
7. Reading at risk: How states can respond to the crisis in adolescent literacy. National Association of State Boards of Education (2005).
8. Reading for understanding: Toward a research and development program in reading comprehension. Research and Development Corporation (2002).
9. Reading next: A vision for action and research in middle and high school literacy. Alliance for Excellent Education (2006).
10. Reading to achieve: A governor's guide to adolescent literacy. National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (2005).
11. Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction.
12. Report of the National Reading Panel. National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2000).
13. Ten years of research on adolescent literacy: 1994–2004: A review. Learning Point Associates (2005).
14. What should comprehension instruction be the instruction of? Handbook of reading research. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum (2000).

Torgesen et al. (2007) identified five high leverage improvements that seem most central to the goal of improving adolescent literacy and most likely to produce significant long-term improvements if they are widely and effectively implemented. The five areas of instructional focus and improvement they recommended are the following:

1. increasing the amount of explicit instruction in and support for the use of effective comprehension strategies throughout the school day;

2. increasing the amount and quality of open, sustained discussion of reading content;
3. setting and maintaining high standards for the level of text, conversation, questions, and vocabulary that are used in discussions and assignments;
4. increasing the use of a variety of practices to increase motivation and engagement with reading; and
5. increasing the use of specific instructional strategies that lead to greater learning of essential content knowledge by all students.

Recommendation one is to increase the amount of explicit instruction in and support for the use of effective comprehension strategies throughout the school day. Text comprehension is purposeful and active. According to the Report of the National Reading Panel (NICHD, 2000), effective comprehension instruction should include instruction in the following comprehension strategies:

1. comprehension monitoring,
2. use of graphic and semantic organizers,
3. question generation,
4. summarization and paraphrasing, and
5. selective rereading.

These comprehension strategies are conscious plans that good readers use flexibly and in combination to make sense of text. Increasing explicit instruction and support for the use of comprehension strategies is one of the most frequently cited recommendations for improving reading comprehension (NICHD, 2000). There is evidence that proficient readers monitor their comprehension more actively and effectively than less proficient readers (Pressley, 2000); proficient readers use a variety of cognitive strategies to enhance their comprehension of text and to repair it when it breaks down (Nation, 2005); and reading comprehension shows consistent improvement when students are explicitly

taught comprehension strategies and provided supported, scaffolded practice in the use of those strategies (Rosenshine, Meister, & Chapman, 1996).

Recommendation two is for teachers to increase the amount and quality of open, sustained discussion of reading content. Participation in high-quality, teacher-guided, and small group discussions on the meaning of text is a direct way to increase students' ability to think about and learn from text (Beck, & McKeown, 2006). In a review of both qualitative and quantitative research on the impact of discussion-oriented teaching on understanding and comprehension, Applebee, Langer, Nystrand, and Gamoran (2003) concluded that these lines of research overlap significantly in both the form and focus of the particular interventions advocated. The results converge to suggest that comprehension of difficult text can be significantly enhanced by replacing traditional initiation-response-evaluation patterns of instruction with discussion-based activities in which students are invited to make predictions, summarize, and link texts with one another, and with background knowledge, generate and answer text-related questions, clarify understanding, muster relevant evidence to support an interpretation, and interrelate reading, writing, and discussion.

In a meta-analysis of the research literature on the impact of discussion-oriented instruction on reading comprehension, Murphy and Edwards (2005) examined effects from 75 studies that used students aged from pre-adolescence through high school. The most important conclusion from the study was that approaches emphasizing critical analysis of text or involving discussion of specific questions about text had the most consistently positive effect on reading comprehension outcomes.

Evidence suggests that discussion of text has two potential kinds of impact on student learning. First, extended discussion of text can improve students' understanding and learning of the specific texts under discussion. Second, students who have opportunities to engage in text-based discussions develop habits of analysis and critical thinking that support improved comprehension when they read text on their own (Torgesen et al., 2007).

Recommendation three is that teachers should set and maintain high standards for the level of text, conversation, questions, and vocabulary that are used in discussions and assignments. To raise adolescent literacy standards, state-level literacy leaders must adopt clear and comprehensive literacy standards which must be reflected in state-level accountability measures. The National Association of State Boards of Education, in its publication *Reading at Risk: How States Can Respond to the Crisis in Adolescent Literacy* (2005), has as its first recommendation for state level policy to raise literacy expectations across the curriculum for all students in all grades. In *Reading to Achieve: A Governor's Guide to Adolescent Literacy* (2005) published by the National Governors Association, the second recommendation is to raise state standards to meet the literacy expectations of employers and postsecondary institutes and revise state standards to include explicit expectations for literacy instruction across grade levels and content areas.

Changes in state standards must be followed by action at the district and school level in order to impact student achievement. According to Langer (2001), teachers and administrators must deconstruct and analyze state standards and test items. This analysis should be followed by a review and revision of curriculum and instructional guidelines to ensure that identified skills and knowledge are incorporated into the curriculum.

Recommendation four is that teachers should increase the use of a variety of practices to increase motivation and engagement with reading. Comprehension of complex text is an effort-filled process that requires active use of background knowledge, active use of appropriate reading strategies, and an actively thoughtful response. The more students are motivated to comprehend and the more they are engaged with the text, the more successful they will be (Research and Development Reading Study Group, 2002). Focusing student learning on interesting topics, using hands-on demonstrations, encouraging discussion of text, and providing explicit instruction in multiple reading comprehension strategies can enhance students' motivation to read.

Guthrie and Humenick (2004) conducted a meta-analysis of instructional practices that enhanced motivation and engagement with text. They identified four practices with significant effect sizes: content goals for instruction, meaning that students had interesting goals to achieve through reading; choice and autonomy, meaning that students had a reasonable amount of choice in reading materials; interesting texts, including books written at multiple levels; and opportunities to collaborate with others in discussion to achieve learning goals. The texts that adolescents are asked to read can be motivating or frustrating. In many content classrooms, struggling readers are expected to read text which is too difficult for them (Moje, 2006). Beers (2003) recommends having text available to students at multiple levels of difficulty that address the same concept.

Recommendation five is that teachers should increase the use of specific instructional strategies that lead to greater learning of essential content knowledge by all students. There are numerous studies that document the positive effect of background knowledge on reading comprehension (Hirsh, 2006). Schneider, Korkel, and Weinert (1989) conducted a study on students with varying levels of general verbal ability and varying levels of background knowledge on a particular subject. They concluded that students with lower general verbal ability can comprehend and remember text as well as students of higher general ability if they are equally familiar and knowledgeable about the material they are listening to or reading. In their work with schema theory, Anderson and Pearson (1984) concluded that how much students already know about a topic in the text they are reading exercises a powerful influence on their ability to comprehend, think about, and remember new information.

One type of knowledge that has an important impact on reading comprehension is vocabulary knowledge. Both knowledge of general words with much utility and content-specific words are important for reading comprehension (Stanovich, Cunningham, & Freeman, 1984). The most current recommendations for vocabulary instruction suggest wide reading, direct teaching of high-utility words, instruction in word learning

strategies, and activities that promote word consciousness (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002).

In addition to recommending areas of instructional focus and improvement, the Florida Center for Reading Research at Florida State University conducted a meta-analysis on instructional research with struggling readers that led to several conclusions about interventions for struggling students. First, schools need to be able to provide high-quality instruction in both word-level and comprehension skills. Instructional support will vary from differentiated instruction in the content-area classrooms to pull-out programs for intensive reading intervention. Second, the content of effective literacy instruction for students reading below grade level is similar to that recommended for students reading at grade level or above. All students should have the opportunity to apply reading comprehension strategies, develop stronger vocabularies, and engage in motivating assignments that increase content-area knowledge. Finally, there has not been enough research over a substantial period of time to determine the extent that interventions can close the reading gap for students with varying degrees of reading impairment (Torgesen et al., 2007)

Reading Next Study

In a report from Carnegie Corporation of New York titled *Reading Next*, Biancarosa and Snow (2004) delineated fifteen elements aimed at improving middle and high school literacy achievement. The fifteen elements were a result of the work of a panel of educational researchers who met in spring 2004 with representatives of Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Alliance for Excellent Education to draw up a set of recommendations to meet the needs of our nation's struggling readers. The literature supporting the panel's recommendations includes over ninety books and research articles. The following are the fifteen elements the panel believes can have an immediate impact on the literacy achievement of adolescent learners:

1. direct, explicit comprehension instruction, which is instruction in the strategies and processes that proficient readers use to understand what they read, including summarizing, keeping track of one's own understanding, and a host of other practices;
2. effective instructional principles embedded in content, including language arts teachers using content-area texts and content-area teachers providing instruction and practice in reading and writing skills specific to their subject area;
3. motivation and self-directed learning, which includes building motivation to read and learn and providing students with the instruction and supports needed for independent learning tasks they will face after graduation;
4. text-based collaborative learning, which involves students interacting with one another around a variety of texts;
5. strategic tutoring, which provides students intense individualized reading, writing, and content instruction as needed;
6. diverse texts, which are texts at a variety of difficulty levels and on a variety of topics;
7. intensive writing, including instruction connected to the kinds of writing tasks students will have to perform well in high school and beyond;
8. a technology component, which includes technology as a tool for and a topic of literacy instruction;
9. ongoing formative assessment of students, which is informal, often daily assessment of how students are progressing under current instructional practices;
10. extended time for literacy, which includes approximately two to four hours of literacy instruction and practice that takes place in language arts and content-area classes;

11. professional development that is both long term and ongoing;
12. ongoing summative assessment of students and programs, which is formal and provides data that are reported for accountability and research purposes;
13. teacher teams, which are interdisciplinary teams that meet regularly to discuss students and align instruction;
14. leadership, which can come from principals and teachers who have a solid understanding of how to teach reading and writing to the full array of students present in schools; and
15. a comprehensive and coordinated literacy program, which is interdisciplinary and interdepartmental and may even coordinate with out-of-school organizations and the local community.

Teaching Middle and High School Students to Read and Write Well: Six Features of Effective Instruction Study

According to According to Langer, Close, Angelis, and Preller (2000), high-performing middle and high schools that succeed in teaching students to read and write well "weave a web of connections" that support literacy. Langer's five-year study of English programs, conducted in 44 classrooms in 25 schools in four states, discovered major differences between effective adolescent literacy programs and ineffective ones. Highly successful programs, Langer found, practice six instructional practices concurrently and consistently:

1. Teach students using a variety of activities, including independent lessons, exercises, and drills; lessons involving reading and writing about new concepts and information; and lessons in which students apply new learning in class discussions.
2. Prepare students for tests by emphasizing the knowledge on which they will be assessed, and integrate test preparation into daily lessons instead of giving students separate drills.

3. Incorporate students' real-life experiences both in and out of school into daily lessons.
4. Give students critical reading and writing strategies they need to succeed on daily lessons and homework assignments.
5. Provide time for students to read broadly on topics of interest, explore texts from many points of view, and conduct their own research.
6. Foster collaborative learning by placing students in well-chosen groups. Prompt students to raise questions, discuss ideas, and "bump minds" with one another (Langer, Close, Angelis, & Preller, 2000).

Every Child a Graduate Study

In the Alliance for Excellent Education's publication *Every Child a Graduate*, Joftus (2002) called for Congress and the President to strengthen and expand the Reading First program by adding an adolescent literacy initiative to its mission. Under the initiative, every high-needs middle and high school would have a literacy specialist who trains teachers across subject areas to improve the reading and writing skills of all students. In addition, teachers would learn to identify reading difficulties and ensure that students receive the extra help they need to become effective readers and writers who are thus able to succeed in challenging high school courses.

The Alliance for Excellent Education believes additional federal funding is needed to pay for diagnostic assessments, research-based curricula, release time for teachers to participate in professional development, and literacy specialists to train all teachers in Title I middle schools and high schools. The Alliance contends that when a comprehensive literacy program targeted to improving the skills of students reading below grade level is in place, all teachers will be empowered to ensure that every student has the literacy skills to succeed in challenging courses, meet academic standards, and graduate from high school prepared for college (Joftus, 2002).

Adolescent Literacy Resources: Linking Research and Practice Study

Adolescent Literacy Resources: Linking Research and Practice defines the elements of a successful literacy initiative based on a review of relevant research over the past twenty years. Meltzer, Smith, and Clark (2002) included previous reviews of research on adolescent literacy, classroom-based action research, and meta-analysis of studies relative to particular literacy strategies. According to the authors, the primary features of effective literacy programs are connections, interactions, and responsiveness.

To assist teachers and administrators in developing a cohesive approach to the issue, the Center for Resource Management (CRM), a partner organization of the LAB at Brown, developed the Adolescent Literacy Support Framework. Drawing from a number of fields, including cognitive psychology, linguistics, education, English language arts, second language acquisition, and reading, the author distilled core concepts into the Adolescent Literacy Support Framework. The Framework provides a comprehensive overview of what needs to be addressed to support adolescent literacy development effectively and identifies four key components of a successful initiative. By putting into practice all four key components, middle and high schools can meet the literacy needs of a wide variety of learners. These key components follow:

1. address student motivation to read and write;
2. implement research-based literacy strategies for teaching and learning;
3. integrate reading and writing across the curriculum; and
4. ensure support, sustainability, and focus through organizational structures and leadership capacity.

Key Component One is that teachers should address student motivation to read and write. Students that do not feel confident in their ability to read and write will choose not to use these skills to learn. These students fall into a cycle of academic failure. The key to breaking this cycle is student engagement. According to Guthrie, Wigfield, and VonSecker (2000), creating classrooms that center on student engagement is essential

to motivating students to develop positive literacy identities and strengthen literacy skills. The primary features of engaging classrooms are connections, interactions, and responsiveness. In student-centered classrooms, teachers constantly make connections between students' life experiences, a variety of texts, and previous school experiences. Students are expected to make and share connections in written and spoken communication. Teachers encourage students to question the text they read, discuss text in interactive, collaborative environments, and develop common understandings (Meltzer et al., 2002). Teachers need to understand the social and motivational needs of adolescents, and schools need to provide a variety of materials and resources so that teachers can respond to adolescents' needs for choice and flexibility.

Key Component Two is that teachers should implement research-based literacy strategies for teaching and learning. Researchers generally agree that poorer readers can be taught the strategies that better readers use (Alvermann & Moore, 1991). There is evidence that the following combination of literacy practices have enhanced literacy for adolescent learners:

1. teacher strategies,
2. a focus on reading and writing,
3. the importance of speaking and listening,
4. an emphasis on thinking, and
5. the establishment of student-centered classrooms.

Researchers also concur about the necessary conditions for implementation. To make effective use of these cognitive and metacognitive strategies, students must learn the literacy strategies, be given time to practice and apply them to a variety of contexts, and use them to learn across the content areas (Meltzer et al., 2002).

A number of particular literacy strategies, when explicitly taught, modeled, and practiced, enhance the ability of secondary students to use reading and writing across the content areas. Effective literacy support involves teachers using information

gathered from literacy assessment strategies to modify their instruction (Langer, 1999). Students who are presented strategies that allow for self-assessment of literacy skills are empowered to take charge of their learning (Peterson, Caverly, Nicholson, O'Neal, & Cusenbary, 2000).

The use of writing along with feedback and opportunities to edit as an integral part of content-literacy development improves written communication skills, thinking skills, and memory (Schoebach, Greenleaf, Cziko, & Hurwitz 1999). Research supports the premise that ample time spent reading and writing will improve those skills (Davidson & Koppenhauer, 1993). Sustained silent reading has been linked to improved reading skills and the development of a positive literacy culture (Flaspeter, 1995).

Integration of speaking and listening into content-area classrooms improves comprehension and writing skills, increases student motivation to read, and helps students make connections with text (Wilkinson & Silliman, 2000; Alvermann & Phelps, 1998). A variety of literacy skills can be developed when students are given the opportunity to brainstorm, discuss, and share ideas in a collaborative setting. Collaborative learning is particularly important for developing the literacy skills of second language learners (Tharp, 1999).

Cognitive strategies incorporating reading, writing, speaking, and listening stimulate students to use higher-order thinking skills (Graves, 2000). The research indicates a positive correlation between frequent use of cognitive strategies and adolescent literacy development (Alvermann & Moore, 1991; Collins, 1994; Schoenbach et al., 1999). Metacognitive strategies allow students to monitor their own comprehension and therefore improve comprehension and content-area learning (Colllins, Dickson, Simmons, & Kameenue., 2001).

Student-centered classrooms are conducive to adolescent literacy development. In student-centered classrooms, all students are expected to use speaking, listening, and thinking actively across contexts. Interactive discussions and experimental learning occur

regularly (Meltzer et al., 2002). The teacher supports literacy by serving as a facilitator of collaborative learning experiences (Alvermann & Phelps, 1998).

Key Component Three is that teachers should integrate reading and writing across the curriculum. Evidence indicates there is a connection between increased use of reading and writing in the content areas and better achievement for all students (Moore, Alvermann, & Hinchman., 2000; Peterson et al., 2000). Educators that incorporate activities that require reading and writing into their instruction help their students develop the skills that allow them to think scientifically, analyze literature, and communicate mathematically. Strategies such as concept mapping, KWL, and two-column note taking can increase achievement regardless of the specific content. Research indicates that when combined with problem-solving approaches to reading comprehension, discipline-based literacy strategies have a significant impact on literacy development (Langer, 1999).

Key Component Four is that teachers should ensure support, sustainability, and focus through organizational structures and leadership capacity. Implementing and sustaining change requires organizational and leadership structures that are specific to the literacy initiative and take into account how secondary schools work. Without this support, restructuring efforts are short-lived because of teacher frustration, stress and burnout among those attempting to implement change (Nolan & Meister, 2000). One study found that schools that effectively implemented literacy initiatives exhibited a variety of organizational support structures. These structures included time for teachers to meet and examine student work, clear instructional goals, the use of assessment data, and ongoing professional development for teachers. Administrators kept the focus on student achievement, provided teachers with resources and scheduling support, and were actively involved in meetings and professional development (Langer, 1999).

Adolescents and Literacy: Reading for the 21st Century Study

Adolescents and Literacy: Reading for the 21st Century (Kamil, 2003) examines several reviews of research on adolescent literacy including *Secondary School Reading*,

a review by Alvermann and Moore; *Preventing Reading Difficulties*, authored by Snow, Burns, and Griffin; *The Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction: Reports of the Subgroups*; and *Reading for Understanding: Toward a Research and Development Program in Reading Comprehension.* Specifically targeted for examination are the issues of motivation, alphabetic principle, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension.

Motivation in reading can be defined as the cluster of personal goals, values, and beliefs with regard to the topics, processes, and outcomes of reading that an individual possesses (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997). Strategy instruction, in which students are taught how to apply specific strategies, is critical to increasing students' motivation (Guthrie et al.,1996). Strategies that are likely to increase students' self-efficacy in reading are activating prior knowledge, looking for information, comprehending informational texts, interpreting literature, and self-monitoring (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997). Motivation and engagement are critical for adolescent readers. If students are not motivated to read, research shows that they will not benefit from reading instruction (Kamil, 2003).

Alphabetics is the term applied to skills such as phonemic awareness and phonics that are required to decode print to speech (Kamil 2003). The National Reading Panel found that instruction in phonemic awareness was effective only for kindergarten and first-grade students. The strongest impact of phonics instruction was evident in normally developing and at-risk first graders as well as at-risk kindergarteners. Phonics instruction had the least impact on struggling second through sixth grade students (NICHD, 2000).

Approximately ten percent of adolescent struggling readers have not mastered the alphabetic principle. Research indicates instruction can help remediate this problem (Kamil, 2003). Suggestions for helping adolescents struggling with word identification include systematic, explicit, and direct phonics instruction (Curtis & Chmelka, 1994); instruction in high-frequency sound-spelling relationships (Blevins, 2001); and emphasis

of connections among word analysis, word recognition, and semantic access (Henry, 1990).

Fluency is defined as the ability to read quickly, accurately, and with appropriate expression (Kamil, 2003). A study conducted by the National Assessment of Educational Progress found a close relationship between fluency and reading comprehension (Pinnell et al., 1995). A more recent Research and Development Reading Study Group (2002) study also found evidence that good comprehenders are usually fluent readers.

In a review of the instructional research on fluency, the National Reading Panel reported findings on two different instructional interventions: repeated reading in which students read and reread a passage until they can read it fluently and guided reading practice. The National Reading Panel found that repeated reading had a clear impact on the reading ability of normally developing readers through fourth grade as well as on students with reading problems throughout high school. Studies of older students receiving guided oral reading instruction found that they display significant improvements in reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension (NICHD, 2000).

Vocabulary is strongly related to general reading achievement (Davis, 1942). Reading involves decoding text to speech. However, comprehension can occur only if the words decoded are in the reader's oral vocabulary. Therefore, when it comes to comprehending text, students with strong vocabularies have a distinct advantage over students with weaker vocabularies.

The National Reading Panel reached the following conclusions about vocabulary:

1. repetition and rich support are essential for increasing vocabulary;
2. revising materials and designing instruction to meet the needs of learners often facilitates vocabulary learning;
3. vocabulary learning should entail active engagement;
4. computer technology can enhance vocabulary instruction;

5. vocabulary should be taught both directly and indirectly; and
6. vocabulary can be acquired through incidental learning (NICHD, 2000).

While studies showed that both vocabulary and comprehension improved as a result of direct vocabulary instruction, it is clear that vocabulary learning must include more than explicit instruction (Kamil, 2003).

The National Reading Panel analyzed 203 studies of comprehension strategy instruction with the majority of the studies involving students in fourth grade and above (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000). The National Reading Panel found that there was research evidence for the efficacy of the following eight strategies:

1. comprehension monitoring,
2. cooperative learning,
3. graphic organizers,
4. recognizing story structure,
5. question answering,
6. question generating,
7. summarization, and
8. multiple strategy application.

Although there is not a great deal of research on the instruction of prior knowledge, the importance of having sufficient prior knowledge is clearly important (Dole, Valencia, Greer, & Wardrop, 1991).

There is a strong enough body of research evidence about adolescent literacy to guide educators to make positive changes. There is evidence that improving decoding and fluency skills leads to better reading comprehension; motivation and engagement are critical elements for adolescents; and professional development for teachers has positive effects on student reading achievement (Kamil, 2003).

Effective Literacy Instruction for Adolescents Study

Effective Literacy Instruction for Adolescents (Alvermann, 2001a) builds on elements of both formal and informal literacies by taking into account students' interests and needs while at the same time attending to the challenges of living in an information-based economy. Adolescent literacy instruction, if it is to be effective, must address issues of self-efficacy and student engagement with a variety of texts in diverse settings. It must also attend to the literacy demands of subject area classes, to struggling readers, to issues of critical literacy, and to participatory instructional approaches that actively engage adolescents in their own learning (Alvermann, 2001b).

If academic literacy instruction is to be effective, it must address issues of self-efficacy and engagement (Alvermann, 2001a). Perceptions of self-efficacy are central to most theories of motivation. Providing adolescents with clear goals for a comprehension task and then giving feedback on the progress they are making can lead to increased self-efficacy and greater use of comprehension strategies (Shunk & Rice, 1993). In a review of how instruction influences students' reading engagement, Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) concluded that instructional practices do not directly impact student outcomes. Instead, the level of student engagement is the mediating factor through which classroom instruction influences student achievement. The engagement model of reading, advocated by Guthrie and Wigfield, calls for instruction that fosters student motivation through goal setting, strategy use, growth in conceptual knowledge, and social interaction.

The expectation that effective literacy instruction should address the demands that various subject area classes place on adolescents is fueled by the need to develop students' abilities to comprehend and think critically about multiple forms of text related to school curriculum. Adolescents respond to the literacy demands of their subject area classes when they have appropriate background knowledge and strategies for reading a variety of texts (Alvermann, 2001a). Effective teachers provide strategy instruction, ensure students have adequate background information, integrate reading and writing as

often as possible, and provide adolescents opportunities to weave their own experiences, feelings, and interests into learning activities (Tierney & Shanahan, 1991; Alexander & Jetton, 2000; Wade & Moje, 2000).

Effective literacy instruction addresses the needs of struggling readers. Research conducted as part of the Strategic Literacy Network found that teachers who had shelved their course textbooks because students struggled to read them were able to reintroduce the texts once students were taught comprehension strategies and became more confident in their abilities as readers (Schoenbach et al., 1999). There is evidence that opportunities to learn can also be extended by making instruction more culturally responsive. A cultural modeling approach to teaching has been shown to be effective in motivating underachieving African-American high school students to read book-length novels and engage in literary analysis. This approach, which built on students' cultural knowledge and personal experiences, sustained interest in reading and discussing texts over an entire school year (Lee, 2001). Studies have also shown that Latino students are also motivated to engage in school literacy tasks when the gap between school and the community environment is bridged (Garcia, 2000). Engaging in culturally responsive literacy instruction requires teaching that takes into account interfaces between home, community, and school literacy practices while attempting to reach struggling readers through skill instruction (Alvermann, 2001a).

Effective literacy instruction addresses the need to equip students with the ability to read with a critical eye. The idea that literacy is reinventing itself through digital technologies has enormous implications for teachers at the middle and high school level (Luke & Elkins, 1998). These technologies are irreversibly affecting how ideas get represented in texts and communicated (de Castell, 1996). It is important that students learn to read with a critical eye toward how writers represent people and their ideas and that students are aware that all texts, including their textbooks, routinely promote or silence particular views (Alvermann, 2001a). This understanding requires moving away

from overly simplistic categories like villains and heroes and developing an appreciation of how people may act provisionally at a particular time and within particular circumstances (Morgan, 1997).

There is evidence of the effectiveness of literacy instruction that integrates print and visual texts such as hypermedia, the Internet and interactive CD-ROMS (Leu, 2000). There is also evidence that adolescents are making valuable reading-writing connections when communicating in a computer-mediated world (Beach & Lundell, 1998). A four- year study of adolescents deemed "at risk" of dropping out of high school found that these students were able to produce their own electronic texts such as multimedia documentaries and critique media violence using multiple forms of visual texts (O'Brien, 1998).

Adolescents of the Net Generation often find their own reasons for becoming literate that go beyond mastery of academic texts. A study of thirty adolescents participating in a fifteen-week after-school program found that although these students scored in the bottom quartile on a standardized reading achievement test, they capably demonstrated a critical awareness of how a variety of media texts represent people, ideas and events. They also engaged in literacy practices which included searching the Internet for song lyrics, reading Japanese anime' online, e-mailing others to obtain information on rap groups, and producing hair and fashion magazines (Alvermann, 2001b).

Effective literacy instruction for adolescents includes participatory approaches to instruction. The teacher-centered transmission model of instruction is common to most subject area classrooms in the United States (Wade & Moje, 2000). Justifications for its use include pressures to meet curriculum standards, preparation of students for statewide assessments, maintaining order in the classroom, and constraints on time and resources (Hinchman & Zalewski, 1996). Effective alternatives to the teacher-centered transmission model include participatory approaches that actively engage students in their own

learning and that treat texts as tools for learning rather than repositories of information to be memorized.

Participatory approaches to literacy instruction are no less concerned with content mastery than is the transmission model. However, participatory approaches de-emphasize the teacher's role in transmitting facts and incorporate classroom structures that promote peer interaction and allow students to assume more responsibility for their own learning (Alvermann, 2001a). In participatory classrooms, a mix of textbooks, magazines, student-generated texts, hypermedia productions, and visuals are used to support and extend the curriculum as students collaborate on meaningful projects and set their own criteria for communicating their thoughts and ideas (Wade & Moje, 2000).

Ten Years of Research on Adolescent Literacy, 1994-2004: A Review Study

In his publication *Ten Years of Research on Adolescent Literacy, 1994-2004: A Review*, Phelps (2005) examines 55 research studies that were published in peer-reviewed journals between 1994 and 2005. The review focuses on the variables that impact the literacy development of adolescents. The author divides the variables into four categories: developmental variables, cultural variables, instructional variables, and professional development variables.

Developmental variables. Research indicates that adolescents develop multiple literacies in and out of school and that many young people feel that school does not facilitate the development of their interests and abilities. A survey of more than 400 sixth graders in three economically and ethnically diverse schools found that most respondents acquired their reading material by purchasing it or borrowing from friends. The most popular reading materials, scary stories, cartoons and comics, popular magazines, and sports, were not readily available in schools because of lack of resources and objections from school personnel about the content or format. The unavailability of materials was most marked in preferences of boys and low achievers (Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999).

Ivey and Broaddus (2001) asked 1,800 economically and culturally diverse sixth graders what they valued in their language arts classes. More than 60 percent listed free reading and teacher read-alouds at the top, while less than one-third valued reading novels as a class. The students reported interest in magazines, adventure books, and mysteries; however, these students rarely found in the classroom what they were interested in reading. The authors suggest that a curriculum centered on teacher-chosen books may limit students' reading experiences.

Adolescents' literacy abilities are as diverse as their reading preferences and range across a developmental continuum. Alexander and Jetton (2000) suggest that reading development is an interplay of three factors: prior knowledge, interest, and strategic processing. In the beginning, reading requires much strategic effort, and the reader is vulnerable to the negative consequences of failure. As readers develop, their more extensive knowledge leads to more efficient processing and fluency. Finally, readers' comprehensive knowledge and interest result in reading that is fluent, creative, and analytic. A reader's level of competence may vary depending on his level of prior knowledge and interest in the literacy task and, consequently, so may his need for support and assistance.

Cultural variables. Two studies reviewed by the author investigated the connection between culture and literacy. Epstein (2000) found that high-achieving eleventh grade students' perspectives about historical events aligned with their racial identities. White students saw European Americans as the major historical subjects, emphasized individual rights and democratic rule, and attributed the denial of rights to abstractions such as "slavery" and "segregation." Black students saw a nation marked by racial domination and struggle, and named white people or racism as the causes of oppression. Although all of these students received the same instruction, comprehension was influenced by social and cultural experiences.

The second study is a year-long study of two tenth-grade English classes that were reading literature by and about people from diverse cultures. The students were ethnically diverse, coming from African-American, European-American, Latino, Filipino, and Chinese heritages. The researchers found that most students identified strongly with works that reflected adolescent and family concerns and that reflected pride in their culture (Athanases, 1998).

Instructional variables. There is substantial evidence that students benefit from direct instruction in comprehension (Alvermann & Moore, 1991). When teachers explicitly explain and model comprehension strategies followed by guided practice and independent practice with feedback and discussion, students of diverse abilities and backgrounds have been able to learn and use these strategies with positive effects on their reading and writing achievement (Wood, Winne, & Carney, 1995). This observation was illustrated in a year-long study by Stevens (2003) that involved almost 4,000 urban middle school students. Standardized test data indicated that students who received instruction in summarizing, understanding main ideas, and clarifying in a cooperative learning environment outperformed students receiving traditional basal reading instruction.

A number of studies support the use of reciprocal teaching (Palincsar & Brown, 1984) as an effective method of providing strategy instruction. Reciprocal teaching allows students to practice reading skills such as predicting, summarizing, questioning, and clarifying using authentic classroom reading materials. The teacher initially models and guides the students in the use of the reading strategies and then gradually releases responsibility to the students and moves into a facilitator role.

A review of sixteen research studies on reciprocal teaching by Rosenshine and Meister (1994) found this approach to be effective in promoting student comprehension. Reciprocal teaching was most effective when the teacher-student dialogue was of high quality and engaged the students with ideas and not just the performance of skills. Alfassi

(1998) studied 75 students in high school Chapter I reading classes. The experimental classes were given reciprocal teaching training for five consecutive days, followed by 15 days of practice. Control classes were taught reading skills through traditional workbook methods. Eight weeks after the practice stopped, the reciprocal teaching students had significantly higher comprehension scores on experimenter-designed tests with two passages of ninth-grade level expository text.

An area of literacy instruction that has been a subject of contention is whether students benefit more from traditional skill instruction and practice or constructivist, strategic approaches. Proponents of skill instruction argue that commercially prepared instructional materials help to compensate for the fact that most secondary teachers are not well prepared to teach reading. In addition, struggling readers need instruction in specific skills before they can be successful with content material (Phelps, 2005). However, studies in which traditional skill instruction is compared to strategic instruction seem to support the superiority of strategic instruction at the middle and high school level (Schorzman & Cheek, 2004; Alfassi, 1998).

In a study involving 64 classrooms in 19 schools across urban and suburban districts in five states, Applebee, Langer, Nystrand, and Gamoran (2003) compared instructional variables to students' end-of-year performance on state and district literacy tests. The researchers concluded that strategic instruction is more effective for students of all ability levels than more traditional skill-based approaches and that students of all ability levels benefit from high-quality discussion and high academic demands. However, the study also found that students in higher tracks were engaged in more open discussion and generally subjected to higher academic demands than students in lower tracks.

In a review of experimental and quasi-experimental research on teaching reading comprehension strategies to students with learning disabilities, Gersten, Fuchs, Williams, and Baker (2001) looked at studies involving both narrative and expository texts. They concluded that strategy instruction appears to improve comprehension consistently,

although students with learning disabilities require longer treatment durations than regular-functioning students. The review also supports the concept of explicit instruction across a variety of materials.

Researchers at the University of Kansas developed instructional strategies to teach content to secondary students with learning disabilities. Among these strategies are the use of graphic organizers and mnemonic devices and the relating of new content to students' prior knowledge. The researchers found teachers able to implement the strategies and students to have higher achievement as a result. However, the researchers also found that because of the pressures of extensive and demanding curricula, many secondary teachers feel they do not have time to incorporate explicit strategy instruction into core curriculum courses (Deschler et al., 2001).

Morocco, Hinden, Mata-Aguilar, and Clark-Chiarelli (2001) helped seventh and eighth-grade teachers in a low-income middle school to implement a curriculum wherein students were involved in authentic, student-centered literacy tasks; cognitive reading and writing strategies were embedded in the curriculum and explicitly taught; and learning was socially mediated through small-group and whole-class activities. The researchers concluded that students with disabilities in the supported literacy environment performed similarly to normally achieving and honors students on measures of writing fluency and quality, and that for these students, a curriculum of authentic reading and writing was superior to an emphasis on isolated skills and mechanics.

Professional development variables. Adolescent literacy development is facilitated by experienced and effective teachers (Phelps, 2005). However, many content-area teachers do not feel comfortable teaching literacy skills and/or do not feel they have time to devote to teaching literacy strategies explicitly in addition to their course content (O'Brien, Stewart, & Moje, 1995). Recent research sheds light on some of the barriers to full implementation of literacy instruction in secondary schools.

Deshler et al. (2001), summarizing a series of studies in which they trained content-area teachers to use literacy-enhancing routines, found that teachers did not fully implement those routines because they felt the routines were too time consuming and prevented coverage of the curriculum. In some instances, teachers did not spend adequate time teaching the strategies and providing practice opportunities for students; consequently, students were unable to learn the strategies. In other instances, teachers used only selected parts of the strategies, and student learning of the strategies was mixed.

Sturtevant and Linek (2003) researched teachers' beliefs about using literacy strategies. Teachers cited conflicts between covering curriculum and including all the learning activities which they felt were important, including reading and writing. Teachers also noted considerations such as administrative support, availability of materials, and time constraints as factors in their decisions about what and how to teach. Research illustrates the constraints placed on content-area teachers by the pressure to cover curriculum and prepare students for high-stakes assessments. There are limits to how much explicit strategy instruction teachers can provide. Professional development will be most effective when teachers are directly involved in its design (Phelps, 2005).

Reading for Understanding: Toward an R and D Program in Reading Comprehension Study

In *Reading for Understanding: Toward an R and D Program in Reading Comprehension*, the Research and Development Corporation (RAND) Reading Study Group (2002) presents a heuristic for thinking about reading comprehension and a review of current research on reading comprehension instruction. The goal the RAND Reading Study Group (RRSG) set for itself was to summarize the state of research in the field of reading comprehension and to generate an agenda for future research. The RRSG defines reading comprehension as the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. It consists of three

elements: the reader, the text, and the activity or purpose for reading. The RRSG created a heuristic to show how these elements interrelate in reading comprehension.

The reader brings to the act of reading his or her cognitive capabilities, motivation, knowledge, and experiences. These attributes vary considerably among readers and within an individual reader as a function of the text and activity (Research and Development Reading Study Group, 2002). Appropriate instruction is necessary for students to develop a repertoire of strategies to help them comprehend a variety of texts for varying purposes.

The features of any given text have a large impact on comprehension. A reader's domain knowledge interacts with the content of the text in comprehension. In addition to content, the vocabulary in the text, its linguistic structure, and its genre also interact with the reader's knowledge. Comprehension breaks down when too many of these factors are not matched to the reader's knowledge (Research and Development Reading Study Group, 2002).

Activity refers to the purpose for reading. A reading activity involves one or more purposes, some operations to process the text, and the consequences of performing the activity. The purpose for reading can be externally imposed or internally generated. The purpose is influenced by motivational variables such as interest and prior knowledge (Research and Development Reading Study Group, 2002).

The RRSG identified ten areas of comprehension that they believed were based on a well-articulated knowledge base:

1. Instruction that is designed to enhance reading fluency leads to fairly significant gains in word recognition and fluency and to moderate gains in comprehension. The National Reading Panel (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000) examined the literature on repeated reading. The weighted effect size of comparisons of this technique versus a no-

instruction control was .55 when the outcome measure was word recognition, .44 with a fluency measure, and .35 with a comprehension outcome measure.

2. Instruction can be effective in providing students a repertoire of strategies that promote comprehension monitoring and foster comprehension (NICHD, 2000).
3. The explicitness with which teachers teach comprehension strategies makes a difference in learner outcomes, especially for low-achieving students (Wong & Jones, 1982).
4. There are a number of working hypotheses about the role of instruction in explaining and addressing the problems of poor comprehenders. McDermott and Varenne (1995) documented that teachers working with higher-achieving students focused on higher-order thinking and communicated clearly that the purpose of reading was understanding. The same teachers, when working with low-achieving students, focused on low-level factual reading and communicated little about comprehension as the goal of reading.

Research indicates that specific instruction can improve poor comprehenders' understanding of a difficult text (Langer, 1984). However, the nature of the strategy taught seems less significant than the role that strategy instruction plays in engaging the reader in active interaction with the text (Chan & Cole, 1986).

5. The role of vocabulary instruction in enhancing comprehension is complex. Vocabulary knowledge is strongly linked to reading comprehension (Freebody & Anderson, 1983). There is a powerful correlational relationship between the volume of reading and vocabulary growth among first-language learners (Stanovich & Cunningham, 1992). Teaching individual words, encouraging wide reading, teaching word-learning strategies, and promoting word consciousness are likely to make a contribution to students' long-term

vocabulary growth and to their reading comprehension (Graves, 2000). However, much of the instructional research in vocabulary has compared the effectiveness of different methods of teaching individual words. The number of studies that have directly examined the effect of vocabulary instruction on reading comprehension is relatively small.

6. Teachers who provide comprehension strategy instruction that is deeply connected within the context of subject matter learning foster comprehension development. Several studies show that when strategy instruction is fully embedded in in-depth learning of content, the strategies are learned to a high level of competence (Guthrie et al, 1998). Connecting cognitive strategies to students' growing knowledge of a content area enables students both to increase their awareness of and to use the strategies deliberately as a means for learning (Brown, 1997). According to several reviews of literature, students who spontaneously apply a strategy, such as questioning, when it is sensible will improve their comprehension. To be effective comprehenders, students must have motivation, self-efficacy, and ownership regarding their purposes for reading and their strategies. Teaching strategies integrated with content enables students to become proficient, self-regulating strategy users (Alexander & Murphy, 1998).
7. Using various genres of text diversifies instructional opportunities, as assessed by teacher and student discourse. Readers who are unaware of text structure do not approach a text with any particular plan of action and tend to retrieve information in a seemingly random way. Students who are aware of text structure organize the text as they read, and they recognize and retain the important information it contains (Meyer, Brandt, & Bluth, 1980).
8. Teachers who give students choices, challenging tasks, and collaborative learning structures increase their motivation to read and comprehend text.

Observations of classroom instruction show that when teachers provide challenging passages for reading, students exert effort and persistence. When students have a limited but meaningful choice about the learning activity, they invest greater energy in learning than when the tasks are always prescribed by the teacher (Turner, 1995). Experimental studies with middle school students have shown that teachers who provide meaningful choices and autonomy increase students' motivation to read and to expend effort to gain knowledge from text (Reeve, Bolt, & Cai, 1999). The explanation for the benefit of autonomy support for reading comprehension is that students become more active learners when teachers provide a minimal but meaningful choice in topics, texts, activities, and strategies for learning (Research and Development Reading Study Group, 2002). .

9. Effective teachers enact a wide range of instructional practices that they use thoughtfully and dynamically (Pressley et al., 2001). These teachers also use a variety of instructional practices that relate more specifically to reading comprehension. Effective teachers ask high-level comprehension questions, help readers make connections between texts they read and their personal experiences, use small-group instruction to meet the individual needs of their students, provide their readers practice material at the appropriate reading level, and monitor progress in reading by using informal assessments (Research and Development Reading Study Group, 2002). .
10. Comprehension instruction receives inadequate time and attention in typical classroom instruction. In the 1970s, research revealed that teachers devoted only two percent of their time designated for reading instruction to teaching students how to comprehend what they read (Durkin, 1979). According to Pressley (2000), not much has changed twenty years later.

Major Themes from the Nine Published Works

A significant amount of research has focused on identifying effective practices for enhancing the literacy skills of adolescent learners. Several common themes run through the recent research on adolescent literacy instruction. This section outlines and describes the major themes across the nine bodies of research included in this review.

Struggling Readers and Word-Level Skills

Instructional research with struggling readers indicates that schools need to provide instruction in both word-level and comprehension skills (Torgesen et al., 2007). Approximately ten percent of adolescent struggling readers have not mastered the alphabetic principle. Suggestions for helping adolescents struggling with word identification include systematic, explicit, and direct phonics instruction (Curtis & Chmelka, 1994); instruction in high-frequency sound-spelling relationships (Blevins, 2001); and emphasis on connections among word analysis, word recognition, and semantic access (Henry, 1990).

Struggling Readers and Comprehension Skills

There is substantial evidence that students can be taught strategies that will improve their ability to comprehend text. Increasing explicit instruction and support for the use of comprehension strategies is one of the most frequently cited recommendations for improving reading comprehension (NICHD, 2000). Torgesen et al. (2007) identified five high-leverage improvements that seem most central to the goal of improving adolescent literacy and most likely to produce significant long-term improvements if they are effectively implemented. Their first recommendation was to increase the amount of explicit instruction in and support for the use of effective comprehension strategies throughout the school day. In their report from Carnegie Corporation of New York titled *Reading Next*, Biancarosa and Snow (2004) delineated fifteen elements aimed at improving middle and high school literacy achievement. The first element identified in

Reading Next is direct, explicit comprehension instruction in the strategies and processes that proficient readers use to understand what they read. In their five-year study in 44 classrooms, Langer et al. (2000) found that giving students critical reading and writing strategies needed to succeed on daily lessons and homework assignments was one of six instructional practices consistently practiced in highly effective adolescent literacy programs. Research conducted as part of the Strategic Literacy Network found that teachers were able to reintroduce textbooks that had been deemed too difficult for their students to read once students were taught comprehension strategies (Schoenbach et al., 1999). Reading comprehension shows consistent improvement when students are explicitly taught comprehension strategies and provided support in the use of these strategies (Rosenshine et al., 1996).

Comprehension of Text and Collaborative Activities

There is evidence to suggest that comprehension of a text can be significantly enhanced through collaborative activities that allow for student discussion of that text. Murphy and Edwards (2005) examined the effects from 75 studies of adolescent literacy instruction and concluded that approaches emphasizing critical analysis of text or involving discussion of specific questions about text had the most consistently positive effect on reading comprehension outcomes. Among the recommendations for impacting literacy achievement of adolescents suggested by Biancarosa and Snow (2004) in *Reading Next* is more emphasis on text-based collaborative learning which involves students interacting with one another around a variety of texts. Langer and her colleagues at the National Research Center on English Learning and Achievement found that teachers in highly successful adolescent literacy programs foster collaborative learning by placing students in well-chosen groups and prompting students to discuss ideas and share thoughts about text with one another (Langer et al., 2000). According to Guthrie et al. (2000), creating student-centered classrooms is essential to strengthening literacy skills. Teachers in student-centered classrooms encourage students to discuss text in interactive,

collaborative environments and develop common understandings (Meltzer et al., 2002). Tharp (1999) in his research on effective pedagogy found that a variety of literacy skills can be developed when students are given the opportunity to brainstorm, discuss, and share ideas in a collaborative setting.

Adolescent Literacy Instruction and Motivation

Research indicates that in order to be effective, adolescent literacy instruction must address the issues of motivation and engagement with reading. If students are not motivated to read, research shows they will not benefit from reading instruction (Kamil, 2003). Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) in a review of how instruction influences students' outcomes concluded that motivation and the level of student engagement is the mediating factor through which classroom instruction influences student achievement. Perceptions of self-efficacy are central to most theories of motivation. Strategies that are likely to increase students' self-efficacy in reading are activating prior knowledge, looking for information, comprehending informational texts, interpreting literature, and self-monitoring (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). A RAND study found that the more student learning focused on interesting topics, used hands-on demonstrations, and involved discussion of text, the more motivated the students were to comprehend text and the more successful they were (Research and Development Reading Study Group, 2002). Guthrie and Humenick (2004) conducted a meta-analysis of instructional practices that enhance motivation and engagement with text and identified four practices: having interesting goals to achieve through reading, being given choice and autonomy, being exposed to interesting texts, and having opportunities to collaborate with others in discussion to achieve learning goals. Engaging in culturally responsive literacy instruction that builds on students' cultural knowledge and personal experiences has been shown to be effective in motivating underachieving African-American and Latino students to engage in school literacy tasks (Lee, 2001; Garcia, 2000).

The Connection Between Writing Activities and Reading Comprehension

Evidence indicates there is a connection between responding to text through writing activities and improvement in reading comprehension. Among the recommendations for impacting the literacy achievement of adolescents suggested by Biancarosa and Snow (2004) in *Reading Next* is an increased emphasis on writing to enhance the understanding of text. The use of writing along with feedback and opportunities to edit as an integral part of content-literacy development improves written communication skills, thinking skills, and memory (Schoenbach et al., 1999). Educators that incorporate activities that require reading and writing into their instruction help their students develop the skills that allow them to think scientifically, analyze literature, and communicate mathematically (Meltzer et al., 2002).

Summary of the Literature Review

The purpose of this review was to identify components of effective adolescent literacy instruction that have a solid research base. Studies were selected for review that were published after 2000 and that focused on adolescent literacy instruction. Several common themes emerged from this review of the research.

Struggling readers may need instruction in word-level skills. Approximately ten percent of adolescent struggling readers have not mastered the alphabetic principle. Research indicates these students will benefit from direct, explicit instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics.

Many adolescents that struggle with reading possess adequate word-level skills but have difficulty comprehending text. There is evidence that these students can be taught strategies that will enhance their ability to construct meaning from text. There is also evidence that collaborative activities involving discussion of text and activities requiring written responses to text can improve students' reading comprehension.

There is adequate research to indicate what constitutes best practice in regards to adolescent literacy. Evidence suggests that students' reading outcomes can be positively

impacted by instruction that incorporates these practices to address reading deficits. A discussion of how the ARI-PAL model incorporated these practices and how well the ARI-PAL schools implemented these practices will be addressed in chapter five of this dissertation.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this descriptive study was to describe the initial year of the ARI-PAL thoroughly. Consequently, the results of this study explain the experiences of the 14 ARI-PAL schools and provide recommendations for other secondary schools interested in strengthening the reading and writing skills of their students. To address the purpose of this study, the following research questions were explored:

1. Did the students participating in the ARI-PAL program in 14 selected Alabama schools increase their achievement as measured by SAT-10?
2. Did the students participating in the ARI-PAL program in 14 selected Alabama schools increase their Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE) scores?
3. Using descriptive data from site visits and educators' experiences, what were the perceived successes and challenges of the ARI-PAL program during the first year of implementation?

A descriptive research approach was used to provide a thorough explanation of the first implementation year of the ARI-PAL. This chapter describes the research context and the data collection and data analysis procedures.

The Research Context

The study took place in 14 schools in Alabama during the 2006-2007 school year. The grade configurations of the schools included two K-12 schools, one 6-12 school, five 6-8 schools, four 5-8 schools, and two 4-6 schools. Regardless of the grade configuration

of the school, ARI-PAL personnel worked only with teachers who were teaching students in grades 4-8. Therefore, data collected for and reported in this study involved only students and teachers in grades 4-8. The 14 schools involved in the study were given fictitious names in order to preserve confidentiality.

Table 1 provides demographic information on the 14 ARI-PAL schools. The table provides information on the number of teachers in each school and includes the number of teachers with graduate degrees. Student information includes the percentage of minority students, the percentage of students that receive free or reduced lunch and the percentage of students that scored below the 5th stanine in total reading on the SAT-10 the year prior to ARI-PAL implementation.

Table 1

ARI-PAL Schools

School	# of Teachers	# With Graduate Degrees	% Minority	% F/R Lunch	% Non-Proficient
Alpha	27	15	52	66	58
Baker	27	18	41	42	36
Carter	30	14	75	83	53
Dalton	43	21	100	83	72
Ellison	17	9	99	95	51
Fulmer	32	23	23	49	43
Green	42	28	29	41	33
Hampton	17	10	8	56	37
Ivey	45	27	15	75	45
Johnson	55	24	78	60	59
Kirby	41	25	46	56	55
Landers	33	22	2	33	27
Mills	31	16	73	86	59
Norville	34	21	82	91	71

Alpha Middle School serves grades 5 through 8 and is located in a rural county in central Alabama. The school had 27 teachers during the 2006-2007 school year, including 15 with a master's degree or higher, 11 with bachelor's degrees, and 1 with an alternative certificate. The student population of 421 was 52% minority with 66% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. Based on spring 2006 SAT-10 data, 58% of the students scored below the 5th stanine in total reading and were classified as non-proficient in reading when they entered the 2006-2007 school year.

Baker Middle School serves students in grades 5 through 8 and is located in a rural community in south Alabama. The school had 27 teachers during the 2006-2007 school year, including 18 with a master's degree or higher and 9 with bachelor's degrees. The student population of 435 was 41% minority with 42% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. Based on spring 2006 SAT-10 data, 36% of the students scored below the 5th stanine in total reading and were classified as non-proficient in reading when they entered the 2006-2007 school year.

Carter Middle School serves grades 6 through 8 and is located in a rural county in southeast Alabama. The school had 30 teachers during the 2006-2007 school year, including 14 with a master's degree or higher, 15 with bachelor's degrees and 1 with an alternative certificate. The student population of 516 was 75% minority with 83% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. Based on spring 2006 SAT-10 data, 53% of the students scored below the 5th stanine in total reading and were classified as non-proficient in reading when they entered the 2006-2007 school year.

Dalton Middle School serves grades 6 through 8 and is located in a rural county in central Alabama. The school had 43 teachers during the 2006-2007 school year, including 21 with a master's degree or higher, 9 with bachelor's degrees, 6 with alternative certificates, and 7 teaching with emergency certificates. The student population of 651 was 100% minority with 83% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. Based on spring 2006 SAT-10 data, 72% of the students scored below the 5th stanine in total

reading and were classified as non-proficient in reading when they entered the 2006-2007 school year.

Ellison Middle School serves students in grades 4 through 6 and is located in a rural county in northwest Alabama. The school had 17 teachers during the 2006-2007 school year, including 9 with a master's degree or higher and 8 with bachelor's degrees. The student population of 238 was 99% minority with 95% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. Based on spring 2006 SAT-10 data, 51% of the students scored below the 5th stanine in total reading and were classified as non-proficient in reading when they entered the 2006-2007 school year.

Fulmer Middle School serves students in kindergarten through 12th grade and is located in a rural community in central Alabama. The school had 32 teachers during the 2006-2007 school year, including 23 with a master's degree or higher and 9 with bachelor's degrees. The student population of 461 was 23% minority with 49% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. Based on spring 2006 SAT-10 data, 43% of the students scored below the 5th stanine in total reading and were classified as non-proficient in reading when they entered the 2006-2007 school year.

Green Middle School serves students in grades 7 and 8 and is located in a small city in central Alabama. The school had 42 teachers during the 2006-2007 school year, including 28 with a master's degree or higher and 14 with bachelor's degrees. The student population of 729 was 29% minority with 41% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. Based on spring 2006 SAT-10 data, 33% of the students scored below the 5th stanine in total reading and were classified as non-proficient in reading when they entered the 2006-2007 school year.

Hampton Middle school serves students in grades 5 through 8 and is located in a small city in central Alabama. The school had 17 teachers during the 2006-2007 school year, including 10 with a master's degree or higher and 7 with bachelor's degree. The student population of 283 was 8% minority with 56% of the students qualifying for free

or reduced lunch. Based on spring 2006 SAT-10 data, 37% of the students scored below the 5th stanine in total reading and were classified as non-proficient in reading when they entered the 2006-2007 school year.

Ivey Middle School serves students in kindergarten through twelfth grade and is located in a rural county in northeast Alabama. The school had 45 teachers during the 2006-2007 school year, including 27 with a master's degree or higher, 17 with bachelor's degrees, and 1 with an emergency certification. The student population of 345 was 15% minority with 75% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. Based on spring 2006 SAT-10 data, 45% of the students scored below the 5th stanine in total reading and were classified as non-proficient in reading when they entered the 2006-2007 school year.

Johnson Middle School serves students in grades 6 through 8 and is located in an urban area in central Alabama. The school had 55 teachers during the 2006-2007 school year, including 24 with a master's degree or higher, 27 with bachelor's degrees, 2 with alternative certificates, and 2 with emergency certification. The student population of 1011 was 78% minority with 60% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. Based on spring 2006 SAT-10 data, 59% of the students scored below the 5th stanine in total reading and were classified as non-proficient in reading when they entered the 2006-2007 school year.

Kirby Middle School serves students in grades 6 through 12 and is located in a rural county in northeast Alabama. The school had 41 teachers during the 2006-2007 school year, including 25 with a master's degree or higher, 14 with bachelor's degrees, 1 with an alternative certificate, and 2 with emergency certification. The student population of 388 was 46% minority with 56% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. Based on spring 2006 SAT-10 data, 55% of the students scored below the 5th stanine in total reading and were classified as non-proficient in reading when they entered the 2006-2007 school year.

Landers Middle School serves students in grades 4 through 6 and is located in a small city in north Alabama. The school had 33 teachers during the 2006-2007 school year, including 22 with a master's degree or higher and 11 with bachelor's degrees. The student population of 550 was 2% minority with 33% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. Based on spring 2006 SAT-10 data, 27% of the students scored below the 5th stanine in total reading and were classified as non-proficient in reading when they entered the 2006-2007 school year.

Mills Middle School serves students in grades 5 through 8 and is located in an urban area in central Alabama. The school had 31 teachers during the 2006-2007 school year, including 16 with a master's degree or higher, 14 with bachelor's degrees, and 1 with an emergency certificate. The student population of 470 was 73% minority with 86% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. Based on spring 2006 SAT-10 data, 59% of the students scored below the 5th stanine in total reading and were classified as non-proficient in reading when they entered the 2006-2007 school year.

Norville Middle School serves students in grades 6 through 8 and is located in an urban area in north Alabama. The school had 34 teachers during the 2006-2007 school year, including 21 with a master's degree or higher, 12 with bachelor's degrees, and 1 with an emergency certificate. The student population of 372 was 82% minority with 91% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. Based on spring 2006 SAT-10 data, 71% of the students scored below the 5th stanine in total reading and were classified as non-proficient in reading when they entered the 2006-2007 school year.

Instruments Used in Data Collection

To determine if students participating in the ARI-PAL program increased their achievement as measured by the Stanford Achievement Test 10th Edition (SAT-10), students were assessed using the SAT-10 in the spring of 2007. The Stanford Achievement Test 10th Edition was published in 2004 by Harcourt Assessment, Inc. and is a norm-referenced assessment. Raw scores can be converted into scaled scores,

percentile rank scores, stanine scores, grade-equivalent scores, and normal curve equivalent scores. Reliability was assessed by the publishing company using internal-consistency measures, alternate-form measures, and with repeated-measurement. Validity was determined using other standardized assessments (SAT-9, Otis-Lennon, etc.). Harcourt Assessment, Inc. standardized the test using a nationwide representative sample of students in 2002.

To determine if students participating in the ARI-PAL program increased their Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE) scores, students were given the GRADE in the fall and spring of the 2006-2007 school year. Reliability of GRADE was assessed by the test publisher using internal-consistency measures, alternate-form measures, and with repeated-measurement. The GRADE's validity was determined using two nationally standardized group achievement tests, the *Iowa Test of Basic Skills* (ITBS) and the *California Achievement Test* (CAT), and a nationally standardized group administered reading test, the *Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests* (Gates). The correlations with the ITBS at the seventh grade level (.83) and eighth grade level (.69) suggests they are measuring similar reading skills. The correlations with the Gates at sixth grade level (.90) and seventh (.87) indicate that GRADE and Gates are measuring the same skill.

Descriptive data from site visits and educators' experiences were used to identify the successes and challenges of the ARI-PAL program during the first year of implementation. ARI-PAL regional coaches submitted weekly reports on each of the ARI-PAL schools. These site visit reports included updates on progress being made in the areas of instructional leadership, reading intervention, assessment, strategic teaching in the content area classrooms, and professional development. The researcher analyzed the data collected by the regional coaches and recorded on the site visit reports to address the third research question.

Research Procedures

Access to the schools involved in the ARI-PAL was unrestricted. The 14 schools participating in the ARI-PAL project requested to be included in the project, and their local education agencies agreed to provide open access to school personnel and student data. Therefore, ARI personnel were able to visit participating schools, observe classroom instruction, provide professional development, and access student data, as needed, throughout the 2006-2007 school year.

The methodology for this study evolved as the study progressed. Initially, the plan was to rely solely on data from the SAT-10 to determine if the ARI-PAL model was successful in positively impacting the reading achievement of students in the participating schools. However, an unexpected surplus of ARI funds allowed for the purchase of GRADE for the ARI-PAL schools. School personnel administered GRADE to all students in grades four through nine in September of 2006 and again in the spring of 2007.

To document implementation and challenges to the implementation of the ARI-PAL model, a site visit form (Appendix A) was designed to provide anecdotal data on progress in each school. Site visit forms were submitted by regional staff after each weekly visit to an ARI-PAL school. Areas addressed in the site visit reports included instructional leadership, which involved the school administrators and a literacy leadership team composed of teachers, counselors, and the literacy coach; the administration of formal and informal assessments to guide instruction; reading intervention for struggling readers; implementation of strategic teaching in the content area classrooms; and professional development needs.

The ARI-PAL state and regional staff began training personnel from the 14 ARI-PAL schools in the summer of 2006. Participants in the three-day summer training practiced planning and delivering strategic lessons that incorporated literacy strategies to teach course of study objectives. Data collection began almost immediately as teachers and

administrators who participated in the training provided invaluable feedback on the clarity and content of the professional development.

Submission of site visit reports began in August 2006 and continued through May 2007. State and regional staff met for two days each month to discuss site visit reports, identify challenges to full implementation of the model, and determine if the challenges were common to multiple schools or unique to individual schools. As the year progressed, information from site visit reports was used to guide the development and delivery of professional development to the ARI-PAL schools.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using several strategies. SAT-10 data were analyzed using a weighted non-proficiency formula (WNP). GRADE data were analyzed using growth scale values. Narrative information on the site visit reports was summarized for each individual school. The data from all 14 schools were then compared to identify like and unlike patterns within each category.

To address the first research question, SAT-10 data were analyzed using a weighted non-proficiency (WNP) formula, which allowed ARI-PAL staff to compare the progress of the same groups of students from one academic year to the next. For example, when measuring the progress of seventh grade students, only students that took the SAT-10 in 2007 and had a matching score from 2006 were included in the comparison. The WNP formula assigns a numerical value to each student's SAT-10 total reading stanine score based on how far that score is from the criteria the Alabama State Department of Education has set for proficiency. Stanine scores have a range of 9, mean of 5, and standard deviation of 2. Students scoring in stanines 1-3 received a weighted value of 1, students scoring in stanine 4 received a weighted value of .5, students scoring in stanines 5-9 were considered proficient in reading and thus received a weighted value of 0. The percentage of WNP for a group of students was calculated by totaling their weighted scores and dividing by the total number of students assessed. A reduction in

WNP indicated that a school had moved more of its students to proficiency, stanine 5 or higher, and/or more of its students closer to proficiency, from stanines 1-3 to 4. Therefore a reduction in WNP was considered by ARI-PAL personnel to be a positive indicator of project effectiveness. WNP was calculated for each grade at all 14 ARI-PAL schools (see Appendix B for individual school reports).

To address the second research question, GRADE data were analyzed using growth scale values. The GRADE growth scale is a scale that reflects a range of reading performance that spans across all levels of the test. As a student's reading level improves, the growth scale value will increase. Growth scale values are an equal-interval scale. Therefore, they can be arithmetically manipulated.

To address the third research question, schools were divided into categories based on changes in weighted non-proficiency as assessed by the SAT-10. The essential elements of each ARI-PAL component were then identified by the researcher based on defining characteristics provided in the ARI-PAL training modules. Data from site visit reports and classroom observations were analyzed to determine the level of implementation of each ARI-PAL component for each of the ARI-PAL schools (see appendix C for summaries of school site visit reports). Schools were then compared to determine if there was more evidence of ARI-PAL implementation in schools that reduced their WNP.

Summary

A descriptive research approach was used to provide a thorough description of the first implementation year of the ARI-PAL. Quantitative data from the SAT-10 and GRADE were analyzed to determine if reading achievement improved for students in the ARI-PAL schools. Qualitative data from regional reading coach site visit reports and classroom observations were examined to identify the perceived successes and challenges of the ARI-PAL program during the first year of implementation.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

As stated in Chapter One, the number of students reading significantly below grade level in Alabama is staggering. The problem is particularly alarming in the state's middle schools, where recent state accountability reports indicate that in approximately one-third of these schools, over half of the students read below proficiency. In an effort to address this problem, the Alabama State Department of Education in the spring of 2006 launched the ARI-PAL. The purpose of this study was to describe the initial year of ARI-PAL thoroughly and to develop recommendations for secondary schools interested in strengthening the reading and writing skills of their students.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed:

1. Do the students participating in the ARI-PAL program in 14 selected Alabama schools increase their achievement as measured by SAT-10?
2. Do the students participating in the ARI-PAL program in 14 selected Alabama schools increase their Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE) scores?
3. Using descriptive data from site visits and educators' experiences, what are the perceived successes and challenges of the ARI-PAL program during the first year of implementation?

Data Analysis

Analysis of SAT-10 Data

To address the first question, students' scores on the 2006 SAT-10 were compared to their scores on the 2007 SAT-10 using the weighted non-proficiency (WNP) formula described in Chapter Three. The desired outcome was for schools to reduce their WNP, indicating an increase in reading proficiency among their students. Overall, 94.5% of the students in the 14 schools took the SAT-10 in both 2006 and 2007. All of the schools were able to match scores with at least 90% of their students. Tables 2 through 4 identify the schools and their WNP scores. Appendix B provides detailed information for each school.

Based on WNP, the schools were placed into three groups. Table 2 shows the first group, which consisted of six schools that displayed a positive effect by reducing their WNP by at least 3%. Table 3 displays the second group, made up of four schools that displayed a neutral effect, with 2007 WNPs that were within 1% of their 2006 WNPs. Table 4 shows the third group, schools that displayed a negative effect by increasing their WNPs by at least 3%.

Table 5 illustrates WNP by grade. The SAT-10 stanine scores for students in all 14 ARI-PAL schools were combined at each grade level to determine if some grade levels were impacted more by ARI-PAL implementation than others. Comparison of changes in WNP indicated that the ARI-PAL had more of a positive impact on students in grades 3 and 7 than at other grade levels. Comparison of changes in WNP also indicates that the ARI-PAL did not have a positive impact on reading proficiency in grades 5 and 6. WNP for eighth grade students did not change from 2006 to 2007.

Table 2

Group 1: Schools That Reduced Their WNP by at Least 3%

	2006	2007	Difference
Alpha Middle School	46	42	-4
Baker Middle School	25	22	-3
Ellison Middle School	30	27	-3
Johnson Middle School	43	40	-3
Mills Middle School	45	42	-3
Norville Middle School	51	48	-3

Table 3

Group 2: Schools With 2007 WNP That Was Within 1% of Their 2006 WNP

	2006	2007	Difference
Ivey Middle School	29	28	-1
Fulmer Middle School	30	31	+1
Green Middle School	23	24	-1
Hampton Middle School	27	28	+ 1

Table 4

Group 3: Schools That Had Increases in Their WNP of at Least 3%

	2006	2007	Difference
Landers Middle School	19	24	+ 5
Dalton Middle School	52	56	+ 4
Kirby Middle School	30	34	+ 4
Carter Middle School	42	45	+ 3

Table 5

Total Weighted Non-Proficiency by Grade

Grade	#Students	WNP 2006	%	WNP 2007	%	Difference
4	348	78	22	66	19	- 3
5	650	167	26	202	31	+ 5
6	1593	557	35	640	40	+ 5
7	1731	729	42	625	36	- 6
8	1729	643	37	646	37	NC
Total	6051	2174	35.92	2179	36.01	+.09

Analysis of GRADE Data

To address the second research question, students participating in the ARI-PAL were given the GRADE at the beginning of the school year, at mid-year, and at the end of the 2006-2007 school year. Data from the first administration of GRADE were to be compared to data from the third administration to determine if there was a change in students' reading scores. However, several issues interfered with the administration of the GRADE and the collection of data.

To begin with, delivery of testing materials to the schools was delayed, with some schools not receiving their materials until September. Therefore, students were assessed for the first time several weeks after school had begun. Some students participating in reading intervention programs had received as much as thirty days of instruction before baseline data were collected.

Another issue with the GRADE occurred in the ways that individual schools chose to administer the assessment. The GRADE allows for students that read below grade level to be tested on level with their peers who read on grade level or out of level with another version of the assessment. Some schools assessed all of their students on level, and other schools chose to test some of their students out of level. To gather baseline data,

all students should have been assessed on grade level. However, this criterion was not clearly communicated to the schools by the Alabama State Department of Education.

A third issue with the GRADE was that there were only two versions, A and B, of the test at each grade level. Therefore, students took version A of the test in the fall and spring. Students taking the test in the spring were familiar with items on the assessment and this factor may have inflated spring scores.

Finally, problems with GRADE software resulted in problems with data collection. Six schools were unable to import student data using the scanner purchased to score the GRADE protocols. The schools that encountered problems with their scanners hand-scored assessments and manually entered data. After the third administration of GRADE was completed, all 14 ARI-PAL schools were instructed to submit data to the Alabama State Department of Education for analysis. Data from the schools that manually entered data could not be opened by personnel at the Alabama State Department of Education. Assistance was requested from the GRADE publisher, who was also unable to convert the data to a usable form. At this point, ARI-PAL administrators concluded that GRADE data could not be used to assess the effectiveness of the project.

Analysis of Site Visit Summaries

To address the third research question, school site visit summaries were divided into the five categories of instructional leadership, reading intervention, assessment, strategic teaching, and professional development to match the site visit reports. School summaries were then analyzed to identify patterns among the 14 ARI-PAL schools. Appendix C provides a detailed summary for each category by each of the 14 schools. Appendix D provides a detailed summary by each component.

Instructional leadership component. Tables 6 through 8 compare how well the schools within the three groups implemented the leadership component of ARI-PAL. Leadership implementation was analyzed according to three criteria. The first criterion

involved how active the school's principal was in leading the implementation of ARI-PAL components. Active participation by principals was characterized by attendance at professional development activities, leading data meetings, conducting walk-throughs to monitor implementation of strategic teaching, and monitoring the fidelity of implementation of reading intervention programs. The second criterion under leadership involved how well the school's literacy coach effectively supported teachers by providing professional development and coaching in the use of instructional strategies. Effective coaching was characterized by identifying professional development needs based on student data and working with teachers until they could implement instructional strategies designed to address students' weaknesses independently. The third criterion under leadership involved how well the literacy leadership team analyzed student data, identified professional development needs, and provided teachers with instructional support. Effective literacy leadership teams conducted regularly scheduled meetings and developed action steps to address instructional needs identified through data analysis.

Table 6 compares how well the schools that showed a positive effect by reducing their WNP met the criteria of the leadership component. While two-thirds of the schools that reduced their WNP had principals that actively led the implementation of the ARI-PAL components, Alpha Middle School, the school that had the greatest reduction in WNP, had no principal the entire school year. The school system superintendant acted as part-time principal and was assisted by an assistant principal on site. Alpha Middle School may have compensated for lack of consistent principal leadership by being one of only two schools in the group that successfully established an active literacy leadership team. The literacy leadership team at Alpha Middle School assumed much of the responsibility for implementation of the ARI-PAL components. All of the schools in Group One had experienced literacy coaches who assisted teachers with the implementation of instructional strategies and assisted with the implementation of the reading intervention programs.

Table 6

Group 1: Schools That Reduced Their WNP by at Least 3%.

School	Active principal participation		Supportive literacy coach		Effective literacy leadership team	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Alpha		X	X		X	
Baker	X		X			X
Ellison	X		X		X	
Johnson		X	X			X
Mills	X		X			X
Norville	X		X			X

Table 7 compares how well the schools that had 2007 WNP that was within 1% of their 2006 WNP or showed a neutral effect met the criteria of the leadership component. All of the schools in Group 2 had actively involved principals. Principal leadership may have compensated for the inability of any of the schools in this group to establish an effective literacy leadership team. All but one school had a supportive literacy coach to assist teachers with the implementation of instructional strategies.

Table 7

Group 2: Schools That Had 2007 WNP That Was Within 1% of Their 2006 WNP

School	Active principal participation		Supportive literacy coach		Effective literacy leadership team	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Ivey	X		X			X
Fulmer	X			X		X
Green	X		X			X
Hampton	X		X			X

Table 8 compares how well the schools that displayed a negative effect by increasing their WNP met the criteria of the leadership component. There was little evidence of

effective leadership by either the principals or literacy leadership teams in the schools in Group 3. Principals in this group rarely attended professional development provided by ARI-PAL staff and frequently delegated leadership of data meetings to the literacy coach. None of these schools held regularly scheduled literacy leadership team meetings. When literacy leadership teams in this group did meet, they did not consistently analyze student data or develop action steps to address instructional needs. Only two of the schools in this group had literacy coaches that effectively assisted teachers with the implementation of instructional strategies.

Table 8

Group 3: Schools That Had Increases in Their WNP of at Least 3%

School	Active principal participation		Supportive literacy coach		Effective literacy leadership team	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Carter		X	X			X
Dalton		X		X		X
Kirby		X		X		X
Landers		X	X			X

Assessment component. Tables 9 through 11 compare how well the schools within the three groups implemented the assessment component of ARI-PAL. Assessment implementation was analyzed according to two criteria. The first criterion involved whether the schools held regularly scheduled data meetings. The second criterion involved the degree to which the schools were able to analyze student data and use the information derived from the analysis to make adjustments in the delivery of instruction. Effective schools displayed the ability to use assessment data to identify weaknesses in instruction and/or curriculum and developed action steps to address the identified weaknesses. Emerging schools actively attempted to use assessment data to identify weaknesses in instruction and/or curriculum and develop action steps to address the

identified weaknesses, but were still requiring assistance from the ARI-PAL regional support staff at the end of the 2007 school year. Ineffective schools did not consistently attempt to use student data to guide instruction.

Table 9 compares how well the schools that reduced their WNP met the criteria of the assessment component. Monthly data meetings were established in five of the six schools in Group 1. Two of the schools did an effective job of using student data to guide instruction, with a third school becoming more effective as the year progressed. Three of the schools failed to show evidence of using student data to guide instruction.

Table 9

Group 1: Schools That Reduced Their WNP by at Least 3%

School	Held monthly data meetings		Analyzed student data to guide instruction		
	Yes	No	Yes	Emerging	No
Alpha	X		X		
Baker	X				X
Ellison	X		X		
Johnson	X			X	
Mills	X				X
Norville		X			X

Table 10 compares how well the schools that had 2007 WNP within 1% of their 2006 WNP met the criteria of the assessment component. Three of the four schools in Group 2 consistently held monthly data meetings to discuss student progress. However, only one school displayed evidence of using student data to guide instruction, with a second school using data more effectively as the year progressed. Two of the schools in this group failed to show evidence of using student data to guide instruction.

Table 10

Group 2: Schools With 2007 WNP That Was Within 1% of Their 2006 WNP

School	Held monthly data meetings		Analyzed student data to guide instruction		
	Yes	No	Yes	Emerging	No
Ivey	X		X		
Fulmer	X			X	
Green		X			X
Hampton	X				X

Table 11 compares how well the schools that had increases in their WNP met the criteria of the assessment component. While three of the four schools in Group 3 consistently held monthly data meetings, these meetings did not produce action steps to address students' needs. Dalton Middle School scheduled monthly data meetings before the school year began but did not follow through. The principal frequently canceled scheduled data meetings because she could not be in attendance, or she decided to use the time scheduled for data meetings for other purposes. Although faculties discussed data in their data meetings, there was little evidence that any of these schools used analysis of student data to make adjustments in the delivery or pace of instruction.

Table 11

Group 3: Schools That Had Increases in Their WNP of at Least 3%

School	Held monthly data meetings		Analyzed student data to guide instruction		
	Yes	No	Yes	Emerging	No
Carter	X				X
Dalton		X			X
Kirby		X			X
Landers	X				X

Intervention component. Tables 12 through 14 compare how well the schools within the three groups implemented the intervention component of ARI-PAL. Intervention

implementation was analyzed according to the percentage of students participating in the reading intervention programs that displayed gains in reading achievement. Comparing students' progress in reading intervention programs was complicated by the different ways in which ARI-PAL schools progress-monitored reading intervention students. *Scholastic READ 180* systematically recorded changes in Lexile scores as students progressed through the program. *Lexile* refers to a measurement of reading abilities based on the Lexile Framework for Reading, a nationally accepted scale designed to measure text and reading abilities. An individual's Lexile scores are determined by administering a test that measures both recognition and comprehension of text. Gains in reading achievement for students participating in *Scholastic READ 180* were determined by examining changes in Lexile scores. *SRA Corrective Reading* and *LANGUAGE III* did not have a progress monitoring component. Although *Voyager Journeys* also included a progress monitoring component that utilized Lexile scores, some of the schools chose not to use the progress monitoring component. Therefore, gains in reading achievement for students participating in reading intervention programs other than READ 180 were determined by examining changes in SAT-10 Total Reading stanine scores from 2006 to 2007.

Table 12 compares the progress of reading intervention students in schools that reduced their WNP. Six of the ARI-PAL schools, including four in Group 1, used *READ 180* as their reading intervention program. Percentages of *READ 180* students making gains ranged from 58-85 with the mean average of 65. In Group 1, all of the schools reported that at least half of their students who participated in a reading intervention program displayed gains in reading. On average, 60% of the intervention students in this group increased their reading achievement.

Table 12

Group 1: Schools That Reduced Their WNP by at Least 3%

School	Intervention Program(s)	% of Students Making Gains in Reading
Alpha	Voyager Journeys	51
Baker	Scholastic READ 180	59
Ellison	Voyager Passport	61
Johnson	Scholastic READ 180	59
Mills	Scholastic READ 180	64
Norville	Scholastic READ 180	67

Table 13 compares the progress of reading intervention students in schools with 2007 WNP that was within 1% of their 2006 WNP. In two of the four schools in Group 2, at least half of their students who participated in a reading intervention program made gains in reading. Hampton Middle School, which used *READ 180*, reported that 85% of their intervention students displayed improvement in their reading ability. Two schools in this group reported less than half of their intervention students displayed gains in reading. Fulmer Middle School used *LANGUAGE III* as their reading intervention program, and 48 percent of their intervention students made gains in reading. However, the program publisher was not able to provide *LANGUAGE III* materials to the school until a month after school had begun, and program implementers did not receive professional development until late in September. Green Middle School, which used a combination of *Voyager Journeys* and *SRA Corrective Reading*, reported only 35 percent of their intervention students made gains in reading. The majority of Green Middle School's intervention students were participating in *Voyager Journeys*. Of the 229 students receiving intervention in *Voyager Journeys*, only 66 made gains in reading as measured by the SAT-10.

Table 13

Group 2: Schools With 2007 WNP That Was Within 1% of Their 2006 WNP

School	Intervention Program(s)	% of Students Making Gains in Reading
Ivey	Voyager Journeys/ SRA Corrective Reading	56
Fulmer	LANGUAGE III	48
Green	Voyager Journeys/ SRA Corrective Reading	35
Hampton	Scholastic READ 180	85

Table 14 compares the progress of reading intervention students in schools that increased their WNP. In two of the four schools in Group 3, at least half of their students who participated in a reading intervention program made gains in reading. Landers Middle School, which utilized *Scholastic READ 180*, had the largest percentage of reading intervention students making gains. Two schools in this group reported less than half of their intervention students displayed gains in reading. Dalton Middle School, with 270 students participating in *SRA Corrective Reading*, reported only 32 percent made gains in reading. Implementation of *SRA Corrective Reading* at Dalton Middle School was hampered by teacher absenteeism and teachers not implementing the program consistently. SRA consultants, hired to coach the 26 teachers implementing *SRA Corrective Reading* at Dalton Middle School, reported that on numerous occasions, teachers whom they were scheduled to coach were either absent or not teaching the intervention program during the time scheduled for intervention. School administrators responded to the reports by monitoring implementation more closely. However, high rates of teacher absenteeism persisted throughout the school year.

Table 14

Group 3: Schools That Had Increases in Their WNP of at Least 3%

School	Intervention Program(s)	% of Students Making Gains in Reading
Carter	Voyager Journeys	43
Dalton	SRA Corrective Reading	32
Kirby	Voyager Journeys	51
Landers	Scholastic READ 180	58

Strategic teaching component. Tables 15 through 17 compare how well the schools within the three groups implemented the strategic teaching component of ARI-PAL. Strategic teaching implementation was analyzed according to three criteria. The first criterion was the percentage of teachers that incorporated strategic teaching into their daily lessons. Incorporation of strategic teaching into daily lessons was monitored by examining teachers' lesson plans. The second criterion involved student engagement. During walk-throughs, observers recorded the percentage of students actively engaged in meaningful learning activities. Active engagement was characterized by students reading for information, writing to enhance learning, engaging in meaningful discussions with the teacher and/or peers, or engaging in problem-solving activities. The third criterion for strategic teaching was evidence of literacy instruction. Evidence of literacy instruction was characterized by direct observation of teachers engaging students in literacy instruction, students working individually or in small groups on literacy-related tasks, and student work products that reflected literacy instruction.

Table 15 compares how well the schools that reduced their WNP met the criteria of the strategic teaching component. All but one school had at least 60% of its teachers incorporating strategic teaching into their daily lessons, as evidenced by inspection of lesson plans and classroom observations. There was evidence of literacy instruction in 69% of the classrooms in Group 1. On average, 61% of the students in Group 1 classrooms were observed actively engaged in learning. Ellison Middle School

outperformed all other ARI-PAL schools regarding evidence of strategic teaching. Two years prior to the initial year of the ARI-PAL, the teachers and administrators at Ellison Middle School received over 60 hours of embedded professional development from an ARI trainer as part of the school district's effort to improve literacy instruction in its secondary schools. The principal of Ellison Middle School documented 120 hours of professional development, and he demonstrated proficiency in all aspects of leading an effective literacy initiative. Therefore, the faculty of Ellison Middle School had more experience than the other ARI-PAL schools regarding using literacy strategies and this factor may account for the high level of implementation of strategic teaching.

Table 15

Group 1: Schools That Reduced Their WNP by at Least 3%

School	% of Teachers Incorporating Strategic Teaching				% of Students Actively Engaged	% of Classrooms with Literacy Instruction
	100-80	79-60	59-40	<40		
Alpha		X			55	65
Baker		X			63	75
Ellison	X				92	85
Johnson			X		63	58
Mills		X			52	68
Norville		X			43	64

Table 16 compares how well the schools with 2007 WNP that was within 1% of their 2006 WNP met the criteria of the strategic teaching component. Schools in Group 2 on average had 71% of the students in classrooms actively engaged in learning. All of the schools had at least 60% of their teachers incorporating strategic teaching into their daily lessons, as evidenced by inspection of lesson plans. There was evidence of literacy instruction in 73% of the classrooms, as evidenced by observation and examination of student work products. Fulmer Middle School performed well on all three criteria for

strategic teaching, a fact which may have helped offset the low percentage of students who made reading gains in their reading intervention program. Hampton Middle School, when compared to the other 13 ARI-PAL schools, had the second highest percentage of students actively engaged and the third highest percentage of classrooms with evidence of literacy instruction.

Table 16

Group 2: Schools With 2007 WNP That Was Within 1% of Their 2006 WNP

School	% of Teachers Incorporating Strategic Teaching				% of Students Actively Engaged	% of Classrooms with Literacy Instruction
	100-80	79-60	59-40	<40		
Ivey		X			62	73
Fulmer	X				76	84
Green		X			61	61
Hampton		X			83	75

Table 17 compares how well the schools that had increases in their WNP met the criteria of the strategic teaching component. Schools in Group 3 on average had only 38% of the students in classrooms actively engaged in learning. All of the schools had less than 60% of their teachers incorporating strategic teaching into their daily lessons, as evidenced by inspection of lesson plans. There was evidence of literacy instruction in only 41% of the classrooms in Group 3, as evidenced by observation and examination of student work products. Common among all of the schools in this group was a lack of strong instructional leadership from either the principals or the literacy leadership teams. The absence of strong leadership may partially account for the low level of implementation.

Table 17

Group 3: Schools That Had Increases in Their WNP of at Least 3%

School	% of Teachers Incorporating Strategic Teaching				% of Students Actively Engaged	% of Classrooms with Literacy Instruction
	100-80	79-60	59-40	<40		
Carter				X	36	28
Dalton			X		40	56
Kirby				X	36	33
Landers			X		39	46

Professional development component. Tables 18 through 20 compare how well the schools within the three groups implemented the professional development component of ARI-PAL. Professional development implementation was analyzed according to two criteria. The first criterion was whether at least 85 percent of the faculty participated in all three days of initial ARI-PAL training. The second criterion was ongoing job-embedded professional development. To meet this criterion, school personnel had to work with the regional ARI-PAL staff to identify professional development needs, develop professional development to address the identified needs and deliver the professional development in a timely manner. Delivery of professional development could be delivered to faculty in small group meetings or through side-by-side coaching with individual teachers.

Table 18 compares how well the schools that reduced their WNP met the criteria of the professional development component. Baker Middle School was the only school in Group 1 that did not have at least 85% of its faculty participate in initial ARI-PAL training. Baker Middle School's fifth grade teachers were opposed to the school's participation in the ARI-PAL, and they refused to attend the initial training. All of the schools in this group conducted ongoing job-embedded professional development throughout the school year.

Table 18

Group 1: Schools That Reduced Their WNP by at Least 3%

School	At least 85% of the faculty participated in initial three day ARI-PAL training		School personnel conducted ongoing job-embedded professional development	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Alpha	X		X	
Baker		X	X	
Ellison	X		X	
Johnson	X		X	
Mills	X		X	
Norville	X		X	

Table 19 compares how well the schools with 2007 WNP that was within 1% of their 2006 WNP met the criteria of the professional development component. All of the schools in Group 2 had at least 85% of their faculties participate in initial ARI-PAL training. All of the schools in this group conducted ongoing job-embedded professional development throughout the school year.

Table 19

Group 2: Schools With 2007 WNP That Was Within 1% of Their 2006 WNP

School	At least 85% of the faculty participated in initial three day ARI-PAL training		School personnel conducted ongoing job-embedded professional development	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Ivey	X		X	
Fulmer	X		X	
Green	X		X	
Hampton	X		X	

Table 20 compares how well the schools that had increases in their WNP met the criteria of the strategic teaching component. Dalton Middle School was the only school in Group 3 that did not have at least 85% of its faculty participate in initial ARI-PAL training. Dalton Middle School experienced high teacher turnover and did not have many of its new faculty in place in time for the initial ARI-PAL training. All but one of the schools in this group conducted ongoing job-embedded professional development throughout the school year. The school literacy coach and ARI-PAL staff were prevented from delivering planned professional development at Dalton Middle School on several occasions because the school administrator failed to adhere to the schedule that had been agreed upon prior to the beginning of the school year. High absenteeism among teachers and members of the leadership team also hindered consistent delivery of embedded professional development at Dalton Middle School.

Table 20

Group 3: Schools That Had Increases in Their WNP of at Least 3%

School	At least 85% of the faculty participated in initial three day ARI-PAL training		School personnel conducted ongoing job-embedded professional development	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Carter	X		X	
Dalton		X		X
Kirby	X		X	
Landers	X		X	

Summary

To answer the first research question, which addressed whether the students participating in the ARI-PAL program in 14 selected Alabama schools increased their achievement as measured by SAT-10, data were analyzed using a weighted non-proficiency formula. Based on changes in WNP, the ARI-PAL schools fell into three

categories. Schools in the first group reduced their WNP by at least three percent, indicating that the student populations in these schools were making gains in reading achievement. Schools in the second group maintained their WNP within one percent of their previous year's scores, indicating little change in the reading achievement of their students. Schools in the third group had increases in their WNP of at least three percent, indicating that the student populations in these schools showed a decline in reading achievement. The WNP of the 6051 students in all 14 schools combined, when compared to 2006, increased by .09 percent. A .09 percent difference in WNP means there was almost no change in WNP from 2006 to 2007.

The second research question involved using data from the GRADE to determine if students in the ARI-PAL schools made gains in reading achievement. The GRADE was administered three times during the 2006-2007 school year. However, as a result of problems with administering and scoring the assessment, no usable data were collected.

To address the third research question, the schools were divided into categories based on changes in WNP as assessed by the SAT-10. Data from site visit reports and classroom observations were then hand-coded to identify information relevant to implementation of the ARI-PAL components. Analysis of the evidence gathered to document implementation of the components of the ARI-PAL found no clear distinction between schools in Group 1 that displayed a positive effect by reducing their WNP and schools in Group 2 that displayed a neutral effect by showing little change in WNP. Schools in Group 2 actually displayed more evidence of implementation of some components than did schools in Group 1. However, there is a noticeable difference between schools in Groups 1 and 2 and the schools in Group 3 that displayed a negative effect by increasing their WNP. With the exception of the professional development component, schools in Group 3 displayed little evidence of successful implementation of the ARI-PAL components.

One of the most significant differences between schools that reduced or maintained their WNP and schools that increased their WNP was leadership. This study indicates that strong leadership from the principal, the literacy coach, and the literacy leadership team is an essential building block in constructing a successful literacy program. All but one of the schools that showed positive achievement gains and reduced their WNP had effective leadership. Johnson Middle School managed to reduce its WNP without strong principal leadership or an effective literacy leadership team. Alpha Middle School, which had the largest reduction in WNP, did not have a principal during the 2006-2007 school year; however, a strong literacy coach and an effective literacy leadership team were able to guide the implementation of the ARI-PAL components. It should be noted that Alpha Middle School benefitted from having the school system's superintendent directly involved in the day-to-day operation of the school in the absence of a principal. The superintendent was a strong supporter of the ARI-PAL, and his frequent presence on campus may have increased the level of implementation of the project's components. The schools that recorded increases in WNP did not have strong leadership from the principal or literacy leadership team. Lack of effective leadership may have impeded the implementation of the other ARI-PAL components, thus contributing to the increases in WNP.

Eleven of the 14 ARI-PAL schools held monthly data meetings to discuss assessment data. There was one school in each of the three groups that failed to schedule and carry out monthly data meetings. Although most of the schools were holding data meetings, analyzing student assessment data and using it to guide instruction proved to be a challenge. Half of the schools in the groups that reduced or maintained their WNP were proficient or becoming proficient in using data to guide instruction. At the end of the 2006-2007 school year, nine of the 14 schools, including all four in the group that had an increase in WNP or negative effect, were still not effectively using data to guide instruction.

Given the large number of struggling readers in the ARI-PAL schools, the implementation of reading intervention programs was a critical piece of the project. Although the schools were required to have an intervention program, they were free to choose any program that had a solid research base and data to validate effectiveness. Six of the schools, including four of the six that reduced their WNP, chose *Scholastic READ 180* as their reading intervention program. The percentage of *Scholastic READ 180* students that made gains in reading ranged from 58 to 85 in the six schools. Five of the schools chose *Voyager Journeys* as their reading intervention program. The percentage of *Voyager Journeys* students that made gains in reading ranged from 29 to 56 in the five schools that selected that program. One school chose *Voyager Passport* for reading intervention and reported that 61 percent of the students involved in the program made gains in reading. Three schools chose *SRA Corrective Reading* for reading intervention, including two that purchased it as an addition to *Voyager Journeys*. Gains in reading for SRA Corrective Reading students ranged from 32 percent to 52 percent in the three schools. One school chose *LANGUAGE III* as its reading intervention program and reported that 48 percent of the students involved in the program made gains in reading.

Based on the percentage of students making gains in reading, *Scholastic READ 180* appears to have outperformed the other reading intervention programs. However, a number of factors such as support from the program publishers, instructional leadership within the schools, and teacher attitudes may have influenced the implementation of the reading intervention programs. Data over several years along with evidence of effective implementation will be necessary to determine if any one reading intervention program has more of a positive impact on students' reading achievement than the others.

State and regional ARI-PAL staff felt that in order for the project to be successful, strategic teaching would have to be implemented effectively in the content area classrooms. ARI-PAL regional reading coaches spent the majority of their time in the schools working with the school literacy coaches on how to coach teachers and provide

support for the implementation of strategic teaching. One way the school literacy coaches supported teachers was by helping them plan strategic lessons. The schools that reduced or maintained their WNP had evidence that the majority of their teachers were writing strategic lessons by the end of the school year. Ellison Middle School's administration required every teacher to plan strategically and provided support until all were proficient. As a result, 100 percent of the teachers at Ellison Middle School were planning strategically by the end of the school year.

The notable exception among the highest performing schools was Johnson Middle School, which had evidence that less than half of the teachers were planning strategically. As noted earlier, lack of instructional leadership was an issue at Johnson Middle School, and this factor may account for the low number of teachers who bought into writing strategic lessons. An absence of instructional leadership may also account for the low percentage of teachers planning strategically in the schools that had increases in WNP. The four lowest performing ARI-PAL schools all had less than half of their faculties planning strategic lessons.

The primary purpose of strategic teaching was to improve the understanding and retention of content material through the use of literacy strategies. These literacy strategies were designed to engage students in learning activities and teach them how to extract meaning from text. Observational data indicated that most of the schools that reduced or maintained their WNP had 60 to 70 percent of their students actively engaged in learning. There was also evidence of high levels of literacy instruction in most of the classrooms in these schools. On the other hand, observational data indicated there were low levels of student engagement and little evidence of literacy instruction in the schools that had increases in their WNP.

The first year of the ARI-PAL involved a substantial amount of professional development. The initial three days of training that faculties received in the summer of 2006 was designed to give faculties an overview of all of the ARI-PAL components and

build background knowledge in regards to assessment and strategic teaching. All but two schools had at least 85 percent of their faculties in attendance for the initial training. One of these two schools, Baker Middle School, was among the highest performing schools and the other, Dalton Middle School, was among the lowest performing schools. Although the initial training was important, the ARI-PAL staff knew that follow-up support and the coaching of teachers was necessary for implementation to be widespread and effective. Therefore ARI-PAL regional coaches spent the majority of their time in schools training the school literacy coaches how to coach teachers and deliver embedded professional development. By the end of the 2006-2007 school year, there was evidence that school personnel in 13 of the 14 schools were delivering ongoing, job-embedded professional development to their teachers. The lone exception was Dalton Middle School, which experienced high teacher absenteeism and leadership issues throughout the school year.

Although SAT-10 data indicated there was little overall change when the scores of students in all 14 schools were combined, when data were analyzed for each of the ARI-PAL schools individually, some of the schools displayed positive gains. There was also a clear distinction between groups of schools that displayed positive or neutral effects and schools that showed negative effects in terms of levels of implementation of ARI-PAL components. Schools that displayed more evidence of implementation of the essential components reduced or maintained their WNP, a positive or neutral effect, while all of the schools that displayed poor implementation increased their WNP, a negative effect.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The number of struggling readers in Alabama is alarming. Data from the 2005 administration of the Stanford Achievement Test-Tenth Edition (SAT-10) identified 205 middle schools (31%) with over half their students reading below proficiency. The disaggregated data indicated that in 443 middle schools (66%), over half of the African-American and Hispanic students were reading below proficiency. The 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results for Alabama students were just as alarming, with 77% of fourth graders and 78% of eighth graders reading below proficiency (NAEP, 2005).

In the spring of 2006, the ARI launched the Project for Adolescent Literacy with three primary purposes. The first purpose was to build highly successful adolescent literacy demonstration sites by making research-based local education authority investments in adolescent literacy efforts and by concentrating the available ARI secondary resources in a small number of schools that had any combination grades 4 through 9. A second purpose for the ARI-PAL was to develop advocacy for and to secure funding for the ARI into more secondary schools. The third purpose for the ARI-PAL was to increase the effectiveness of the ARI secondary model by making it compatible with the latest research on adolescent literacy. Chapter Two provided an overview of the research studies that supported the ARI-PAL.

The purpose of this descriptive study was to describe the experiences of the 14 ARI-PAL schools thoroughly and to develop recommendations for other secondary schools

interested in strengthening the reading and writing skills of their students. To address the purpose of this study, the following research questions were explored:

1. Do the students participating in the ARI-PAL program in 14 selected Alabama schools increase their achievement as measured by SAT-10?
2. Do the students participating in the ARI-PAL program in 14 selected Alabama schools increase their Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE) scores?
3. Using descriptive data from site visits and educators' experiences, what were the perceived successes and challenges of the ARI-PAL program during the first year of implementation?

Summary of Findings for the Three Research Questions

Results of Student Achievement as Measured by SAT-10

Analysis of SAT-10 scores indicates that half of the ARI-PAL schools decreased their WNP, and half of the schools recorded an increase in WNP. When the scores of the 6,051students in all 14 ARI-PAL schools were combined, there was virtually no change in WNP. The lack of change in WNP might suggest that the first year of ARI-PAL implementation had little effect on students' academic performance. However, longitudinal analysis of the ARI-PAL schools' SAT-10 data might indicate that no change in WNP may be a positive indicator.

In the three years prior to ARI-PAL implementation, students exited the middle schools that would become the original 14 ARI-PAL schools scoring on average 5.5 percentile points lower in reading on the SAT-10 than when they entered. For example, when students entered the sixth grade at Ivey Middle School in 2004, they scored at the 48th percentile in reading on the SAT-10, and when this group of students exited the eighth grade in 2006, they scored at the 32nd percentile. Such declines in reading achievement as students progress through the secondary grades are the norm in Alabama.

Therefore, a 1% increase in WNP appears to be an improvement over the normal decline in reading achievement.

Overall, 11 of the 14 ARI-PAL schools had declining SAT-10 reading scores in the three years prior to ARI-PAL implementation. This statistic may be attributed to reading instruction in middle school not keeping pace with the increasing rigor of the SAT-10. In 2007, after one year of ARI-PAL implementation, 11 of the 14 ARI-PAL schools had increases in SAT-10 reading scores. The three schools that experienced declines in SAT-10 scores, Carter Middle School, Dalton Middle School and Kirby Middle School, were all Group 3 schools that displayed little evidence of ARI-PAL implementation.

The assumption has traditionally been that students entering middle school should already know how to read. The reality is that while most students entering the middle grades are proficient at word recognition, many of these students do not know how to extract meaning from text. Unfortunately, very few middle school teachers know how to help struggling readers because these teachers receive little or no pre-service training in teaching reading. As the texts that students are required to read increase in complexity each year, students with reading difficulties find it increasingly more difficult to keep pace with the reading requirements of their content area classes. The strategic teaching component of the ARI-PAL, which equipped teachers with strategies for teaching reading comprehension, combined with research-based reading intervention programs may have helped reverse, or at least slow, the decline in reading achievement prevalent in so many middle schools.

Two of the three schools that experienced declines in SAT-10 reading scores, Carter Middle School and Dalton Middle school, both had 83 percent of their students receiving free or reduced lunch. However, three other ARI-PAL schools which had larger percentages of students receiving free or reduced lunch, Ellison Middle School, Mills Middle School, and Norville Middle School, displayed positive effects by improving their SAT-10 reading scores and reducing their WNP. Therefore, there is evidence that, when

properly implemented, the ARI-PAL model can have a positive impact on SAT-10 reading scores in schools that have a high percentage of students from low-income families.

Overview of Student Achievement in GRADE Scores

The Alabama State Department of Education purchased the GRADE, along with special scanners to read the test protocols, for the 14 ARI-PAL schools. The GRADE was intended to be a diagnostic assessment that would provide benchmark data on students' reading skills. The schools experienced numerous problems with the *GRADE* during the 2006-2007 school year. Some of the problems existed because of poor planning on the part of the ARI-PAL staff, and some occurred because of the quality of the service provided by the assessment's publisher.

The ARI-PAL staff did not do an adequate amount of research on the *GRADE* before purchasing the assessment. Although the sales representatives for *GRADE* presented their product as a diagnostic assessment and progress monitoring tool, a careful analysis would have revealed that it was best suited to be a summative assessment. However, in their haste to purchase an assessment and get it in place before the school year began, the ARI-PAL staff purchased the assessment without giving it a thorough evaluation.

As a diagnostic assessment, the *GRADE* had little utility. The reports generated provided general information on individual student performance but did not diagnose specific skill deficits. The information provided on the reports generated by *GRADE* was almost identical to the information that could be obtained from the state accountability assessments that the students took each spring.

The *GRADE* was not well designed to be a progress monitoring tool. To begin with, there were only two versions of the assessment at each grade level. Therefore, the test should have been given only twice a year. When given three times, students saw the same version in the fall and spring, and there is a possibility that familiarity with the test may have inflated scores. Another reason the *GRADE* did not function well as a progress monitoring instrument was the length of the interval between administrations

of the assessment. ARI-PAL schools gave the assessment at the beginning of the school year, at mid-year, and again at the end of the school year. There were approximately 18 weeks between administrations of the assessment. Progress monitoring, to be effective, should occur at least monthly for students who are achieving at a normal rate and at least biweekly for students who are struggling academically. The 18-week interval between administrations of the *GRADE* did not allow for timely adjustments in instruction.

Although the *GRADE* would not fulfill the purposes for which it was purchased, it still had potential value as a summative measure of changes in students' reading achievement from fall to spring. However, technical problems and delays in the delivery of appropriate testing materials limited its usefulness during the 2006-2007 school year. *GRADE* materials were not delivered to all of the ARI-PAL schools until after school had begun in the fall. The first administration did not occur in some schools until a month after students had begun classes. The first administration was also complicated by shortages of test protocols at some grade levels. Waiting on additional materials further delayed the first administration of *GRADE* for some students.

The GRADE can be hand-scored or scored by a specially designed scanner. To make the administration of GRADE faster and easier, scanners were purchased for all 14 schools. Although the scanners were purchased from the GRADE publisher, they were not compatible with the version of GRADE software that ARI-PAL had purchased. Calls for technical assistance from the publisher were not immediately answered. When technical assistance was provided, it did not solve many of the problems. Eight schools were able to work through their technical problems and had their scanners operational by October. The other schools hand-scored their assessments and manually entered their data. In some of the schools, problems with the scanners persisted the entire year.

After the third administration of GRADE was completed, all 14 ARI-PAL schools were instructed to submit data to the Alabama State Department of Education for analysis. Data from the schools that manually entered data could not be opened by

personnel at the Alabama State Department of Education. Assistance was requested from the *GRADE* publisher who was also unable to convert the data to a usable form. At this point, ARI-PAL administrators concluded that *GRADE* data could not be used to assess the effectiveness of the project.

Results on Perceived Successes and Challenges of the ARI-PAL Program

The initial year of ARI-PAL implementation presented an invaluable learning opportunity to the ARI-PAL staff and personnel at the 14 schools. The goal going into the project was to establish the five essential components of ARI-PAL in each of the schools. The level of implementation of the components varied from school to school as each school had its own unique strengths and challenges. This section provides an overview of the challenges encountered while implementing each of the components and some lessons learned during the process.

Collaborative leadership. The developers of the ARI-PAL envisioned a leadership component led by the principal with the assistance of key school personnel, who would make up a literacy leadership team. The principal's role was to be a proactive leader who endorsed and supported the implementation of all components of the ARI-PAL. The literacy leadership team would assume responsibility for analyzing student assessment data, determining professional development needs based on the data analysis, developing or arranging for the delivery of professional development, and serving as a conduit of information to the rest of the faculty.

The role that principals played in the first year of the ARI-PAL was crucial to the success or failure of the schools. Not surprisingly, the schools that had effective leaders outperformed the schools that experienced leadership issues. The most successful schools had principals who made the transition from supporting implementation of the ARI-PAL components to leading the implementation of the ARI-PAL components. This transition required the principal to be not only the authority figure of the school but also

the instructional leader of the school. In most cases, principal leadership translated into more teacher buy-in and a more thorough implementation of assessment, intervention and strategic teaching. The best-case example was Ellison Middle School, where the principal was not only the leader but also the lead learner. He attended every professional development session, led data meetings, taught demonstration lessons, taught intervention students, coached teachers, and expected everyone on campus to be as committed as he was. The result was high levels of implementation and improved student achievement at every grade level and on every subtest of the SAT-10.

Most of the schools in which principal leadership was lacking floundered during the first year of the ARI-PAL. In some cases, the principals delegated their responsibilities for implementation to the literacy coaches or other subordinates. This decision sent a message to the faculties that the project was a low priority to the administration. Without principal buy-in, it was difficult to get teachers to buy-in. The four ARI-PAL schools that had increases in WNP (negative result) of at least three percent all had principals that failed to assume the role of instructional leader. As a consequence, there were low levels of implementation of strategic teaching, intervention programs taught without fidelity, and little use of data to guide instruction. Clearly, the role of the principal as an instructional leader was crucial to the project.

Knowing that implementation of the ARI-PAL components would be too daunting an endeavor for one person to lead, the ARI-PAL schools were required to have a literacy leadership team to help the principal guide the process. Leadership teams participated in a one-day session in the spring of 2006 to become acquainted with the components of the ARI-PAL. The teams were also given a day to plan how they would implement each component in their schools. During the summer of 2006, the leadership teams participated in three days of initial summer training with their faculties and then attended a separate session on research-based reading intervention programs.

Despite the training that leadership teams received, they did not play a vital role in most of the schools. In several schools, the literacy leadership team existed only on paper and never actually met to fulfill its function. In other schools, the teams met but did not produce specific plans to guide their schools' literacy efforts.

A major reason some of the literacy leadership teams were ineffective was that despite receiving training on the components of the project, the members of the leadership teams were not given enough training on analyzing student data or specific instruction on how to use the information to guide the literacy efforts in their schools. The assumption was that when given tasks to accomplish, the leadership teams would determine how to accomplish those tasks given the resources available in their schools. With few exceptions, this scenario was not the case. Lacking clear guidelines, the literacy leadership teams did not know how to proceed and tended to wait for guidance from the principal and/or literacy coach. When guidance was not forthcoming, the literacy leadership teams slipped into inactivity.

Another reason some of the literacy leadership teams struggled was team membership. Although principals were asked to choose team members based on knowledge and leadership ability, some principals assembled teams based on convenience and/or personal preference. Some principals placed teachers on their literacy leadership teams based on who was available on the date the leadership team training was scheduled. Others asked for volunteers and staffed their teams according to who was willing to serve. In some instances, school principals staffed their teams with teachers they felt most comfortable working with. The cumulative result of these practices was that many schools did not staff their literacy leadership teams with the most qualified personnel available in their schools.

Assessment. A pressing concern for the ARI-PAL schools during the summer of 2006 was how to identify struggling readers and determine the type and amount of intervention materials that would need to be purchased in order to provide reading intervention.

Standardized test data from the previous spring provided enough information to screen out students that might benefit from participation in the reading intervention programs, but few schools had diagnostic reading assessments to pinpoint specific reading deficits. Most of the ARI-PAL schools purchased intervention materials based on the number of students identified through initial screening using SAT-10 and Alabama Reading and Math Test (ARMT) data. Once the intervention materials were received, the schools used the placement tests included with the intervention programs to determine which students would benefit from participation in the programs.

An ARI budget surplus made it possible for the ARI to provide $140 per student to assist the ARI-PAL schools. Some of these funds were used to purchase the *GRADE* for all 14 schools. The ARI expected this assessment to provide detailed information about student reading difficulties and provide a consistent evaluation of the schools' progress. However, the reports generated were very similar to those offered by the state's standardized tests and offered very little actual diagnostic information. In addition to providing disappointingly little useful data, the *GRADE* proved to be time consuming to administer and difficult to score.

Problems with the *GRADE* left most of the ARI-PAL schools without a reliable progress monitoring instrument. Some of the schools were able to track the progress of their reading intervention students using progress monitoring components built into the reading intervention programs. However, the impact that strategic teaching was having on students was difficult to assess. Schools were forced to rely on student work products, observational data, and teacher-made formative assessments to measure students' progress. The quality of the data collected using these informal measures varied from teacher to teacher and school to school.

Intervention. Implementation of reading intervention programs was a significant challenge for the ARI-PAL schools in year one. Difficulties for the schools stemmed from three circumstances. First, the selection of intervention programs did not occur until the

summer before the school year, and initial professional development for the teachers chosen to implement the programs was not completed until after the school year had started. This situation delayed full implementation in some schools for several weeks.

Another challenge schools faced was the need for more than one reading intervention program. Assessments revealed that there were students in every ARI-PAL school who did not have mastery of the alphabetic principal. These students required an intervention program designed to teach them decoding skills and assist them in developing reading fluency. Analysis of assessment data also revealed that a significantly larger population of students in the ARI-PAL schools possessed limited vocabularies and displayed poor comprehension skills. Thus intervention programs designed to address both of these deficit areas had to be put into place. Finding enough qualified personnel to implement two separate reading intervention programs required that some teachers who did not want to teach reading intervention were assigned to reading intervention classes. Thus, teachers' attitudes may have had a negative influence on the quality of the implementation of reading intervention programs in some schools. In some schools, there were not enough personnel to staff all of the intervention classes that were needed, and schools had to prioritize student placement in reading intervention based on which students had the greatest needs. Therefore, not every student who might have benefitted from reading intervention received it.

One of the biggest challenges to full implementation of the reading intervention programs was scheduling. *Scholastic READ 180* was particularly problematic because it required 90 minutes daily. In some of the ARI-PAL schools, a separate intervention period was not possible, so students participated in *Scholastic READ 180* as their core language arts class. In order to meet all of the Alabama Course of Study standards, teachers were required to supplement the program with other materials. Teaching the standards that were not covered in the intervention program reduced the amount of time students were working in *Scholastic READ 180.*

In many cases, intervention classes had to be scheduled at the same time as elective courses, making it necessary for students to give up their elective classes in order to participate in reading intervention. Some students felt they were being punished, and they resented giving up classes that were of interest to them in order to receive reading intervention. Students who perceived that reading intervention was punishment may not have given their best effort in the intervention classes.

Still another challenge to successful implementation of the reading intervention programs was professional development. Most of the teachers that implemented the reading intervention programs had no prior experience with reading instruction. These teachers required intensive professional development to build their knowledge base regarding reading instruction. As previously mentioned, many of these teachers did not receive professional development until after the school year had begun. Once they began teaching the programs, they received two or three follow-up coaching visits from program consultants. However, for some teachers this training was not enough support to ensure that the reading intervention programs were being implemented with fidelity. The cost of purchasing additional support visits from program consultants ranged from $1,500 to $2,500 per day depending on the program. Many of the schools were unable to afford the additional professional development, so they were left to work through implementation issues on their own.

Strategic teaching. Strategic teaching was the cornerstone of the ARI-PAL. ARI-PAL staff knew that in order to have a significant impact on the achievement of the large numbers of students that were non-proficient in reading, content area teachers would have to incorporate literacy strategies into their daily instruction. Strategic teaching was the primary focus of the ARI-PAL regional coaches that worked in the schools from week to week.

Strategic teaching proved to be difficult to implement. Strategic teaching required a great deal of planning on the part of teachers. Active engagement by all students was one

of the most critical elements of strategic teaching. Teachers had to develop a repertoire of engaging literacy strategies and then learn how to use those strategies to teach their content standards effectively. Going into the first year, the assumption of ARI-PAL administrators was that teachers would receive professional development on literacy strategies and then use these strategies to tweak lessons the teachers had already planned. The reality was that the initial three-day training had little impact on teachers' ability to implement literacy strategies. Analysis of teachers' lesson plans during the first few weeks of school revealed that almost no one was incorporating literacy strategies, many teachers were not teaching the content standards, and some teachers were not writing lesson plans.

To address these issues, the ARI-PAL regional coaches worked with the school literacy coaches to establish coaching cohorts. Coaching cohorts were small groups of three or four teachers that the literacy coaches worked with for several weeks to help the teachers plan and deliver strategic lessons. Selection of teachers for the cohorts was based on teacher attitude. Teachers in the first cohorts were those the school leaders perceived as being open to new ideas and willing to change. Literacy coaches worked side-by-side with these teachers until they felt that the teachers could plan engaging lessons and execute them as planned. Some teachers grasped the concept of strategic teaching after a few weeks; others struggled with it for months. There were also teachers in every school who showed no interest in changing their instruction and refused to participate in the coaching cohorts. School administrators and ARI-PAL staff decided not to force teachers to participate but instead to focus on helping teachers that were committed to the project.

To function as instructional leaders, administrators had to understand strategic teaching fully so that they could observe instructional practices and reflect with teachers on the impact these practices were having on student learning. Given their other responsibilities, most of the ARI-PAL principals did not have the opportunity to observe and participate in strategic teaching enough to develop a deep understanding of

the concept. The principals who were committed to leading ARI-PAL implementation in their schools participated as much as possible, relied on their literacy coaches for guidance, and sent a clear message to their faculties that everyone was expected to participate. These schools had much more teacher buy-in and, in most cases, the students benefited from engaging lessons that were focused on the content standards. Schools with principals that were not actively involved experienced more teacher resistance to changes in instruction. These schools, for the most part, experienced declines in student achievement.

Professional development. Professional development was most effective when delivered to individuals or small groups. Large group professional development sessions, such as the initial three days of ARI-PAL training, delivered to whole faculties did not appear to have much of an impact on instructional practices. Schools that delivered professional development at faculty meetings after school encountered high teacher absenteeism because of other commitments and limited active engagement from participants. Professional development delivered during the school day, using teachers' planning periods or utilizing substitutes to free teachers to participate, was much better received by teachers and perceived as more productive by facilitators. By far the most effective professional development was side-by-side coaching with individual teachers.

ARI-PAL regional coaches and school literacy coaches initially implemented side-by-side coaching to assist teachers with the planning and delivery of strategic teaching. The practice proved to be very effective and was expanded to include coaching reading intervention teachers in the use of the reading intervention programs. An additional component was added when a retired principal from an effective ARI middle school was contracted to be a principal coach and do side-by-side coaching with ARI-PAL principals. She worked with the principals to help them become more effective at conducting data meetings, walk-throughs and classroom observations. Unfortunately, a few of the ARI-

PAL principals that may have benefitted from assistance from the principal coach refused to participate.

The implementation of the five essential components of the ARI-PAL in 14 schools provided insight into the challenges that would have to be addressed in order to implement the project on a larger scale. Although some of the schools were well on their way to implementation of the essential components by the end of year one, none of the schools managed to implement all five fully. The second year of implementation may provide a better indication of the effectiveness of the ARI-PAL model and the feasibility of expanding the project to include more schools.

Discussion

The ARI-PAL was launched in the spring of 2006 to address concerns about the poor performance of Alabama's middle and high school students on state and national assessments of educational progress. The focus of the project designers was to select the pilot schools and begin implementation as quickly as possible. In the haste to purchase assessment instruments, identify reading intervention programs that were appropriate for adolescents, and develop professional development for the pilot schools, little thought was given to how the implementation of the ARI-PAL components in the pilot schools would be monitored. As a result, the monitoring plan and tools were not developed until after the school year had begun and the project was well under way. The delay in developing a monitoring plan limited the types and amount of data that were collected during the first year of the ARI-PAL.

In this study, the 14 schools were placed into three categories after the WNP scores were analyzed. The three categories included higher performing schools, neutral performing schools, and lower performing schools as judged by WNP scores for literacy proficiency. During the first implementation year, additional data were gathered by various individuals connected to the ARI-PAL initiative. The researcher analyzed the

collected data and assigned rankings to each school. The results were provided in several tables in Chapter 4.

While the SAT-10 provided reliable data to evaluate changes in reading achievement among the students in the ARI-PAL schools, the instruments used to evaluate the level of implementation or the quality of implementation of the ARI-PAL components were not as reliable. Implementation evaluation was dependent upon site visit reports, walk-through data, observational data, and document analysis. All of these measures were very subjective, and in most cases the person collecting the data on implementation was the same person responsible for guiding the implementation, the ARI-PAL regional coach. In some cases, the regional coaches may have been too close to the issues in their schools to view the situations objectively. Therefore, the explanation the researcher provided for the differences in WNP scores and placement of the schools in the three categories are as good as the data collected by the ARI-PAL observers.

In addition to the above obstacles, little training of the ARI-PAL regional coaches occurred on how to use the walk-through and classroom observation tools. The walk-through and classroom observation forms were developed by the ARI-PAL administrators, who then explained their use to the regional coaches during their monthly team meetings. Although the team discussed the items to look for during their school visits, the regional coaches never practiced using the instruments prior to using them in their schools. It is possible that regional coaches may have interpreted the characteristics of the student and teacher behaviors they were observing differently. These different interpretations may have had an impact on the perceived levels of implementation of the ARI-PAL components.

The monitoring of the reading intervention programs during the initial year of ARI-PAL is another concern. No common measure of reading achievement was used by all 14 schools to document the progress of students in reading intervention. The six schools using Scholastic READ 180 reported students' Lexile scores to document changes in

reading achievement. The eight schools that used a reading intervention program other than Scholastic READ 180 reported SAT-10 total reading subtest stanine scores to document changes in students' reading achievement. Stanine scores essentially represent standard scores, with a range from 1 to 9 and a mean score of 5. It is a relatively coarse measurement that allows comparison of scores from one standardized test to another. Comparing changes in Lexile scores to changes in SAT-10 stanine scores is problematic because while Lexile scores are sensitive to subtle changes in students' reading ability, stanine scores represent broad spans of reading ability. Therefore, it was difficult to assess if any one reading intervention program was more effective at raising student achievement than the others.

Reviewing the results, preliminary findings begin to help educators gain initial insight about possible factors that influence literacy achievement in the participating ARI-PAL schools. In the next section, the researcher provides some recommendations for changes the Alabama State Department of Education could make to improve the program and gain a better insight on factors that influence literacy achievement.

Recommendations for ARI-PAL Improvement

A number of lessons were learned during the first year of the ARI-PAL. Unforeseen obstacles created challenges that stakeholders were forced to confront in order to move the project forward. Many of the following recommendations for improvement of the ARI-PAL model are based on insight gained through collaboration with ARI-PAL staff and school personnel to solve problems encountered during implementation of the essential components of the project.

The project should provide literacy leadership training to building administrators, building literacy coaches, and members of the literacy leadership teams a year in advance of school-wide implementation. Personnel designated to lead the literacy initiative need time to build background knowledge regarding issues surrounding adolescent literacy and time to plan for implementation. In the year prior to implementation, key

school personnel should work under the guidance of ARI-PAL staff members to become knowledgeable of what constitutes best practice when it comes to adolescent literacy instruction. Building administrators and literacy leadership team members should visit schools that are already successfully addressing the literacy needs of adolescent learners. Visits should be scheduled so that visitors have the opportunity to observe leaders in the host school conducting walk-throughs to assess the level of implementation of literacy strategies, conducting observations to assess the quality of implementation of instructional strategies, and facilitating data meetings where individual student assessment data are analyzed and steps are planned to address students' instructional needs.

The principal is a key element in the success or failure of ARI-PAL implementation. In the year prior to school-wide implementation of the initiative, the principals of schools planning implementation should be allowed to attend the ARI-PAL collaborative meetings where principals of current ARI-PAL schools discuss issues related to implementation with the ARI-PAL administrators. This meeting would give the principals insight into potential obstacles to implementation in their own schools and knowledge about how the experienced ARI-PAL principals overcame these obstacles.

Principals should be provided guidance on developing structures that support literacy instruction. Literacy leadership meetings, data meetings, and time for professional development should be scheduled for the entire school year prior to the beginning of the school year. The ARI-PAL staff should offer assistance to principals as they build collaborative time for teachers into the daily schedule and develop master schedules that provide extended time for literacy instruction and reading intervention classes.

Principals should be given guidance on selecting staff members to serve on the literacy leadership team. Members of the team should be respected by their colleagues, positive about the school, and understanding of the need for change. The responsibilities

of the literacy leadership team should be clearly defined and should include collecting and analyzing student data, determining professional development needs based on data analysis, and assisting with the delivery of professional development. ARI-PAL personnel should develop templates to assist literacy leadership teams with the performance of their responsibilities such as sample agendas, action plans, and professional development planning tools. In the year prior to school-wide implementation of the initiative, leadership team members should receive professional development on assessment, data analysis, and using data to differentiate instruction.

Schools should have assessments that provide a clear picture of students' strengths and weaknesses. The ARI-PAL staff should provide guidance as schools review their assessment plans to determine what information can be obtained from assessments currently being administered and what additional information is needed. All schools need a common measurement tool, such as the Lexile Framework for Reading, to establish a quantifiable measure of reading ability. Once assessments are selected, they should be purchased well in advance of the first planned administration in order to allow adequate time for professional development on administration and interpretation of results. If assessment data are not analyzed and used in a timely manner, they can become useless information. Schools should be assisted in creating timelines for conducting assessments and analyzing data.

In order to meet the needs of all students, schools will need interventions that address all aspects of reading. In most secondary schools, there will be a relatively small number of students that struggle to decode words. Other students' reading difficulties are usually due to poor comprehension skills, limited vocabularies, and/or insufficient prior knowledge. ARI-PAL staff should assist schools as they consult multiple forms of data to determine students' specific reading deficits and identify reading intervention programs that will address those deficits.

As with assessments, reading intervention programs should be purchased well in advance of their implementation date in order to provide adequate time for professional development. The importance of professional development when implementing a reading intervention program cannot be overemphasized. In order to reap the full benefits of research-based reading intervention programs, schools must implement the programs exactly the way they were designed. Therefore, schools should budget for initial training and follow-up coaching support from program consultants when purchasing intervention programs.

Strategic teaching is the cornerstone of the ARI-PAL because content area teachers have the greatest opportunity to impact students' reading skills. When content-area literacy strategies are embedded in daily classroom instruction, students acquire skills that allow them to develop into independent learners capable of constructing meaning from text. The ARI-PAL staff must equip content area teachers with the skills to provide comprehension instruction, and, more importantly, they must convince teachers that they can teach reading skills and teach their content material effectively.

One possible impediment to wide-spread implementation of strategic teaching during the first year of the ARI-PAL was the complexity of the strategic teaching model. Planning effective strategic lessons required teachers to have a thorough knowledge of their content standards, an understanding of the characteristics of adolescent learners, and mastery of a repertoire of literacy strategies. In hindsight, strategic teaching may have been too overwhelming and labor intensive for some teachers.

The strategic teaching model should be simplified to focus on the aspects of adolescent literacy instruction that research indicates will have the most impact on student achievement. One of the most important variables in learning with texts is a reader's prior knowledge. The more a reader brings to the text in terms of knowledge and skills, the more he will learn and remember what he reads. Professional development

should equip teachers with simple strategies to activate prior knowledge, build background knowledge, pre-teach vocabulary, and focus attention on intended outcomes.

How well a reader comprehends a text is also dependent on his ability to think about and control his thinking process during reading. Instruction for teachers should include developing lessons that require students to stop and reflect on what they are reading. Graphic organizers and a number of easy-to-implement instructional strategies can be utilized to help students learn to monitor their comprehension of text.

Reading and writing are integrally related. Writing activities are especially critical after students complete a reading. The training teachers receive should include incorporating into their lessons writing assignments that require students to verbalize understanding and go beyond the text to arrive at conclusions and make judgments.

Learning is a socially interactive process, and learning increases when the students collaborate in the learning process. Dialogue can spark new ideas, and the process of verbalizing ones' understanding of an idea or concept deepens understanding. Therefore, teachers should incorporate strategies that allow for discussion of text with partners or in small groups. The training teachers receive should include guidance on managing and assessing collaborative learning activities. Teachers should also receive support and coaching from school leaders as they learn to become facilitators in collaborative classrooms where students assume more responsibility for acquisition of content knowledge.

There is a strong correlation between high-quality professional development and student achievement. In order to meet the literacy needs of adolescent learners, schools must have a structure in place to identify professional development needs and a framework in place to deliver the professional development effectively. Ideally, professional development needs should emerge as teachers meet to analyze student data and collaborate on ways to address identified student needs. The ARI-PAL regional coaches should coach teacher leaders as they learn to facilitate data meetings in which teachers use student data to identify professional development needs.

Working one-on-one with teachers proved to be the most effective way to influence teacher behavior during year one of the ARI-PAL. The ARI-PAL staff should work with school leaders to identify small cohorts of teachers who are receptive to new ideas and willing to accept coaching. School leaders should invest time assisting these select teachers with the planning and delivery of strategic lessons until the teachers are competent and confident in their ability to plan and deliver strategic lessons independently.

Summary of Recommendations

Many of the problems encountered during the first year of the ARI-PAL could have been avoided if more time had been invested in planning and preparation prior to implementation. School leaders should develop a thorough understanding of all of the components of the adolescent literacy initiative prior to school-wide implementation.

Adequate time should be allotted to researching assessment tools and reading intervention programs to ensure that they will effectively meet the needs of school personnel and students. Once school-wide implementation of the initiative begins, time invested working one-on-one with teachers as they learn to implement literacy strategies will pay dividends as students develop skills that enable them to become independent learners.

It is recommended that the progress of the 14 ARI-PAL schools continue to be studied. The first year of implementation of a new initiative may not be a true indicator of the potential long-term effects of the initiative. The potential of the ARI-PAL model cannot be accurately evaluated until it can be ascertained it has been properly implemented. The results of this study can be used to make necessary changes to the ARI-PAL as the project continues in the existing schools and expands into other schools. Once administrators are confident that the components are firmly established in some of the schools, they should reassess the effectiveness of the ARI-PAL model.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Site Visit Report

Alabama Reading Initiative

Project for Adolescent Literacy
Site Visit Report

School: _____

Date: _____

Regional Coach: _____

Purpose of Visit: _____

Leadership

_____

Assessment

_____

Intervention

_____

Strategic Teaching

_____

Professional Development

_____

Comments:

_____

Next Steps:

_____

Appendix B

Weighted Non-Proficiency

Table B.1

Weighted Non-Proficiency: Alpha Middle School

				2006					2007				
Grade	Total	Matched	Pct.	WNP	1	2	3	4	WNP	1	2	3	4
5	87	84	97	38	25	13	27	19	41	29	11	30	14
6	119	112	94	54	51	18	33	10	50	41	30	30	11
7	105	101	96	50	39	24	30	8	36	26	21	44	10
8	110	100	91	42	33	17	37	13	42	32	19	40	9

Table B.2

Weighted Non-Proficiency: Baker Middle School

				2006					2007				
Grade	Total	Matched	Pct.	WNP	1	2	3	4	WNP	1	2	3	4
5	94	92	98	20	10	17	34	31	23	14	14	30	34
6	105	100	95	23	12	21	31	36	23	14	17	38	31
7	119	115	97	23	17	19	50	29	18	12	17	47	39
8	107	104	97	33	20	28	34	22	25	16	21	40	27

Table B.3

Weighted Non-Proficiency: Carter Middle School

				2006					2007				
Grade	Total	Matched	Pct.	WNP	1	2	3	4	WNP	1	2	3	4
6	160	150	94	37	37	38	53	22	46	53	31	54	12
7	164	152	93	47	52	39	51	10	38	35	44	60	13
8	178	161	90	43	51	35	62	13	50	64	34	48	15

Table B.4

Weighted Non-Proficiency: Dalton Middle School

				2006					2007				
Grade	Total	Matched	Pct.	WNP	1	2	3	4	WNP	1	2	3	4
6	175	169	97	41	56	27	65	21	62	88	32	42	7
7	225	206	92	54	83	56	59	8	56	96	40	59	11
8	226	220	97	58	103	48	53	16	52	85	58	64	13

Table B.5

Weighted Non-Proficiency: Ellison Middle School

				2006					2007				
Grade	Total	Matched	Pct.	WNP	1	2	3	4	WNP	1	2	3	4
4	71	70	99	21	8	14	40	8	19	4	19	36	11
5	96	95	99	32	17	27	42	9	28	15	24	47	9
6	71	70	99	36	17	16	26	11	34	14	19	29	8

Table B.6

Weighted Non-Proficiency: Fulmer Middle School

				2006					2007				
Grade	Total	Matched	Pct.	WNP	1	2	3	4	WNP	1	2	3	4
4	35	34	97	26	7	4	16	7	22	5	5	14	10
5	37	37	100	24	7	4	8	18	28	8	5	10	14
6	38	35	92	29	4	12	13	6	41	10	9	15	1
7	55	53	96	39	12	17	20	4	31	12	9	29	3
8	42	38	90	22	4	9	16	9	33	10	5	18	5

Table B.7

Weighted Non-Proficiency: Green Middle School

				2006					2007				
Grade	Total	Matched	Pct.	WNP	1	2	3	4	WNP	1	2	3	4
7	367	343	93	28	66	57	140	80	24	60	44	128	111
8	331	317	96	18	37	42	108	130	24	51	48	124	94

Table B.8

Weighted Non-Proficiency: Hampton Middle School

				2006					2007				
Grade	Total	Matched	Pct.	WNP	1	2	3	4	WNP	1	2	3	4
5	58	55	95	19	7	7	20	21	33	13	10	19	13
6	77	76	99	32	19	10	24	23	22	9	15	33	19
7	62	60	97	34	14	13	20	13	30	12	12	21	15
8	75	69	92	23	13	6	28	22	30	13	15	19	22

Table B.9

Weighted Non-Proficiency: Ivey Middle School

				2006					2007				
Grade	Total	Matched	Pct.	WNP	1	2	3	4	WNP	1	2	3	4
4	81	81	100	30	18	12	30	21	18	8	13	37	23
5	64	60	94	19	8	7	22	23	23	9	9	28	14
6	55	51	93	27	11	6	18	16	17	6	5	20	20
7	81	73	90	33	19	10	35	9	43	23	17	23	10
8	63	55	87	37	17	7	20	11	42	19	8	16	12

Table B.10

Weighted Non-Proficiency: Johnson Middle School

				2006					2007				
Grade	Total	Matched	Pct.	WNP	1	2	3	4	WNP	1	2	3	4
6	292	280	96	37	70	68	110	32	48	95	81	83	21
7	327	306	94	51	119	74	89	24	39	78	83	115	30
8	343	327	95	40	100	64	120	43	33	71	75	137	44

Table B.11

Weighted Non-Proficiency: Kirby Middle School

				2006					2007				
Grade	Total	Matched	Pct.	WNP	1	2	3	4	WNP	1	2	3	4
6	150	136	91	23	20	22	94	0	31	29	27	58	22
7	130	124	95	36	32	25	49	18	30	25	24	48	27
8	139	133	98	30	28	25	56	24	41	43	24	46	20

Table B.12

Weighted Non-Proficiency: Landers Middle School

				2006					2007				
Grade	Total	Matched	Pct.	WNP	1	2	3	4	WNP	1	2	3	4
4	174	163	94	18	17	25	77	44	19	16	29	70	48
5	182	176	97	18	18	26	77	55	29	36	29	67	44
6	197	190	96	20	30	17	81	62	24	34	22	76	58

Table B.13

Weighted Non-Proficiency: Mills Middle School

				2006					2007				
Grade	Total	Matched	Pct.	WNP	1	2	3	4	WNP	1	2	3	4
5	98	88	90	38	23	21	30	14	42	27	20	25	16
6	120	113	94	50	40	32	28	13	49	42	27	35	9
7	103	96	93	55	40	25	26	5	41	32	15	41	8
8	113	107	95	37	27	26	41	13	35	25	25	41	16

Table B.14

Weighted Non-Proficiency: Norville Middle School

				2006					2007				
Grade	Total	Matched	Pct.	WNP	1	2	3	4	WNP	1	2	3	4
6	118	111	94	41	33	26	38	14	43	34	27	43	7
7	117	102	87	55	42	29	29	2	50	42	17	36	7
8	110	98	89	57	47	18	26	7	52	35	31	27	5

Appendix C

Site Visit Summaries

Table C.1

Site Visit Summary: Alpha Middle School

Leadership • A strong LEA commitment made implementation of ARI-PAL components possible. • A planned, consistent schedule for leadership meetings and data meetings was important. • The lack of an on-site instructional leader made the coach have to take on more responsibility than she should have.
Assessment • Data meeting had a definite focus • Analyzing the assessment data to really determine the needs of students proved to be challenging. • Lack of time during the school day for teachers to meet and discuss student needs hampered implementation of strategic teaching and intervention.
Intervention • A program consultant was a very necessary component when implementing the program. A lot of time was wasted doing things incorrectly. • Some teachers refused to follow the scripted program.
Strategic Teaching • The coaching cycle was very important. • Just showing teachers through professional development was not enough. The teachers we worked with intensively changed the way they taught. • Some teachers refused to change their teaching practices.
Professional Development • Professional development was much more effective when the teachers were actively engaged in both the planning and the implementation. • Finding time to present material so that it was not hurried or condensed was challenging.

Table C.2

Site Visit Summary: Baker Middle School

Leadership • Active involvement of the principal accelerated implementation of ARI-PAL components. • The role of the leadership team needed to be more clearly defined. • It was difficult to get teachers to serve on the leadership team.
Assessment • The GRADE assessment was time consuming. • The school needed guidance on using data meetings effectively. • Students and teachers were overwhelmed by the amount of assessment • Some students and teachers did not take the assessments seriously.
Intervention • Follow-up PD is essential for proper implementation of intervention programs. • Scheduling students into reading intervention needs to be done early.
Strategic Teaching • Initial 3 day training had little impact on instruction. • Some teachers had a difficult time grasping the strategic teaching concept. • Some teachers were not familiar with their content standards. • Strategic teaching led to an increased awareness of the importance of teaching the standards. • Leadership became more aware of what was happening in the classrooms and the importance of their presence in the classrooms • Strategic teaching increased the level of student engagement.
Professional Development • The faculty was more receptive to professional development when school personnel identified professional development needs. • Scheduling of professional development needed to be done at the beginning of the school year.

Table C.3

Site Visit Summary: Carter Middle School

Leadership • The principal and assistant principal attended all professional development sessions. • Administrators participated in data meetings but did not assume a leadership role. • Administrators did not consistently monitor implementation of ARI-PAL components.
Assessment • The implementation of GRADE was more time consuming than had been anticipated. • Data from GRADE had little impact on instruction. • Teachers voiced concerns about the number of assessments administered. • Data meetings did not produce specific action steps to guide instruction.
Intervention • Follow-up support from Voyager made the intervention program more effective. • Scheduling of students into the intervention program after school started delayed full implementation several weeks. • Content area teachers did not progress to the point that they were comfortable differentiating instruction to meet the needs of struggling students.
Strategic Teaching • Problems with classroom management prevented some teachers from effectively implementing strategic teaching. • Teachers who received daily support from the reading coach were able to implement strategic teaching. • Some teachers refused to accept coaching from the reading coach. • Most teachers that implemented strategic teaching achieved a surface level understanding of the concept.

Table C.3 continues

Table C.3 (continued)

Professional Development

- One-on-one coaching by the reading coach was effective in changing teachers' instructional practices.
- After school professional development was poorly attended and not well received by the faculty.
- The use of substitute teachers to allow teachers to collaborate during the school day was well received by most teachers and well structured meetings produced specific action steps to guide instruction.

Table C.4

Site Visit Summary: Dalton Middle School

Leadership

- Administrators offered verbal support to ARI-PAL staff but did not follow through on commitments.
- Administrators did not monitor implementation of ARI-PAL components.
- Concerns about student discipline took precedence over instructional leadership.

Assessment

- The GRADE assessment occupied at least a week of the reading coach's time each time it was administered.
- Technology problems prevented school personnel from utilizing GRADE data in a timely manner.
- Data meetings were not scheduled before the beginning of the school year, and were difficult to schedule after school had started.
- Data meetings were poorly attended and did not produce action steps.

Intervention

- The large number of teachers teaching *Corrective Reading* (26) made it difficult to monitor the level of implementation.
- Several teachers that were required to teach intervention did not feel comfortable in that role.
- Program support personnel provided monthly coaching, but high teacher absenteeism hampered their efforts.

Strategic Teaching

- Problems with discipline and classroom management slowed implementation of strategic teaching.
- Unusually high teacher absenteeism made consistent coaching of some teachers challenging.
- Lack of content knowledge on the part of some teachers hampered implementation of strategic teaching.

Table C.4 continues

Table C.4 (continued)

Professional Development

- High teacher turnover limited teacher participation in summer training.
- The inability to find substitute teachers limited opportunities to provide professional development during the school day.
- Teachers were not receptive to after school professional development and attendance was poor.

Table C.5

Site Visit Summary: Ellison Middle School

Leadership

- The support of central office (in terms of teacher units and scheduling) is crucial in order to keep making great gains.
- The support and follow through of the administrator were key factors in the success of ARI-PAL.
- The administrator was a strong instructional leader and set high expectations for strategic teaching.
- The reading coach held herself as well as the other teachers to high standards with strategic teaching.
- The literacy leadership team worked well and makes solid decisions for the school.

Assessment

- Data from multiple sources was used in data meetings to guide classroom instruction.
- We were unable to disaggregated data from GRADE.
- Time became a factor in being able to administer all of the assessments at the end of the year.

Intervention

- Intervention teachers needed frequent coaching in order to ensure fidelity teaching the program.
- Administrative buy in was key to keeping the intervention efforts up and running smoothly.
- The schedule did not allow for the intervention time to be in addition to the core classroom time.

Strategic Teaching

- Even in a motivated ARI school, there were still some teachers that were resistant to strategic teaching.
- When the administration incorporated standards for strategic teaching into the lesson plan format, the lessons became much more strategic on a regular basis.
- After one year we still need to do more intensive coaching in a couple of the classrooms.

Table C.5 continues

Table C.5 (continued)

Professional Development

- The administration always participated in the turn around training by the reading coach.
- Job embedded professional development was effective in increasing the quality of teaching strategic teaching.
- Money and time were two of the most common obstacles to professional development.
- Some of the teachers did not value the professional development.

Table C.6

Site Visit Summary: Fulmer Middle School

Leadership • The principal articulated goals to the faculty, engaged in frequent classroom observations, and was highly accessible. • The principal led the data meetings. • The principal modeled strategic lessons in classrooms. • The leadership team was not used productively.
Assessment • Teachers adjusted instruction according to the data • Most teachers did not know how to read data. • Teachers need more practice dealing with data if it is to be effectively used. • When the data was provided, conversations took place • Data meetings should be consistent (both in when they take place and the format)
Intervention • Protected intervention time was essential. • Program support people were necessary for effective implementation of intervention programs. • The first year of the program contained a good amount of trial and error • Some teachers did not use the program as it was designed.
Strategic Teaching • Strategic teaching fostered more student engagement in all grades. • Several middle grade teachers were resistant. • Without consistent support, some teachers reverted back to their previous teaching style.
Professional Development • When teachers took ownership of their professional development it was more effective.

Table C.7

Site Visit Summary: Green Middle School

Leadership

- The principal supported all aspects of ARI-PAL. The principal articulated goals to the faculty, engaged in frequent classroom observations and was highly accessible
- There were politics in the school district that interfered with ARI-PAL implementation..
- The overall climate of the school and climate in individual teachers' rooms was paramount to real and lasting success.
- The leadership team was ineffective because some members did not want to be on the team.

Assessment

- Time needed to be provided during the day for teaching teams to meet and discus data.
- Sometimes there was too much data, and it made planning for students more difficult
- Structure was required to keep teachers on track during data meetings.
- It was hard to change the perception that teachers had about their students. Even with the data supporting the need for change, teachers wanted to rely solely on their own understanding of what the student needed.

Intervention

- Scheduling allowed for protected time for reading intervention.
- Consultants helped to implement and support the program.
- Good schedules and consultants are not enough if the wrong teachers are chosen to teach intervention

Strategic Teaching

- Change is difficult.
- Not only teaching techniques had to change but how the information was imparted to the students had to be revised
- Most educators had some knowledge of strategic practices, but they had little experience using it or even recognizing it when they did use it.
- It's hard to change individual teaching philosophies
- Getting the textbooks out of the teachers' hands was difficult.
- Teachers had difficulty establishing outcomes before planning lessons.

Table C.7 continues

Table C.7 (continued)

Professional Development

- After school professional development without compensation was not productive.
- There had to be follow-through to ensure that professional development was implemented.
- Professional development was more effective when it was presented to teachers in the context of their specific subject areas.

Table C.8

Site Visit Summary: Hampton Middle School

Leadership

- Both the principal and assistant principal were instructional leaders and strongly supported strategic teaching in all classrooms.
- High expectations were held for all teachers.
- It was time well spent for the reading coach to spend time establishing strong relationships with the faculty members.
- Having too many professional development activities going on at or around the same time overwhelmed the teachers.
- At times, expectations of teachers were overwhelming because of additional professional development given on top of ARI-PAL implementation.
- The literacy leadership did not function as well as it should when charged with making school wide decisions about literacy.

Assessment

- It took major organization and planning to administer GRADE correctly school wide.
- The faculty needed more training in how to use data.
- Data meetings needed to focus on individual students instead of on trends.

Intervention

- The classroom teachers reported that the intervention students made gains in their content classes.
- It took much longer than expected to get READ 180 up and running.
- Fidelity in teaching the program yielded great gains.

Table C.8 continues

Table C.8 (continued)

Strategic Teaching • The majority of the teachers worked well with the implementation of strategic teaching. • The administration established high expectations for strategic teaching. • The reading coach was very successful in implementing 3 day coaching cycles with the teachers. • Teacher collaboration worked well in the 5th and 6th grades but was more challenging in the 7th and 8th grades. • When the administration incorporated standards for strategic teaching in the lesson plan format, the lessons became much more strategic.
Professional Development • The reading coach was able to deliver quality turn around training from the secondary coaches' professional development sessions. • Too much professional development was overwhelming to the teachers. • The three day coaching cycle was powerful for most of the teachers. It took the three days to really feel the flow of strategic teaching and moving from one lesson to another. • Some of the teachers didn't feel they could benefit from the coaching cycle.

Table C.9

Site Visit Summary: Ivey Middle School

Leadership

- The leadership team played an active role in planning assessment, analyzing data, and implementing strategic teaching.
- The administrators followed up professional development with classroom visits to encourage implementation.

Assessment

- Data meetings were well organized, with a set agenda, and had meaning for instructional purposes.
- Most teachers used the data to determine areas of strengths and weaknesses in order to drive and/or change instruction and instructional practices.
- Grade or department co-workers influenced change among reluctant teachers more easily than the regional RC or the administration.

Intervention

- Two accelerated interventions were put in place.
- Some students exited scripted reading intervention programs and several others should exit before the first semester of next year.
- 4th - 6th grade did a great job with reading intervention and classroom intervention. There is an expected decrease in the number of students being referred for a scripted accelerated intervention program in the 7th-9th grades**.**
- Strategic teaching in the content classes helped 4th-6th grade students become more familiar with text and strategies to comprehend the text.
- There was as much focus on content intervention as there was on reading intervention programs.
- Scripted programs were taught with fidelity.
- Numbers in scripted intervention classes were kept at a minimum.

Table C.9 continues

Table C.9 (continued)

Strategic Teaching • Teacher leaders have developed in all grades and content areas. • The faculty's attitude improved as the year progressed. • Teachers learn from their co-workers. • Success doesn't happen overnight or in a week or even in a month or two. But, with motivation and encouragement, some reluctant teachers will accept new ideas. • Teacher attitude can be the biggest obstacle to implementation.
Professional Development • Job-embedded was the most effective professional development. • Teachers found value in seeing one another in action. • Walk throughs were the responsibility of the whole faculty. • After school professional development was not effective.

Table C.10

Site Visit Summary: Johnson Middle School

Leadership

- Clear communication among all stakeholders was lacking and this impeded successful implementation of ARI-PAL.
- Administrators did not hold faculty members to high expectations.
- There was not enough administrative follow through to achieve the degree of change needed for the successful implementation of strategic teaching.
- The relationship between the reading coach and the principal wasn't clearly defined
- The literacy leadership team didn't have regularly scheduled meetings times, goals, or an action plan for achieving those goals.
- Support from the central office was inconsistent.

Assessment

- Team data meetings evolved into productive meaningful meetings during the course of the year.
- The principal was directly involved in the data meeting.
- Data meetings needed to be more closely monitored in order to ensure that they were being conducted correctly.
- The scheduling for the administration of GRADE, the preparation required, the scanning of GRADE, and the dissemination of GRADE data were enormous tasks.

Intervention

- It took much longer than expected to get READ 180 up and running.
- The READ 180 teachers need much more coaching in order to teach the program to fidelity.
- The principal, the assistant principals, and the reading coach need to monitor the intervention classes to ensure the fidelity of the teaching of the programs.
- The teachers who did not like the intervention program and/or did not want to teach intervention should not have taught the intervention program.
- The teachers who did like the intervention programs made good gains with their students.
- More than half of the teachers teaching READ 180 did not teach it with fidelity.
- No one spent enough time monitoring the implementation of the intervention programs.

Table C.10 continues

Table C.10 (continued)

Strategic Teaching • Seven of the nine sixth grade core teachers became proficient in strategic teaching. • A few of the seventh and eight grade teachers are became proficient with strategic teaching. • The three day coaching cycle was very powerful with those teachers who were receptive. • Teachers truly needed coaching to understand all aspects of strategic teaching. • The size of the faculty made it very difficult to keep everyone motivated to teach strategically because it was impossible to coach everyone in a timely manner after training sessions. • Teacher buy-in was low. • Low expectations for the implementation of strategic teaching were set by the principal. • For the most part, the administrators did not support strategic teaching through frequent classroom visits, frequent walk throughs, and through checking lesson plans.
Professional Development • After school professional development sessions were not effective with this faculty. Many would not be present or would leave early. • Professional development was much more effective when delivered in the team meeting sessions. However, the time restraint made it very difficult to fully develop the concepts we worked on. Rich discussions had to be cut short. • The size of the faculty made it very difficult to deliver quality professional development in an effective way. • There was little participation in professional development sessions.

Table C.11

Site Visit Summary: Kirby Middle School

Leadership

- The administrator did not fill the role of instructional leader.
- Administration did not hold teachers accountable for what was expected—check ups were needed.
- Administration needed to be present during weekly regional support visits
- Assistant Principals were not involved with ARI- PAL efforts.

Assessment

- Teachers originally didn't understand the importance of creating assessments before teaching objectives--- some understanding began to break through by the end of the year.
- Teachers needed more training on using assessment results to guide instruction.
- Teachers didn't take an active role in evaluating data for classroom purposes
- Group and individual profile sheets were easier to update when well-kept.

Intervention

- Intervention did not carry over into content classes.
- Support from intervention companies such as SRA and Voyager was crucial to development of program.
- Teacher attitudes affected the success of the program.
- Teacher fidelity to scripted program was lacking due to insufficient coaching, poor preparation, or not enough faith in the program.

Strategic Teaching

- Entire faculty was never fully committed—so we had to move the ones who were willing.
- New teachers needed extensive modeling and coaching support.
- Some teachers' attitudes and resistance to change made them difficult to coach.
- Administration did not hold teachers accountable for lesson plans and implementation.
- It was surprising how many teachers did not use the course of study.
- The school reading coach developed with weekly support from the regional coach.
- Some teachers didn't take the time to plan effectively for instruction.

Table C.11 continues

Table C.11 (continued)

Professional Development

- Job-embedded professional development was most beneficial.
- Professional development must be tied to strategic teaching as the means of meeting the objectives.
- After school professional development was not effective due to too many extra-curricular activities that caused teachers to miss.

Table C.12

Site Visit Summary: Landers Middle School

Leadership

- Involvement by local administration and central office was essential
- Leadership meetings were not scheduled in advance.
- Leadership meetings need a definite focus

Assessment

- Accurate and appropriate identification and placement of students in intervention classes was not done early enough.
- Data wasn't well organized or accessible to the teachers.
- Administrators need to work on productive data meetings that use the data to really drive instruction.
- Interpreting the GRADE data was difficult.
- We did not have effective progress monitoring for those not in intervention and in Corrective Reading.

Intervention

- Corrective Reading was very effective for students that had not mastered the alphabetic principle.
- Scheduling affected the flexibility of the intervention classes.
- To ensure that the students' instruction included course of study objectives when in an intervention program, school personnel scheduled an additional reading time, and used cross-curricular standards.

Strategic Teaching

- The three day coaching cycle enabled the teachers to see how strategic teaching was purposeful and well planned. (As opposed to viewing ST as just strategies.)
- Strategic teaching, when done correctly, incorporated explicit instruction effortlessly.
- Moving the teachers deeper into the philosophy behind strategic teaching, and making connections not just "doing" strategies was labor intensive and time consuming.
- Many secondary teachers were resistant to incorporating small group instruction.
- Finding leveled text for content instruction was challenging.

Table C.12 continues

Table C.12 (continued)

Professional Development

- Two hour sessions, once a month, with teachers released from their teaching duties for the PD was very effective.
- To be effective, the relevance of PD must be very clear to teachers.

Table C.13

Site Visit Summary: Mills Middle School

Leadership

- The principal supported strategic teaching.
- The principal created a schedule to foster professional development and professional learning communities within the school.
- Support from LEA was essential.

Assessment

- The faculty needed more training on interpreting data and using results to guide instruction.
- Some faculty members felt data was unimportant as a tool for developing plans to meet student needs.

Intervention

- READ 180 worked well—most students' lexiles improved.
- Strategic teaching offered intervention within the content classes.
- Reading intervention students needed content intervention as well.
- Teacher attitudes concerning helping struggling students in content classes was a problem because most felt the intervention teacher should handle this problem
- Some intervention teachers showed little enthusiasm for the intervention program and did not implement it with fidelity.

Strategic Teaching

- Coaching cycles had to take place in order for modeling to occur. The reading coach had to be available for coaching cycles and support on the 4 days when the regional literacy coach was not present at the school.
- Teachers came on board at different rates--- some jumped right in and embraced the changes, others were very reluctant at first and were more slow to adapt to changes. Some never changed teaching practices.
- Teachers want modeling sessions to see the strategic teaching process in action within their class and with their students.
- Teachers didn't know how to break down objectives to teach what the objective demanded.
- Teachers were still more comfortable with lecturing or assigning work than strategic teaching.

Table C.13 continues

Table C.13 (continued)

Professional Development

- Teachers need professional development on data interpretation and usage.
- After school professional development sessions were ineffective and teacher absenteeism was high.
- During the day professional development was more effective—extended planning periods, early release days, sub-hired days, etc… were beneficial for job-embedded professional development.
- Teachers wanted more quality time for school PD rather than system-wide professional development.

Table C.14

Site Visit Summary: Norville Middle School

Leadership

- Central office was very involved.
- Membership on the leadership team was based on a willingness to serve.
- Leadership at the school level can either block or implement instructional changes.
- Scheduling was very difficult.
- Initially, the principal did not really understand what the ARI-PAL would play in their school. The conception was that coaching teachers was the main focus, everything else was optional.

Assessment

- Too much data can be a hindrance and actually create busy work for teachers and staff.
- Mandates from central office did not have much success. Teachers were told do things such as create portfolios and write common assessments. They went through the motions but did not use assessment to guide instruction.

Intervention

- Students should be placed based on data, not just teacher referral.
- Placing students correctly was vital.
- Intervention classes should have been set up before school started.
- Program coaching was important.
- Lack of enthusiasm on the part of the teachers limited the effectiveness of programs.
- Lack of fidelity to the program limited the effectiveness of programs.
- Scheduling 90 minute intervention blocks plus meeting course of study requirements in language arts was challenging.
- Program coaching was cost prohibitive.

Table C.14 continues

Table C.14 (continued)

Strategic Teaching • A full-time literacy coach was essential. • Teachers were using some of the strategies by the end of the year. • There was not enough accountability to ensure continued use of strategic teaching on a regular basis. • School wide structures and routines were needed in order for instruction to be more of a focus. • Teacher attitude and apathy limited implementation. • Issues other than instruction took away from instruction.
Professional Development • Making time for teacher collaboration and professional development within the school day was vital to implementing instructional strategies. • Finding time for professional development was challenging. • Teacher attitude about professional development influenced the effectiveness.

Appendix D

Summaries of Implementation by Component

Table D.1

Summary of Implementation by Component: Leadership

Alpha Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 4%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • There was no principal during the 2006-2007 school year. • The lack of an on-site instructional leader made the literacy coach take on more responsibility. • A strong LEA commitment made implementation of ARI-PAL components possible. • The leadership team was actively involved in monitoring data and leading professional development efforts. • A planned, consistent schedule for leadership meetings and data meetings was beneficial.
Baker Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 3%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Support of the principal assisted implementation of ARI-PAL components. • The principal was not actively involved in day to day implementation of ARI-PAL. • The literacy coach assumed the literacy leadership role. • The role of the leadership team was not clearly defined therefore, the leadership team was ineffective. • It was difficult to get teachers to serve on the leadership team.

Table D.1 continues

Table D.1 (continued)

Ellison Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 3%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • The support of central office (in terms of teacher units and scheduling) was crucial to making achievement gains. • The support and follow through of the administrator were key factors in the success of ARI-PAL. • The administrator was a strong instructional leader who set high expectations for strategic teaching. • The reading coach held herself as well as the other teachers to high standards with strategic teaching. • The literacy leadership team worked well and provided solid instructional support for the school.
Johnson Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 3%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Clear communication among all stakeholders was lacking and this impeded successful implementation of ARI-PAL. • Administrators did not hold faculty members to high expectations. • There was not enough administrative follow through to achieve the degree of change needed for the successful implementation of strategic teaching. • The relationship between the literacy coach and the principal wasn't clearly defined. • The literacy coach worked well with the faculty and provided instructional support. • The literacy leadership team didn't have regularly scheduled meetings times, goals, or an action plan for achieving those goals. • Support from the central office was inconsistent.

Table D.1 continues

Table D.1 (continued)

Mills Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 3%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • The principal supported strategic teaching through monitoring of lesson plans and classroom visits. • The principal created a schedule to foster professional development and professional learning communities within the school. • The literacy coach was well organized, a leader of professional development efforts, and respected by the faculty. • The leadership team was not active. • Support from LEA was consistent.
Norville Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 3%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Central office was very involved. • Initially, the principal did not really understand what the ARI-PAL would play in their school. The perception was that coaching teachers was the main focus, everything else was optional. • The principal became a strong instructional and management leader. • The literacy coach was knowledgeable and actively supported all of the teachers. • Membership on the leadership team was based on a willingness to serve rather than knowledge and/or leadership ability. • The leadership team was not actively involved in ARI-PAL implementation.

Table D.1 continues

Table D.1 (continued)

Ivey Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 1%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • The administrators followed up professional development with classroom visits to encourage implementation. • The literacy coach was an instructional leader and a natural at coaching teachers. • The leadership team played an active role in planning assessment, analyzing data, and implementing strategic teaching.
Fulmer Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 1%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • The principal articulated goals to the faculty, engaged in frequent classroom observations, and was highly accessible. • The principal led the data meetings. • The principal modeled strategic lessons in classrooms. • There was no literacy coach for grades 4-9. • The leadership team was unproductive.
Green Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 1 %**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • The principal supported all aspects of ARI-PAL. The principal articulated goals to the faculty, engaged in frequent classroom observations and was highly accessible • The literacy coach was well respected by the faculty and did an excellent job coaching teachers. • There were politics in the school district that interfered with ARI-PAL implementation. • The leadership team was ineffective because some members did not want to be on the team.

Table D.1 continues

Table D.1 (continued)

Hampton Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 1 %**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Both the principal and assistant principal were instructional leaders and strongly supported strategic teaching in all classrooms. • High expectations were held for all teachers. • The literacy coach established strong relationships with the faculty members and pushed them to teach strategically. • The literacy leadership did not function well and had little impact on ARI-PAL implementation.
Carter Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 3 %**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • The principal and assistant principal attended all professional development sessions. • Administrators participated in data meetings but did not assume a leadership role. • Administrators did not consistently monitor implementation of ARI-PAL components. • The literacy coach was very knowledgeable and assumed the role of instructional leader. • The leadership team existed only on paper.
Dalton Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 4 %**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Administrators offered verbal support to ARI-PAL staff but did not follow through on commitments. • Administrators did not monitor implementation of ARI-PAL components. • Concerns about student discipline took precedence over instructional leadership. • Although the literacy coach was very knowledgeable, responsibilities outside the realm of ARI-PAL prevented her from coaching teachers on a regular basis. • There was no leadership team.

Table D.1 continues

Table D.1 (continued)

Kirby Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 4 %**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • The principal did not fill the role of instructional leader. • The principal did not hold teachers accountable for implementation of ARI-PAL components. • The principal was not present during weekly regional support visits • Assistant Principals were not involved with ARI- PAL efforts. • Leadership team meetings were inconsistent and unproductive. • The literacy coach did not feel comfortable coaching teachers. • The literacy coach did not follow-up professional development with coaching.
Landers Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 5 %**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • The principal was not actively involved in ARI-PAL implementation. • The literacy coach was very knowledgeable and she pushed teachers to change their instruction. • Leadership meetings were not scheduled in advance and attendance was poor. • Leadership meetings often lacked a definite focus.

Table D.2

Summary of Implementation by Component: Assessment

Alpha Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 4%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Monthly data meetings focused on using data to identify and address students' weaknesses • Analyzing the assessment data to determine the needs of students proved to be challenging.
Baker Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 3%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • The GRADE assessment was time consuming. • Data meetings were ½ day monthly • The school needed more guidance on using data to guide instruction. • Data meetings did not produce specific action steps. • Students and teachers were overwhelmed by the amount of assessment required. • Some students and teachers did not take the assessments seriously.
Ellison Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 3%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Data meetings occurred monthly • Data from multiple sources was used in data meetings to guide classroom instruction. • The school was unable to disaggregated data from GRADE. • Time became a factor in being able to administer all of the assessments at the end of the year.

Table D.2 continues

Table D.2 (continued)

Johnson Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 3%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Data meetings were scheduled before school started for the entire year • Team data meetings evolved into productive meaningful meetings during the course of the year. • The principal was directly involved in the data meeting. • Data meetings needed to be more closely monitored in order to ensure that they were being conducted correctly. • The scheduling for the administration of GRADE, the preparation required, the scanning of GRADE and the dissemination of GRADE data were enormous tasks.
Mills Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 3%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Data meetings were held monthly. • The faculty needed more training on interpreting data and using results to guide instruction. • Some faculty members felt data was unimportant as a tool for developing plans to meet student needs. • Sometimes students didn't take these assessments carefully due to teacher attitudes in giving the assessments.
Norville Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 3%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Data meetings were infrequent and poorly attended. • Too much data was a hindrance and actually create busy work for teachers and staff. • Mandates from central office did not have much success. Teachers were told do things such as create portfolios and write common assessments. Most teachers went through the motions but did not use assessment to guide instruction.

Table D.2 continues

Table D.2 (continued)

Ivey Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 1%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Data meetings were monthly, well organized with a set agenda, and had meaning for instructional purposes. • Most teachers used the data to determine areas of strengths and weaknesses in order to drive and/or change instruction and instructional practices. • Co-workers influenced change among reluctant teachers more easily than the regional literacy coach or the administration.
Fulmer Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 1 %**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Data meetings were inconsistent in when they took place and format. • Most teachers did not know how to read data. • When the data was provided, conversations took place. • Some teachers learned to adjusted instruction according to the data
Green Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 1 %**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Time was not provided during the day for teaching teams to meet and discus data. • Sometimes there was too much data, and it made planning for students more difficult • Lack of structure made it difficult to keep teachers on track during data meetings. • It was hard to change the perception that teachers had about their students. Even with the data supporting the need for change, teachers wanted to rely solely on their own understanding of what the students needed.

Table D.2 continues

Table D.2 (continued)

Hampton Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 1 %**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Data meetings were held monthly. • It took major organization and planning to administer GRADE correctly school wide. • The faculty did not use data to guide instruction. • Data meetings never focused on individual students.
Carter Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 3 %**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • The implementation of GRADE was more time consuming than had been anticipated. • Data from GRADE had little impact on instruction. • Teachers voiced concerns about the number of assessments administered. • Data meetings were held monthly but did not produce specific action steps to guide instruction.
Dalton Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 4 %**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • The GRADE assessment occupied at least a week of the literacy coach's time each time it was administered. • Technology problems prevented school personnel from utilizing GRADE data in a timely manner. • Data meetings were not scheduled before the beginning of the school year, and were difficult to schedule after school had started. • Data meetings were poorly attended and did not produce action steps.

Table D.2 continues

Table D.2 (continued)

Kirby Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 4 %**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Data meetings were conducted monthly. • Teachers didn't understand the importance of creating assessments before teaching objectives • Most teachers needed more training on using assessment results to guide instruction. • Teachers didn't take an active role in evaluating data for classroom purposes
Landers Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 5 %**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Data wasn't well organized or accessible to the teachers. • Monthly data meetings did not focus on using data to drive instruction. • Interpreting the GRADE data was difficult. • There was not effective progress monitoring for students who were not in a reading intervention program.

Table D.3

Summary of Implementation by Component: Intervention

Alpha Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 4%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • A lot of time was wasted implementing the reading intervention program incorrectly. • A program consultant was necessary in order to implement the reading intervention program correctly. • Some teachers refused to follow the scripted program. • Lack of time during the school day for teachers to meet and discuss student needs hampered implementation of intervention. Intervention Data Program: Journeys Number of students participating: 42 • % with a 1 stanine increase on the SAT-10: 27 • % with more than a 1 stanine increase on the SAT-10: 24 • % with no change in stanine score on the SAT-10: 26 • % with a decrease in stanine score on the SAT-10: 22
Baker Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 3%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Follow-up PD was essential for proper implementation of the reading intervention programs. • Scheduling students into the reading intervention program was done after the school year started and some students were not able to be scheduled into the program. Intervention Data Program: Scholastic READ 180 Number of students participating: 68 • Average lexile gain: 30 • Average grade level gain: .36 • % of students with lexile gains: 59 • % of students with more than 2 years growth in reading: 15

Table D.3 continues

Table D.3 (continued)

Ellison Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 3%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Intervention teachers needed frequent coaching in order to ensure fidelity to the reading intervention program. • Administrative buy in was key to keeping the intervention efforts up and running smoothly. • The schedule did not allow for the intervention time to be in addition to the core classroom time. Intervention Data Program: Passport • Number of students participating: 102 • % with a 1 stanine increase on the SAT-10: 38 • % with more than a 1 stanine increase on the SAT-10: 23 • % with no change in stanine score on the SAT-10: 28 • % with a decrease in stanine score on the SAT-10: 11

Table D.3 continues

Table D.3 (continued)

Johnson Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 3%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • It took much longer than expected to get READ 180 up and running. • More than half of the teachers teaching READ 180 did not teach it with fidelity. • The teachers who taught the intervention programs with fidelity made gains with their students. • Some of the READ 180 teachers needed more coaching from the publisher in order to teach the program with fidelity. • The principal, the assistant principals, and the literacy coach did not monitor the intervention classes enough to ensure the fidelity of the teaching of the programs. Intervention Data Program: Scholastic READ 180 Number of students participating: 159 • Average lexile gain: 25 • Average grade level gain: .33 • % of students with lexile gains: 59 • % of students with more than 2 years growth in reading: 11

Table D.3 continues

Table D.3 (continued)

Mills Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 3%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • READ 180 worked well for some students' based on lexile gains. • Some intervention teachers showed little enthusiasm for the intervention program and did not implement it with fidelity. • Reading intervention students needed content intervention as well. • Strategic teaching offered intervention within the content classes. • Teacher attitudes concerning helping struggling students in content classes was a problem because most felt the intervention teacher should handle this problem Intervention Data Program: Scholastic READ 180 Number of students participating: 53 • Average lexile gain: 48 • Average grade level gain: .65 • % of students with lexile gains: 64 • % of students with more than 2 years growth in reading: 17

Table D.3 continues

Table D.3 (continued)

Norville Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 3%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Some students were improperly placed based on teacher referral without looking at data. • Intervention classes were not set up before school started and this delayed start up. • Lack of enthusiasm on the part of the teachers limited the effectiveness of programs. • Lack of fidelity to the program limited the effectiveness of programs. • Scheduling 90 minute intervention blocks plus meeting course of study requirements in language arts was challenging. • Program coaching was cost prohibitive. Intervention Data Program: Scholastic READ 180 Number of students participating: 98 • Average lexile gain: 57 • Average grade level gain: .76 • % of students with lexile gains: 67 • % of students with more than 2 years growth in reading: 20

Table D.3 continues

Table D.3 (continued)

Ivey Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 1%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Two accelerated interventions were put in place. • Some students exited scripted reading intervention programs and several others should exit before the first semester of next year. • 4th - 6th grade did a great job with reading intervention and classroom intervention. There is an expected decrease in the number of students being referred for a scripted accelerated intervention program in the 7th-9th grades**.** • Strategic teaching in the content classes helped 4th-6th grade students become more familiar with text and strategies to comprehend the text. • There was as much focus on content intervention as there was on reading intervention programs. • Scripted programs were taught with fidelity. • Numbers in scripted intervention classes were kept at a minimum. Intervention Data Program: Journeys Number of students participating: 32 • % with a 1 stanine increase on the SAT-10: 25 • % with more than a 1 stanine increase on the SAT-10: 31 • % with no change in stanine score on the SAT-10: 22 • % with a decrease in stanine score on the SAT-10: 22 • Program: SRA Corrective Reading • Number of students participating: 5 • % with a 1 stanine increase on the SAT-10: 40 • % with more than a 1 stanine increase on the SAT-10: 0 • % with no change in stanine score on the SAT-10: 60 • % with a decrease in stanine score on the SAT-10: 0

Table D.3 continues

Table D.3 (continued)

Fulmer Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 1 %**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Protected intervention time was essential. • Program support people were necessary for effective implementation of intervention program. • The first year of the program contained a considerable amount of trial and error • Some teachers did not use the reading intervention program as it was designed. Intervention Data Program: LANGUAGE! III • Number of students participating: 53 • % with a 1 stanine increase on the SAT-10: 31 • % with more than a 1 stanine increase on the SAT-10: 17 • % with no change in stanine score on the SAT-10: 33 • % with a decrease in stanine score on the SAT-10: 19

Table D.3 continues

Table D.3 (continued)

Green Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 1 %**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Scheduling allowed for protected time for reading intervention. • Consultants helped to implement and support the program. • Good schedules and consultants are not enough if the wrong teachers are chosen to teach intervention Intervention Data Program: Journeys Number of students participating: 229 • % with a 1 stanine increase on the SAT-10: 22 • % with more than a 1 stanine increase on the SAT-10: 7 • % with no change in stanine score on the SAT-10: 40 • % with a decrease in stanine score on the SAT-10: 28 Program: SRA Corrective Reading Number of students participating: 80 • % with a 1 stanine increase on the SAT-10: 41 • % with more than a 1 stanine increase on the SAT-10: 11 • % with no change in stanine score on the SAT-10: 40 • % with a decrease in stanine score on the SAT-10: 8

Table D.3 continues

Table D.3 (continued)

Hampton Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 1 %**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • The classroom teachers reported that the intervention students' academic performance improved in their content classes. • It took much longer than expected to get READ 180 up and running. • Fidelity in teaching the reading intervention program yielded great gains. Intervention Data Program: Scholastic READ 180 Number of students participating: 41 • Average lexile gain: 135 • Average grade level gain: 1.6 • % of students with lexile gains: 85 • % of students with more than 2 years growth in reading: 31

Table D.3 continues

Table D.3 (continued)

Carter Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 3 %**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Follow-up support from Voyager made the intervention program more effective. • Scheduling of students into the intervention program after school started delayed full implementation by several weeks. • Content area teachers did not progress to the point that they were comfortable differentiating instruction to meet the needs of struggling students. Intervention Data Program: Journeys Number of students participating: 73 • % with a 1 stanine increase on the SAT-10: 32 • % with more than a 1 stanine increase on the SAT-10: 11 • % with no change in stanine score on the SAT-10: 40 • % with a decrease in stanine score on the SAT-10: 18

Table D.3 continues

Table D.3 (continued)

Dalton Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 4 %**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • The large number of teachers teaching *Corrective Reading* (26) made it difficult to monitor the level of implementation. • Several teachers that were required to teach intervention did not feel comfortable in that role. • Program support personnel provided monthly coaching, but high teacher absenteeism hampered their efforts. Intervention Data Program: SRA Corrective Reading Number of students participating: 270 • % with a 1 stanine increase on the SAT-10: 23 • % with more than a 1 stanine increase on the SAT-10: 9 • % with no change in stanine score on the SAT-10: 41 • % with a decrease in stanine score on the SAT-10: 26

Table D.3 continues

Table D.3 (continued)

Kirby Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 4 %**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Teacher fidelity to scripted program was lacking due to insufficient coaching, poor preparation, or not enough faith in the reading intervention programs. • More support from intervention companies such as SRA and Voyager was needed to successfully implement the reading intervention programs. • Intervention did not carry over into content classes. Intervention Data Program: Journeys Number of students participating: 52 • % with a 1 stanine increase on the SAT-10: 35 • % with more than a 1 stanine increase on the SAT-10: 16 • % with no change in stanine score on the SAT-10: 31 • % with a decrease in stanine score on the SAT-10: 18

Table D.3 continues

Table D.3 (continued)

Landers Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 5 %**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Accurate and appropriate identification and placement of students in intervention classes was not done early enough. • Corrective Reading effectively helped students that had not mastered the alphabetic principle. • Scheduling affected the flexibility of the intervention classes. • To ensure that the students' instruction included course of study objectives when in an intervention program, school personnel scheduled an additional reading time, and used cross-curricular standards. Intervention Data Program: Scholastic READ 180 Number of students participating: 48 • Average lexile gain: 55 • Average grade level gain: .71 • % of students with lexile gains: 58 • % of students with more than 2 years growth in reading: 17

Table D.4

Summary of Implementation by Component: Strategic Teaching

Alpha Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 4%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Showing teachers through professional development was not enough to influence teaching behaviors • The teachers that received intensive coaching changed the way they taught. • Some teachers refused to change their teaching practices. Observational Data • 55% of students actively engaged • Evidence of literacy instruction in 65% of classrooms
Baker Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 3%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Initial 3 day training had little impact on instruction. • Some teachers had a difficult time grasping the strategic teaching concept. • Some teachers were not familiar with their content standards. • Strategic teaching led to an increased awareness of the importance of teaching the standards. • Leadership became more aware of what was happening in the classrooms and the importance of their presence in the classrooms • Strategic teaching increased the level of student engagement. Observational Data • 63% of students actively engaged • Evidence of literacy instruction in 75% of classrooms

Table D.4 continues

Table D.4 (continued)

Ellison Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 3%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • There were some teachers that were resistant to strategic teaching. • When the administration incorporated standards for strategic teaching into the lesson plan format, the lessons became much more strategic on a regular basis. • After one year, there is a need for more intensive coaching in a couple of the classrooms. Observational Data • 92% of students actively engaged • Evidence of literacy instruction in 85% of classrooms
Johnson Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 3%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Seven of the nine sixth grade core teachers became proficient in strategic teaching. • A few of the seventh and eighth grade teachers obtained a surface level understanding of strategic teaching. • The three day coaching cycle was very powerful with those teachers who were receptive to learning strategic teaching. • The size of the faculty made it very difficult to keep everyone motivated to teach strategically because it was impossible to coach everyone in a timely manner after training sessions. • Teacher buy-in was low. • Low expectations for the implementation of strategic teaching were set by the principal. • The administrators did not support strategic teaching through frequent classroom visits, frequent walk-throughs, and through checking lesson plans. Observational Data • 63% of students actively engaged • Evidence of literacy instruction in 58% of classrooms

Table D.4 continues

Table D.4 (continued)

Mills Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 3%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Teachers came on board at different rates--- some jumped right in and embraced the changes, others were very reluctant at first and were more slow to adapt to changes. Some never changed teaching practices. • Coaching cycles had to take place in order for modeling to occur. The literacy coach was available for coaching cycles and support on the 4 days when the regional literacy coach was not present at the school. • Teachers wanted modeling sessions to see the strategic teaching process in action within their class and with their students. • Teachers didn't know how to break down objectives to teach what the objective demanded. • Teachers are still more comfortable with lecturing or assigning work than strategic teaching. Observational Data • 52% of students actively engaged • Evidence of literacy instruction in 68% of classrooms
Norville Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 3%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • There was not enough accountability to ensure continued use of strategic teaching on a regular basis. • Lack of school wide structures and routines limited implementation of strategic teaching. • Issues other than instruction took away from instruction. • Teacher attitude and apathy limited implementation. • Some teachers were using some of the instructional strategies by the end of the year. • Observational Data • 43% of students actively engaged • Evidence of literacy instruction in 64% of classrooms

Table D.4 continues

Table D.4 (continued)

Ivey Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 1%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Teacher attitude was the biggest obstacle to implementation. • The faculty's attitude improved as the year progressed. • Teacher leaders developed in all grades and content areas. • Success didn't happen overnight or in a week or even in a month or two. But, with motivation and encouragement, some reluctant teachers accepted new instructional strategies. Observational Data • 62% of students actively engaged • Evidence of literacy instruction in 73% of classrooms
Fulmer Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 1 %**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Strategic teaching fostered more student engagement in all grades. • Several middle grade teachers were resistant. • Without consistent support, some teachers reverted back to their previous teaching style. Observational Data • 76% of students actively engaged • Evidence of literacy instruction in 84% of classrooms

Table D.4 continues

Table D.4 (continued)

Green Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 1 %**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Most educators had some knowledge of strategic practices, but they had little experience using it or even recognizing it when they did use it. • It was hard to change individual teaching philosophies • Getting the teachers to stop teaching the textbook was difficult. • Teachers had difficulty using content standard objectives to establish outcomes before planning lessons. Observational Data • 61% of students actively engaged • Evidence of literacy instruction in 61% of classrooms
Hampton Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 1 %**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • The majority of the teachers worked well with the implementation of strategic teaching. • The administration established high expectations for strategic teaching. • The literacy coach was very successful in implementing 3-day coaching cycles with the teachers. • Teacher collaboration worked well in the 5th and 6th grades but was more challenging in the 7th and 8th grades. • When the administration incorporated standards for strategic teaching in the lesson plan format, the lessons became much more strategic. Observational Data • 83% of students actively engaged • Evidence of literacy instruction in 75% of classrooms

Table D.4 continues

Table D.4 (continued)

Carter Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 3 %**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Problems with classroom management prevented some teachers from effectively implementing strategic teaching. • Teachers who received daily support from the reading coach were able to implement strategic teaching. • Some teachers refused to accept coaching from the reading coach. • Most teachers that implemented strategic teaching achieved a surface level understanding of the concept. Observational Data • 36% of students actively engaged • Evidence of literacy instruction in 28% of classrooms
Dalton Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 4 %**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Problems with discipline and classroom management slowed implementation of strategic teaching. • Excessively high teacher absenteeism made consistent coaching of teachers challenging. • Lack of content knowledge on the part of some teachers hampered implementation of strategic teaching. Observational Data • 40% of students actively engaged • Evidence of literacy instruction in 56% of classrooms

Table D.4 continues

Table D.4 (continued)

Kirby Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 4 %**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Administration did not hold teachers accountable for lesson plans and implementation. • Teachers needed extensive modeling and coaching support. • The school literacy coach's coaching skills developed with weekly support from the regional coach. • Some teachers' attitudes and resistance to change made them difficult to coach. • Many teachers did not use the course of study to plan instruction. • Some teachers didn't take the time to plan effectively for instruction. Observational Data • 36% of students actively engaged • Evidence of literacy instruction in 33% of classrooms
Landers Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 5 %**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • The three day coaching cycle enabled the teachers to see how strategic teaching was purposeful and well planned. • Strategic teaching, when done correctly, incorporated explicit instruction effortlessly. • Moving the teachers deeper into the philosophy behind strategic teaching, and making connections not just "doing" strategies was labor intensive and time consuming. • Many secondary teachers were resistant to incorporating small group instruction. • Finding leveled text for content instruction was challenging. Observational Data • 39% of students actively engaged • Evidence of literacy instruction in 46% of classrooms

Table D.5

Summary of Implementation by Component: Professional Development

Alpha Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 4%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Professional development was effective when the teachers were actively engaged in both the planning and the implementation. • Finding time to present material so that it was not hurried or condensed was challenging.
Baker Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 3%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • The faculty was more receptive to professional development when school personnel identified professional development needs. • Professional was not scheduled at the beginning of the school year and it was a challenge to schedule after the school year began.
Ellison Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 3%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • The principal always participated in the ARI-PAL training provided by the literacy coach. • Job embedded professional development was effective in increasing the quality of teaching strategic teaching. • Money and time were two of the most common obstacles to professional development. • Some of the teachers expressed that they were overwhelmed by the amount of professional development.

Table D.5 continues

Table D.5 (continued)

Johnson Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 3%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • After school professional development sessions were not effective with the faculty. Many would not be present or would leave early. • Professional development was much more effective when delivered in the team meeting sessions. However, the time restraint made it very difficult to fully develop the concepts we worked on. Rich discussions had to be cut short. • The size of the faculty made it very difficult to deliver quality professional development in an effective way. • There was little active participation by the teachers in professional development sessions.
Mills Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 3%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • After school professional development sessions were ineffective and teacher absenteeism was high. • During the day professional development was more effective—extended planning periods, early release days, sub-hired days, etc… were beneficial for job-embedded professional development. • Teachers wanted more quality time for school PD rather than system-wide professional development.
Norville Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 3%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Making time for teacher collaboration and professional development within the school day was vital to implementing instructional strategies. • Finding time for professional development was challenging. • Teacher attitude about professional development influenced the effectiveness.

Table D.5 continues

Table D.5 (continued)

Ivey Middle School **Reduced weighted non-proficiency by 1%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Job-embedded was the most effective professional development. • Teachers found value in seeing one another in action. • Walk throughs were the responsibility of the whole faculty. • After school professional development was not effective.
Fulmer Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 1%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • When teachers took ownership of their professional development it was more effective. • After school professional development was ineffective due to poor teacher attitude and absenteeism.
Green Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 1%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • After school professional development without compensation was not productive. • There was follow-through to ensure that professional development was implemented. • Professional development was more effective when it was presented to teachers in the context of their specific subject areas.

Table D.5 continues

Table D.5 (continued)

Hampton Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 1%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • The administrator valued professional development in a variety of areas and supported faculty members by supplying time and funding. • The reading coach was able to deliver quality turn around training from the secondary coaches' professional development sessions. • Too much professional development was overwhelming to the teachers. • The three day coaching cycle was powerful for most of the teachers. It took the three days to really feel the flow of strategic teaching and moving from one lesson to another. • Some of the teachers didn't feel they could benefit from the coaching cycle.
Carter Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 3%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • One-on-one coaching by the reading coach was effective in changing teachers' instructional practices. • After school professional development was poorly attended and not well received by the faculty. • The use of substitute teachers to allow teachers to collaborate during the school day was well received by most teachers. • Well structured professional development meetings produced specific action steps to guide instruction.

Table D.5 continues

Table D.5 (continued)

Dalton Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 4%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • High teacher turnover limited teacher participation in summer training. • The inability to find substitute teachers limited opportunities to provide professional development during the school day. • Teachers were not receptive to after school professional development and attendance was poor.
Kirby Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 4%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • After school professional development was not effective due to too many extra-curricular activities that caused teachers to miss. • Job-embedded professional development was more effective than after school professional development.
Landers Middle School **Weighted non-proficiency increased by 5%**	Regional reading coach reflections based on weekly site-visit reports: • Two hour sessions, once a month, with teachers released from their teaching duties for professional development was effective. • After school professional development was not well received by the faculty.