INVESTIGATING OLDER ADOLESCENT/YOUNG ADULT ENGLISH LEARNERS' LITERACY ENGAGEMENT AT AN ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL

by

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A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty
of
George Mason University
in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy
Education

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Date: _____ Summer Semester 2014
George Mason University
Fairfax, VA

Investigating Older Adolescent/Young Adult English Learners' Literacy Engagement at an Alternative High School

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to English Learners who believe their education will make the difference in their lives.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my family and many friends who supported me through this process.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

English Learner ..... EL
English for Speakers of Other Languages ..... ESOL
Lexile Text Measure ..... LTM
Older Adolescent/Young Adult English Learners ..... OA/YA EL
Reading Engagement Index ..... REI

ABSTRACT

INVESTIGATING OLDER ADOLESCENT/YOUNG ADULT ENGLISH LEARNERS' LITERACY ENGAGEMENT AT AN ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL

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George Mason University, 2014

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Students who speak a language other than English represent a growing population in secondary schools, and their need to acquire academic English is essential in order to graduate. A student population that has largely been overlooked in the literature are Older Adolescent/Young Adult English Learners, ages 18 to 22, who attend high school and are generally older than their grade level peers. This study sought to fill a gap in the literature by investigating Older Adolescent/Young Adult English Learners' (OA/YA ELs) literacy engagement at an alternative high school.

The conceptual framework for this study was informed by theories of second language acquisition and a sociocultural perspective for engaged literacy practices with ELs. The goals of this study were to identify the reading practices and perceptions of literacy engagement for OA/YA ELs in their English classes,

the English teachers' classroom practices and perceptions of the OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement, and the supportive factors for literacy engagement at this alternative high school. The participants included forty-five OA/YA ELs, two English teachers, the English department chairperson, the librarian, and the principal at an alternative high school. The quantitative data sources included an online survey of student reading engagement and practices completed by the students. The teachers completed a print version of the reading engagement survey regarding their students. The qualitative data sources included open-response items on the student online survey, artifacts, teacher records, classroom observations, and interviews with students, teachers, and staff.

From the analysis of the data, the following findings emerged. First, there was an indication that OA/YA ELs had positive perceptions of their literacy engagement in the English classes that provided them with book choice, a selection of accessible books, time to read each day, and the support of their English teachers. As a factor of their literacy engagement, the student participants indicated that they were less confident about their reading skills. Their English teachers also expressed that the students' demonstrated positive perceptions about their literacy engagement, but their reading skills were markedly below grade level. The English teachers provided a consistent learning environment that was responsive to OA/YA ELs as mature students. Lastly, the alternative high school's culture of literacy provided direct and indirect support that encouraged the OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement.

From the findings, there are four conclusions concerning the literacy engagement of OA/YA ELs at this alternative high school. First, the students need to have a supply of different types of books that are accessible, so the school must provide the financial support and philosophical endorsement of a guided choice reading program. Secondly, teachers need to be readers themselves to model the behaviors, social interactions, routines of an engaged reader for their OA/YA ELs. A third conclusion is that students need consistency in the time dedicated to read each day in class, and that the teachers maintain consistency in the expectations for reading. Lastly, the OA/YA ELs need ongoing support and strategy use to improve their reading skills, so a lack of fluency and comprehension does not impede their engagement in reading. In closing, the results of this study suggest that future research should focus on the relationship between the OA/YA ELs' reading skills and their literacy engagement and whether the use of reading strategies could help them access and engage with the text for academic language learning.

CHAPTER ONE:
INTRODUCTION

Throughout my career as an English for Speakers of other Language (ESOL) teacher, I have taught in inner-city, urban, suburban, and alternative settings. In all these schools, a common focus of professional development for teachers was to improve student engagement in learning by offering choices in what and how they learned. The professional development sessions suggested that teachers use choice with students, but I sensed this was a limited sense of choice that related to assignment length or social grouping. I wondered if the concept of student choice could be broader and effect change for English Learners (ELs), who were not demonstrating improved proficiency in their academic language development, nor were they engaged in the reading activities offered to them. I hypothesized that ELs needed choice in what they read, suited to their abilities and interests, as a means for supporting their literacy engagement. With the population of ELs growing in our schools, my goal for this study was to examine their perceptions of their literacy engagement when they chose to read for academic purposes.

The EL population is growing. In 2009, 20 percent or 57.1 million people spoke a language other than English (LOTE) in the United States (Ortman & Shin, 2011). Using data from the Census Bureau 2008 and 2009 National Population Projections, Shin and Ortman projected the growth of the LOTE population for 2020 to continue to trend upwards. Nevertheless, Ortman and Shin

(2011) found a limitation in their projections for identifying English learners because the Census Bureau did not make a distinction between those who were foreign born or in the United States.

The term LOTE speaker does not indicate the speaker's English language proficiency. Statistical analysis of ELs' academic performance in American schools has been too broad for school-based decision makers to create responsive, systematic support for diverse learners. For example, a report from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES, 2012) stated that, from 1980 to 2009, the number of school-age children in the United States who spoke a language at home other than English rose from ten percent to twenty percent. During the same period, the number of students who spoke English with difficulty decreased from 36 percent to 24 percent. Accordingly, public schools have seen a rise in the number of students enrolled in their language programs. In the 2009-2010 academic year, public schools provided language services to 4.7 million ELs, up from an estimated 3.7 million students ten years earlier (NCES, 2012). These data do not disaggregate for older adolescent or young adult English Learners (OA/YA ELs) or their struggles with literacy development for academic purposes. Therefore, OA/YA ELs are the specific population for this study to fill a gap in the existing literature on OA/YA ELs' second language acquisition and literacy development and the contributing role of their literacy engagement.

The targeted population for this study was Older Adolescent/Young Adult English Learners (OA/YA ELs) because there is limited attention given in the

literature to their academic success and high school completion. For example, the NCES analysis only included students who were five to seventeen years old. This age range ignored students who attended high school past the age of 18, particularly immigrant students who began their schooling in the United States as adolescents and continue beyond the state's compulsory age for attendance. In the case of OA/YA ELs, many experience interrupted schooling between the times when they left their native country to then enrolling in an American public school. Furthermore, the NCES figures did not disaggregate the figures for students who have been life-long English speakers from those who recently began learning English as a new language. Interrupted schooling and language proficiency can influence a student's learning yet these factors remain invisible in many statistical analysis related to the measurement of ELs' academic success.

There are a variety of terms used by schools, researchers, academia, and policy makers to distinguish non-native speakers of English from their peers who speak English as their home language. These identifying labels and terms have included, but are not limited to, English Language Learners (ELLs), Limited English Proficient (LEP) and most recently English Learners (ELs). Throughout this study, I will refer to those students whose home language is other than English as English Learners (ELs) because it has become a term preferred in the current literature.

Statement of the Problem

OA/YA ELs who arrive in the United States need to quickly acquire academic language skills; otherwise they are at great risk for not graduating with their age level peers or dropping out of high school. In her seminal work on the effects of age and second language acquisition (SLA), Collier (1987) pointed out that research at the time narrowly focused on the social skills of speaking and listening and largely ignored the academic tasks of reading and writing. Earlier in that decade, Cummins' (1984) research in second language acquisition introduced the idea that there is an identifiable difference in the acquisition of social and academic language. Social language that is context embedded might be acquired in from a few months to three years, depending on an English learner's background knowledge. On the other hand, academic language, which is more context reduced, is necessary for success in school and takes from five to seven years or longer to acquire.

Collier's work was an extension of Cummins' research and provided additional findings that made distinctions between ELs based on their years of schooling and background knowledge. From her review of studies up to that time, Collier found support for the supposition that older students (8-12 years old) were more efficient learners than were younger children (4-7 years old) at performing school related tasks. In her longitudinal study from 1977 to 1986 of 1,548 language minority students in grades K-12 in a large United States school system, Collier (1987) collected cross sectional data that covered the students' academic

progress across content areas from 1977 to 1986. In her findings, Collier discovered that post pubescent ELs needed opportunities to continue acquiring academic language as their social language simultaneously provided a foundation for language input. Thus, the need to focus on academic literacy development is magnified for OA/YA ELs who find themselves behind their age-level peers in American high schools.

Rationale for the Study

Today, several indicators point toward a gap in OA/YA ELs' literacy and academic development. One such gauge is the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assessment. In 2010, the National Assessment Governing Board published a policy statement setting out, "Among students classified as either ELL (English Language Learner) or SD (students with disabilities) a goal of 85 percent inclusion shall be established. National, state, and district samples falling below this goal shall be identified in NAEP reporting," (p. 2). The NAEP assessment sample size for all other students is 95%. This policy statement did not separately define who is an EL other than a non-native speaker of English, but it did state that an EL who resided in the United States for one year or longer should take the NAEP assessment. Students who have been in the United States for less than a year can take the assessment in his or her primary language, if it is available. Ultimately, researchers must use caution when interpreting the NAEP results because ELs are not disaggregated by the time they have attended an American school and have been learning English.

Nonetheless, this policy sets the bar for what the nation is expecting an EL to be able to demonstrate in a new language after just a year in their American school, without taking into account their previous schooling literacy in their native language, or prior exposure to English.

In 2011, NAEP reported that 71 percent of ELs in the eighth grade scored below basic on the reading assessment, whereas 23 percent of their native English-speaking peers scored below basic (2011b). These results can be interpreted as a predictor for rising ninth graders' literacy skills, but it does not explain why the students might not adequately be prepared for success in high school coursework. As stated earlier, these numbers do not report the amount of time that the students have been learning English. Even so, these data indicate that there appears a gap in students' preparation prior to high school entry, and thus, high schools need to continue to seek greater insight into ELs learning needs in order to support their academic success.

In the analysis of the public and private high school dropout rates from 1972 to 2009, the NCES (2011a) disaggregated the data for characteristics of students at the time of dropping out by their age, grade level, gender, race/ethnicity, family income, and region of residence. The NCES report (2011a) stated that the dropout rate for Hispanic students, between 16-24 years old, was always higher than the dropout rate for Black or White students in that 37-year period. However, since 1990 the Hispanic student dropout rate has fallen from 32.4 percent to 17.6 percent as compared to 9.3 percent for Black students and 5.2

percent for White students. These statistics do not include a variable for the students' native language status nor the length of time they attended American, English language schools. One distinguishing finding in this report featured the Hispanic students' immigration and generation status. Students born outside of the United States had a 31.3 percent dropout rate compared to first generation Hispanics who had an 11.8 percent dropout rate and second or later generations who had a 10.2 percent dropout rate. Furthermore, Hispanics born outside of the United States had a higher rate of dropping out of school, 31.3 percent (*n*= 685,000) than non-Hispanic immigrants aged 16 to 24, 6.2 percent (*n*=118,000) (NCES, 2011a).

In another analysis of graduation rates, NCES (2011a) reported for the 2009 school year a 63 percent high school completion rate for foreign-born Hispanics between the ages of 18 to 24, whereas 83.7 percent of first generation Hispanics born in the United States graduated. The data did not refer to on-time graduation rates. Thus, it appears that the data on high school completion rates tell us the race and status birth place for high school dropouts, but it fails to explain why these students left high school. For that reason, this study took place at an alternative high school, which has a majority student population of Hispanic OA/YA ELs born outside of the United States.

The present study is framed by the theories and research of second language acquisition, literacy development, and sociocultural aspects of learning for OA/YA ELs. This study contributes to the literature in three distinct ways

based on the background of the participants, their academic learning goals, and the characteristics of the site. First, these young adult ELs learners could have attended an adult program to learn basic-English skills, but they sought to demonstrate an advanced level of literacy. Secondly, this study examined an EL population who attended the alternative high school with the goal of earning a high school diploma. Lastly, the site of this study was at a supportive alternative high school, which fostered a culture of literacy among the students, teachers, staff, and administration.

Continuum of Second Language Acquisition

According to the 2012 Condition of Education report from NCES, students are labeled as ELs if they are receiving services from their school that supports their language development (2012). For the 2009-2010 school year, the 4.7 million ELs accounted for 10 percent of public school students in the United States, which represented 2 percent, or 1 million more ELs than reported a decade earlier (NCES, 2012). However, this does not take into account the 11.2 million students who speak a language other than English in the home (NCES, 2012). Not all ELs are enrolled in a separate language program, or they may transition out of such a program within a school year. Moreover, those who test out of a language program have not necessarily attained a comparable level of academic language as their native-English speaking peers; they may need additional support. Thus, teachers should be aware of each student's individual needs and strengths.

Despite being a student population whose numbers are increasing, there is little research that reports on the academic needs of OA/YA ELs in American public high schools. To address this need, this study examined the reading practices of OA/YA ELs in their English classes at an alternative high school with a majority EL population who were at least 17 years old.

Literacy Development in School

School is not necessarily the only environment in which OA/YA ELs are reading. Research on adolescent literacy development has explored students' identity and out-of-school literacies (Moje, Overby, Tysvaer, N., & Morris 2008; Sturtevant & Kim, 2009). In the field of multilingual/multicultural education, research has examined student learning through the lens of culture and funds of knowledge (Carhill, Suárez-Orozco, & Páez, 2008; Enright, 2010; Jiménez, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Moll & Arnot-Hopffèr, 2005). Teachers need to understand that ELs' perceptions of their larger identity as a shape shifting mélange of racial, cultural, gender, linguistic, and generational identities. ELs should encounter a variety of personally relevant texts in school, so they see themselves in the curriculum rather than marginalized. Identity and culture influence students' motivation to engage in literacy development as well as how teachers acknowledge and respond to them (Jiménez, 1997, Jiménez, 2000). Therefore, one purpose of this study seeks to understand the OA/YA ELS' reading practices in their English classes where they choose their books to read from a selection of titles.

Sociocultural Aspects of Second Language Acquisition

In her writings on learning social context, and multicultural education, Nieto (2010) illuminated the unique needs of students, such as ELs, who do not represent the majority culture in school and feel marginalized. Nieto (2010) stated that, "learning emerges from the social, cultural, and political spaces in which it takes place and through the interactions and relationships that occur among learners and teachers" (p. 34). When teachers create classroom environments for ELs to take risks and construct learning, students will use their second language for academic and communicative purposes (Jiménez, 2000). Negotiating new social relationships is one of many challenges that adolescent ELs face as they are learning to read, write, and speak academic English. As such, this study intends to examine these sociocultural factors, which are present for OA/YA ELs and their literacy engagement at the alternative high school.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study exists in the interwoven examination of OA/YA ELs' reading practices and literacy engagement that includes their perspectives, which have been minimized in the literature. This examination seeks to provide greater insight for high school teachers and administrators, and researchers about how ELs in an alternative high school perceive themselves as engaged readers within their larger reading community of teachers and peers.

This study filled a gap in the existing literature on literacy engagement as a contributing factor to OA/YA ELs' second language acquisition and literacy

development. Separately, research by Collier addressed the language acquisition of OA/YA ELs; Jiménez (2000) and Gutiérrez (2008) discussed the sociocultural needs of ELs in acquiring a second a language; Moje, Overby, Tysvaer, and Morris (2008) sought to understand students' reading practices outside of school as an extension of their identity. The findings of this study brought attention to OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement as a key factor to their second language development and literacy development and supportive practices from teachers, staff, and administrators.

This study has significance to the local context. In the school district where this study took place, The *Washington Post* has reported on the changing demographics of the student population in regards to their language spoken at home. Of approximately 181,500 students, over fifty percent of this total student population speaks a language other than English at home (Rees Shapiro, 2012). While these students speak a language other than English at home, this does not imply that they also receive services from the English for Speakers of Other Languages program (ESOL) because they could have reached a level of English proficiency in which they did not require ESOL support, or they may have refused ESOL support. To describe the impact of this growing population of students in the ESOL program, the news article:

> This year, about 31,500 students are projected to enroll in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), representing 17 percent of the total county student population and an increase of nearly one-third from last

> year. Those numbers have profound financial implications for the school system, which spends $3,300 per student for ESOL lessons, county budget records show. With 7,652 new students in ESOL this year, that represents an additional $25.3 million. (Rees Shapiro, para. 2)

In order to determine the level of ESOL services to provide students, all school districts are required by federal policy to assess their ELs' academic language proficiency annually. In September 2011, this school district had 36,561 ELs and 4,795 were determined to be at an advanced level (FCPS, 2012). However, in the 2010 cohort of four-year graduates, ELs comprised 48.43% of dropouts (381 of 790); although these data do not include information about students who continued in school for a fifth year in order to graduate (FCPS, 2011b). At this study's site, an alternative high school, students have chosen to continue attending school rather than dropping out of school. These students may be those who take five or more years to graduate from high school, and thus have not dropped out. This study contributes to the literature on OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement by capturing the students' voices through qualitative research methods that are triangulated with quantitative data sources.

Purposes of Research Study

This study investigated the reading practices and literacy engagement of OA/YA ELs in their English classes at an alternative high school. This study seeks to identify the reading practices of OA/YA ELs in their English classes at an alternative high school, and how they perceive of their literacy engagement.

Additionally, this study endeavors to identify the English teachers' classroom practices, and how they perceive their OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement. Furthermore, this study explored the ways in which this alternative high school supports the literacy engagement of OA/YA ELs.

Professional Purpose

I have taught in three school districts in the mid-Atlantic region, which all served students who were struggling academically. When talking with students who were not successful in their courses, they often responded, "I won't do that teacher's work." This was their reason for not completing class work or homework. I wondered if they did not have a sense of choice in what or how they were learning, and this might have led to their external attribution for their academic struggles. I am curious about what students, who have been unsuccessful in school, want to control in their learning environment so that they choose to read.

I have been a teacher at the site of this study since 2004, and I was the department chair of the ESOL department. As such, I have been at Fieldside Alternative High School (FAHS is a pseudonym) longer than the English teachers' who are the participants in this study. I have seen the English program over the last years shift towards allowing students more choices in what they read to earn credit in the course. I have observed students who seemed to thrive in a learning environment where they had greater autonomy over their reading that is required for the English course. On the other hand, there are students who take

two semesters rather than one semester to complete the reading requirement for the English course. Being that the OA/YA ELs are on the continuum of second language acquisition, they need reading materials that are just above their current language proficiency to continue their rate of progress. Therefore, one of my professional purposes was to understand how these English teachers offer choices to their OA/YA ELs, and in turn whether their students consider this a factor in their reading engagement. I believe that the findings of this study provide new, broader parameters for teachers, department chairpersons, and administrators to consider when designing literacy programs targeted for OA/YA ELs.

Intellectual Purpose

As a teacher and doctoral candidate in education, I have read a range of literature on promising instructional practices to promote ELs' academic language development. Professional teaching books have stressed developing students' background knowledge, directly teaching metacognitive learning strategies, making personal connections with the academic content, and creating appropriate assessments (Freeman & Freeman, 2002, Short & Fitzsimmons, 2002, González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005, Peregoy & Boyle, 2008). In my review of studies, articles, and books on promoting and supporting the literacy development of ELs, I found many resources related to English language development, assessment, cultural awareness, and family literacy. Through my years of teaching and learning about the needs of marginalized youth, I feel that my theory of practice is rooted in a critical sociocultural pedagogy found in the writings of Delpit (1988), Freire

(1995), Gee (2001), Ladson-Billings (1995), Moll and Arnot-Hopffer (2005), and Nieto (1999).

The examination of the research has led me to also consider engagement as a factor in OA/YA ELs' ongoing second language acquisition. Motivation, as an influence in students' reading practices, has been a focus in the work of Wigfield (1997), Guthrie and Davis (2003), and Ivey and Broaddus (2001). There is little research on the role of motivation and engagement in ELs' second language acquisition or advanced literacy development. While experts in SLA have studied the effectiveness of making curriculum culturally relevant for ELs, I believe the influence of motivation and engagement has not been a focus of research. Enright (2011) called for researchers of academic literacy to explore, "how teachers can incorporate broader repertoires of literacy practices in their classrooms within the very real constraints of this policy context," (p.805). An intellectual purpose for this study was to broaden researchers' understanding of OA/YA ELs' literacy practices and to explore their engagement as a factor towards advancing their second language acquisition to graduate from high school.

Research Questions

This mixed-methods study investigated the reading practices and literacy engagement of OA/YA ELs in their English classes at an alternative high school. This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the reading practices of Older Adolescent/Young Adult English Learners (OA/YA ELs) in their English classes at this alternative high school?
2. How do these OA/YA ELs perceive their own literacy engagement at this alternative high school?
3. What are the classroom practices of the English teachers who work with these OA/YA ELs at this alternative high school?
4. How do the English teachers perceive their OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement at this alternative high school?
5. In which ways does this alternative high school support the literacy engagement of OA/YA ELs?

Key Words

Alternative High School: A program designed to support high school students who have experienced or at risk for interrupted schooling. Students may be placed for disciplinary reasons or attend voluntarily (FCPS, 2014).

Older adolescent/young adult English learner: These students are 17 to 23 years old who attend high school. As second language learners, they are acquiring English for academic purposes in order to be successful in high school (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2006).

Literacy engagement: Students are active and engaged in literacy activities with a disposition for thinking about the text (Guthrie, 2004).

Chapter Summary

My purpose for the study was to investigate the reading practices and literacy engagement of OA/YA ELs in their English classes at an alternative high school with the goal of finding features that are transferable to other educational contexts. In this chapter, I presented an introduction to my proposed research that will focus on a diverse student population, OA/YA ELs, who represent a significant number of high school dropouts yet are often left out of policy statements that seek to address the needs of at-risk learners. In my rationale for the study, I called for a shift in research that examines the diversity of ELs' experiences and skills and considers where they are in the continuum of second language acquisition and how they perceive of themselves as readers in English, the dominant academic language. I explained that the significance of this study was in the interwoven examination of OA/YA ELs' reading practices and literacy engagement that includes their perspectives, which have been minimized in the literature. In the next chapter, I will synthesize the areas of research that form the conceptual framework for this study: aspects of second language acquisition, literacy practices, and sociocultural perspectives, which contribute to OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement.

CHAPTER TWO:
LITERATURE REVIEW

This study focused on the literacy engagement of OA/YA ELs in an alternative high school setting. Two principle areas of theory and research informed this study. First, the process of second language acquisition is discussed and evaluated as it pertains to adolescent literacy development. Secondly, models of literacy practices and engagement are presented in terms of their application for OA/YA ELs. This literature review is guided by a sociocultural perspective for engaged literacy practices and interactions that center on the identity development of adolescent ELs. This sociocultural perspective is based on the learning theory of Vygotsky (1978) and asserts that ELs' literacy development is influenced by their social interactions and culturally shaped beliefs (Johnson, 2009).

Criteria for Selection of Studies

For this line of research, I sought out studies and seminal publications that did not use a deficit perspective to explore the needs of students learning a new language for academic purposes and examined the protective practices of schools and teachers. I took a multitier approach to select the studies and articles from databases of academic educational research journals related to English learners, adolescent English learners, literacy engagement, and sociocultural practices. This yielded forty-five sources that dated from 1978 to 2013.

While my research yielded several studies that addressed each of the areas informing my study, none specifically integrated the particular student population,

Older Adolescent/Young Adult English Learners (OA/YA ELs). None specifically addressed the topic of their literacy engagement in school. As I narrowed my search, I sought out studies that examined classroom literacy practices and older adolescent ELs' literacy engagement. Even as I mined the references from articles, no seminal studies on this topic emerged. There were, however, areas of research in the domain of Second Language Acquisition and Literacy that informed aspects of the study I conducted. These studies and areas of research are presented in the sections that follow.

Second Language Acquisition

Second language acquisition is the term used in the field to refer to the process of acquiring a language in addition to one's native (or home) language. The field of second language acquisition has studied the cognitive, linguistic, social, affective, and cultural aspects of learning an additional language in different contexts. This field of research is relatively new. It emerged in the 1980s with the work of Collier, Cummins, Ellis, and Krashen among others (Long, 2000). Theories of SLA have been derived from research in the field and from the fields of linguistics and psychology (Long, 2000).

The term acquisition, rather than learning, is used to make the distinction from the overall process of acquiring or attaining a level of proficiency in a language through social interaction and the more deliberate, direct language instruction found in the classroom (Collier, 1987, Krashen, 1982). Nonetheless,

Krashen (1982) argued that teachers could create a learning environment that promotes second language acquisition.

As early as the 1980s, Cummins' (1984) research in second language learning noted that the academic language used for classroom learning might present the EL with a greater range of contextually embedded and cognitively demanding interactions than the language situations they encounter with peers. His research established essential new information for the field of SLA that suggested two levels of language acquisition and production. Cummins' (1984) research in second language acquisition introduced the idea that there is an identifiable difference in the acquisition of social and academic language. Social language that is context embedded might be acquired from a few months to three years, depending on an EL's background knowledge. Cummins termed this as basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS). The second form of language that Cummins identified was cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). CALP is context reduced compared to the language demand needed for BICS.

As a language task becomes more contextually reduced and cognitively demanding, an OA/YA EL without prior background knowledge will need additional support. Students need CALP to achieve academic success, yet this can take from five to seven years or longer to acquire (Collier, 1987). This area of SLA research informed the present study because the student participants received ESOL services, and therefore were continuing to acquire CALP (Cummins, 1984).

Krashen's Hypotheses of Second Language Acquisition

The work of Krashen (1982) is often regarded as foundational knowledge for all teachers of ELs. Of particular relevance to this study in regards to OA/YA ELs' reading practices are Krashen's (1982) acquisition-learning hypothesis, input hypothesis, and affective filter hypothesis. Krashen purported that a person acquires a second language through meaningful interaction with native speakers rather than strict attention to form and structure, and this was his basis for the acquisition hypotheses. The emphasis was on the use of language for authentic purposes through interaction so language was acquired rather than directly taught via instruction. In terms of literacy practices in school, research has not considered the meaningful interaction between the EL and the author on the written page. A key point of Krashen's hypothesis is that language is acquired rather than learned through interaction, and it follows that readers are interacting with the text when they are engaged and appropriately challenged.

Having the choice to select one's own book does not ensure that the student will read a text that is appropriately challenging. The second hypothesis stated by Krashen (1982) is the input hypothesis, which is represented by $i+1$ to express how the target language should be just one-step above the EL's current level of comprehension to ensure that he or she is challenged but not frustrated. Language at this level is labeled as comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982). Additionally, Krashen advocated that vocabulary development through free choice topics of interest would provide the learner with more autonomy over his

or her language development. If this were the case, an EL who is engaged in reading would have more frequent opportunities to acquire language via this meaningful interaction.

Taken as a whole, Krashen's hypotheses of second language acquisition can be synthesized into the statement that individuals will acquire language when they attain comprehensible input with a lowered affective filter. This last factor is explained in the affective filter hypothesis developed by Krashen (1982) as a social-emotional variable that favors a low-anxiety learning environment. An EL who is not anxious about his or her performance, or the feedback received from teachers and peers, is in an emotional state to receive comprehensible input. As such, an EL who is engaged in self-selected reading in a safe classroom environment would have a lowered affective filter, which could facilitate language acquisition. These three hypotheses have not been studied in terms of OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement in the English classroom, and thus this study speaks to the gap in the literature.

Interrupted Schooling

Interrupted schooling is another factor to consider for OA/YA ELs' language and literacy development. Interrupted schooling occurs when students do not attend school for longer periods of time, and the length of time that constitutes interrupted schooling could vary by the district or the state. There are various factors to consider besides the actual number of days a student has

attended school. For example, the New York Department of Education has determined that ELs have interrupted schooling if they entered a school in the United States after 2nd grade, received two years less schooling than their age-appropriate peers, and function two years below their EL peers (New York State Department of Education, 2011). The other factors taken into consideration for interrupted schooling included a lack of records for previous schooling, poor attendance records, and limited academic progress.

The state where this study occurred did not set parameters for determining interrupted schooling. In the school district for FAHS, if a student misses 15 consecutive days, counselors and administrators create an attendance intervention. According to the attendance guidelines in the state where FAHS is located, a student may be referred to an attendance officer after 5 unexcused absences from school. Furthermore, the school may withdraw students who are absent for 10 consecutive days from school. These policies are directed at a student's current attendance, but they do not determine a student's status as having experienced interrupted schooling.

In a study that the examined the effects of schooling, Thomas and Collier (2002) concluded that ELs with more formal education in their native language while in their home country had higher academic achievement in American schools than their peers with interrupted schooling. Thomas and Collier used a longitudinal mixed-methods approach that spanned from 1996 to 2001. They

reviewed educational services provided to ELs in American K-12 public schools, and in particular, the ELs' consequential academic achievement as a result of participation in those programs. The research sites spanned from urban to rural areas of the northeastern, northwestern, south-central, and southeastern United States. When they examined the influence of the students' background on their academic achievement, Thomas and Collier (2002) found, "the L2 academic achievement of older immigrant arrivals with strong grade-level schooling completed in L1 in the home country was less influenced by low socioeconomic status and more dependent on number of years completed, (p. 6). Since the work of Thomas and Collier (2002), this subset of the EL population has received increased attention. This population has been referred to as students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) (DeCapua, Smathers, and Tang, 2009). This study included SLIFE as a characteristic to examine in the OA/YA EL population at FAHS when examining their reading practices and literacy engagement. As immigrants who arrived during their middle and high school years, this particular student population has also experienced interrupted schooling after moving to the United States. Therefore, the OA/YA ELs' interrupted formal schooling must be examined over the spectrum of their education to include their home country and the United States.

Subtractive Schooling

OA/YA ELs have a range of life experiences, which they bring to their learning. Their time in school in the United States is a factor to consider. This

population could have begun acquiring English in their native country as a child or soon after arrival in this country. Still other OA/YA ELs were born in the United States, but they are not thriving academically (Valenzuela, 1999, Suárez-Orozco, Rhodes, & Milburn, 2009). In a two-year ethnographic study of a high school in Houston, Texas, Valenzuela (1999) found that students of Mexican descent were less likely to succeed in school as compared to their peers who were ELs and recent immigrants from Mexico (1999). Valenzuela used the term, "subtractive schooling" for this phenomenon.

In a later study related to subtractive schooling, Suárez-Orozco et al. found a paradox that the longer immigrant students' were in school, their academic performance and attitude worsened. Suárez-Orozco et al. documented how recent immigrants adapted to American schools. In a five year longitudinal study of 408 recently arrived immigrants from Central America, China, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Mexico, the findings indicated that recent immigrant students had more positive attitudes towards school than their peers, who had been enrolled for four years or more in the United States, or those who were born in the United States. Subtractive schooling could occur for OA/YA ELs who do not acquire academic language at a rate in which they will make adequate progress and graduate with their age-appropriate peers.

Age of the Learner

The age of OA/YA ELs could be an advantage in terms of their ability to analyze language. Based on Collier's work (1987), ELs between 8 and 12 years old outperformed younger children between 4 to 7 years old on academic tasks involving reading and writing. Collier referenced Cummins' (1981) model of second language acquisition to distinguish between social language, as context embedded and cognitively undemanding, from academic language, as context reduced and cognitively challenging. This is an important distinction to be aware of for OA/YA ELs who may have the analytical skills but not the language proficiency to perform an academic task.

In a review of studies involving ELs in school, Collier discovered findings to support that older students were more efficient learners than younger children at performing school related tasks. Subsequently, from her longitudinal study, Collier concluded that post pubescent ELs needed to focus on acquiring academic language. However, Collier's study was not designed to consider whether the participants were engaged in their learning or if other factors were present which may have affected their academic language acquisition.

In a more recent study, Hakuta, Bialystok and Wiley (2003) examined the effect of age on second language acquisition. The work of Hakuta et al. tested the critical period hypothesis (CPH) for SLA, which stems from a line of research that asserts there is a biological time period that is optimal for learning a second

language and our cognitive processes decline with age. Hakuta et al. believed that if this was the case, there would be a certain age when that decline occurred, which was not related to other factors. They used the ages 15 years old and 20 years old as hypothesized ending points for a possible critical period. Hakuta et al. used the 1990 Census data of 2.3 million immigrants who had either Spanish or Chinese language backgrounds to test whether there was an age in which their SLA appeared to decline. Their quantitative results found that there were effects on language learning from factors related to education and age of immigration and, "the most compelling finding was that the degree of success in second-language acquisition steadily declines throughout the life span," (Hakuta et al., 2003, p. 37). Thus, it could not be assumed that OA/YA ELs would be at a disadvantage for learning a second language based only on their age.

In this section on SLA, I have addressed a range of factors that may affect OA/YA ELs' acquisition of academic English and development of literacy skills. From SLA research, this section examined influences related to this unique student population such as their age and schooling experiences. The age of an OA/YA EL should not be considered as a singular factor that determines his or her ability to acquire English for academic purposes. A stronger indicator of an ELs' ability to succeed at English academic tasks is his or her prior education in the native language and any periods of interrupted schooling. However, ELs who do not demonstrate proficiency in academic English over a period of years could be at risk of experiencing subtractive schooling. In that case, other interventions

must be developed to promote the ELs' literacy development. The following section will consider sociocultural and affective influences on teacher practices and classroom environments that sought to nurture OA/YA ELs' language learning and literacy engagement.

Sociocultural Factors for Supporting ELs' Literacy Engagement

Understanding more about English language acquisition and the literacy development of ELs has attained a national focus. In 2002, the U.S. Department of Education selected a panel to investigate a variety of areas of concern related to ELs' literacy development and sociocultural contexts. August, the principal investigator, and Shanahan, the panel chair, reported that the panel found limited studies related to acquiring literacy in a second language (2006). Nonetheless, the executive summary stated that student outcomes in literacy development appeared to be largely dependent on teacher quality, and that teachers needed to give specific attention to phonemic awareness as it contrasted with the students' native language.

There is a collection of practices that schools should implement to support ELs' second language acquisition through sociocultural processes. Thomas and Collier (1997) found from their research on school effectiveness for children, adolescents and young adults learning a second language that, "sociocultural, academic, cognitive, and linguistic (components) are interdependent. If one is developed to the neglect of another, this may be detrimental to a student's overall growth and future success. The academic, cognitive, and linguistic components

must be viewed as developmental." (p. 44). Thomas and Collier called this the Prism Model as a means to convey to schools the importance of supporting the development of ELs' language, academic, and cognitive development through sociocultural processes. From this perspective, ELs are active learners who contribute to the context of their classroom environment rather than being passive recipients of their teachers' lessons.

Schools must consider sociocultural and affective factors in the literacy development of OA/YA ELs. The integration of SLA theory with a sociocultural construct for learning took hold in the late 1990's (Swain & Deters, 2007). From their review of SLA theory from 1997 to 2007, Swain and Deters focused on four theories that merged the learner's mediation of language through interactions known as "languaging", identity development, sense of agency, and situated cognition as language socialization (p. 822). Swain and Deters positioned the EL as an agent of his or her own dialogic language learning in the context of, "a community of practice in order to gain access to resources and opportunities for socialization. Access is key and crucial," (p. 824). This point is rooted in the Prism Model from Thomas and Collier that was described earlier (1997). It is from this framework that gives equal import to social, cultural, and affective factors for ELs' language and cognitive development, which guides the sociocultural perspective of this present study.

The Teacher's Role in Supporting ELs' Literacy Development

Research by Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti (2005) led to their funds of knowledge approach for informing sociocultural teaching practices. The ethnographic study included data sources from interviews in the Latino community of Tucson, Texas with families and teachers. Gonzalez et al. gathered data about the families' origin, use, and distribution of knowledge and skills. They concluded that the families had abundant knowledge, which the schools did not know about, and therefore did not access to support the students' academic skills or literacy development. Gonzalez et al. termed the families' funds of knowledge as, "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (p.72). The teachers created classroom practices that led to activities with meaningful social exchanges based on students' funds of knowledge. In this new practice, teachers found their students to be cognitively engaged and thoughtful. The focus of language learning became centered on making meaning with the students' native language and English. Since the teachers based classroom learning on their students' knowledge and skills, the students were valued as agents in their own learning.

Affective factors need to be considered by teachers in their literacy practices with ELs. If the student struggles with reading, he or she may feel overwhelmed by the demands of English and withdraw from class activities. Ivey and Broaddus (2007) studied this concern with a middle school teacher who

sought to engage struggling Latina/o ELs with reading and writing. Working with this teacher, Ivey and Broaddus (2007) conducted a formative experiment investigating literacy engagement among adolescent Latina/o students just beginning to read, write, and speak English. The study included fourteen Spanish speakers in a middle school language arts class for a school year, and the intervention focused on student-selected literature and teacher directed lessons with whole class and small groups for reading and writing development.

This formative experiment was unique because Ivey and Broaddus (2007) set out, "to take a more proactive approach, using what we already know as a starting point to make significant changes in students' school literacy experiences and achievement" (p. 519). In designing an instructional intervention, Ivey and Broaddus considered the distinct needs of second-language learners and whether or not it was appropriate to implement strategies created for native-speaking "at-risk students." The student participants were native Spanish speakers in the seventh or eighth grade, who were placed in a middle school team with other ELs.

The study found that texts the students' found engaging were connected to their experiences. Ivey and Broaddus (2007) suggested that teachers offer ELs a wide range of reading materials, which reflect students' various life experiences and identities. This study illustrated the decisions a teacher makes about selecting books, modifying text, scaffolding for reading and writing development, and creating a supportive learning environment. The Ivey and Broadus (2007) study

addressed engagement in reading by suggesting that students have a wide selection of materials.

Research has suggested that administrators and educators should take a sociocultural perspective for supporting ELs rather than these students relying on their own resilience to acculturate to school settings. There are growing numbers of ELs born in the United States, and their home environment and living contexts could also point to the importance of sociocultural factors in their learning. A study from Nieto (2010) examined the sociocultural factors for supporting ELs' learning. It included interviews with elementary teachers, who felt unprepared in how to support ELs who did not represent the majority culture in their school, and so they acted on their good intentions to support ELs. Nieto concluded that these teachers were learning from their interactions and relationships with their students. For this to occur, the teachers, with their students, created a space that was devoted to understanding the context of their learning in their school and community.

The present study examined in which ways FAHS supported the literacy engagement of OA/YA ELs. The environment of a school needs to be included as an influence on OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement because in the words of Nieto (2010), "It is in the *interplay* between personal and institutional change that substantive transformation occurs," (p. 101). Institutional support for bilingual, bicultural students occurs when schools build their pedagogy and practices upon caring and respect.

Caring should be a form of institutional responsibility in the secondary schools. In her influential work, Noddings (1988) recommended that schools explore an ethic of caring from a moral prospective as the aim of education. A school's structure should promote an ethic of caring as inherent to its work as an institution of society. Noddings (1988) explained that a pedagogy of caring makes the objective of learning the development of caring, moral people. While Noddings' work is rooted in feminist theory, it has implications for schools seeking to design institutional accommodation for its students.

Teacher Behavior as Caring

In a qualitative study, Garza (2009) sought to understand Latino and White high school students' perceptions of caring. Even though Garza did not take into account whether students were ELs, his findings show a range of perceptions that adolescent high school students have about their teachers' behavior as caring. The participants included 49 Latino students and 44 White students from a large, suburban high school in Central Texas. By applying constant comparative data analysis, Garza (2009) found that students perceived their teachers demonstrated caring behaviors when they scaffolded instruction, provided academic support in class, were available to help, demonstrated actions that showed their dispositions, and took an interest in their students' lives.

The results of Garza's (2009) study indicated a difference between Latino and White students for preferences in teachers' caring behaviors. Latino students reported that teacher scaffolding and academic support were the most important

forms of teacher caring. By contrast, White students preferred that teachers' actions reflect their disposition, which Latino students reported this as the least valued form of teacher caring (Garza, 2009). From this analysis, Garza inferred that Latino students sought out the teachers' qualities of caring, besides affection, that supported their academic learning. The present study will not be comparing OA/YA ELs' perceptions to their native English peers. Instead, participants will voice how they perceive their teachers' behaviors are supporting their literacy engagement.

School environment and supportive relationships can significantly influence the recent immigrants' engagement for school learning and outcomes (Suárez-Orozco, Rhodes, &Milburn 2009). The OA/YA ELs in this study have been in the United States for at least three years. In the time they have been in this country, they have left their neighborhood high school to attend an alternative high school. Even though they have a lifetime of experiences, they have not yet converted their cultural knowledge into social or cultural capital that rewards them with academic achievement (Rios-Aguilar, Kiyama, Gravitt, & Moll, 2011; Valenzuela, 1999). It is possible that the students who have been in American schools for a longer period are experiencing subtractive schooling (Valenzuela, 1999). As discussed earlier, Valenzuela (1999) found that students of Mexican descent felt less supported by their teachers and less likely to succeed in school as compared to their peers who were recent immigrants from Mexico. Valenzuela created the term subtractive schooling to connote the phenomenon that these

students were experiencing the longer they were in their American school. For this study, such differences in perceptions of OA/YA ELs about their teachers' caring and support, as an influence on their literacy engagement, was taken into consideration.

Sociocultural Classroom Practices with ELs

A sociocultural perspective is founded on the assertion that ELs' literacy development is influenced by their social interactions and culturally shaped beliefs (Johnson, 2009). As a sociocultural classroom practice, research has shown that ELs need opportunities in the classroom to interact and learn from their peers, as well as the teacher. This space for assisted learning through social interaction is the zone of proximal development, which Vygotsky (1978) created to represent the learning space between what a learner can do independently and what a learner can accomplish with the guidance of proficient peer. Vygotsky's zone of proximal development is the foundation for a sociocultural framework for learning and classroom practice.

A study from Reyes (2008), viewed learning as a sociocultural process in which children interact with peers and adults in their environment and learn from their interactions and observations. This one-year study was part of a larger mixed-methods three-year longitudinal study on emergent biliteracy. Reyes sought to discover how students' social practices at home, in the community, and in school influenced their bilingual literacy development. The participants were twelve 4 to 5 year old immigrant Mexican children acquiring literacy in Spanish

and English. When observing literacy events in the home, Reyes stated that the development of bilingual print concepts and awareness were achieved through social interaction rather than from exposure alone. These findings might suggest a link between literacy interactions in the students' zone of proximal development, and ELs' reading development when the text that falls within Krashen's zone of *i*+1 (1982). Nonetheless, those results caused me delve into the research further. Thus, there are limiting factors in Reyes' conclusions when applied to the present study. First, the population of four to five year olds was much younger than OA/YA ELs. Secondly, those students were developing literacy in both their native language and English.

With the purpose of considering an older population of ELs, I included a study from McElvain (2010), in which the student participants were ELs in the fourth and fifth grade. This study is unique because it examined the ELs' perceptions of their reading engagement in addition to their progress, which relates to the present study. McElvain was concerned that the ELs who were mainstreamed into fourth through sixth grade were in English-only classrooms with support from another program. The English-only classrooms stressed basic reading skills for high stakes assessments and allowed for little peer interaction. For that reason, McElvain implemented transactional literature circles with the ELs to counter the effects of a test-driven curriculum. McElvain sought to increase ELs' interaction and meaning-making as a means for improving their literacy skills. After seven months, the 75 mainstreamed ELs increased their

reading comprehension by one grade level, and they outperformed the control group on the standardized reading test. The teacher interviews and student surveys indicated an increase in the ELs' reading engagement and motivation. This positively affected their reading self-efficacy, confidence and a willingness to participate in class discussions. Based on McElvain's findings, literature circles as a classroom could provide OA/YA ELs a zone of proximal development in which literacy interactions promote their reading engagement.

Reading Practices with OA/YA ELs

Research suggests that the life experiences of OA/YA ELs have a strong influence on their learning, reading practices, attitudes towards reading. One study by Jiménez (2000) stands out for its examination of the interaction between students' identities and culture in their reading practices. Jiménez conducted observations and interviews with 4 bilingual teachers and 85 Hispanic fourth to sixth graders. Even though this study included younger ELs, the teacher's literacy practices are important to consider as promising for older ELs. Over the year-long study, Jiménez examined how the teachers worked with the students on cognitive reading strategies in a culturally responsive curriculum.

Results from the Jiménez (2000) study indicated that the students situated their larger identity in a "cultural borderland" (p.985). The students were born in the United States, Puerto Rico or Mexico and their families spoke mostly Spanish at home. They felt their Spanish skills were valued in the community, but less valued at school where there was an emphasis on acquiring academic English.

The students wanted to be proficient in English, yet they feared losing their cultural identity if they did not continue to be proficient in Spanish. For this reason, research needs to tie OA/YA ELs' reading practices with their reading engagement in their second language.

As research has shown, second language acquisition is not as simple as translating words and answering questions about their meanings (August & Shanahan, 2006). The Jiménez (2000) study serves to uncover some of the complexities of reading that might also be applied for OA/YA ELs who, like the participants in this study, also live between languages and cultures. Gutiérrez (2008) described this as the Third Space, in which student's academic and personal worlds transform one another:

> Third Space is interactionally constituted, in which traditional conceptions of academic literacy and instruction for students from nondominant communities are contested and replaced by forms of literacy that privilege and are contingent upon students' sociohistorical lives, both proximally and distally (p. 148).

When Gutiérrez (2008) observed teachers and students in her early research, she found their interactions along with the influences of their lives led to periods of engagement in learning. This conceptual space is a zone of potential for future learning that is dependent upon the individual's relation to the social environment. The previous studies did not focus on OA/YA ELs who are trying to

graduate from high school, which brings in another influence on their reading practices and engagement.

In this section on sociocultural factors for ELs' literacy engagement, I presented research that spoke to the role of the teacher. As a caring guide, the teacher provides students with texts to read that relate to their personal knowledge and skills. The students and teacher negotiate the meaning of texts through social interactions. In this learning environment, ELs will be agents of their learning (Swain & Deters, 2007). Nonetheless, care must be taken that reading materials not only allow OA/YA ELs to access their funds of knowledge, but also that they can comprehend texts at the appropriate challenge level to promote their language acquisition. (Gonzalez et al. 2007). In the following sections, the focus of this review will turn to research based in the field of literacy with findings that pertain to the engaged reading practices of OA/YA ELs in both their high school environment and their classroom settings.

Silent Sustained Reading with English Learners

High schools have implemented silent sustained reading (SSR) programs with the hope of increasing the amount of reading time for students, so they develop the habits of engaged readers. SSR has also been referred to in the literature as Drop Everything And Read (DEAR), Independent Reading (IR), and Free Voluntary Reading (FVR). Research has shown that SSR is as important for older English learners as for younger learners developing their literacy and should receive attention as part of the academic day for these learners. Fisher (2004)

studied one urban high school that sought to examine the consistency and effectiveness of its SSR program. This high school was of particular interest to the current study because 75 percent of the students were English Learners and 54 percent of the student population was Latino. The time for SSR was designated to one class period, which was twenty minutes longer than the other periods. From an assessment of the SSR program, Fisher found that only 44 percent of students regularly participated. Some of the reasons for the low participation rate in SSR included a lack of consistency in teachers safeguarding the time for reading during the assigned period and students completing other assignments or using it as free time.

The administration and a teacher-led literacy committee implemented a new model for SSR, which they adapted from guidelines by Pilgreen (2000). Pilgeen's eight factors for a school-wide SSR program included easy access to books, appealing books for students, a comfortable yet interactive physical environment, encouragement from adults and parents, staff training, informal accountability of reading, follow-up activities to reading, and distributed time for SSR so students could develop the habit of reading. After two years of integrating these factors into their SSR program, Fisher found that the number of students regularly participating had increased to 88 percent. The administration, teachers, and students believed that this turn-around occurred because the students had a voice which books to purchase, teachers and students were partners in reading, the administration provided financial and program support, and the adults

became role models for reading. This high school created a culture for reading, which is a characteristic being examined at the setting of this study, Fieldside Alternative High School.

The study on SSR from Fisher (2004) included a high number of adolescent English Learners as student participants, but the research did not focus on the unique literacy development and language acquisition of ELs in an SSR program. Hellermann (2006) conducted a longitudinal microethnography on two adult English Learners who were attending community college ESOL classes. The structure of the classes included a modified SSR program with opportunities for text interaction thorough speaking and writing. This is an important factor to consider for adult ELs who are acquiring both social and academic skills in their new target language, and they need to practice in order to communicate effectively for both purposes. The participants in the study were beginning level English speakers. The 51 year old male EL was a Spanish speaker with two years of schooling in his country. The 21 year old female EL was a Cantonese speaker with eleven years of schooling in her country. Over the three years, Hellermann examined, "the recurrent nature of activity in classroom discourse to understand how the local practices for social interaction of two learners in similar interactional environments constitute socialization into literacy over the course of three terms of study." (p. 381).

Hellermann (2006) considered book selection, book retelling, and reading logs to be forms of "language socialization and interactional competence," for the

ELs' classroom literacy practices in SSR (p. 396). In the first literacy practice, choosing a book, the male participant, who had limited schooling, appeared unsure of how to select a book. Over repeated exposure and practice, he came to not only get up and scan a book before reading it, but he eventually supported other students in finding books. On the other hand, the female participant, with formal schooling, immediately demonstrated this literacy practice by examining a book before taking it to her seat. The participants' prior literacy experiences shaped their ability to select a book independently. Even though the students were both at a beginning level of English proficiency, the female was initially more comfortable with the structure and social interaction required for story re-tellings, and she was more skilled at completing the reading logs. Another important distinction between the two participants was their out-of-school literacy practices. On average, the female participant read books and newspapers for seven hours a week, and the male participant read magazine and newspapers for two hours each week. The time that each participant had to read, in their past and present lives, seemed to have shaped their literacy practices and interactions during their SSR time in class.

Based on the findings from Fisher (2004) and Hellermann (2006), it appears that older adolescent and young adult English Learners need the structured and consistent time for reading in school if they are to acquire the habits of engaged readers. The school community contributes to the culture of reading through of model of SSR that prioritizes adults modeling and partnering

in engaged reading with their English Learners. Classroom teachers can devote attention to their English Learners' language socialization and literacy interactions as a form of accountability in the SSR program and an authentic practice in second language acquisition. Both the school as setting and the English teachers' classroom practices are examined in the current study.

Literacy Research on Engagement

The fields of second language acquisition and literacy each hold the stance that learners' lives play a role in their reading development, and this premise helped to form the conceptual framework of the present study. As Gutiérrez suggested a Third Space for teacher and ELs to engage in literacy, Gee (2004) proposed that schools needed to, "situate reading within a broad perspective that integrates work on cognition, language, social interaction, society, and culture" (p. 116). A person acquires the language, or discourse, of his group's identity through social practice. As such, discourse is their identity kit (Gee, 2004). Consequently, learners are acquiring discourse identities and social language at home, school and in their community. Gee posited reading development as an issue of equity and access for all students because reading, writing, speaking and listening are skills for acquiring a social identity in multiple contexts.

Adding a position on adolescent literacy, Moje, Overby, Tysvaer, and Morris (2008) argued that power, identity, and agency are powerful influences on the literacy practices of adolescents. These older students are negotiating their

role in society and their place in the power structure through in-school and out-of-school literacies (Moje et al., 2008). In order to understand how students acquire reading skills in the classroom setting, Moje pointed out that we should look to how they are influenced by social relationships, and how they perceive their power as an influence in their learning. This is an important dimension of the present study.

Literacy Interactions

It is notable from the work of Dillon (1989) and Moje (1986) that both researchers focused on the teachers' instructional practices with adolescent high school students, who continue to develop discourse identities throughout their time in high school. Gee (1989) and Moje et al. (2008) understood adolescents' identity development as a process, in which they may struggle with the school culture. However, there is more research needed to examine how OA/YA ELs perceive their power dynamics as an influence in their learning.

Research also needs to attend to how secondary teachers support adolescent ELs' reading development and engagement as an intervention to help them graduate from high school. In a yearlong ethnographic study, Dillon (1989) interpreted the interactions between a White male, high school teacher and African American students in the eleventh grade who were placed in his low-track reading class. Even though the students in this study were not OA/YA ELs, its results are germane to the current study as Dillon's work examines how students reacted to the teacher-created social organization, which guided their actions and

interactions. Dillon broadened her lens to examine the classroom culture as an organization and then defined culture as "the sets of learned and shared standards for perceiving, believing, acting and evaluating the actions of others," (p. 230). From her observations, Dillon found that the teacher acted as a cultural broker between the students' home and school lives. In essence, the teacher was the students' social capital for gaining access to the cultural capital of school

In the study findings, Dillon (1989) categorized the teacher's style and effectiveness based on the manner of communicating, coaching and counseling rather than his content knowledge. The teacher did not approach the students' learning from a deficit model or perpetuate their labeling as at-risk. Dillon labeled the teacher's style of lesson planning for reading as "anticipator/adapter actions" because the teacher could anticipate student reactions and needs and therefore adapt the lessons to their interests and learning needs (p. 248). As such, the teacher created a system for accommodating reading lessons that connected the students' home lives, communication styles to the academic demands of high school. While the findings of Dillon's study are encouraging, the do not focus on how teachers can accommodate for adolescent ELs with innovative and motivating literacy methods, such as anticipator/adapter actions.

Dillon (1989) studied the social organization created and supported by the teacher as a cultural broker, and Moje (1996) focused on a chemistry teacher's use of literacy strategies for promoting students' literacy development. In an ethnographic study, Moje examined the social space that the chemistry teacher

and her students interacted in and how they negotiated social and cultural meanings beyond content knowledge itself. In the findings, Moje noted that the teacher did use literacy as a tool for learning chemistry, but that students were not applying those skills to other learning situations. The teacher used literacy to build relationships with her students and to show that she cared about their interests. The teacher and students had positive attitudes towards the benefits of literacy activities, but Moje stated that more research was needed on the effectiveness of the strategies for learning chemistry. These findings point to the need for secondary teachers to employ classroom practices, as well as strategy instruction, that ultimately promote their OA/YA ELs' literacy in a Third Space (Gutiérrez, 2008). These results also suggest that a conscious combination of SLA knowledge and understanding of literacy practices and approaches that are effective with OA/YA ELs are called for.

Literacy Engagement and Middle School Students

Evidence of a reader's use of strategies for understanding and higher order thinking is found in his or her writing and talking about reading. In the same way, Guthrie (2004) concluded that engaged reading is, "observable as a behavior in the classroom but also entails cognitive, motivational, and social attributes," (p. 4). Then the question is whether struggling readers are engaged in the reading they are assigned to do in school, or are they turned away because of language access. This does not imply that proficient and advanced readers are more motivated and engaged. In response to the need for supporting students'

engagement in reading, research-based literacy frameworks have been created by Guthrie and Davis (2003), Brozo, and Flynt (2008). Both frameworks are similar in their approach to building students' reading development through authentic literacy experiences. However, additional research needs to examine how elements of these frameworks can support OA/YA ELs literacy engagement. Thus, the fields of SLA and literacy development need to consciously merge in the research.

Guthrie and Davis (2003) investigated the phenomenon of decreasing reading engagement in students as they progressed from elementary school to middle school. Guthrie and Davis compared survey responses among all Maryland students in the third, fifth and eighth grade about their reading motivation. The demographics of the student population was not noted in the study. Guthrie and Davis found support for the premise that middle school students lacked self-efficacy and engagement in reading. For example, 36 percent of third graders agreed with the statement, "I think reading is boring," whereas 64.5 percent of eighth graders agreed with it (p. 62). Guthrie and Davis used their data to understand the relationship between students who are struggling in reading due to their disengagement.

Based on the findings from this survey, Guthrie and Davis (2003) sought to engage struggling middle school readers by building their self-efficacy when they encountered texts that were more challenging. The authors defined struggling readers as those, "who are disengaged from reading activities that are related to

school," (p. 61). The engagement model of instruction was largely based upon the self-determination theory from Ryan and Deci (2000), which contributes to the internalized motivation of a learner through his or her sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness to the task. In order for internalized motivation to become long lasting for in-school literacy, Guthrie and Davis proposed that students have knowledge goals, real-world interactions, and an abundance of interesting text, support for student choice, direct instruction on using strategies and support for collaboration. To measure teachers' perceptions of their students' engagement in this model of classroom practice, Wigfield and Guthrie (2004) created the eight-item Reading Engagement Index (REI). The REI was used in this study as a quantitative data source to examine the FAHS English teachers' perceptions of their OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement and the OA/YA ELs perceptions of their own literacy engagement in school as well. Further details concerning this index are found in Chapter 3.

Even though Guthrie and Davis (2003) focused their work on the needs of middle school readers, they believed the engagement model was beneficial for high school readers, as well. Since OA/YA ELs were not the targeted population of this study, further research is needed to determine if engagement varies among subgroups of ELs in terms of their language proficiency and schooling. These are important features to consider when working with ELs, who have a variety of life experiences that could connect and engage them in reading for school.

In a separate study related to literacy engagement, Ivey and Broaddus (2001), investigated the attitudes of middle schoolers towards reading, and what led them want to read. Ivey and Broaddus surveyed 1600 sixth graders in 23 middle schools from the northeastern and mid-Atlantic regions of the United States. They used qualitative and quantitative methods to capture the students' voices on the ten-item survey with checklists and open-ended questions. Ivey and Broaddus followed up with interviewing 31 students in three classrooms from three schools. From quantitative analysis of the student' survey responses, the study found that the greatest number of students, 63 percent, preferred free reading time to the other classroom activities. For the question, "What makes you want to read?" 42 percent stated, they were motivated by finding good materials to read and having choice in the selection of these materials," (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001, p. 361). These findings are encouraging for OA/YA ELs at FAHS who have both the free time and a selection of materials to choose from in their English classes. This study extended the work of Ivey and Broaddus (2001) by modifying their survey for a new population of students, the OA/YA ELs at FAHS taking high school level English courses. This survey is further explained in Chapter 3.

Literacy Engagement and High School Students

With a broader focus on reading across the curriculum, Brozo and Flynt (2008), created six evidence-based principles for content teachers to enhance instruction and their learning environment. These principles to promote engagement were similar to those of Guthrie and Davis (2003) in the areas of

elevating self-efficacy, having an abundance of interesting texts available, expanding choices and options, and structuring collaboration into classroom practices. A distinctive principle in the later model directs teachers to recognize and cultivate students' out-of-school literacies with their in-school literacies. This is particularly important because many adolescents interact via social media practices, and teachers could bridge this to their in-school literacy tasks. While these frameworks for literacy engagement sound promising, they need to be researched in a manner, which includes the perspectives the OA/YA ELs and their teachers. There are not data to support the efficacy of these literacy engagement models for ELs.

In a separate analysis of the 2002 Program for International School Assessment (PISA) results for the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Republic of Ireland, Brozo, Shiel and Topping (2007), compared the rate of reading engagement for fifteen year olds in those English-speaking countries. The PISA specified reading engagement as, "the time that students report reading a diversity of material for pleasure and their interest in and attitudes toward reading." (p. 307). Therefore time spent reading is a trait of reading engagement. Moreover, Brozo et al. found that the students' levels of engagement had the largest correlation with their reading achievement. For this reason, Brozo et al. suggested that schools increase the amount of time students had for reading a variety of challenging, as well as personalized, texts with a system of accountability for students to track their reading.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I examined SLA research to better understand the context of language acquisition for OA/YA ELs. Engaged literacy practices with OA/YA ELs should be comprised of multiple factors such as, sociocultural and affective influences on SLA, the teacher as a caring guide and facilitator for literacy development, materials and activities that make meaningful connections with students' lives, opportunities to negotiate meaning, and the prioritizing of students' agency in their learning. Subsequently, I incorporated Guthrie's (2004) explanation of literacy engagement as a disposition for focused and frequent reading that is strategic and conceptual, as well as socially interactive. From this definition, I argued for a framework of engaged literacy practices. In the following chapter, I explain the research methods I used to implement this research study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

This study focused on the reading practices and literacy engagement of OA/YA ELs in their English classes at an alternative high school. This mixed-methods study was constructed with a dialogic approach to data analysis. Each step informed the analysis of the next data source (Greene 2007; Maxwell, 2012). The research methods included surveys with scaled items and open-ended items, descriptive research, observations, interviews, and artifacts in a mixed-methods approach. I included quantitative and qualitative data sources on how the readers selected books, what they were thinking during and after reading, as well as their observable reading practices. By employing qualitative methods, participants had the space to describe and expand upon how they understood the role of literacy engagement for OA/YA ELs at FAHS. This study was centered on the following five questions:

RQ1: What are the reading practices of OA/YA ELs in their English classes at this AHS?

RQ2: How do these OA/YA ELs perceive their literacy engagement at this AHS?

RQ3: What are the classroom practices of 2 English teachers who work with the OA/YA ELs at this AHS?

RQ4: How do the English teachers perceive their OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement at this AHS?

RQ5: In which ways does this AHS support the literacy engagement of OA/YA ELs?

Researcher Disclosure

In designing a mixed-methods study, I sought to construct a mental model for my study, as a toolkit, with a dialogic approach (Greene 2007; Maxwell, 2012). According to Greene (2007), a mental model is, "the set of assumptions, understandings, predispositions, and values and beliefs with which all social inquirers approach their work," (p. 12). Multiple mental-models influence a researcher's interpretation of what to ask, observe, and value as relevant to the inquiry. When the researcher merges mental models to broadly examine the social phenomena, rather than narrowly predefine it, then he or she is moving toward a dialogic approach to mixed-methods. From this perspective, I examined adolescent and young adult ELs' literacy engagement in terms of the students' schooling and language experiences, the teachers' behaviors and classroom structures, and the supportive factors in the school environment and community. I identified themes from these data that represented the voices of the participants.

Data sources were selected to deepen my understanding of the ELs' literacy engagement rather than merely include an increased number of data sources for the sake of triangulation. Maxwell (2012) explained that triangulation involves using different methods of varying strengths and limitations as a check to support a single conclusion. This strategy reduces the risk that the conclusions

will reflect only the biases of a specific method, and allows the researcher to gain a more secure understanding of the issues being investigated.

I interpreted this to be another layer to the dialogic approach. Not only should these data arise from a variety of methods, in a mixed-method study, but they also answer the research questions from distinct angles. For this reason, I used iteration as a means for integrating my mixed-methods research design. As I explain in my research design section, my analysis of the student and teacher surveys informed my observational protocol, which in turn shaped my interview questions with students, teachers, and other stakeholders in the school.

Since 2004, I have been a teacher in the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) department at FAHS. I will describe the school as the site of this study in the subsequent section. This study gave me the opportunity to survey, observe, and interview the teachers, students and staff. The following figure illustrates my mental model for this study:

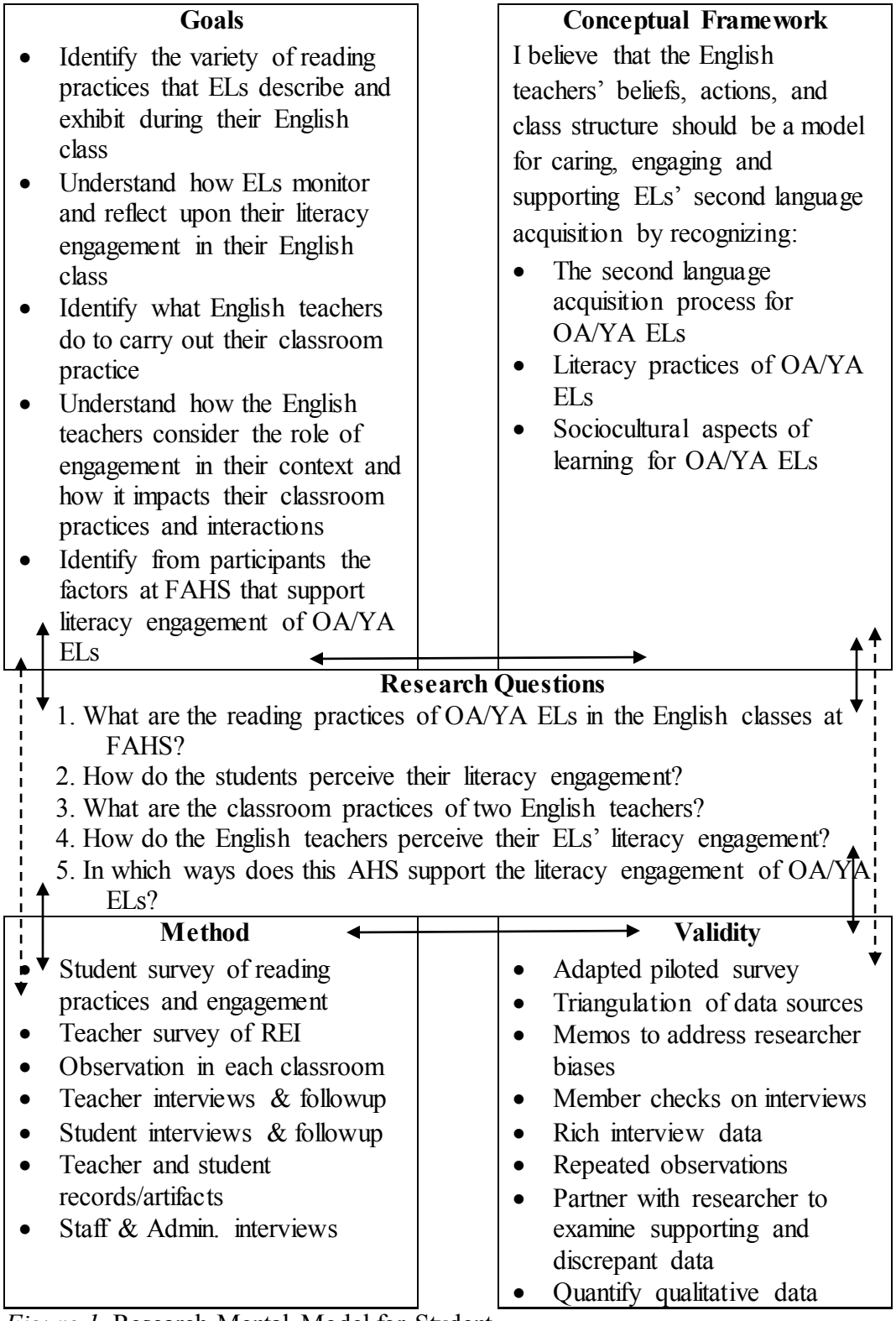


Figure 1 Research Mental Model for Student

Setting

For the 2011-2012 school year, the public school district for FAHS reported that approximately 82,567 students were enrolled its middle schools and high schools (2014c). It also reported for the 2011-2012 school year that 1.26 percent (n=1,025) of those students dropped out of school. (2012c). The last report issued by the school district to report on-time-graduation rates was in 2011. It stated that for students designated in the 2009-2010 graduating cohort who did not finish high school in four years, 67 percent (*n*=787) dropped out, 17.1 percent (*n*=200) completed later, and 15.8 percent(*n* = 185) were still enrolled (FCPS, 2011b). OA/YA ELs represented 36 percent (*n*=442) of those who did not graduate with their cohort. The school district did not report on the number of OA/YA ELs who went on to complete their high school degree in more than four years or who enrolled at an alternative high school. Nonetheless, there is an indicator of where OA/YA ELs can go after they leave their original high school because the school district reports the number of students at the alternative sites. The school district reported for the 2011-2012 school year that FAHS had approximately 339 students, and 34.68 percent (*n*=77) were ELs (2012b). In 2012-2013, the number of ELs increased to 43.72 percent (n=108) of the student population. In conclusion, FAHS appeared to be an alternative school for OA/YA ELs who may have otherwise dropped out. Unfortunately, these data do not

include the length of time that the OA/YA ELs have been learning English, their length of prior schooling, nor any interruptions in schooling.

School as Setting

FAHS is one of two alternative high schools in this school district. It opened in 1995 as an alternate site for students in the school district to complete their education and graduate from high school. It is unique for a variety of reasons. It can serve up to approximately 325 hundred students. Most students are at least 18 years old, so they can transfer themselves, as adults to FAHS. The students who are 16 to 17 years old were placed by the hearing office for disciplinary reasons, or they are pregnant or parenting students, so they chose to attend FAHS for its services. All FAHS students would otherwise attend one of the other 24 other high schools in this large, suburban school district in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Teachers at FAHS refer to other high schools as the students' "base school." Anecdotally, I have observed that students refer less to their base schools as they identify themselves as FAHS students and embrace the school's motto, "family, love, respect". This motto adorned the schools' hallways, offices, and classrooms. There were also laminated posters in the hallways that showed photographs of teachers, staff, and administrators reading their favorite books. The supportive atmosphere of the school makes Fieldside a unique alternative high school because it does not regulate students through strict or punitive practices.

There are more than a dozen programs at FAHS that were created to support the changing needs of its student population. Signs adorned the hallways announcing upcoming events and inspirational messages. For example, the Pregnant and Parenting Program, supports over 35 students with monthly meetings, luncheons, diapers, clothes, and other parenting materials. One of the counselors is designated to work with the pregnant and parenting students, so she is familiar with how to connect parents to day care and other services in the county. The majority of pregnant and parenting students are female OA/YA ELs who speak Spanish as their native language. These parents are able to continue their education because of the extended services that FAHS offers them that the base schools do not.

The Mentoring Club is the largest program at FAHS with over 200 members, and it represents the motto, "family, love, respect". The culture of FAHS encourages the administration, faculty and staff to mentor students throughout the school year. All the mentors and their mentees meet for monthly luncheons, with over 200 people in attendance. Mentors also help their mentees with job applications, class work, family and relationship issues, and scholarship applications. Additional programs that have reached out to students are: Chat and Chew Lunch Group for ELs, Environmental Club, Girls Club, Grief Support Group, Intramural Soccer and Basketball, and the Talent Show. The mentoring relationships developed through these ongoing and meaningful interactions are a safety net for students who might otherwise go unnoticed or dropout.

The flexibility of enrollment at FAHS allows students to enter as new students or begin a class about every two weeks throughout the school year. This rolling enrollment policy permits new students in the school district, or those transferring from an in-district high school with their credit hours. Fieldside is one of two high schools in this district that operates on a semester model. Class size is set at 18 students for teachers to provide direct attention and monitor their students' progress. Each class meets for 90 minutes every day, so students can accrue a semesters' worth of class hours as well as have time to master the material. This structure facilitates the students' completion of a course and enrollment in the next one. In addition to earning credit, students need to pass six of the statewide assessments in English, history, science, and math to receive a standard diploma. FAHS schedules these assessments twice a year to allow for the students' graduation. These scheduling policies help students to graduate in a timely manner for the February or June ceremony.

Since the 2009-2010 school year, the OA/YA ELs have represented at least 43 percent the entire student population (2012b). Not all students have received direct services from the ESOL department. For the 2011-2012 school year at FAHS, 33.4 percent (n=77) of the students received English Language Services (FCPS 2012b). However a larger portion of the students, 44.59 percent (n=99), were identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP), based on their performance on the statewide language proficiency assessment, the ACCESS for ELLs developed for the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment

Consortium (WIDA) by the Center for Applied Linguistics. The WIDA consortium uses the term ELLs to refer to English Learners. To date, twenty-nine states and the District of Columbia have joined the WIDA Consortium, and they employ the ACCESS for ELLs assessment as a means to annually assess ELs social and academic language proficiency and conform to the federal legislation, The No Child Left Behind Act (WIDA, 2012).

English Classroom as Setting

Just by walking through the hallways of Fieldside Alternative High School, the students had a sense that reading was valued there. Besides the posters of teachers, staff, and administration reading, there was a shelf with more than a hundred free books that anyone could pick up. Once inside an English classroom, hundreds more books were available to the students. The English department at Fieldside has created a unique structure for promoting independent student reading. Giving students the choice to read self-selected books has become the cornerstone of this program, and no other English department at a base school in this district operates in this manner. The department chair has led his department on a path of collaboration to create a program that sets the course requirements for earning credit in English 9, 10, 11, and 12. As such, the department has made it an expectation that all students begin their English class by reading for at least 30 minutes of the 90 minute period. If they are not reading, student should use the time to complete a book project as a means of demonstrating their comprehension, analysis, and reflection. The teachers have agreed on at least ten

styles of book projects, but they do allow students to design their own books projects if they are motivated to do so. The students are grouped into one of two-seminar style courses. The first course is called Seminar One for students in English 9, 10, or 11 who need to pass the state's standardized English assessments in reading and writing. This makes it possible for students to stay with the same teacher for more than one grade level of English. Once the students have passed English 11 and the required assessments, they are ready for Seminar Two, otherwise known as Senior English. In Seminar One, students must read and do a project for at least 4 books. In Seminar Two, the teachers may challenge the seniors by asking them to read and respond to 5 books. In addition, both Seminar One and Seminar Two call for students to write four major papers.

For OA/YA ELs, who receive direct ESOL services, the school district requires them to take an English class called Transitional English 9, or Trans 9. As stated earlier, the students are identified to receive ESOL services based on their performance on the statewide language proficiency assessment, the ACCESS for ELLs developed for the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment Consortium (WIDA) by the Center for Applied Linguistics. The OA/YA ELs are dually enrolled in an ESOL course and their Transitional English class. It is called "transitional" because it is meant to transition ELs at an intermediate level of reading and writing into grade level English courses. The credit for this course is the equivalent as the English 9 course on the students' transcripts. The high schools in the district can design the Transitional English 9 course to suit their

students' needs and interests. The English department at FAHS decided to incorporate the choice reading program into the Transitional English 9 course. Like their native-English speaking peers, these OA/YA ELs read 4 books during class time and respond with book projects. The only difference between Transitional English 9 and Seminar One is that the OA/YA ELs are guided through their major papers as a means of scaffolding for their ability level. The Transitional English 9 course is capped at 14 students rather than 18 per class, so they can receive additional teacher support. If the OA/YA ELs do not make progress on the WIDA ACCESS for ELs assessment, but they do earn credit for Transitional English 9, the teacher can roll them into Transitional English 10 rather than the standard English 10 course. This decision means that the students stay in her class, but will earn another credit towards graduation. This is an example of how the FAHS English department is trying to be flexible in helping OA/YA ELs to earn credit, yet they continue to provide necessary academic language support to the students.

All English classroom libraries includes hundreds of titles. The English department buys books each year for the students' changing interests and restocking the most popular ones. In addition, the school librarian purchases books requested by students through the year. Some of the popular titles that the English department has acquired multiple copies of include: *My Bloody Life* by Reymundo Sanchez, *A Child Called It* by David Pelzer, *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins, and *Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexi. In

considering these features of the English program at FAHS, this site was a rich setting for investigating the reading practices and literacy engagement of ELs.

Participants

There are three groups of participants in this study. First, there are the student participants, who are OA/YA ELs taking English classes in the 9th, 10th, or 11th grade. The second group is the English teachers, who have OA/YA ELs in their 9th, 10th, or 11th grade courses. The last group of participants included the decision-makers at FAHS who impact the English classes' structure and materials. These participants will include the department chair of the English department, who also teaches English 12. Also in this group is the principal, who makes purchasing and staffing decisions for the English department, and the school's librarian who purchases books for the English students and provides support for students' reading choices as well.

Teacher Participants

The English teachers are the greatest influence on me for selecting FAHS as the site of this study. As a teacher in the school, I thought there was more going on in their classrooms than just giving students' choice in what they read and write. From my time working with these teachers, I have come to understand how the English teachers believe choice is about handing over responsibility to the students for their own learning while maintaining routines and structures in the classroom. I have seen the English department as a collegial group who

communicates easily with one another, and they discuss how to support their students. All names used in this study are pseudonyms to provide anonymity.

As the former chairperson of the ESOL department, I worked regularly with the chairperson, Mr. Hughes. I speak almost daily with the English teachers. Consequently, I recognize that my relationship with the participants may influence my interactions with them during the study, but I do not think there is an inherent advantage or disadvantage to my membership status (Maxwell, 2012). Maxwell stated that while there could be validity threats that unavoidable, the researcher needs to acknowledge their existence. I believe that by identifying my relationships with the participants, I was able to interpret my data with this in mind. According to Maxwell, my experiential knowledge of the participant and the school environment is an instrument of research for this study.

There are six teachers in the English department, and four teach the Seminar One course with 9th, 10th, and 11th grade students. The department chair, Mr. Hughes, has been at the school for six years, and he interviewed each teacher in his department. Mr. Hughes felt these teachers were a good fit for the department and the school, and they understood the philosophy of choice reading. These teachers had taught English from 11 to 20 years. Prior to coming to FAHS, they all taught in this district at high schools with more than 2,000 students. The English department has three male teachers' three female teachers, and all are Caucasian. The two teacher participants, who teach grade 9, 10, and 11 English to OA/YA ELs, are both female. I intended to focus on four teachers who had either

the Seminar One or Transitional English 9/10 courses with OA/YA ELs. However, one of the teachers, Ms. Vann, was on leave, and she had a long term substitute for her classes, which had four EL's student participants. These students began the school year with Ms. Vann, so they were included as student participants, but the long term substitute teacher was not included as a teacher participant. The male English teacher, Mr. Hickman, had one EL student participant in his class, who took the online survey. I did not interview Mr. Hickman, Ms. Vann, or the long term substitute, nor did I select their classes to observe. The remaining two teacher participants, Ms. Smith and Ms. Murray had forty of the forty-five student participants in their classes. Ms. Smith and Ms. Murray had a range of experiences, so this study featured each teacher's classroom practices and perceptions of the OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement.

The two English teacher participants in the study had different classroom experiences prior to coming to FAHS. The Transitional 9 teacher, Ms. Smith, had been at FAHS for four years and had taught secondary English for eleven years. At her previous high school in this school district, she was assigned to remediate struggling readers, which included OA ELs. She has also presented at district professional development sessions on classroom practices to use with struggling readers. At FAHS, her classes were capped at fourteen students, so she was able to focus on their individual literacy needs. The Seminar I teacher, Ms. Murray, has been at FAHS for two years. At her previous high school, Ms. Murray was not assigned to teach an English class designated for struggling readers although she

said that she had worked with students who were academically at-risk for passing the course. Overall, these English teachers are friendly colleagues. Their rooms were at the end of the corridor, so they could easily visit each other's room. They often spend lunch together. I have conferred with them when I am concerned about one of my own students, and I want their feedback.

Student Participants

Based on information provided from the administration at FAHS, I can say that the majority of the OA/YA ELs are not placed at FAHS for disciplinary reasons. They chose to voluntarily attend FAHS instead of going to their neighborhood base school. The FAHS public profile does not report the number of students who are placed there for disciplinary reason versus those who volunteer to attend. The district hearing office places students at Fieldside for disciplinary reasons, and they can send students as young as 16 years old to FAHS. Otherwise, students who are pregnant or parenting may also enroll if they are at least 16 years old, and their parent or guardian will sign the forms to voluntarily transfer schools. Students, who are at least 18 years old, may self-enroll without a parent or guardian's signature. The administration at FAHS reserves the right to refuse a student who is 18 or older if he or she has a history of poor attendance. Each time a student withdraws from FAHS, for reasons other than graduating or transferring to another school, he or she is counted as a dropout. For that reason, one student could count as multiple dropouts in a single school year.

In order to identify student participants for this study, I asked the Office of Student Services at FAHS to provide me with a list of students, who were enrolled in the Seminar One, Transitional 9, or Transitional 10 English courses and designated as ELs with a 2012 WIDA score that was below 6.0. The English teachers provided me with their class rosters, so I could meet with the potential student participants. I visited these classes and explained the study to them with their teachers present. I read aloud the student participant form, left it with them to collect later, and offered to answer questions confidentially outside of class. During this time, no new students enrolled in the courses. Students who were enrolled in my ESOL course and gave consent to participate in the study, took the online survey and were present for classroom observations, but I did not include them in the interviews. There were 45 students, at least 18 years old, who gave their consent to participate in the study.

This study included 16 female and 32 male OA/YA ELs, who were at least 18 years old, which represents the later years of adolescence and early adulthood. For OA/YA ELs in the study who are over 18 years old and are no longer required by law to attend school, it could be asserted that they have chosen to stay in school rather than dropout.

The majority of FAHS ELs who spoke another language at home were native Spanish speakers. Forty students responded that Spanish was the language they speak at home. In the survey, the students identified themselves as speakers of Amharic Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, French, Hindi, Ixil, Korean, Pashtu,

Persian, Punjabi, Vietnamese, Somali, and Urdu, and Uyghur. The students responded that they had attended schools in Bangladesh, Bolivia, China, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, Iran, Mexico, Pakistan, Peru, Sierra Leone, Vietnam, and the territory of Puerto Rico. Of the 42 students who reported the countries where they attended school, 40 listed that they were enrolled in a school outside of the continental United States for first through sixth grades, and 24 were outside of the United States for all of seventh and eighth grade. The student participants in this study represented a variety of languages, nationalities, and school experiences.

The pilot study included eight OA/YA ELs who no longer were required to receive ESOL support, and they were in Seminar 1 or Seminar 2, otherwise known as English 11 or 12. These students were in their last English course required for graduation.

Other Participants

As stated earlier, I interviewed the English chairperson, the principal and the librarian. In addition to my observations and field notes, interviews with these participants provided data, which described how the school supports the literacy engagement of OA/YA ELs. The English teachers do make individual decisions about their classroom practices, but they are guided by the framework, which they have created as a department to determine how students earn credit in their course. The English department is able to purchase thousands of books in a range of interests because the school's principal supports them. The English Department

is also permitted to organize their classes into Transitional 9 and 10, Seminar One, and Seminar Two because they have the principal's approval. Additional support for the English department is offered from the librarian. She takes an active role in helping students select books to read and purchasing books with their input. In conclusion, these final three participant interviews provided data related to of how FAHS supports OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement.

Data Collection

The data collection for this study utilized quantitative and qualitative methods. Five data sources were used in the study: 1) a student survey of reading practices and self-reporting of their literacy engagement, 2) a teacher survey for reporting students' literacy engagement, 3) interviews with teachers, students and other decision makers in the school, 4) classroom observations, and 5) artifacts from the teachers and students.

Survey Instruments

For the first phase of the study, I used a teacher survey and student survey to collect data on the students' reading practices and perceptions of literacy engagement. The teachers completed the Reading Engagement Index (REI), which was developed for teachers to rate each student as an engaged reader (Wigfield & Guthrie, 2004). The REI (Appendix B) includes eight statements for a teacher to reflect on their students' behavior, motivation, and cognition during reading that are characteristics of engagement. Wigfield and Guthrie used the REI

to measure engagement as an outcome for the intervention they used with teachers to improve students' reading engagement and comprehension. The teachers' rating for the eight items are summed for a combined score of 8 to 40 and analyzed with descriptive statistics for each item. This study was not an intervention, and I believe the REI was an appropriate tool for teachers to rate their students' reading engagement in the English classes. I added an optional comments section at the bottom of the index, so the teachers could provide any information they wished to share that was not captured by the rating scale.

In the first phase of the study, the students took an online survey to report their in-school and out-of-school reading practices as well as their perceptions of their reading engagement (Appendix C). Based on my prior knowledge of the English classes at Fieldside, I adapted the survey from one created by Ivey and Broaddus (2001) in which middle school students reported on their reading practices and the language arts/reading class environment as a motivation for reading. Since I am familiar with the structure of the English classes at this particular alternative high school, I was able ask questions related to scheduling and course requirements. I kept the open-ended style questions, so students could respond as they wished. Ivey and Broaddus believed that their style of survey led to detailed student responses on their personal preferences. For this study, I kept the question from Ivey and Broaddus asking for the book titles that students read in class, while adding responses to the checklist questions related to my research setting, such as where they found books and who helped them. As stated earlier,

the intention of modifying the original survey from Ivey and Broaddus was to extend their examination of literacy engagement to the unique population of OA/YA ELs in their English classes FAHS.

This survey asked the students to select the name of their teacher and the period they take the English class. I also asked students to report the number of English classes they have passed at FAHS to learn if they were new to the program or familiar with expectations. The students reported their demographic information regarding gender, languages spoken, years of schooling in their native language and English, and periods of interrupted schooling. In this school district, if a student misses 15 consecutive days, counselors and administrators must create an attendance intervention. Therefore, I am using 3 weeks as the threshold for interrupted schooling.

In their survey, Ivey and Broaddus (2001) focused on what students read and how they found a variety of reading materials, but it did not include the students' perceptions of their behaviors while reading, which are indicators of engagement. For that reason, I included an adapted version of the REI for the students (Appendix C). The REI was changed from the third person to the first person, so students could answer about themselves. In addition, I modified the wording of the third item from, "Easily distracted in self-selected reading," to "I am easily distracted when I read my book in class," so OA/YA ELs will not be confused by the terminology. In this case, "my book" refers to the book the students chose and read in class each day for 30 minutes. The student REI

responses were analyzed by total score, 8 to 40, and with descriptive statistics for each item.

From my insider knowledge about this student population, I was aware that many have missed time from school, yet this may or may not have an effect on their reading engagement in the English classes. The student REI was integrated into the reading practices survey, so students completed both online surveys in one session. I used the responses from the surveys to shape my classroom observations and student interviews as part of the iterative process for this study (Greene, 2007).

Even though the student participants were not native-English speakers, they had attained an intermediate to advanced language proficiency level to be in an English 9, 10 or 11 course. For that reason, I believe the data collected are accurate. As an ESOL teacher, I have modified texts for OA/YA ELs to reduce the language demand without diminishing the intent of the content. Therefore, the reading level of the survey was not be above their ability because the questions and terms are general vocabulary terms. I chose an online survey instead of paper-and-pencil because the students in this school are accustomed to taking online assessments in their social studies and math courses. The faculty agreed to promote online reading in their classes, so the students should have some experience with answering questions electronically. In the pilot of the online survey, I asked the participants to report any confusing language or formatting.

Based on their feedback, I modified one question for clarity without altering the intent.

Observations and Interviews

The second phase of the study included classroom observations of the teachers and students during instructional time. I observed the first period class of Ms. Murray and the second and third period classes of Ms. Smith. All classes had either Transitional 9 or 10 students. At the end of the fall semester, Ms. Smith's classes were full. Therefore the administration decided to open a new section of Transitional 10, and Ms. Murray was assigned to teach it during first period in place of her Seminar One course. Ms. Smith selected eight ELs who had already earned English 9 credit to transfer to Ms. Murray's class. She hoped they would feel like they were being promoted by moving to a new class.

The approved Observational Protocol (Appendix D) was created to capture teacher and student actions, interactions, responses, and interruptions during the reading time in the English classes. This data source aligns with Research Question 1 and Research Question 2 regarding the reading practices of the OA/YA ELs and the classroom practices of the English teachers. In the inferences and question section of the observational protocol, I used a dialogic approach to inform the later interviews and observations.

The Semi-Structured Interview Guides (Appendix E, Appendix F) were based on a pilot study that I conducted with English teachers and students at FAHS. Along with Research Question 1 and 3, the semi -structured interview

guides were a data source for Research Question 2, the OA/YA ELs' perceptions of their literacy engagement, and for Research Question 4, the English teachers' perceptions of their ELs' literacy engagement. I created questions to prompt responses from participants about FAHS as a unique learning environment, the English department's guided choice reading program, their literacy practices, and their perceptions of literacy engagement.

Teacher and Student Artifacts

As final data sources, I included artifacts from the teachers. The English teachers' syllabi and supporting documentation outlined the expectations they had for the number of books to read with book projects as requirements for earning credit. The teachers maintained records of the books each student reads with the date of completion. Ms. Murray and Mr. Smith copied their records, and I used them as an indication of the students' reading pace. With these data, I created spreadsheets with the lexile text measure for each book and the books they read at each grade level. I used these data to infer the level of challenge and variety of books that the students selected.

The students were reluctant to share their book projects with me. Even though the teachers use an "accept, revise, or reject" method of feedback for assessing the book projects, I deduced that the students did not want me to judge their writing. For that reason, I asked students in the interviews the types of book projects they completed and how they worked on them. From the interviews, I found that neither the teachers nor the students thought that the quality of the

book projects were an indicator of reading engagement. In my observation notes, I noted whether students were reading or working on book project, so I could get a sense of how much time and effort they put into the book projects after completing their book.

Procedure for Collection

Approval for this study was granted from the George Mason University's (GMU) Office of Research Subject Protections and Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) and the local school district's Research Screening Committee. I shared the approval to conduct this research with each institution prior to beginning the study. I initiated the data collection process on April 2, 2013 through the last day of school on June 18, 2013 with the exception of interviewing the principal. Due to scheduling conflicts, I interviewed him on August 21, 2013 prior to the beginning of the new school year. In Table 1 below, the data sources are listed with the corresponding participant size, procedure for collection, and analysis.

Table 1

Data Sources

Data Source	Participants	Procedure	Analysis
Online student survey with REI	Students (45) from 9 classes	Administered by classes in cafeteria	Open responses coded and categorized by themes and

			compared to other data Quantitative analysis by total score and item score
Teacher REI	Teachers (2)	41 completed by the teachers	Quantitative analysis by total score and item score, compared with student responses
Observational protocol and memos of classroom observations	Students (31) and Teachers (2)	2 rounds of 4-5 observations in 3 classes	Typed, coded and categorized by themes compared to other data
Semi-structured interviews	Students (11) Teachers (2) Department Chair Librarian Principal	Individually conducted by researcher	Digital audio recordings were transcribed, sorted and categorized into themes, compared to other data
Artifacts including syllabi and book lists	Teachers (2)	Teacher provided copies	Book lists were categorized into spreadsheets by reader, book features, and order read for each course. Compared to other data.

As a teacher in the school, I was able to meet with the English teachers, principal, and librarian at a time convenient for them to review the timeline of the study and to sign the informed consent forms with the approval stamp from GMU.

Based on the teachers' scheduling requests, I visited Ms. Murray's first period class and Ms. Smith's second, third and fourth period classes from April 8 to 10, 2013. I met individually with the OA/YA ELs who were in the other five English teachers' classes, which I was not observing. In these sessions, I explained my role as a researcher in the school and the purpose of the study. I read aloud the letter of informed consent and explained that they would be involved in the survey phase of the study, but fewer would be part of classroom observations or interviewed. In addition, I explained that students over 18 years old needed to sign an informed consent form and those under 18 years old would sign an informed assent form to participate in the study along with informed parental consent. Since the majority of students speak Spanish as their first language, there was a translated version of the informed parent consent letter with the GMU approval stamp. It was translated into Spanish by staff at FAHS who routinely communicate with the students and their families in their native language. I encouraged all the students to share the letter with their parents even though they were all at least 18 years old. All students, who participated in the study, signed and returned the informed consent letter. Students who participated in the study received a pizza lunch valued at $5.

After speaking with each class, I returned the following day, so the ELs had time to consider participating in this study. I left the consent forms with the students to sign and give to their teacher, so they would not feel pressured. Once the pool of student participants was established, I scheduled a time for them to

take the survey in another room outside of the classroom in a more neutral location using laptops.

At FAHS, there were sixty OA/YA ELs who qualified to participate in the study based on their English language proficiency and placement in an English 9, 10 or 11 class. After I met with students who were enrolled in nine different classes, forty seven students (78.3%) returned their signed informed consent forms. Of the thirteen who did not participate in the study, two did not return their informed parental consent letters, five were not attending school on a regular basis, and five refused to participate. The latter group of students were in Ms. Smith's fourth period, so I did not select that class for observation. The following table shows the participants' English class periods and teachers.

Table 2

Teacher Participants

Teacher	1st period	2nd period	3rd period	4th period
Smith		11	12	7
Murray	8	3	1	
Hickman		1		
Substitute Teacher	3		1	

Surveys

After students submitted their signed informed consent letters, the English teachers completed the paper-pencil rating REI scale for each EL in the study over the period of a week. I opted to use a paper-pencil instrument, so the teachers could easily refer to it in a folder and revise their responses as needed. The teachers had previously told me that they preferred not to be tethered to a computer during the school day, so I hoped to make it convenient for them. Ms. Smith and Ms. Murray completed the REI from April 15-19, 2013. This was the same week in which forty-five students completed the online survey and the REI.

Prior to the student participants taking the online survey, I piloted it on April 11, 2013 with eight students who had exited the ESOL program and were in English 11 or 12. I met with each of those students individually on April 8 and 9, 2013 to explain the purpose of study, my role as a researcher, the informed consent letter, and the purpose of the piloting the online survey. They signed the informed consent letter prior to taking the online survey in the school cafeteria. I chose this location because it is in the basement of the school where they are only three classrooms nearby, so there was little foot traffic or distracting noise. While taking the online survey, the students appeared comfortable with asking me questions. They were mostly concerned about their spelling, so I assured them to try their best and not worry about spelling. They took 13 to 30 minutes to take the online survey. Based on their questions, I modified one item response for clarity, and I created an item for students to list their ESOL teacher as a sorting feature.

Observations and Interviews

Each teacher taught three-ninety minute periods a day with one period off for planning. Since there were fewer ELs in the other English classes than I had anticipated for the study, I opted to observe two classes with Ms. Smith and the other class with Ms. Murray. In order to observe these classes, I needed to have coverage for two of my own classes during first and second period. I observed Ms. Smith's third period during my planning time. In consideration of these factors, I sought to attain a representative sample with the most students possible.

The observations and interviews followed after the teacher and student surveys. I used the GMU approved Observational Protocol (Appendix D) to record my notes in the first round of classroom observations from April 24th to May 11th and the second round from May 28th to June 3rd. In between these rounds of classroom observation, from May 13 to 20, I conducted student then teacher interviews with the GMU approved Early Observation Semi-Structured Student Interview Guide (Appendix E) and the Early Observation Semi-Structured Teacher Interview Guide.

After the first round of observations, I interviewed 11 students (Appendix F, Appendix G) and both English teachers (Appendix E). I recorded all interviews with an application on a password-protected electrical device and saved the files to my password protected computer. At the completion of this study, I will destroy all digital recordings. I selected the eleven student informants based on my early observations. Moje (1996) described how she selected the seven student

informants based on, "class participation, interactions with the teacher, achievement levels, gender, and willingness to be interviewed," (p. 179). Moje explained how she chose students based on their level of engagement in class and academic achievement. I followed Moje's procedures for selecting students to interview based on who appeared to be engaged in reading as well those who seemed to have difficulty. I interviewed three to four students from each class to represent a range of reading practices and engagement. The interview locations changed depending on room availability in the school that day. I used a meeting room in the back of the library and another teacher's classroom labeled the "ESOL café" for the student interviews. Both of these rooms are meeting places for students, so I hoped they would feel comfortable during the interviews. For the first set of teacher interviews, I met with them in the cafeteria in the basement of the school because it was quiet and away from activity.

At the end of the second round of observations, I followed up with the students if I had any questions. Since it was the end of the school year, students were not available for a lengthy second round of interviews. I found they were completing other courses, preparing for the state required end-of-course exams, or had completed their English class. Even with the shortened follow-up interviews, I was able to confer with all of the interview participants. I met with the teachers in their classrooms for the second interview because I wanted artifacts nearby as I asked questions.

By making accommodations for the Fieldside's end of year testing and event calendar, I was able to observe Ms. Murray's class nine times and both of Mrs. Smith's classes ten times over an eight-week period. I observed the classes five times at the beginning of the eight week period, and then I did a second round of observations at the end of that time period. This allowed time for me to conduct audio-recorded interviews with the teachers and students. After observing them, I looked for confirmations of their statements in the second round of observations. I recorded routines, interactions, practices and behaviors that indicated a range of engagement. During these observations, in the 30-minute reading portion of the class, I recorded the teacher and students participants' behaviors. I kept field notes in addition to the observational protocol to note behaviors and interactions (Appendix D).

As stated earlier in my mental model, I intended to use a dialogic approach to allow each set of data to speak and inform my analysis. Based on what the teacher and students participants said about the support they received from the librarian, Ms. Carroll, I interviewed on May 21st to learn more about her role in supporting the literacy engagement of OA/YA ELs. I waited until after the second round of observations to interview the English department chairperson, Mr. Hughes, on June 17th because I wanted these data to inform my questions for him as well. After the conclusion of collecting student data and compiling the books list from the teacher artifacts, I conducted a second round of interviews with Ms. Smith and Ms. Murray on June 18th. The end of the school year was quite hectic.

As the principal was involved with exit conferences with each faculty and staff member, it was not convenient for him to have an interview. Therefore, I left the date open for him to select the time for an interview, which was August 21. This was a better option as it allowed me the opportunity to review all of my data, which informed my perspective and gave me the space as a researcher to be removed from the school environment.

Quantitative Data Analysis

The online student survey and REI are descriptive research because they are, "intended to provide systematic and accurate description(s) of characteristics for a population of interest," (Dimitrov, 2009). The participants self-reported on demographic information, standardized statements and questions, and free responses. The forty-five student responses and forty-one teacher responses to the REI were analyzed by the total score, with item three reverse-coded (Guthrie, 2004). The other portion of the student survey on reading practices was analyzed with descriptive statistics to describe and summarize. In particular, I was able to analyze how the students understood their reading practices outside of school as well as in school, thus providing the potential of capturing a more holistic set of reading practices. The demographic section of the survey allowed the students to report on the length of time they may have missed school, the countries they were living in during these absences, and the approximate grade they were in when they moved to the United States.

Qualitative Data Analysis

As I stated earlier, I used an iterative process to inform each step of my research. According to Maxwell (2012), the first step to qualitative analysis is for the researcher to read observations and listen to recordings followed by notes and memos, which guides the researcher towards forming initial themes, categories, and relationships. I believe that keeping memos while reading the data helped me capture my thinking in the moment; I used my notes as a tool for analysis. I had three sources of qualitative data for analysis: open-ended questions on surveys, observations, and interviews.

On the student online survey, I reviewed and coded the responses for emic statements allowing themes to emerge. I created a spreadsheet of these emic statements to help me categorize themes. The insights I gained from the surveys gave me a perspective for observing beyond my prior knowledge and helped me to continually become aware of possible bias (e.g. as a teacher in the school). For example, the students reported that what they liked most about the English class was reading time, which gave me the students' perspective early in the study as I began my observations.

From the teacher records of the students' books read that year, I compared them to the students' listing of books on the survey. I organized the book list in the first spread sheet by the student name to see individual trends. In a second spreadsheet, I listed the titles by the times read, genre, lexile text measure,

publisher series, and story features. In the third book list, I analyzed it by the order the books were read for each grade level.

While I was informed by my conceptual framework, I did not want it to narrow my perspective on how to analyze the data. Therefore, I was cautious of sorting my data into categories that strictly fit with Guthrie's (2004) engagement model of reading without the context of the informants' statements. Maxwell (2012) suggests that connecting strategies can help the researcher to identify relationships in statement not only similarities. I believe that there are multiple elements at play, which influence an ELs' reading engagement, so I melded my categorizing and connecting strategies. At the intersection of identity and literacy engagement, I employed connecting strategies to understand this relationship for ELs.

The table below presents the mapping of the data sources to the five research questions.

Table 3

Research Questions

Research Questions	Online Student Survey With REI	Teacher REI	Class Observa-tions	Partici-pant Interviews	Arti-facts
RQ1: What are the reading practices of OA/YA ELs in their English classes at this AHS?	x		x	x	x

RQ2: How do these OA/YA ELs perceive their literacy engagement at this AHS?	x			x
RQ3: What are the classroom practices of 2 English teachers who work with the OA/YA ELs at this AHS?			x	x
RQ4: How do the English teacher perceive their OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement at this AHS?		x		x
RQ5: In which ways does this AHS support the literacy engagement of OA/YA ELs?				x

Contexts for Consideration

The generalizability of the findings from this study were limited by the uniqueness of this alternative high school in a suburban mid-Atlantic community of the United States, as well as by the involvement and traits of the participants.

The qualitative results are not generalizable, as per the nature of qualitative research data. It is undetermined how these findings would play out in a large-sized high school, in which teachers have 150 students. While class size is not the only factor that affects the ability of a teacher to reach out to students, it certainly cannot be ignored. Additionally, alternative high school students may be distrustful or guarded of any questions related to their prior schooling. Based on my observations, Fieldside students often wait to open up to adults with authority until after they have developed a level of trust and mutual respect.

A second consideration of the study is the pool of teacher participants. Each teacher was specially selected to work at Fieldside through a series of interviews and site visits with the department chairperson and administrators. Therefore, each teacher was thought to have a talent for reaching out to marginalized youth. However, the teachers did not have experience with Transitional 9 or 10 English classes of only ELs.

A third consideration is the amount of time that the researcher spent in each classroom. In order to get a broader perspective of the teachers' practices and students' literacy development, certain elements of depth were sacrificed. This was done in the hope of finding factors in the English classes that could transfer to other schools.

Finally, the fourth consideration is my identity as an insider at this school. I carry my own bias as a teacher. Meanwhile, the teachers and students at the school know of me better as a teacher rather than as a researcher. For that reason,

they may have responded to me differently than they would have to an outside researcher, whom they would not see again.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I explained my mental model for the mixed-methods research design using a dialogic approach (Greene, 2007, Maxwell, 2012). I listed and explained my data sources from teacher and student surveys, teacher and student interviews, field notes, classroom observations, teacher syllabi, teacher artifacts, and interviews with persons in the school who are connected to literacy decisions for OA/YA ELs. Additionally, I described the site for this study, Fieldside Alternative High School, as a unique setting in how the teachers, staff, and administration created programs to support their students' sociocultural, linguistic, and academic needs.

CHAPTER FOUR:
FINDINGS

This mixed-methods study investigated the reading practices and literacy engagement of Older Adolescent/Young Adult English Learners (OA/YA ELs) in their English classes at an alternative high school. It sought to identify the variety of reading practices that OA/YA ELs describe and exhibit during their English classes and to understand how they monitor and reflect upon their literacy engagement. Furthermore, this study identified the individual behaviors of English teachers, their decision making as a department, how they understand the role of student engagement, and its impact on their classroom practices. The first section of this chapter provides the findings that detail the characteristics of this unique student population related to the students' interrupted schooling, limited academic success, continuum of language acquisition, and multiple life experiences. This information establishes important foundational information about this group of ELs and provides the context for responses by research question in the subsequent sections. Finally, this study identified the existing factors at FAHS that related to the literacy engagement of OA/YA ELs in their English classes. The qualitative and quantitative analyses of data sources support the findings of this study. Findings are presented as they correspond to each of the following five research questions:

RQ1: What are the reading practices of Older Adolescent/Young Adult English Learners in their English classes at this AHS?

RQ2: How do these OA/YA ELs perceive their literacy engagement at this AHS?

RQ3: What are the classroom practices of 2 English teachers who work with the OA/YA ELs at this AHS?

RQ4: How do the English teachers perceive their OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement at this AHS?

RQ5: In which ways does this AHS support the literacy engagement of OA/YA ELs?

The following section will provide the background information of the OA/YA ELs from the online survey. These data include their ages, languages spoken, previous schooling, and periods of interrupted schooling. This demographic information is important to the findings of the study because it helps to identify the distinctive traits of the student population.

Characteristics OA/YA ELs as a Unique Student Population

The student population for this study represents a unique segment of ELs who attend high schools. The data analysis seeks to provide a clear depiction of the educational and language experiences of these students. The first data source collected for this study was the student online survey (Appendix C). Forty-five student participants took the online survey. They represented 9 English classes with 4 different teachers. All were in the Seminar I course, with 10 students in English 9, 27 in English 10, and 8 in English 11. There were 29 male students and 16 female students. All student participants were at least18 years old, 31.1 %

(n=14) were 18 to 19 nineteen years old, 62.4% (n=29) were 20 to 22 years old, and 4.4% (n=2) were more than 22 years olds. The students represented the age demographic targeted for this study.

The student participants listed 16 languages, other than English, which they speak. It was necessary to begin with the languages they speak because not all students were literate in their home language. For example, in the case of Ixil, an indigenous Mayan language of Guatemala, this is a language spoken in the home, but Spanish is taught in the schools. Students may speak multiple languages, so they could list up to five languages in any order on the survey. Therefore, the first language was not necessarily their dominant language. The results indicated that ten students reported speaking a third language, three a fourth language, and four a fifth language. There were 57.7% (n=26) who reported Spanish as their first choice of languages spoken and 24.4% (n=11) who listed it as their second choice. The results of all languages spoken are shown in the following table.

Table 4

Spoken Languages Reported by Student Participants

1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Spanish (26)	Spanish (11)	Spanish (3)	Pashtu (1)	Arabic (1)
English (12)	English (27)	English (2)	Punjabi (1)	English (1)
Amharic (1)	Chinese (1)	Amharic (1)	Others (1)	Spanish (1)
Bengali (1)	Hindi (1)	Ixil (1)		
Ixil (1)	Urdu (1)	Korean (1)		
Persian (1)		Punjabi (1)		
Urdu (1)		Urdu (1)		

Uyghur (1)
Vietnamese (1)

One response from a student participant stated, "im learning korean." This indicated that he or she was acquiring Korean outside of school. Other statements included, "a little bit amharic," and, "a little french." These responses suggested that the students had conversational skills in more than two languages, which they were developing in their work and social lives. While 40 student participants specified that they spoke Spanish as their first, second, or third language choice, 10 other languages were listed in these categories. This indicates broader language diversity within the group.

Previous Schooling

As a student population at FAHS, these OA/YA ELs have a variety of schooling experiences outside of the United States. For this open-response item on the survey, the student participants typed in the countries where they attended school from grades first to sixth, seventh to eighth, and then ninth to eleventh. If they moved during those grades, they could list more than one country. The responses listed 14 countries other than the United States, in the category of first to sixth grade, nine countries for seventh to eighth grade, and two countries for ninth to eleventh grade. The table below illustrates where the students attended school from first grade through eleventh grade.

Table 5

Enrollment in School by Grade and Country

Countries	1st-6th grade (n=43)	7th-8th grade (n=42)	9th-11th grade (n=41)
United States	1	16	36
Moved during these grades			
El Salvador to U.S.	1	2	3
Guatemala to U.S.			1
Total in United States	2	18	40
Outside of United States			
North America			
Mexico	4	4	0
Puerto Rico	1	0	0
Central America			
El Salvador	15	9	0
Guatemala	10	5	0
Honduras	1	0	0
South America			
Bolivia	1	1	0
Peru	1	0	0
Africa			
Ethiopia	1	1	0
Sierra Leone	1	0	0
Southeast Asia			
China	1	1	0
Vietnam	1	1	1
Western Asia			
Bangladesh	1	0	0
Iran	1	1	0
Pakistan	1	1	0
Not in school	1	0	0

Based on the survey results, 42.8 percent (n=18) of the students reported attending a school in the United States for seventh and/or eighth grade. Therefore, the majority of these OA/YA ELs were not enrolled in an American school until high school, which would impact their level of academic language development in English. Students reported being enrolled in a 9th grade (n=10), 10th grade (n=27), or 11th grade (n=8) grade English class. Thus, it can be inferred that students who reported they began attending school in the United States in 8th grade (n= 18) have been studying English for at least 1 to 3 years. In this school district, ELs are placed in an age appropriate grade and receive ESOL services according to their proficiency level. For example, a student placed in the 8th grade would be approximately13 years old.

Interrupted Schooling

After reviewing the data on age, country, frequency and length of absences, the students in this study experienced interrupted schooling as younger learners before leaving their countries and later as adolescents after moving to the United States. Ninety percent (n=40) of the OA/YA ELs in this study were between 19 and 22 years old. If a student had not been continuously enrolled in school or experienced interrupted schooling, there was potential impact on their reading skills and literacy engagement. The student participants responded to items in the survey regarding the frequency, length, and reasons for absences from school abroad and in the United States. They also reported their ages during such

absences. The following table displays the data related to the frequency and length of students' absences, or interrupted schooling periods, before and after moving to the United States.

Table 6

Frequency and Length of Days Absent from School

Days absent per month	Times absent before moving to the U.S. (n=45)	Times absent after moving to the U.S. (n=45)	Change in frequency of absences
0-1	22	17	-5
2-3	15	14	-1
4-5	4	6	+2
6-7	0	3	+3
8-9	0	2	+2
10 or more	4	3	-1

According to the attendance guidelines in the state where FAHS is located, a student may be referred to an attendance officer after 5 unexcused absences from school. Furthermore, the school may withdraw students who are absent for 10 consecutive days from school. Given this attendance policy, it appears that the OA/YA ELs in the study who missed 2 or more days per month throughout the school year would be at risk for an attendance referral. There were 23 students

who reported missing 2 or more days per month while studying in another country. This number increased to 28 students after they moved to the United States. The frequency and length of absences increased after the students attended school in the United States.

In order to capture data reporting on longer periods of interrupted schooling, the students shared how many months of school they had missed before leaving their home country and after moving to the United States. Of the 45 responses, 19 reported missing one to 10 months or more in a row of school before moving to the United Stated. There were 24 students who reported missing that amount of school after moving to the United States. Table 7 illustrates the breakdown of months participants missed school before and after moving to the United States.

Table 7

Frequency of Months Missed from School

Months missed of school	Before moving to the U.S.	After moving to the U.S.	Change in frequency of absences
0	26	21	-5
1	9	14	+5
2-3	4	3	-1
4-5	2	1	-1
6-7	1	0	-1

8-10	0	0	0
More than 10	3	6	+3

OA/YA ELs in this study missed more days of school after moving to the United States than before leaving their home countries. Participants largely entered schools in the United States after the 7th grade, so they would have been at least 12 years old. From ages 5 to 11, there were sixteen students who missed a month or more of school in another country, whereas two students in that age range were absent for the same length of time in the United States.

It appeared that the time needed to prepare for immigration took students away from school. There were eight student participants who reported missing school for a month or more in another country prior to immigrating when they were between the ages of 12 and 14, yet none in that age range had a similar amount of absences in the United States. The number of students who missed a month or more of school in the United States increased to 8 for 15 to 16 year olds and then to 17 for those who were 17 or older. The following table illustrates the trend in frequency of absences of a month or more as the student aged and immigrated to the United States. Participants could provide more than one answer, so the total is greater than the number of respondents.

Table 8

Age of Students Missing a Month or More of School

Age	Absence of a month or more in another Country (n=44)	Absence of a month or more in the United States (n=43)
5-7	5	0
8-9	4	0
10-11	7	2
12-14	8	0
15-16	5	8
17 or older	1	17

Overall, the number of students who reported not missing school for a month or more in another country or in the United States was quite similar. Of 44 respondents, 52.3 percent (n=23) did not miss school for that length of time in another country compared to 51.16 percent (n=22) of 43 respondents who did not miss school for a month or longer after moving to the United States.

Reasons for Interrupted Schooling

Open-ended responses provided space for the students to provide reasons for their absences from school. There were 37 responses to the item addressing the timeframe before moving to the United States and 38 responses after U.S. arrival. Consequently, 28 respondents gave reasons for missing school before

moving, and 31 explained why they missed school after moving to the United States.

From coding their responses, there were eight categories of reasons for missing school in their country and ten categories after immigrating to the United States. In both situations, the most common reason for missing school was due to their own or a family member's sickness or a medical issue. Before leaving their country, the second most common category was related to preparing to immigrate. Responses included, "I was getting ready to come to so i miss school for a week before ia came to this country [*sic*]," and "the reason that i miss school because I came to united state so i had to soport my self so its why I didn't came to school [*sic*]." The latter quote also supports the third most common reason for missing school, which was economic. It appears that some students needed money to pay for tuition or for living expenses in their country. They stated, "I didn't have the money to pay my school," and, "I was working hard because my parents were so poorly that they couldn't afford my education [*sic*]." They used the words "money" or "economic" more often than "work" in explaining their financial reasons for missing school.

After moving to the United States, the surveys indicated that the number of students who missed school for sickness or medical issues actually increased along with missing school for work reasons. Since most students were adolescents when they entered the United States, they were more likely to find employment than if they had been young children. More respondents (n=10) used

the words "work" or "working" rather than "money" or "economic" as reasons for missing school after they moved to the United States. The following table shows the coding for student participants' reasons for missing school.

Table 9

Reasons for Missing School

Reasons for Missing School	Before coming to the U.S.	After arriving in the U.S.
Medical/Sickness	9	12
Preparing for immigration	7	0
Economic	4	1
Working	1	10
Learning a language	0	4
Personal problems	1	3
Not like school/skipping	2	1
Jail/Court	0	2
Married	0	1
Expelled	0	1
Riots	1	0

Health issues and financial insecurity were barriers to attending school compared to the other reasons provided on the survey.

Summary of Characteristics of OA/YA ELs

The OA/YA ELs in this study had a variety of language and educational experiences. While the majority of students spoke Spanish as their first language, fifteen other languages were represented. Most students entered schools in the United States as high school students. Therefore, on the second language acquisition spectrum, they were still acquiring academic language proficiency. Furthermore, the students experienced interrupted schooling both in their home country and in the United States. The students were more likely to miss a month or more of school when they were 15 years old or older. The most common reasons for missing school were related to medical, economic, and working issues. In conclusion, this student population had responsibilities to take care of outside of school as well as needing to improve their English proficiency required to graduate from high school.

Research Question 1: What are the reading practices of Older Adolescent/Young Adult English Learners in their English classes at this alternative high school?

Based on the findings from the online survey, class observations, self-generated book lists, and student interviews, the OA/YA ELs had a reading practice that was rooted in choice and behaviors associated with interactions, comprehension strategy use, and time use. The student participants understood that they made the decision to read in class every day, so choosing a book they liked would make the activity more enjoyable. They chose what to read, who to

talk to about books, and where to pick them out. To get a holistic understanding of who these OA/YA ELs were as readers, the online survey and student interviews also provided information about their reading practices outside of school. The findings from these data sources are discussed below in subsections and also synthesized across subsections.

The online survey provided background information prior to the classroom observations and student interviews. The reading practices of OA/YA ELs include the activities and choices they made for their English classes and outside of school. The survey indicated the number of books they had read in their current English class at FAHS, as well as their preferences for language, print or electronic formats, topics, and means of obtaining books. Following the survey, the 29 observations provided the context for the behaviors and practices the students had described in the survey. Classroom observations expanded the findings to also show how students interacted with each other in the environment shaped by their English teacher. Teacher records were used to generate a list of all the titles they had read from the beginning of the school year. The list was organized by title, number of times read, genre, lexile text measure, and other notable features such as a publisher series targets for struggling adolescent readers. Subsequently, the eleven student interviews conducted between round one and round two of the observations gave me the opportunity to follow up with students about what I noted had occurred in the classroom. Their responses from

the interviews clarified my observations and elaborated on the findings from the survey.

From the eleven students interviewed, four students were from Ms. Murray's class, three students were from Ms. Smith's second period, and four students were from Ms. Smith's third period. They were chosen based on the length of time they were enrolled in an English class, ranging from their first to fourth semester, and behaviors they demonstrated during classroom observations. The data analysis from these interviews indicated that the students understood the course expectations for reading and responding to books, were able to find what they called "good books", accepted book recommendations from friends and teachers in the school, and preferred to have the final say in choosing their own books. The participants' interview responses added a layer of knowing to the outcomes of this study that would not have been discovered from observations alone. Their responses expanded and clarified my understanding of their reading practices, which the following section will explain.

Book Choices

Three themes emerged related to the books choices that OA/YA ELs made at FAHS. They considered where and how they chose books and the types of books categorized by language, genre, and lexile. Analysis of the survey data provided insight into the OA/YA ELs' reading practices in their English classes. Of the 45 respondents, 95.6 percent (n=43) indicated their preference of reading books in print, rather than on a computer. The school library had six electronic

reading devices for students to check out, and the English department had ten IPads for student reading. The English classrooms and library had well over a thousand books in print available to the students.

Where students chose books. The online survey indicated that students had a preference to get their books from the school library or their English classroom rather than outside of the school. The majority of student participants, 88.9 percent (n= 40) responded that they found their books in the school library, and 76.6 percent (n=34) read the books in their English classroom. There were 40 percent (n=18) who reported that they got help in finding books from their English teacher and 37.8 percent (n=17) would go to the librarian. Even though more students were getting books from the library than in their English classes, a lesser number reported asking the librarian for help to find a book.

The location of books was a factor the OA/YA ELs considered in choosing what to read. Sometimes, a student chose a book out of convenience because it was on the shelf nearby. Oscar and Rose, both reluctant readers, said they chose their first books based on the proximity. Rose withdrew from school the end of May, and in class she appeared easily distracted and disinterested in reading. When asked how she found her book, she laughed and said, "How? I just picked at random."

Other students seemed to like to walk to the library and browse the shelves without speaking to the librarian, Ms. Carroll. For example, Tomás went to get a copy of his book, *Upstate*, in the library even though the English department kept

additional copies in their classrooms. Otherwise, students did not mention using the public library unless it was for summer reading. No students said they bought books in a store, which is similar to the responses from the survey. The school was a place where students the OA/YA ELs could easily find books, so this access supported their reading practices In conclusion, the students freely explored their classroom collection and the school library for books.

How students chose books. The respondents stated a preference to choose their own books, 48.9 percent (n=22) or to get a recommendation from a friend or student in their English class, 44.5 percent (n=20). It does not appear that the English teachers or the librarian were regarded as the sole sources for making book suggestions. Therefore, findings indicate that participants relied upon themselves, their peers, English teachers and the librarian as resources for suggesting books. Based on the survey, observations, and interviews, the students responded with a resounding, "I choose" about who picks their books. Nonetheless, students were accepting of friends', teachers', and the librarian's recommendations for books.

When students responded with statements such as, "I choose the book," or "I prefer to choose my own books," they spoke with a sense of autonomy. It appeared that they selected books based on the content rather than the length. However, in one instance, a student, Oscar, referred to wanting a shorter book in order to finish the class. He described it as, "I want a quick book." From the class

observations, students were reading books with a range of page lengths. In the interviews, students described their books by the plot or genre.

The teacher was also a source for recommending books. There were two students, Ana and Edgar, who believed that the teacher had expertise in selecting books for them that would support their English reading development. Ana and Edgar were both in their fourth semester of English. When asked about her preference for choosing a book, Ana responded:

> Sometimes, sometimes because the teacher knows when I need more, so I like her to choose the book for me because she knows what I need like to improve my English. Sometimes I do like to choose my own books because I know which one is gonna or whether it's gonna like make me feel good to read it or not. Yeah.

Ana was mindful that she needed to improve her English reading skills in order to pass the WIDA ACCESS exam and be permitted to take English 11 the following semester. She appeared to be keenly aware that her reading practice could support her English language development, yet she wanted to enjoy the story as well. Similarly, Edgar believed the teacher had his learning interest in mind. He stated:

> I would prefer the teacher choose the book because she wants something that's best for me to have a better vocabulary…Yeah she will suggest true story because she said that kind of (story) I will understand better so true stories.

Like Ana, Edgar wanted a book that would support his learning needs and interests, and he believed that his teacher could make this choice for him. Other students interviewed also expressed that they read to learn more English, but they chose the books themselves.

Even though this student population valued their personal choice in making book selections, they accepted recommendations from their peers, teachers, and the librarian. Denis expressed a sentiment that echoed others in the study, "I prefer to have some help, and I like to hear some recommendation. And read the introductions of the book and hear how it's going to be, but mostly I like to choose them on my own." He was one of six students interviewed who said that they listened to book recommendations from other students, as well as giving recommendations themselves. Dana, a student who read more than the required number of books for the class, saw herself as a person who gave suggestions to her peers. She said:

> My friends always ask me for a book. When they finished one, they always go to me and they're like, 'Dana, what is a good book that I can read?' And I just tell them, and it's funny because, a year ago, I wouldn't read that at all.

This student's identity as a reader was transformed by finding books that she connected with and then shared with her peers.

Another valued source for book recommendations by the students was the librarian, Ms. Carroll. Based on the survey and interview results, students sought

out suggestions from her. Dana seemed to highly regard her advice. She said, "Yeah, she's awesome. She's always helping me find a book." Ignacio, who read a variety of topics, said he went to Ms. Carroll, "Yeah. I look and then I say, 'Ms. C., today which books do you recommend?'" If the student found one book on a topic or by an author, they would go to Ms. Carroll. Ignacio added, "Yeah. The book I was reading was *The Messenger*, and she said, 'O, I have some similar books to this.'" The librarian offered suggestions when students weren't sure what to read next. Another student, Diego had chosen a series to read and stated, "Yeah, when I don't know what to choose, I ask." Ignacio and Diego said they go to the librarian for suggestions rather than the teacher, but they agreed that there were plenty of books in the classroom. It can be inferred that the students sought to expand the range of book choices by going to Ms. Carroll. The students were aware that if the book they wanted was not on the shelves, she would order it from another school library or purchase it. As a community, the teachers, staff, administration, and students created a culture of reading in how they recommended and discussed books.

Categories of books. Along with interviews, observations, and the online survey, the self-generated book lists were used to explore the reading practices of OA/YA ELs in their English classes. Both English teachers, Ms. Murray and Ms. Smith, provided records of what 35 student participants had read for the 2012-2013 school year. Records were not collected from the other English classes. The lists of books were categorized by: student, order read, course level, genre,

lexile text measure, and if the publisher promoted it as a high-low book. The high-low designation was explained by Ms. Carroll, the librarian, to be how publishers market series of books for adolescent readers who are reading below grade level. The topics are believed to be of high interest to adolescent readers because they focus on age related issues, but the text demand has been reduced to meet the skills of a struggling high school reader. Other features were also noted in the lists for each title such as the author, series, and topics addressed. The categories and notes were used to identify trends in the reading practices of the OA/YA EL participants.

Language preference in school. Since English is not the students' first language, it is important to understand reading practices with regard to their native language or English. Survey results indicate that participants overwhelmingly preferred to read in English while at school. There were 80 percent (n=36) who selected English as their language of choice for reading, whereas 15.6 percent (n=7) did not have a preference and fewer, 4.4 percent (n=2) wanted to read in their home language. These results shifted when they were reading outside. Fewer participants, 55.6 percent (n=25), preferred to read in English outside of school, but those who did not have a preference of language rose to 28.9 percent (n=13), and 15.6 percent (n=7) favored their native language. These survey data indicated that English was their language of preference for reading both in and out of school. They were living in an English dominant society where the language of instruction is English. These data suggest that these

OA/YA ELs may not be continuing to develop their literacy skills in their native language beyond the competency they attained prior to moving to the United States.

Language preference out of school. In the online survey, the students were asked what they read when they were not in school, and if they read in their native language, English, or both languages. The fewest number responded that they read any of the sixteen items listed, in print or electronically, in their native language. The most popular item to read in their native language was online sports. Even for that item, of the 42 respondents, 28.6 percent read in both languages, 26.2 percent in English, and 16.7 percent in their native language. For the same item, there were 28.6 percent who answered they did not read online sports. The respondents were most likely to read in both languages if it was online for purposes such as texting (n=29), in chat rooms (n=19) or tweeting (n=16). The most popular item to read outside of school was their book for school in English (n=39). The second most popular item to read was another book they chose to read in English, 70.7 percent (n=29), and the third most popular item were job related materials, 65.9 percent (n=27), also in English. In summary, outside of school, the participants were reading what was readily available in print, related to their jobs, or accessible online.

Topic and genre preferences. On the survey, the students gave open-ended responses to list or describe the book they were currently reading for their

English classes. If the students wrote the title of the book without a description, a book description was found online. In most cases, I was familiar with the titles. Their responses were categorized by similar responses in wording or description. For example, the most popular type of book choice related to youth issues/coming of age stories, and it was chosen by 35.5 percent (n=16) of the respondents. Some of the responses reflected youth issues/coming of age category described the books as, "about kids having a lot of problems at high school," and "…is about how boys affect in girl's life [sic]," or, "the book is about the high school student who is about to graduate and try to dicide what he wants to study in collage [sic]." The next most popular category of book related to immigration issues, which were read by 5 students. Responses related to immigration included, "its about young people border to the United States [sic]," and, "this book is about a girl that had to leave his country to escape from the army and go and survive in other country where she have to adapt do different cultures [sic]." The books in the immigration category featured young protagonists as well. The other categories included romance (n=3), fantasy (n=3), and mystery (n=1). None of the students referred to the books as being short in length or very easy to read. From this sample, larger trends of what they read at that time did not emerge.

In their book choices, the students also showed an interest in reading about people's lives from the present and the past. There were three students reading a biography and six reading a memoir. The subjects of the biographies and memoirs included the soccer play Lionel Messi, President Abraham Lincoln, civil rights

figure Melba Pattilo Beals, a male former gang leader Reymundo Sanchez, and a female former gang member Sonia Rodriquez. These responses represented a range of topics that the students were reading at the same time. There were multiple copies of single book titles available, but most students had chosen books that no one else was reading at the time.

Over their time in the course, the ELs in this study read more books than those they listed in the survey. To get a broader perspective of the types of stories that they like to read in school, they responded to two items. They could select sixteen categories of fiction that they liked and seven categories of nonfiction, which included an "other" option to create their own category. These preferences seemed to be in line with the types of stories they were reading at the time about youth issues/coming of age and immigration stories. For fiction, the highest responses were for "stories about people my own age," with 66.75 percent (n=30) and "stories about people who are like me," with 53.3 percent (n=24). Genres of stories followed with 46.7 percent (n=21) for romance and 40 percent (n=18) for both adventure and scary stories. The overall response rate was lower for nonfiction choices. When the responses for biography, memoir, and autobiography were collapsed, 66.7 percent (n=30) were the most popular. That was followed by history, 57.6 percent (n=26), sports, 37.8 percent (n=17), and current events 35.6 percent (n=16).

In the choice reading program, the students could continue reading one genre, such as romance, or switch. Even if the teacher assigned four books

throughout the semester, it is not certain that they would fall into of these categories of interest from the students. To further examine the diversity of books and identify any trends, discussion of the book lists generated from the teacher records will follow in a later section.

Topics and genres in self-generated book lists. Based on the review of the self-generated book lists, the thirty-five students read 133 different titles. Throughout the school year, there were twenty-three students in Transitional English 9 and twenty-five in Transitional English 10. In level 9 English, twenty-three students read 72 titles, and 59 titles were read once. For level 10 English, twenty-five students read 85 titles, and 75 titles were read once. Of the 133 titles, twenty-three were read in both level 9 and 10 English. The following table shows a list of titles that were read at least twice in either Transitional English 9 or 10.

Table 10

Popular Books Read in 2012-2013

Title	Feature	Read in Eng. 9	Read in Eng. 10	Total
Secret in the Shadows	Bluford high-low fiction series	5	1	6
La Linea	Immigration fiction	2	4	6
Upstate	Juvenile fiction	3	2	5
Perks of a Being a Wallflower	Juvenile fiction	2	3	5
Forged by Fire	Juvenile fiction series by Draper	2	3	5
My Bloody Life	Memoir by Sanchez	2	3	5

Tears of a Tiger	Juvenile fiction series by Draper	3	1	4
Go Ask Alice	Juvenile fiction of 1970's	2	2	4
The Boy in Striped Pajamas	Historical fiction	2	1	3
Lady Q: The Rise and Fall of a Latina Queen	Memoir with Sanchez	2	1	3
A Child Called It	Series memoir	2	1	3
Every Day	Juvenile fiction	1	2	3
Dear John	Romance by Sparks	1	2	3
The Notebook	Romance by Sparks	2	0	2
Nights in Rodanthe	Romance by Sparks	0	2	2
Once a King Always a King	Memoir by Sanchez	0	2	2

As a reading practice, the OA/YA ELs selected books that they were able to comprehend, and they were interesting in or connected with personally. After a review of the titles by topic, it seemed that the OA/YA ELs had a variety reading interests that were within their reading ability. The most popular book, *Secrets in the Shadows*, was the third book in the Bluford high-low series that was set in an urban high school with elements of mystery and romance. Overall, the category of high-low books was the most widely read in Transitional English 9, with twenty-one titles. The second most common genre in this course was juvenile fiction, with eighteen titles. The books in the juvenile fiction category were published for adolescents, but not marketed as high-low books for struggling readers. From the online student survey, books described as juvenile fiction were the most popular as well. The protagonists in these stories struggled with issues that included high

school culture, friendship, family, poverty, gender identity, sexual identity, and incarceration. The most popular categories of books shifted in Transitional English 10. Students read more juvenile fiction titles, twenty-three, than high-low titles, fourteen. These data indicate that reading more challenging books became a practice for some students as they stayed in the class.

From Transitional English 9 to 10, the number of nonfiction titles read increased from fourteen to twenty-four. Memoir was the mostly widely read in the nonfiction category. Three of the popular books were memoirs by Sanchez, and they dealt with overcoming the pressures of gang life and poverty with protagonists of Hispanic heritage. The other memoir series, by Pelzer, dealt with child abuse and overcoming personal tragedy. In the interviews, students stated they would like to see more nonfiction books on the shelves. This is another indication that students had developed the reading skills to move beyond high-low titles and comprehend more challenging text.

There was also some indication that students liked to read more than one book by an author. One student read romance fiction from Sparks for seven of her eight books, and a male student read three from Sparks. Three students read at least two books by Sanchez, and two read at least two books by Draper. One student, Diego, enjoyed a fiction series based on vampires, Cirque de Freak by Shan, and he completed three of these titles for Transitional English 10. In his interview, Diego said he intended to keep reading the series over the summer.

These students may have sought out books by these authors based on their familiarity with the writing style as well as the topics covered in the story lines.

Another important finding emerged from the analysis of the book lists. Based on the variety of topics and genres the students read, they appeared to select books that related to them in more than one aspect of their lives. There was not a dominant character trait across the stories. They may have chosen books that they were simply interested in. The fictional story, *La Linea* dealt with the struggles of immigration and poverty, and it was read as often as *Secrets in the Shadows,* which was a high-low book based in an urban high school. Even though this student population had experienced immigration, this was not the only topic they read about. In the previous year for Transitional English 9, Ana read a book by Nicolas Sparks because she knew there was a movie based on *Dear John*. Later in Transitional English 10, her last book was *La Linea.* She said that she read it because it had, "a lot in common with my life." In conclusion, the students appeared to be flexible in determining which books they found interesting to read.

Lexile text measure in self-generated book lists. For this study, the lexile text measure (LTM) was examined to consider whether the student participants chose books that had more challenging semantic and syntactic elements as they progressed through the course. The LTM for a book is calculated by a software program that measures the semantic and syntactic elements of a piece of writing (Harvey, 2011). The LTM is not intended to determine the grade level of a text, nevertheless there are charts that list the expected range of LTM for grade levels.

The FAHS English department did not assess students with a lexile reader measure, but the school district did provide all middle and high schools with the software program to do so. For instructional planning, a teacher could use a book's LTM as one factor to determine if it is appropriate for the students' skill level.

With this student population of ELs, it is important to recognize the LTM of a book does not take into account the context of the story. Students may struggle with making inferences from the context more than comprehending the semantic and syntactic features of a text. As the text is context-reduced, the EL will need additional scaffolding to understand the story. The semi-autobiographical book, *The Absolutely True Story of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexi has a LTM of 600, which rates on a readability scale between the fourth and sixth grade. However, this book has a sophisticated humor with a critique of American history and society. An EL may not grasp the historical context of this book as easily as a book on a familiar topic even if it had more complex vocabulary and grammatical structures.

Students expressed in the survey and the interviews that they thought reading helped them develop skills for understanding English, and in turn would help them to graduate. Since the students seemed to value books as tools for learning in their classroom reading practice, they may have selected books with more challenging vocabulary and sentence structure. This did not appear to be

case. For Transitional English 9, the range of LTM was 440 to 1190, and in Transitional English 10 the range was from 390 to 1170.

Table 11

LTM of books read in order by course

	Transitional English 9				Transitional English 10			
Order of books read	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Number of books	17	21	20	20	21	21	22	19
Number of Books with LTM	15	16	17	15	18	18	16	12
Range of LTM	630-1190	440-1080	650-1150	510-960	580-950	390-1010	610-1080	580-1070

The books that did not have a listed LTM were often popular works not typically found in the high school English classroom. *My Bloody Life* by Sanchez dealt with gangs, drug abuse, sex, and violence. Other books without a listed LTM ranged from popular biographies, to romance novels, and even *La Linea* that was one of the most read books in both courses.

A fundamental reading practice of the OA/YA ELs was exhibited in their varied choices of books by genre, topic, author, and LTM. However, there was no evidence signifying a trend that their books became progressively more

sophisticated by topic and the text feature. For example, one student began Transitional English 9 reading *Lady Q*, a memoir about gang life with a LTM of 1150, and at the end of the course, she finished with *Wired*, a high-low mystery book about a champion skier with a LTM of 560. The students' individual choices in which books they read was a key feature in their reading practice. This section has focused on identifying the reading practices of OA/YA ELs. The reasons why the students selected their books will be discussed in the following section that identifies the ELs perceptions of their literacy engagement.

Developing Routines for Reading

In the student interviews, the participants explained how they developed a routine for reading as a classroom practice. On their first day in the class, the teacher explained the program, and they were expected to begin the process of choosing a book. Ms. Smith and Ms. Murray allowed students to switch books, and they were aware that students may take a few days to find the right book.

These OA/YA ELs seemed quite comfortable with the expectations for reading or writing a book project during the thirty minutes each day. Edgar, who read the required number of books, could paraphrase the expectations that framed his routine, "Yes. It's simple. If you want to do it, I mean, you do it. If you don't want to, it won't happen…I say that things that we make, make us. So I have to do it because I need it." This quote reflected an attitude of taking responsibility for one's own actions. Edgar referred to "it" as reading that was required for the course. Another student, Oscar, phrased how Ms. Smith explained the

expectations and his reaction as, "It's up to you, like it's not like I'm going to baby sit you. I mean I think that was good you know. It used to be my teachers pushed me. And I never did anything." Both students recognized that they had autonomy in how they developed a routine for reading as a classroom practice.

It might be that OA/YA ELs responded positively to owning their routines for reading in class since they were older students. Denis described FAHS as, "Basically, it was just a school for adults." In this school's context, making choices was part of being a mature adult. One student who also thought this way was Diego. He was a diligent student who read more books than required for the course. He went to the library to pick up books for other students, and he moved swiftly from reading to writing book projects. He described the routines for class as, "She explain them (expectations) very specific. She was very specific and clear about how she would like the book projects." When asked if this was acceptable, Diego responded, "Yeah. It was okay because we make the choice to be mature." The interview participants did not express concerns about their routines in class or the teacher's expectation to read each day.

Challenges to developing routines. There were two students who said initially, they were not clear about the expectations for creating a routine for reading. Ana was in her fourth semester in the reading program, and Cesar had begun his first semester in February. Each of them gave examples of being nervous on the first day, so they did not fully grasp the course requirements. Ana laughed when she recounted the story:

A yeah. When I started English 9 with Ms. Smith, she introduced herself, and then the explained how the class was believed to be. And she, I remember, and she said 30 minutes the beginning of class, we were going to read our books. And then the rest of the class, we have to do like class work or any assignment that she gave us. But then I thought…I did not understand her well, and I thought that is was only one day that we had to read a book, and then we had to read books at home. Then the next day, I arrived to her classroom, and I was to make nothing. Just staying there. In the class was really quiet, but then Ms. Smith came over, and she was like, "Um, do you have a book to read?" And I was like, yeah. It was kind of silly that.

This description illustrated how a new reader may feel in the classroom among other readers in the class. Once Ana saw what her peers were doing and the teacher quietly redirected her, she realized what she needed to do. Based on her prior experiences in school, Ana assumed that she would read at home rather than in the classroom each day. Having dedicated time each day for reading in class was a major change in classroom practice for Ana.

The newest student to Ms. Smith's second period class was initially uncertain that he had to develop a routine for reading. From the class observations, he often appeared physically uncomfortable with reading in class. He cleared his throat, his hands shook, and he looked around the room and at his cell phone. Compared to his peers in the room, he did not have a routine for

reading. Cesar was a timid speaker in English, but he responded to interviews questions. He stated, "I just reading, but sometimes I was texting too." He was aware of his behavior and related it to the book he was reading. He explained, "I mean some books are boring, and I feel like sleeping sometimes." In class, I observed that he changed books, and he referred to this in the interview, "Yeah a book I started to read, but I didn't finish it called like…I forget the name. It's in the classroom. It's in her classroom room.…It was about a girl." Cesar went on to explain that he liked books about history or people, such as biographies. He was currently reading *The Boy in Striped Pajamas*, which is a work of fiction set in pre-World War II Berlin. Cesar said he chose the book because he had read it in Spanish at home. It could be concluded that Cesar's physical behavior while reading in class was associated with his disinterest in the book he had chosen. For students new to choosing books for classroom reading, they may need further assistance to find the book that suits them. In the case of Cesar, he may have quickly chosen a book to fit in with the rest of his peers who were already reading.

Routines for book projects. The students also developed routines for completing their book projects. Based on the interviews, the students were familiar with the assigned book projects. From the class observations, the most common question for the teacher was related to the book project directions. Cesar was the only student interviewed who was not sure that a book project was required after reading a book. When he talked about how the teacher explained

the requirements to him, he said, "She told, she talked about that, but I didn't put attention when she was talking about that." Like Ana, Cesar may have been anxious on the first day in the class, and so as he reflected, he was not paying attention. The other factor could be Cesar's English proficiency because he may not have fully understood what Ms. Smith was saying to him. The combination of being anxious, shy, and less proficient in English may have contributed to Cesar's uncertainty about the reading requirements for the class.

Classroom Reading Behaviors

The three classes observed had distinct qualities, which may have been influenced by when the class was held during the day, the length of time students had been in the class, how well the students knew one another, and their relationship with the teacher. From the observation field notes, coding and connecting strategies were used to analyze the content related to student behaviors and interactions as well as those of the teachers, Ms. Smith and Ms. Murray. The four common themes that emerged were self-directed behavior, interactions, strategy use, and time use. This section will focus on each of the classes and the students' reading practices as they relate to research question one.

Ms. Murray's first period class. There were eight students assigned to Ms. Murray at the beginning of the second semester. The number of ELs in Transitional 9 or 10 had grown beyond the size limit of Ms. Smith's class. These classes were capped at fourteen, and Ms. Smith's room was too small to

accommodate more than that amount. As stated earlier, the administration tried to alleviate the crowding by moving the more veteran students to Ms. Murray's first period. Of the eight students, two were female and six were male. At the time of the classroom observations, it was the fourth semester for five of the students, the third semester for two students, and the second semester for one student. Therefore, all but one student had taken one or more semesters to complete Transitional Nine and another one or two semesters in Transitional Ten. They had been in this class for ELs, rather than with their native-English peers, because they had not passed the state English language proficiency exam, WIDA ACCESS for ELLs. Until they did so, the administration adhered to a school policy that did not permit the ELs to enroll in the standard English 11 course. This was found to have an impact on attendance in the class later in the semester.

Self-directed. Throughout the nine observations, all of the students appeared very familiar with the routines of reading and were self-directed in initiating and sustaining reading engagement. This class was the first period of the day. Most students drove themselves to school rather than taking the bus, so they did not all arrive at the same time. Generally when the students entered the room, they took out their book from their bag or on the counter in back of the room by the door, greeted each other in a low voice, and sat in their seat. If the students were working on a book project, they took a laptop out of the cart at the front of the room.

Ms. Murray had a sense of whether each student was reading his or her book, working on a book project, or making up work during reading time. One student, Ricardo, was redirected by the teacher on three different occasions, "What do you need a laptop for?" or "Put the laptop away now." He had not finished his current book, *My Bloody Life*, so Ms. Murray was aware he did not have a book project to work on. Nonetheless, Ricardo continued to come to class even though he had read the four books required for the course. He had not yet been awarded credit for the course because he had not passed the state English proficiency exam the previous year.

Interactions. The atmosphere in Ms. Murray's class felt congenial and supportive. During reading time, the students were comfortable to share a question with a peer or occasionally to call out to Ms. Murray in front of their peers. Again, the majority of these questions to Ms. Murray pertained to directions rather than text support while reading. Few peer discussions seemed to be for social reasons, and none lasted for more than three minutes. For instance, one day Ana was not sure what a word meant in her book, La Linea, when she was writing the book project. She called out, "How do you call this woman who dresses up and…?" The teacher asked if it was a Spanish word, and Ana turned to Tomás and spoke in Spanish. Ricardo jumped in with, "un indio." This means Indian. Then another student, Farad, looked up something on his cell phone and added, "Reservation. I am reading about Indians too." He had started reading La Linea as well, but did not speak Spanish. Then Ms. Murray offered,

"Indigenous?" After input from three students and the teacher, Ana did not seem satisfied with their suggestions and continued typing on her laptop. The other students went back to their reading. This interaction lasted for less than three minutes, but it exemplified the type of communication that students had to support their reading practice in class.

Strategy use. Based on these observations, the students used few cognitive strategies to support their reading practice. These strategies included taking notes and using cell phones as a resource. Lina and Edgar took notes on a strip of paper while they read. In their interviews, each student said that they wrote down new words or key parts of the story with the page number to use later for their book project. Edgar was also the only student who fell asleep in class during one observation. He said he worked late and was tired most mornings. Otherwise, the cell phone was used as an electronic dictionary or translator once each by Tomás and Estefan while they were reading. The teacher was aware of the cell phone use, and she asked Estefan what he was doing. He replied that he was looking up a word. In one class, Estefan seemed to be texting while working on a book project, but this did not seem to be the case for any other students. While they read, the students were more likely to ask a peer a question than take notes or use their cell phone to translate.

In addition to the strategies stated above, the students' reading practices included listening to music on their cell phones. At FAHS, students were allowed to listen to music in class as long as the teacher gave permission. I observed

Edgar, Estefan, and Sam listen to music while reading, and Lina had her ear buds in when she was working on a book project. In their interviews, Edgar and Lina reported listening to instrumental music in order to block out distracting noise. They believed that the background music would help them stay focused on their task.

Use of time. Students demonstrated their reading practice by how they used their time in class to read or for other activities. Absenteeism increased as the school year was coming to an end, which was not unusual at FAHS. As students completed their coursework, they earned credit and would longer attend those classes. In this class, Ms. Murray was not dropping students for poor attendance if they had completed the course requirements. By the second round of observations, Ana left school to join her husband with their child in another state. Lina, Ricardo, and Estefan were preparing for and taking end-of-course state exams in another content areas. On day seven of observations, five students were absent, and three were in other classes. Farad and Edgar were the only students present on day eight, and Farad and Tomás were present on day nine. Even when only two students were in the room on those days, they read their books. Tomás, Edgar, and Farad were waiting for the results from the state English language proficiency exam to find out if they passed and could move on to English 11. They had completed their work, but continued to come to class and read. This is an indication that the students had created a routine for reading as a practice.

Ms. Smith's second period class. The eleven participants in Ms. Smith's second period class included newcomers and veteran FAHS students. There were five females and six males in this class. The newest student, Angela, enrolled in FAHS and Transitional 9 in March. Three other students, Rose, Joshua, and Gina, were promoted from ESOL 3 to ESOL 4 at the turn of the semester in February, so they were new to Transitional 9. Of the remaining seven students, six had completed Transitional 9 in the fall semester and were enrolled in Transitional 10. The students who completed Transitional 9 had read four books in the fall semester and were reading their third or fourth book to earn credit for Transitional 10. The two students who were enrolled in Transitional 9 the previous school year, Ada and Ray, had completed four books in two semesters rather than one. This school year, they were taking the entire school year as well to read their books, and they were not reading additional titles as the students in Ms. Murray's class had. By the end of the spring semester, Ray and Rose were no longer attending school. The remaining new students earned credit for Transitional 9 and the veteran students, except for Ray, earned credit for Transitional 10.

Self-directed. During the ten observations, the ELs in the second period class appeared aware of the class routines for reading and working on book projects. They all responded to the teacher, Ms. Smith, when she greeted them by name each day. All students had a first period class, so they were in the school when second period began, and their tardies were infrequent. Rose was tardy twice and Ray once. These were the students who later dropped out of school.

The entire class was present in three out of ten observations. The routine for reading was similar to Ms. Murray's class. The students took their books out of the file cabinet by the door or from their bags. They took a seat at the tables that were arranged in the configuration of a square around the room. They did not always sit in the exactly the same seat nor did they seem to mind if someone sat in their usual seat.

There were some instances in which some students looked unable to focus on reading or doing their book project. Students left the room more frequently in this class than the first period class. In each observation, one to four students left the room. The students who left most often were Joshua (n=6), Oscar (n=5), and Angela (n=3). The times out of the room ranged from 3 to 13 minutes. These three students showed more physical signs of trying to focus by tapping their feet or hands. Angela and Joshua tapped their feet quickly, listened to music, or glanced at their cell phone. Oscar put his head on the desk and turn to the side to read and put the book within a few inches of his face. When he turned the pages, I inferred that he was reading. He reported in the interview that he wore glasses because his eyesight was not very good. Ms. Smith had told me she was beginning to be concerned about Angela and had spoken with her. After that conversation, Angela did not leave the room during reading time, listen to music, or take out her cell phone. Ms. Smith had an impact on Angela's reading practice. In addition, Ms. Smith spoke with Joshua and Oscar about cell phone use and staying focused in class. In the later observations, I did not see Joshua listening to

music while reading. Ms. Smith did not tell them to stop listening to music, but rather to put the cell phone away and focus more on reading. Following that direction, Angela and Joshua reduced their use of music on their cell phone after the redirection from their teacher.

From the observations, it was noticeable if a student was texting with two hands instead of scrolling for songs with one hand. Meanwhile, other students in the class did not appear to take notice of physical movements, such as leaving the room or tapping, which could have been a distraction. Despite appearing distracted in the observations, Angela, Joshua, and Oscar read the required number of books to earn credit by the end of the semester.

The class felt calm and quiet once everyone was seated. Students rarely looked up while reading. Voices in the hall, a movie playing next door, or sirens blaring outside did not disturb them. Looking up and across the room or at the clock on the wall for a moment was the most popular form of pausing. From my view, where I sat in a different section of the room each day, the students appeared busy, but it was not apparent what they were doing if they had a laptop. For example, one student, Carlos, worked on the laptop during all ten observations. I did not see him read a book. Ms. Smith said he had waited to do the book projects until after reading all of his books. She also was not sure if he was always working on a book project when he had a laptop, or if he was doing assignments from another class. His back was against the front wall, so the laptop screen was not visible. Ms. Smith stated in her interview that it was much harder

to gauge when students would finish a book project, and some took a week or more.

Each day the ELs chose to read or do a book project unless the teacher allowed them to finish other work during reading time. This occurred once, and all students chose to complete the essay that was due instead of reading. Otherwise, the amount of students who chose to read ranged from nine to five, and they outnumbered those working on the laptop in nine of the ten classes observed. If a student finished a book during class, he or she moved directly to beginning a book project. I observed this four times from Angela, Ada, Gina, and Diego. They did not use the remaining reading time to rest or leave the room. Since it was the end of the semester, students may have been more aware of the short time they had to complete their book projects and earn credit for the course.

Overall, students demonstrated they were self-directed in initiating and sustaining reading. Ms. Smith did not use physical proximity or questions to redirect student behavior during reading time. She sat with the students during reading time to read her own book or e-book. None of the students slept or refused to read.

Interactions. The students interacted with each other in short bursts to prolonged exchanges. These interactions were related to reading topics or social interests. When students pointed towards their book or a peer's book, it appeared they were talking about reading. There were eight peer question and answer interactions over the ten observations. Some students looked over to another's

book and asked what it was about. These interactions demonstrated the support they provided each other.

Ms. Smith sat with the students during reading time. The students who sat next to Ms. Smith were more likely to ask her a question than students seated further from her. For instance, Oscar turned to Ms. Murray and pointed to his laptop screen while he was working on a book project. She responded, "So what are you doing?" He responded in a low voice, and she added, "That's a good introduction. Yeah give the main idea of the book." He nodded, turned back to his screen and then to his book cover. Students working on book projects asked a total of eight questions about directions or word choice in their book projects. Those who were reading their books asked two questions. The students interacted with the teacher more when they worked on book projects than reading their books. When they did ask a peer a question while they read, it was the person sitting next to them. Interactions with the teacher or peers seemed contingent on proximity.

Among the students, social interactions lasted longer than conversations related to reading. Diana and Carlos sat next to each, and their interactions could last for seven minutes. They spoke in English because Rose's first language was Vietnamese, and Carlos' first language was Spanish. On another day, Angela and Joshua both spoke Spanish, and they whispered back and forth for four minutes. That day Angela had five social interactions, used her cell phone seven times, listened music, and looked up twice while reading. She shook her legs and

appeared to be agitated. The newer students to the class, Angela, Joshua, and Diana were more likely to have social interactions than students who were in the class for more than a semester. This may indicate that they were developing their sustained reading practice in the classroom environment.

It should be noted that there were students who read with few if any interactions during the observations. While reading or working on a laptop, five students spoke very little and looked as if they were engaged in reading or writing about their books. For example, Diego smiled at his friends and made occasional, brief comments, but he did not linger in conversation. One young woman, Margo, read predominately books by Nicolas Sparks. As she finished one, she began the next. These five students appeared comfortable with using the thirty minutes for their reading practice.

Strategy use. The students' use of strategies to support reading in Ms. Smith's second period was not markedly different from Ms. Murray's first period in the frequency or form. There were two students, Rose and Ray, who took notes while reading. While Oscar, Gina, and Ada worked on book projects, they referred back to their books. No one used a paper dictionary during the observations, but Ada and Oscar used their cell phones to look up or translate words. The limited use of a dictionary was unexpected since this was a class of ELs. Two assumptions are possible. Either some students were reading books in which the vocabulary and phrasing was not so challenging that they needed to look up words, and/or they skipped over new terms. If they needed assistance, the

students did not bring their books to the teacher with questions. An analysis of their books by lexile, genre, and course will be discussed in a later section.

The most notable distinction among the students in Ms. Murray's and Ms. Smith's English classes was the amount of students who had ear buds in while they read or worked on a book project. In one class of Ms. Smith, eleven students were present and seven had ear buds in. Of this group, three were reading and four were on laptops. This class period had the greatest number of students wearing ear buds over the ten observations. In interviews with three students from this class, Diego said he could not read with music, whereas Oscar stated, "Yeah but I get lazy, and when I don't want to read, I listen to music. To distract to make it better for me you know. Sometimes class is loud. Just try to make it better for me." When asked about music, Rose responded, "No. I don't. But some like I uh, my friend text me sometime is chatting." In this case, the cell phone could be used for listening to music or communicating via text messaging.

Use of time. Being present in class was part of the students' reading practice. For example, Rose had the greatest number of absences with six, and she stopped attending school altogether without completing her books. Otherwise, three students missed two days of class, and three others missed one day. Conversely, the ELs in Ms. Murray's class had read the minimum number of books, and all but one student had been in Transitional 10 for more than a semester. This latter group of ELs completed the class as well. Over the ten

observations in this class, the participants' attendance did not greatly fluctuate, thus the data indicates that attendance is a factor in their reading practice.

Even though the students' attendance was stronger in Ms. Smith's class, the students were more likely to leave the classroom during reading time. As an older student population, they could leave the room without a pass. Ms. Smith told her students not to ask every time they need to leave because they were adults, and asking could be disruptive. For this reason, students got up and left the room as they liked. This was another practice during reading time. The time out of the room ranged from 2 to 13 minutes with most being out around 6 minutes. Joshua, Oscar, and Gina left the room 4 times, and Angela, Diego, and Louis left three times. Oscar once left for 13 minutes and returned with a bottle of water. One day, Diego left for 9 minutes, but he returned with a book for himself and another student. Class time was an opportunity for students to get their books from the library, which based on the responses from the online survey, 88.9 percent (n=40), chose as their preferred location for finding books. Therefore, some students left the room for a variety of reasons, so their use of time outside of class could be an interruption to their reading.

Ms. Smith's third period class. The final of the three classes observed was the most physically and socially active during reading time. When the observations began, there were eleven students, seven males and four females. On day five of observations, two more students, a male and a female, transferred into Ms. Smith's third period from her fourth period. Both students had earlier

participated in the online survey. Another male student stopped attending this class after the third day of observations, and Ms. Smith reported that he dropped out of school for health reasons. Therefore, from day five through ten of the observations, there were twelve students, seven males and five females, regularly attending third period. This class had the most students of the groups observed, and like the others, there were more males than females.

Ms. Smith's third period had students enrolled in Transitional 9 or 10. Seven students had been in class with Ms. Smith since September 2012. Of that group, four completed Transitional 9 in one semester and then were completing Transitional 10. Another two male students read four books in two semesters, one earned credit for Transitional 9 and the other for Transitional 10. The latter student did not read extra books. Then a female student re-enrolled at FAHS after having a baby. She read two books to finish Transitional Nine from a previous semester, and then she read three more. Therefore, four of the seven students completed the expected number of books, which was four per semester. Students who did not finish enough books to earn credit would continue the following semester in the course.

It was common for students to enroll or change classes at FAHS throughout the school year. In Ms. Smith's third period, two students enrolled in FAHS later in the school year. Sara began Transitional 10 in November and Cesar began Transitional 9 in February. Rona re-enrolled at FAHS and began Transitional 9 in February after she had a baby and worked before returning to

school. The last two students, Jorge and Ricardo, joined Transitional 9 in February because they were promoted from ESOL 3 to 4 by the ESOL department. In terms of the entire class during this study, six of the participants were in Transitional 9, and six were in Transitional 10. By the end of the school year, 7 were on pace and had read the expected four books in a semester.

Self-directed. Based on the observations, the students appeared to understand the routines of reading in class although there were periods of interruption for those who either left the room or were not focused. Since this class met after lunch, more students were eating while reading than in the other classes observed. They did not appear as self-directed to sustain reading.

Ms. Smith began her third period in the same fashion as second period. She greeted each student by name, and they replied back to her. Students took out their books and chose their seat. If they needed a laptop for a book project, they went directly to the cart and got it. Ms. Smith did not have to prompt any one to initiate a task. This was the time in which students were more likely to ask her a question while the class was settling down.

The time period took to settle into a calm, peaceful environment felt longer than the other classes I had observed. In particular, one student, Dana, was louder when she spoke, so the other students would look up and take notice. Dana ate her lunch, read, and sometimes made eye contact with others in the room. Her emotions showed when she giggled with a friend or abruptly left the room after receiving a text message. However, her behavior was not indicative of

her reading practice in and out of school. Based on the analysis of the interview with Dana, her teacher and the librarian, along with the record of books she read, there was evidence that Dana was an avid reader, who had read more than 8 books since September. She read for personal enjoyment, but she did not read only during class time. Perhaps she did not appear engaged in her reading practice during most of the observations because she read outside of class.

The newest student to the choice reading program was Cesar, who transferred from another high school in the district. Ms. Smith was concerned about his progress because he seemed unfocused during reading time, and she was aware that he was texting as well. She mentioned it to me before the second observation, and she pointed it out during the class as she read across the room from him. Once Cesar looked up at her, she signaled to put it away without drawing attention from the other students. For the remainder of the class, he looked up or towards me seven times. Cesar's hands shook while he read. He fidgeted, cleared his throat, and appeared unable to focus. Later in an interview with Cesar, he expressed that he should put his cell phone away and pay attention to his reading. He was aware of his behavior, but he did not know how to focus while reading even though he liked to read at home. Cesar was a unique example of a student who needed support in managing his behavior in class, so he could read and be successful. In one class, he could not find his book, so he took a different one off the shelf. He could have asked Ms. Smith for another copy or gone to the library, but he did not. He appeared resistant to ask the teacher for

assistance. In the later observations, Cesar appeared slightly more engaged when he worked on book projects. By June, he had read three books and completed the projects for each, but he did not finish the fourth book to earn credit.

The other students in Ms. Smith's third period were generally friendly with each other as they read or worked on a book project. There were students who showed they transitioned from reading to working on book projects. In two instances, Ignacio finished a book and started his book project without hesitation. However, another student, Ricardo spent the first five observations on one book project, which Ms. Smith thought should only take three class periods. Each student moved at his or her own pace, which may have been influenced by their language skills or confidence to complete the task.

Looking up while reading or writing was coded in the observations because it was a moment when students paused. It was a time when they may have been thinking about their book and engaged, or they may have taken a brief break. While working on a book project, students looked up from their book project up to seven times in a class period. Up to eleven students looked up in a class period while reading. The students went back to their reading or writing after looking up, so it did not appear to be a lasting distraction. This pause in their reading could have been a brief time for reflection, or they may have been questioning the meaning of words they were encountering.

Even though students spent more minutes talking in this class, eventually they did read. Once they had begun reading, they were more likely to look up

than students in the other classes, from two to eleven times. They were also more social, and had interactions not related to reading. This occurred sixteen times in one class, in which Ms. Smith commented out loud, "… and they still didn't start reading 15 minutes into class." Nevertheless, the book records indicate that over half of the students (n=7) were reading on pace to complete the course. It is uncertain if the other five students would have read more books if they were less distracted by their own concerns or the behavior of their peers.

Interactions. Social interactions were common among the students, and this seemed to cause an interruption in their reading engagement. However, one-on-one interactions with the teacher were fewer than second period and ranged from zero to two per class. One student, Ricardo, asked the teacher for a book suggestion because it was the end of the semester, and he was not sure if he should start a new book. Ms. Smith responded, "I think this would easier to finish at the end of the year." She got a copy of *Tuesdays at Morrie's*, and she summarized the story while cautioning him about trying to finish it in the last two weeks of school. After hearing this, Ricardo asked her about another book that his history teacher suggested involving war and slaves. Ms. Smith was not familiar with the book, so Ricardo replied, "She (the history teacher) can write it down." Ms. Smith nodded, and in the meantime Ricardo sat down and started reading *Tuesdays at Morrie's*. He may have wanted to read a nonfiction book suggested by his history teacher because he could earn credit towards that course as well. This was an agreement made among the English and History department

to promote nonfiction reading. In all of the classroom observations, this was the only occurrence of a student seeking a teacher recommendation for a book to read. From the online survey responses, slightly more students preferred choosing their own books 48.9 percent (n= 22) or taking a friend's recommendation, 44.5 percent (n=20) than from their English teacher, 40 percent (n=18). Perhaps since this study occurred at the end of the school year, the students were more confident in choosing their own books, or they were finishing their last one, so they did not need to ask the teacher for book recommendations.

The other interactions that the students had with the teacher were related to directions for an assignment or supplies. Over the ten observations, twelve questions were asked by seven students. For example, while Ricardo was working on a book project, he asked, "Do I have to tell the end?" She looked at him and answered, "That is what you will tell the class." Ms. Smith reported that the students have difficulty doing a book talk and not telling the end of the story. The students did not ask questions that were related to text comprehension.

The students in this class were comfortable with asking each other questions about their work. They had fifteen interactions related to their book projects and seven interactions about books they were reading. Based on the observations and interview with Cesar, he understood how to do a book project from his peers. He reported being nervous when Ms. Smith was explaining the book projects and course requirements. One day, he leaned over to Karina and pointed to her book project, which was a brochure. She whispered back to him

with the brochure in hand. Two classes later, Cesar had a laptop out, and Ignacio pointed to his screen and gave him advice. I was able to see that Cesar was beginning to type a new document. Cesar did not explain why he would not ask the teacher for help, but he was comfortable speaking with his peers in Spanish for help. As a level 4 ESOL student, Cesar had the verbal skills to ask questions in English. Otherwise, Ms. Smith could speak in Spanish, so he could have asked her questions in either language.

Strategy use. The ELs in Ms. Smith's third period did not show a difference in strategy use from the other classes observed. During the observations, none of the students used a paper dictionary. Students were not observed taking notes while reading. From my seat in the room, I could see that at least two students, Ignacio and Sara, used their cell phone as a dictionary or translator while working on book projects. In one class, Ignacio was unsure of a word to use, so he asked Sara. He was a native Spanish speaker, and she was native Amharic speaker, so they both used English with one another. Sara searched on her IPad-mini for the word then Ignacio waved Karina to come over. In the meantime, the class took notice and Ms. Smith said in a joking voice, "I don't know what's going on, but it's exciting." The other students laughed while Karina sat by Ignacio and helped him spell the word. This is an example of how students in the third period class used peer support as a strategy to support their reading and book projects. These ELs accepted peer support in English or their native language.

In terms of trying to diminish the distractions around them, students in this class did not frequently put in ear buds to listen to music. At any time, only one student had in ear buds. They did not use music as a strategy to tune out the classroom noise. Actually, two students in Transitional 10, Denis and Raqel, whisper-read to themselves. It was barely audible, but their lips were moving while they read. In an interview with Denis, he stated that he read aloud in English at home because he thought it was good for his accent, but he did not do it in class because it would be a distraction to his peers. Denis may have been reading aloud out of habit rather than using it overtly as a strategy to support his reading engagement or comprehension. Overall, peer support was the most frequently observed strategy that the students used to support their reading in Ms. Smith's third period class.

Use of time. The third period students left class more frequently than students observed in the other English classes. Students appeared comfortable with leaving the room to throw away lunch trash or for other reasons. In one class, there were ten instances of students leaving the room. No students left the room on a day in which the teacher allowed them to complete an essay that was due, and then read when they finished. Dana left the room four times, but in one class she was gone for 21 minutes, and in another class she did not return. Of all the students in the study, she had the most time, 60 minutes, out of class. As discussed earlier, Dana was recognized as an avid reader by her teacher and the librarian, but she used time out of school for reading as well. In the other classes

observed, the times students went out of the room ranged from four to five minutes. For third period, excluding Dana, most of the time out of class lasted for six to thirteen minutes. As an example, Jorge left the room four times for a total of thirty five minutes over ten reading periods. If he continued that trend, he would miss over 10 percent of the reading time for the semester. Such interruptions could impact reading engagement for ELs who need time to become immersed in a challenging book.

The attendance in third period did not greatly fluctuate. Not accounting for the student who withdrew from FAHS, the greatest number of students were absent on the first day of observations (n=3), and on the last day (n=2). Three of the female students were mothers, and each missed a day during the observations for day care issues. Denis missed a class to take an end-of-course state exam in geometry. The rest of the students in this class were not affected by the testing schedule. The students continued to attend class in order to complete their course requirements. Ms. Smith stated after the observations that once students completed the course, she submitted their forms for course completion.

Summary of Reading Behaviors

The time for reading in class was an established practice by the students. In all of the three classes, students appeared aware of what they were supposed to do during the reading time. In every observation, nearly all students initiated a reading related task. There were few who needed redirection by teacher. After

students finished a book, they immediately began a book project, so they did not hesitate to initiate the next task. Even though students appeared to have a routine for reading, few of them accessed strategies to support their reading comprehension. Their independent reading time appeared to be an individual practice with occasional interactions regarding word meaning. Students did not demonstrate a daily reliance on music to support their reading practice as a means of minimizing distractions. When they did use a cell phone, it seemed to be used for listening to music, translating words online, or texting. The two factors that decreased students' opportunity to read during class time were absences and time out of the room. First, the students who were in Transitional 10 for two or more semesters stop attending the class towards the end of the semester. This was the case for four of the seven students in Ms. Murray's class who were in Transitional 10 for two or more semesters. Secondly, students who chose to leave the room were sacrificing time to read, which could impact their ability to be immersed in challenging text and complete the course requirements.

Summary of OA/YA ELs Reading Practices in their English Classes as this AHS

From the analysis of the student survey, classroom observations, student interviews, and self-generated book lists, three major themes emerged related to the OA/YA ELs' reading practices: book choices, reading routines, and classroom behaviors. The wide availability of books and the class social environment encouraged interactions. Based on the data sources, students favored reading

juvenile fiction, which may have reflected aspects of their lives. The students did not appear to choose text that became increasingly more challenging as they moved from book to book. However, students in Transitional 10 read fewer hi-lo books than students in Transitional 9, which indicates some increase in comprehension skills. Additionally, students were aware that they could find books in their classroom or the school library, as well as seek recommendations from their teacher, peers, and librarian. Above all, the students clearly wanted to have the decision to choose their own books, and their choices included an assortment of genres, topics, and authors with varied levels of text difficulty. The majority of students developed routines for classroom reading without showing any difficulty. Students with different teachers had similar reading practices in terms of self-directed behaviors, interactions, strategy use, and time use. Above all, students demonstrated a variety of behaviors and routines, yet most still accomplished reading the required number of books to complete the course.

Research Question 2: How do these Older Adolescent/Young Adult English Learners perceive their literacy engagement at this AHS?

Analysis of the students' responses from the Reading Engagement Index (REI), online survey and interviews indicate that the OA/YA ELs perceived their overall literacy engagement positively. While they responded positively towards their motivational beliefs and identity of being a reader, they had weaker perceptions that using comprehension strategies supported their literacy

engagement. The last finding indicates that students sought out books they described as "good" or "interesting" to support their literacy engagement.

OA/YA Perceptions of their Literacy Engagement

For this study, literacy engagement was determined to be present when students were active and engaged in literacy activities with a disposition for thinking about the text (Guthrie, 2004). The REI was used as the instrument to measure the three dimensions of reading engagement (Wigfield et al., 2008). The eight items on the REI were aligned with the dimensions of literacy engagement. Students (n=43) responded to all eight items on a 5 point scale. A rating of 1 to 2 indicated not true, 3 indicated true, and 4 to 5 indicated very true. The following table displays the items in order of highest score with the related dimension of literacy engagement.

Table 12

Student Participants' Responses to the Reading Engagement Index

Dimension	Item	Mean Score	SD
Behavior	I often read in class	3.67	1.36
Cognitive	I think deeply about the story I am reading.	3.65	0.95
Cognitive	I work hard in reading.	3.58	1.07
Motivation-Intrinsic	I am easily distracted when I read my book in class. (reverse coded)	3.33	1.32
Motivation-Intrinsic	I read favorite topics and authors.	3.23	1.13

Motivation-Self Efficacy	I am a confident reader.	3.14	1.13
Cognitive	I use comprehension strategies to help me understand.	3.05	1.13
Motivation-Social	I enjoy discussing books with other students in my class.	2.91	1.43

The student participants most strongly agreed that they demonstrated the behavioral dimension for literacy engagement. The statement, "I often read in class," (M = 3.67, SD = 1.36) was the highest rated of the eight items. The student participants also perceived that they "think more deeply about reading," (M = 3.65, SD = 0.95) and "work hard in reading," (M = 3.58, SD = 1.07), but they were also "easily distracted," (M = 3.33, SD = 1.32). From these responses, the students appeared to consider reading an activity that they had to focus on, and they could be distracted.

Motivational Beliefs

Overall, the triangulation of data sources suggest that these OA/YA ELs had intrinsic and extrinsic motivational beliefs towards reading in their Transitional English 9 or 10 courses. The students' motivational beliefs towards reading were reflected in three data sources. On the REI, the students' moderately stated as true that they, "read favorite topics and authors," (M = 3.23, SD = 1.13). The data analysis of the online survey indicates that the students

expressed intrinsic and extrinsic motivational beliefs towards their literacy engagement. For example, of the forty-three responses, sixteen specified that they read to improve their English skills and acquire vocabulary. Fourteen of the online survey responses stated that reading books was a requirement of completing the course, which demonstrates an extrinsic motivational belief towards literacy engagement.

The student interviews extended the understanding of students' positive perceptions of their motivational beliefs towards their literacy engagement. One student, Dana, spoke enthusiastically about reading and her transformation to becoming a reader. Dana said, "I like to read for fun. I don't always want to do a book project. I feel like I am cheating, so I read on vacation, so I don't like to use them." She referred to cheating because the English teachers prefer to see the students read in class, and she also read at home. Ms. Smith identified Dana as an avid reader, so she was not concerned with cheating. In Dana' case, she found a way to connect with books, and she thought this made reading fun. When she talked about *Every Day*, by Levithan, she expressed her intrinsic motivation, "That is a really good book. Like I'm telling you, after the first one that I read, I just can't stop." Dana became an intrinsically motivated reader by having access to books she found interesting that were recommended by her teacher or the librarian.

A common perception that emerged from the respondents' statements was their lack of enjoyment and motivation to read prior to taking this class. Oscar

was a student in Ms. Smith's second period, who fell into that category. His family was Uyghur and emigrated from China, so English was his third language. In his interview, he did not appear as excited about reading as Dana was. Nonetheless, he seemed to find value in reading if it taught him a lesson about life. When asked what he read before coming to FAHS, he replied, "Basically nothing. I never read until this year, yeah." He went on to talk about his interest in reading, "No. No. Not much. That's not my thing. That's not me." Oscar did not identify himself as a reader, and he even called himself lazy. However, he seemed to become more aware of what he did like to read. He stated, "But I don't like to read books that's just stories. But you know some books they teach you something. I want to read something like that." Finding a favorite topic to read supported the students' motivational beliefs towards reading.

Identity as a Reader

Prior to beginning their English class at FAHS, most of the students interviewed (n=8) did not identify themselves as readers, yet they came to value reading in their class. Their reasons for not reading prior to this class had ranged from not having time because they worked, to not knowing how to read a book, or having no interest in reading.

One student, Edgar, who was from El Salvador, said he worked and did not have time to read at home, "Yup because I'm working. I will clean up my house. If I don't clean my house, it will be all messy. I don't got no time to read so." Edgar often looked sleepy in class. He had read four books over two

semesters, knowing that he was waiting to exit ESOL and move onto English 11. Edgar stated, "Reading is fun. (laughing) It make you smart. Yeah it make you smart." As a young adult, who supported himself financially, he did not believe he had time to read at home, but he valued time for reading in school and saw himself as a reader.

Some students felt that they did not know how to read before this class, so they did not consider themselves readers. One of these students was Denis, who appeared to be on task in Ms. Smith's third period class. He moved without interruption from reading to writing a book project, so there was no indication that this was his first year reading books. He described reading as:

> I think that it's helping a lot. Like if you read, you get knowledge in your brain. It helps you a lot. I don't know which ways. But when you know how to read it, it is way better. I can give you an example. When I came here, and I didn't know how to read a word, so and now I'm able to read a book, and it's just awesome. To know how to read it….If you let's say when I came here, I didn't know how to read and now I know how to read. I can now. I know what is going on in the world by reading in the newspaper.

Denis's words expressed how much he did not identify as a reader prior to reading books in this class, and how he came to value reading as a life skill.

Another student in Ms. Smith's third period was Dana, who came from El Salvador four years earlier. She stated, "I used to be a bad student at my base

school. I didn't really go to school because you know I didn't know in English, so it was really hard." She went on to add, "…I didn't read anything." These statements indicted that Dana did not identify herself as a reader or a strong student. Since completing two semesters of English class at FAHS, Dana explained her change in attitude:

> I just recommend it to people. This is amazing. I can't believe that I'm saying this. Right now, I mean like a year ago, I used to hate it so much. But since I got to the school, I learned how to read. I mean I know how to read, but I learned how to like connect with books.

In her point about learning to read, Dana shared an insight that was different from Denis's. She went on to explain that she learned how to interact with the books by making text to self-connections. When she talked about the books she had read for class, making personal connections was important. She was excited to share, "Almost all of them connect with me in some way." Compared to her prior school experience, she said, "I didn't read anything. I didn't like it. I just. (Shrugging) I didn't like it." Dana found value in reading when she could make connections with her life. From analyzing students' statements such as these, it appears that the OA/YA ELs valued reading and internalized the identity of a reader, which were positive perceptions of their literacy engagement.

Good and Interesting Books

The student participants made statements in the interviews that particularly related to one of the items in the REI, "I read favorite topics and authors." The concept of reading a favorite topic was interpreted to include books that students called "good" or "interesting". The other two items from the online survey that related to students' literacy engagement asked, "Why did you decide to read this book?" and "What makes you want to read in this class?" These were open response items that were coded from participants' emic statements. In the former question, the most common response (n=14) indicated that they decided to read the book because of the particular topic, or they considered it interesting. The second question, "What makes you want to read in class," asked the OA/YA ELs to consider what makes them read in English class. From the forty-three responses, eleven students expressed that they decided to read because the books were interesting or enjoyable. Based on these findings, it appears that some students chose books they found interesting.

In the interviews, the students shared their beliefs about what was a good or interesting book. Lina, a student in Transitional English 10, had read eight books for the class. She went beyond the required four books to earn credit, and she reported reading additional books for pleasure. Lina believed that all her books were good, yet they were on a variety of topics that included: *The Power of Positive Thinking, The Outliers, The Year of Impossible Goodbyes, Every Day, and The Outsiders.* On the book about business, *Good to Great*, by Collins, Lina said, "They show you statistics in real life how business can break down or can

raise up. It's really interesting." From the juvenile science fiction book, *Among the Hiding,* by Patterson Haddix, Lina stated that she read six of the seven books in the series. After describing the plot line and her disappointment about a character's death, Lina added, "But, but I mean it was interesting." Based on the range of topics that Lina read, it would be difficult to categorize the topics that she found interesting.

There were students who did not read beyond the course requirements, and they still called their books, "interesting" or "good". For instance, Tomás said he did not read a book before taking the Transitional English 9 course at FAHS. He said that he had a hard time picking out books, and when asked to explain why, he responded, "To find an interesting book." Tomás went on to say that the book he was reading, from a high-low series, was interesting, "Because that kind of book always start with a conflict." Tomás was pointing out that he liked the structure of the story not only the topic. In terms of topics that he preferred to read, Tomás explained, "Soccer. I like to read about soccer or a sport." Of the five books that Tomás read for Transitional English 10, one was a biography on the soccer player Messi, and two were juvenile fiction titles related to incarnation, romance, and adoption. The other two books were high-low publications with settings in urban high schools. When he described his feelings about reading now, Tomás said, "It's interesting when I found books that I like." From being a self-declared nonreader, this student came to understand that there were interesting books for him on a range of topics. In his time in the Transitional English courses, Tomás

read an assortment of books on topics that he found interesting with a level of text challenge that he could understand.

The students read favorite topics and authors, but they did not gravitate towards one topic. Students, like Lina, who read more than one book by an author were reading a series. As stated earlier in this study, the self-generated book lists showed that some students had favorite authors, such as, Draper, Sanchez, and Sparks, but this was not a trend. Therefore, the books that the OA/YA ELs considered good or interesting were broadly represented.

Use of Strategies

The OA/YA ELs had weaker perceptions of comprehension strategies supporting their literacy engagement. From the REI, the two lowest rated items by the OA/YA ELs were, "I use comprehension strategies," ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 1.43$) and "I enjoy discussing books with other students in my class," ($M = 2.91$, $SD = 1.43$). The second finding is not unanticipated since Transitional English 9 and 10 courses did not rely on structured book discussions during reading time. The students talked to each other one-on-one about their books, but they did not participate in organized group discussions. The OA/YA ELs in this study stated in the online survey and in interviews that they talked with their peers about book recommendations, but they may not have considered these interactions to be book discussions. However, the classroom observations indicated that some students used comprehension strategies while reading. These observable strategies included using the cell phone to look up word meanings and note taking.

Summary of OA/YA ELs Perceptions of their Literacy Engagement at this AHS

Analysis of the data indicates that the OA/YA ELs had positive perceptions of their motivational beliefs towards reading and their identity as readers. This was a major finding because the analysis of the online survey and the student interviews suggest that many students did not hold these positive perceptions prior to reading books they chose in their English class. In addition, the OA/YA ELs believed that finding books they personally considered as "good" or "interesting" supported their literacy engagement. However, the students had weaker perceptions that using comprehension strategies supported their literacy engagement.

Research Question 3: What are the classroom practices of English teachers who work with these Older Adolescent/Young Adult English Learners at this AHS?

Seven themes emerged from the data that address aspects of the classroom practices of English teachers working with OA/YA ELs These themes revolve around a student-centered approach that include: offering choices, consistency in requirements, consistency in time, facilitating and modeling reading, relationship building, communication, and monitoring and redirecting behavior.

The analysis of the classroom observations and teacher participant interviews identified the English teachers' individual practices, as well as their collective practices. The interview with the English department chair, Mr.

Hughes, provided insight into the collective practices of the teachers across the department. Since he provided information about the overall scope and goals of the choice reading program, his responses are included in this section. The analysis of these interviews provided an overall connected understanding of the teachers' practices in the choice reading program.

The three teachers represented all courses taught by the English department at FAHS, so they could share perspectives across the continuum from Transitional 9 to English 12. In the 2012-2013 school year, Ms. Smith taught Transitional English 9 and 10 at FAHS. In previous years, she had taught Seminar I, which included English 9, 10, and 11. Ms. Smith explained in the interviews that she was also teaching an online English 12 course for the school district, so she shared her comparison of students who chose to read at FAHS to the online students who were assigned to read specific titles. She believed that the latter group did not demonstrate they were reading in their online discussions. The other teacher, Ms. Murray, had a Transitional English 10 course as well as two Seminar I courses, all of which had OA/YA ELs who received ESOL services. The last teacher was the department chair, Mr. Hughes, who taught Seminar II for English 12 students. A few of his students were OA/YA ELs, but only two accepted ESOL services. The examination of his interview indicated that choice reading in English 12 placed an emphasis on inferencing and analysis, thus students were expected to read more challenging text.

Offering Choices

The teachers offered choices in reading as a practice of supporting OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement. In the interviews, each teacher described how they had implemented a form of choice reading in their classes prior to teaching to FAHS. It is a finding from the analysis of their statements that these teachers had a predisposition towards giving students the option to choose their own books and providing time to read in class. In order for this to occur, these teachers endorsed greater student autonomy in a student-centered learning environment, and this positioned them as facilitators for reading.

The teachers' experiences with offering choice for reading were varied. For example, Ms. Smith talked about developing a practice, in 1999-2000, for choice reading when she taught high school in another state. She stated a strong belief in giving students choice:

> I've been doing, in class silent reading, giving students complete choice or managed choice. And I think it really works in terms of getting kids to actually read. And you have to have them reading in order to get them to improve their reading or to keep up with the skills that they need…You know, people that think by giving students class time to read, people who view that as like a waste of time, I view as the exact opposite. I think it's absolutely critical.

Based on her opinion, it appeared that students should have both the choice and the time for reading in class if they are to develop their skills and interests in the activity.

At the beginning of her career, Ms. Murray taught middle school English. She implemented a practice of offering choice to her students, but it was not department-wide. She stated, "I've always been a proponent of choice reading." In her reflection, she went on to frame her belief from the perspective of a student:

> I loved reading, but I rarely liked reading the things we read in school. So and I think probably there was some dabbling in my own schooling where the teachers would sometimes let us read what we wanted in reading our own books. And I really clung to that. I really loved being able to read my own books.

Ms. Murray's statement indicated that she, as a reader, placed a high value on students' autonomy to make decisions about what to read as a means for engagement.

The support for offering choice for reading as a teacher practice was echoed by the English department chair, Mr. Hughes. He had been offering choice to students in reading for fifteen years, and he stated, "I've been using this at (FAHS) for five years. And at base school with one choice book a quarter for four quarters in the 10th grade for over 10 years prior to that." He expressed that he needed to guide the students in their choices to ensure they were selecting

more challenging books and reading more deeply into the text structure. He added, "…As a teacher, you're trying to guide them because your purpose in that first book or two is to hook the kid, so reading isn't the enemy. Yet you have to win that battle first." This statement showed that getting the students to choose a book is the first step towards enjoying reading and then eventually they learn from their reading.

Mr. Hughes added that the program is now labeled as guided choice reading. He explained the distinction as:

> But we did read retitle the program and adopt this concept even more wholly this year of guided choice reading, so it wasn't so much reading whatever you want and a lot of people outside of the English department probably didn't always grasp that… They see kids sitting around reading and yet how are they progressing? How are they increasing vocabulary? Sophistication? Understanding of author's tone, idea or the conventions of writing like figurative language. You know other things, author's purpose. Well it really always was guided choice but we kind of put some chops on that.

Since the English department adopted the new title, guided choice reading, that will be the term used for the remainder of this study. From the multiple perspectives of being teachers, students, and readers, these English teachers offered students choices in what to read. They were united in their belief that

giving students a choice in what they read for school could lead to furthering their literacy development.

Consistency in Requirements

From the English teachers' responses, another essential component of their classroom practice that emerged was consistency. The English teachers had consistent reading and project requirements for the students. This included how they introduced reading and explaining how students could complete the course. For example, Ms. Smith described how she explained the expectations in the course syllabus to the OA/YA ELs:

> It basically says we are going to do 90 minutes of reading and writing in this class. You are required to do four books, four papers. You know we're going to spend the first 30 minutes in class reading. And I actually have this conversation with them in addition to what the paper says. And I just lay out the requirements orally, very simply. You have to do 120 hours. You have to read four books and do four projects. You have to write four papers. You know again we spend the first 30 minutes reading. You can bring something in from home. We have a good collection. There's a great collection and library. I can help you find books if you don't have any ideas. You know so that's. I think the class is pretty easily summarized that way.

This statement showed that Ms. Smith was aware that the OA/YA ELs needed her to explain the course requirements, verbally and in print, in simplified language to

meet their English proficiency level. Later some of these students went onto Ms. Murray's class without a change in requirements or routines. Ms. Murray said the students appeared to understand the requirements, "The reading at the beginning of the period had already been entrenched in them by (Ms. Smith). So that was handy for me because I didn't feel like I had to do much other than reinforce it."

The one course requirement that Ms. Smith and Ms. Murray agreed was less consistent for the OA/YA ELS was the book projects. Even though the list of book projects that students could select were the same in each class, the students worked at different paces to complete them. In the observations, there were students who worked five days in a row on a book project. Ms. Smith told her students that a book project should take no more than three classes, but students could take longer if they wished. Each teacher was consistent in allowing students to take the time they wanted to complete the book projects. Both teachers were more concerned with students being distracted rather than not understanding how to do a book project. Ms. Murray stated, "That's where it really gets dicey." She believed that students were distracted or doing other assignments on the laptop instead of their book project. This concern was supported in the classroom observations, nonetheless the teachers were consistent with the assignment's requirements.

Consistency in Time

In looking at the consistency of practices with the English teachers, the time given for daily reading was a priority at the beginning of each class. Ms. Smith specified that, "And to me it's probably the most valuable time that they'll spend during the day, and so the fact that we all value that, gives it a weight and a value…I always feel good about saying in every English class at (FAHS) you're going to be a reading the first half an hour." From this statement, it can be inferred that the program depended on consistency across the classrooms. Ms. Murray also highly valued the uniformity of each class reading every day. She stated:

> If you interrupt like that 30 minutes. You know. If you start to mess with it. That time. It's harder to get them back on track. So you kind of, the best way to do it, I think, is to keep that time like really sacred. And to not start to use it for other things. Because once you start doing that you can kind of lose it.

By interruptions in the time, Ms. Murray was referring to preparing students for the state's end-of-course standardized assessments or allowing them to make up missed assignments. She found that if students were doing different assignments during reading time, the students' focus on reading lessened. This was supported by the class observations as well. There was a sense of calmness and focus when everyone was reading or writing about their book.

Mr. Hughes believed that all teachers in the English department honored the time for reading. He expressed that students came to expect this well:

> You're providing the reading time and the kids know the routine and they come to expect that. Many come to appreciate it. Because actually it's that time to slow down and self center sometimes. That reading time once it's enjoyable becomes relaxing. When the brain is relaxed it's actually more receptive. When it's more receptive and relaxed it's generally more creative.

Setting a routine for reading seemed to instill a pattern of behavior in the students. From the observations of the OA/YA ELs in class, they entered the room and knew what to do. The teachers were more likely to redirect student behavior during reading rather than getting them to initiate the task of reading. Without new directions or assignments given at the beginning of class, the thirty minutes were for choice reading. This ensured that all English students had an equal amount of time to read no matter which teacher they had. Mr. Hughes held that consistency was essential the guided choice reading program in his statement:

> And if you can be unifying and agree and get some consistency to the message and approach so that when a kid leaves 10th grade, and they go to another class with a different teacher for 11th grade, they are going to have similar requirements or whether the book to 12th grade. The approach and the basic requirements are the same. That's pretty essential.

Based on the interviews and classroom observations, consistency in the English department's guided choice reading program was valued and

demonstrated by the teachers. They placed importance on consistency with the intention of students internalizing the behaviors of self-directed readers.

Facilitating and Modeling

Another theme, which emerged from the data analysis, related to how the English teachers facilitated and modeled reading behavior. The teacher, as a role model, helped students select books of interest with appropriate challenge, aided them with comprehension, and maintained an environment for reading. In this role, the teachers created an environment that they hoped supported the OA/YA ELs' reading practices.

In her class, Ms. Smith did not feel that many students often asked her for book recommendations. However, in order to introduce new books to the OA/YA ELs, Ms. Smith did provide ongoing book previews. She described them as book talks:

> Especially on some of the books that are newer. I might take out, I don't know, six or seven books and say this is about… This has been popular in the past. Or this is a new one we just got in, and here's why we ordered it. I haven't read this one, but I've heard such as such about this one. Like I kind of do a little bit of the preview. And sometimes I have people who read those books.

She was aware that just because some students asked for book recommendations, the others were not necessarily finding books that interested them. Ms. Smith

recognized that when students were sleeping, talking or looking around, they usually were not interested in the books. In that case, her role shifted to monitoring and redirecting the student behavior. She added, "It's critical that I feed them a book that is good." Ms. Smith wanted students to be aware of interesting books that she could help them find, so they would engage in reading.

Ms. Murray found the OA/YA ELS in her Transitional English 10 course to be trusting and accepting of her book recommendations. In general, she preferred to give a selection of options rather than one title, so the students felt that they had a say. She believed this practice supported students who were not sure what to pick or wanted short books. She explained:

> If you just say no that's too short, go find something else, they will get frustrated because they don't know what to pick. But if you can like give them three different ones, most of the times they wind up sticking to something that you suggested. That I have suggested.

This statement illustrated the fine line that teachers must walk in making suggestions students will value rather than feel coerced. If that happened, the teachers were aware of the risk that students would not be engaged in reading. The teachers felt they would spend more time monitoring and redirecting student behavior in class if the students were not engaged in reading.

Based on the analysis of the teachers' statements, they were intent to offer more challenging books to their students. At the end of the school year, Ms. Smith said,

> Frankly, that's going to be one of the things that I need to do better next year is to you know move them from maybe they are a low reader to get them started on Sharon Draper or *The Child Called It*, or you know even Nicolas Sparks.

The teachers had a positive attitude towards their role as an advocate for reading, and they seemed confident with getting students "hooked" on reading. However, students could be resistant to reading books that felt beyond their grasp of comprehension. In English 12, Mr. Hughes had an EL who was new to FAHS, and she had failed the state's end-of-course English exam multiple times. He found she had been comfortable with reading juvenile fiction and romance books, but she was not reading books that challenged her or pushed her to analyze the text. In order to pass the exam and graduate, this EL eventually accepted Mr. Hughes suggestion to read *The Bean Trees* by Kingsolver. He concluded, "After that resistance, I do believe that she gave a good honest attempt to engage in that book." Mr. Hughes stressed the role of the teacher as a facilitator who guides the student towards select more challenging books.

The teachers modeled a consistent reading practice by reading alongside the students. Mr. Hughes argued, "The teacher must be a reader. A program, it would be hard to imagine a choice reading program as I've described it to you…led by a general non-reading teacher." Ms. Smith and Ms. Murray agreed that they needed to read with the students to model the behavior of an engaged reader. The teachers felt that students were more likely to read when their teacher

was reading alongside them. In analyzing the data from the classroom observations, it was found that Ms. Murray read for all or part of the thirty minutes for five of the nine observations. In the ten class observations, Ms. Smith read five times in second period and seven times in third period.

Relationship Building

From the analysis of the data related to observable teacher practices the teachers used relationship building with their students as a foundation for their practice. The teachers in the English department had a practice of writing letters of introduction to their students in order to model writing and share details of their lives as a means of building positive relationships. The students responded with their own letter, and they decided what information to share. It is the first assignment that students completed in the class, and it was the first opportunity that teachers had to discover the students' interests and experiences. Ms. Smith described the importance of forming relationships with the students right away:

> So to get them to read and be engaged it's really important to establish a personal relationship with them, which is part of what the letter does, and it's part of why I spend the first week of school doing team building exercises instead of just jumping right into the academics.

The examination of data from the classroom observations supported the teachers' intent to establish and build relationships with students. Ms. Murray felt that if she had a good relationship with the student, she could guide their reading choices towards more challenging selections without them feeling coerced.

During class, students appeared comfortable with calling out questions or asking her for writing advice. In Ms. Smith's class, she greeted each student individually. The students greeted her in return. If it was someone's birthday, she would announce that there was a plate of brownies to share. It was also at this time that she would ask a student how they were and make humorous remarks. The students would laugh in response. This exchange usually lasted for a few minutes, and then Ms. Smith would give an overview of the activities for that class period. The students seemed to enjoy this, and then they transitioned to reading. In an interview, Ms. Smith explained that she began this practice when she taught at another school. A teacher had shadowed a student throughout the school day and observed that none of the teachers greeted or acknowledged the student by name. Thereafter, Ms. Smith established the practice of greeting students by name and initiating conversations with them.

The teachers worked to build a safe, social environment in the Transitional 9 and 10 classes. Ms. Smith gave more reasons to greet OA/YA ELs daily, "That establishes a sense of community where not only do I know their names, but they know each other's names a little bit better because they're repeated each day." From the observations, it appeared that the students were familiar with one another, talked about their books, and supported each other on assignments.

Communication

After reviewing and studying the classroom observation notes, three types of communication materialized that went beyond greetings. These forms of communication included the teachers responding to student questions related to vocabulary and directions, giving direct oral feedback on student work, and interacting in personal exchanges. Once reading time had begun, the teachers did not address the entire class. When they did speak, it was with one or two students, and the teacher' voices were lowered.

From the observations of questions asked by students, there was one instance of a student asking a teacher for a book recommendation. Of all the questions that students asked their teacher during the observations, book based questions were the least common. The students appeared comfortable with finding their books. At the beginning of second period with Ms. Smith, one of the students finished his fourth book for the course, and he wanted to begin a new book that could be used towards Transitional English 10. As described earlier, Ms. Smith showed him the book *Tuesdays at Morrie's* by Albom, and gave a summary of it, but she warned him that there were only two weeks left in the school year. He asked about a non-fiction title that his history teacher had suggested about war and slaves. He could earn credit in history. as well as English, if she selected this type of nonfiction book. Ms. Smith responded that she was not familiar with the title, so the student said he would ask his history teacher about the title. In the meantime, he began reading *Tuesdays with Morrie*.

This exchange lasted only three minutes, but it resulted in the student accepting the teacher's suggestion.

The most frequently answered questions by the teachers were related to directions for assignments or the meaning of a word. In first period with Ms. Murray, there were thirteen such questions from a class of eight students. In second period with Ms. Smith, there were a total of ten questions from a class of twelve students. The third period class with Ms. Smith had eleven students, and eleven questions were asked. In nine of the observations, no students asked a question related to their assignments. The students in Ms. Murray's class tended to walk up to her to ask these questions, or they were sitting next to her. Ms. Smith's classes were smaller in size, and Ana and Lina usually called out to her. She responded from her seat or walked to them if it involved a book project, and then she looked at their laptop screen.

The teachers initiated communication with the students when they gave feedback on assignments completed or those the students were working on at the time. While students were reading, the teachers returned assignments and briefly commented. Each teacher gave feedback in all but one of the class observations, so this seemed to be a common practice. Their comments ranged from positive feedback on a book response to checking in on the completion of an assignment or explaining an upcoming assignment. These exchanges were short and did not branch into discussions. Both teachers waited to conference with students on writing until after the reading time. In one class, Ms. Murray stated, "Your papers

are due Wednesday. I need to meet with you." Even when the teachers did speak during the thirty minutes for reading, it did not appear to distract students from reading or develop into a whole class discussion.

Ms. Smith's third period was the most conversational of the three classes observed. Consequently, that could have contributed to the greater number of personal exchanges in third period, with fifteen, compared to her second period, with seven. The personal exchanges ranged from wishing a student happy birthday to commenting on a student being late or joking about something happening in the room. The use of humor with students seemed to put the students at ease. In Ms. Murray's first period class, the students appeared to be sleepier and less talkative. Nonetheless, the teacher talked with Ana about her child or with Lina about her job. The male students in the room did not have personal exchanges with Ms. Murray, but they did say good morning, and their questions were related to word use or directions.

Monitoring and Redirecting Behavior

The thirty minutes for reading were devoted to the students making decisions about their behavior and whether or not to read. The teachers monitored the students and redirected any behavior if there was an indication that a student was not on task. In the interviews, the teachers saw their OA/YA ELs as having weak reading skills, yet they did not interrupt the reading time for assessing the

students' comprehension. The teachers guarded this time for students to read or respond to reading.

The English teachers were subtle in how they monitored the students' behavior. This is an important feature of their monitoring style. They stated in their interviews that they preferred to sit and read with the students, so they could be a role model and monitor behavior. Ms. Smith read a book on her IPad for at least part of the reading time for half of the observations. As well, Ms. Murray read a book for part of every class in half of the observations, and she laughed out loud while reading. The students did not seem to notice or ask what she reading. If the teachers were not reading a book of their choice, they were responding to student writing assignments or book projects.

During reading time, the teachers looked up at the students. In the interview, Ms. Smith said she noticed if there was whispering or students were reaching for their cell phones. In the observations, when she looked up, students noticed. Ms. Smith wanted the students to be aware that she observed their behavior, but they were responsible for changing it. In the interview, she stated that if she needed to redirect a student, she would pull them into the hallway to talk about distracting behavior or how they were impeding their progress. She shared that she had spoken with Oscar and Cesar about their behavior while reading. The observation notes indicated that these students appeared to be distracted readers. This teacher used an understated but direct manner of redirecting OA/YA ELs because she wanted to treat them as adults.

In a slightly different approach, Ms. Murray used physical proximity to redirect students. For example, if she walked over to answer a question from Lina, she could see the laptop screens and cell phones of the other students. The desks in the room were configured in a large square, so she could walk the circumference and see what each student was doing. At the back of the room was a long counter that she sat on to read her book. She seemed aware that one student tended to take a laptop when he did not need it, so she asked him if he had finished his book. When he said he had not, he returned the laptop to the cart and picked up his book without argument. If a student had been absent the previous day, Ms. Murray directed them to read or make up work during the thirty minute time. On another day, she redirected a student who had been absent to take out his book instead of working on a missed assignment. In the interviews, Ms. Murray stressed that the thirty minutes for reading was "sacred", and students needed a routine to instill a habit of reading. Based on the classroom observations, she was vigilant to preserve this time. Nonetheless, the monitoring and redirecting from Ms. Murray did not give the classroom environment a feeling of strict teacher control. As stated earlier, the students did ask questions and read most days without distractions. The tone of Ms. Murray's voice was low when she redirected students, and they did not appear to be put off by her requests.

Summary of the Classroom Practices of Two English Teachers who Work with OA/YA ELs at this AHS

In summary, the English teachers who worked with the OA/YA ELs at FAHS were consistent in their practice of offering choices to their students. As well, they were consistent in their practices of maintaining the course requirements and allowing time for daily reading. The teachers facilitated and modeled reading as a means to support the students' choices. By building relationships with the students, the English teachers were able to facilitate and model reading. The teachers' communication, monitoring, and redirecting of behavior with the OA/YA ELs was suitable to the maturity of this student population. These themes represented the classroom practices of the English teachers who worked with OA/YA ELs at FAHS.

Research Question 4: How Do the English Teachers Perceive their Older Adolescent/Young Adult English Learners' Literacy Engagement at FAHS?

The English teachers had positive perceptions of their OA/YA ELs literacy engagement. Based on the analysis of the teachers' interviews and their responses on the Reading Engagement Index (REI), the four themes related to the students' literacy engagement were founded on the teachers' perceptions of their students' motivational beliefs, reading skills, use of strategies, and ability to avoid distractions.

Teacher Perceptions of OA/YA ELs' Literacy Engagement

The two English teachers completed a paper and pencil version of the REI for each OA/YA EL in their courses who were participants in this study. Ms. Murray completed twelve surveys, and Ms. Smith completed twenty-nine surveys. There was an area on the REI for the teachers to add comments, which was analyzed as an open-response item. The first eight items on the REI were analyzed using descriptive statistics. On those items, a rating of 1 to 2 indicated not true, 3 indicated true, and 4 to 5 indicated very true. The means of the teachers' responses were ranked and compared with the students' responses to identify if the two groups had similar perceptions of the OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement. This analysis was not intended to generalize beyond the data in this study. The following table displays the teacher and student responses by mean scores and standard deviation. The survey items are in order of the students' highest score with the related dimension of literacy engagement listed.

Table 13

Teacher and Student Participant Responses to the Reading Engagement Index

Dimension	Item	Teacher Mean Score & Rank	Teacher SD	Student Mean Score & Rank	Student SD
	This student:				
Behavior	Often reads independently in class	4.22 (2)	.79	3.67 (1)	1.36

Cognitive	Thinks deeply about the content.	3.97 (4)	.84	3.65 (2)	0.95
Cognitive	Works hard in reading.	4.05 (3)	.95	3.58 (3)	1.07
Motivation -Intrinsic	Is easily distracted during self-selected reading. (reverse coded)	3.03 (7)	1.06	3.33 (4)	1.32
Motivation -Intrinsic	Reads favorite topics and authors.	4.28 (1)	.79	3.23 (5)	1.13
Motivation -Self Efficacy	Is a confident reader.	3.81 (6)	.95	3.14 (6)	1.13
Cognitive	Uses comprehension strategies while reading.	3.95 (5)	.82	3.05 (7)	1.13
Motivation -Social	Enjoys discussing books with peers.	3.97 (4)	.78	2.91 (8)	1.43

Teachers' responses on the REI indicated that that they rated the OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement more strongly for seven of the items than the students had rated themselves. The teachers had positive perceptions that, "The student often reads in class," (M=4.22, SD=.79). The students, as well, held this perception as it was their highest score for the eight items (M=3.67, SD=1.36).

Students' Motivational Beliefs

Contained in the composite score of the REI, each dimension of literacy engagement is represented by the eight items. From the item analysis related to motivation, it was found that the teachers perceived the students to have somewhat higher motivational beliefs than the students' self-assessment indicated. The teachers rated the students most highly on this item, "This student

reads favorite topics and authors," (M=4.28, SD=.79) which reflected the dimension of intrinsic motivation. This item was the students' fifth strongest response (M=3.23, SD=1.13). This may be interpreted that the students were reading, but they did not see the books as being related to a favorite topic. In the teacher records, there were students who read more than one book by an author, but they might not have strongly identified those authors as being a favorite. Nonetheless, the teachers had positive perceptions overall of the students' intrinsic motivational beliefs related to finding and reading books on favorite topics and authors.

The teachers believed that the students choose favorite topics, and worked hard at reading, yet their responses indicated that they were less sure about the students being confident readers. The item, "This student is a confident reader," related to motivational beliefs for self-efficacy. Both the teachers' responses (M=3.81, SD=.95) and the students' responses (M=3.14, SD=1.13) were the sixth highest score of the eight items. These findings suggest that both groups understood that the students' confidence in reading was still developing.

From the interviews, the English teachers expressed that OA/YA ELs brought their life experiences with them into the classroom, and that this positively influenced the students' motivational beliefs. It appeared that the English teachers viewed the age and immaturity of their students as a positive influence on their motivational beliefs for reading and in turn their literacy engagement in class. Ms. Murray and Ms. Smith saw their OA/YA ELs as mature

learners who took their learning seriously. From the interviews, the teachers believed that since these students were older than most ninth and tenth graders at the base high schools, they valued school in addition to working and helping their families. Ms. Murray stated, "English language learners seem to be more committed to their reading in general… I don't know if they are doing it because they intrinsically find it valuable or it's because in general they're a little more vested in their education." This quote illustrated that the teacher was aware of the OA/YA ELs' level of motivation, but she was not sure to whether attribute it to their intrinsic or extrinsic motivational beliefs.

Ms. Murray also made the distinction between the students' attitudes towards reading as an activity versus their overall value for school and education. Ms. Smith believed that since the OA/YA ELs needed to learn a second language and support themselves financially, they focused on reading and learning. She described her belief in the following manner:

> I think they are very motivated to learn…And so they have real life you know concerns and issues and I think that helps motivate them to really get more education and have that help them in their jobs and in their lives and become more fluent in English.

The teachers' practice of offering book choice operated under the assumption that if the OA/YA ELs chose books they found interesting and at the right level of readability, they would improve their English proficiency. Ms. Murray believed this practice supported the students' motivation beliefs, as well. She added, "The

fact that the books since they have chosen them themselves, they're definitely much more motivated to read them." Thus, from examining the data, the English teachers believed that the OA/YA ELs demonstrated positive motivational beliefs that supported their literacy engagement.

Reading Skills

While the English teachers believed that many of the OA/YA ELs brought positive motivational beliefs to their reading practice, they sensed that these students entered their classes with reading skills that were below grade level. The English teachers stated that ELs needed more time to read because they were slow readers and/or they were absent from class, but they did not consider this a negative indication of their literacy engagement related to distractions. Moreover, Ms. Murray thought that the ELs took longer to read a book or complete a book project when she compared her OA/YA ELs in Transitional 9 or 10 to native-English speakers in a Seminar One.

It is not uncommon for intermediate ELs to read less proficiently in their target language than in their native language. However, Ms. Murray and Ms. Smith believed that these OA/YA ELs had experienced interrupted schooling in their native language, which the analysis of the online student survey indicated that a number of students had missed school in their home country and in the United States. Therefore, interrupted schooling was a factor in the OA/YA ELs' literacy development before and after their immigration. This may have been a contributing factor to the students' reading skills, which the teachers' perceived as

being below grade. Ms. Smith explained, "On the less positive side, they tend to have you know many of them very weak skills. You know I would almost put them like at the grade school level, and in some cases, like fifth, sixth grade level." Even with this being the general status of the OA/YA ELs' reading level, it did not appear to deter them from finding books of interest and reading in class.

Students' Use of Strategies

From the analysis of the REI, the English teachers indicated their belief that their students were cognitively active while reading. Cognitive activity can be demonstrated from the students' active reading strategies, which may include note taking, dictionary use, and questioning. Cognitive activity is a dimension of literacy engagement, which relates to the REI item, "The student works hard in reading." This item response was the third highest from the teachers (M=4.05, SD=.95) and the students (M=3.58, SD=1.07). While students were reading, the observations indicated that they did not often ask the teachers about vocabulary or the development of the story. The teachers may have based their positive perception of the students' cognitive activity on the students' book projects, or their individual discussions with the students on their books.

The English teachers believed that the OA/YA ELs' use of reading strategies were an indication of their literacy engagement. One reading strategy that the teachers' described was the students' use of questioning. Ms. Murray viewed student questioning as an indicator that they were engaged in reading. She stated, "You know when they ask questions, you know that they are reading.

They're actually thinking…I'm worried about the ones that don't ask questions." This showed the teacher's awareness that students could demonstrate their thinking by asking questions. The teachers recognized that students questioned each other about reading. Ms. Smith pointed out with one student, Dana, "You could hear her talking to students in class about the book, or to me about it. She tends to do a very thorough job on her book projects." The teachers' statements indicated that they understood how students demonstrated literacy engagement through questioning as a reading strategy.

Distractions

The only item in which the teachers were less positive than the students related to their ability to read without being distracted. On the item, "The student is easily distracted during self-selected reading," the teachers felt less positive (M=3.03, SD=1.06) than the students (M=3.33, SD=1.32). This item was reversed coded. The teachers' responses to this item were the lowest of all eight items, whereas the students' responses positioned this as their fourth highest score with the reverse coding. It is a positive perception that the teachers believe this to be less true than the students do. From the teacher interviews, they identified distractions for students to include fatigue, emotions, listening to music, and cell phone or internet use.

When interviewed, the teachers gave examples of times the students created or were affected by distractions in the classroom. They believed that the greatest distractions were related to cell phone use and social interactions. The

OA/YA ELs used their cell phones to listen to music. If they turned up the volume, students around them could hear the sound. Ms. Murray explained that she had a student who asked to read in the library. He later emailed her to explain that he preferred reading in the library because he was bothered by the sounds of other people's music from their head phones. This made her realize that it was a distraction for other students, not only her, and her policy for listening to music the following year would change, and she would not allow music.

Interactions could also distract the students from reading. Ms. Smith explained that if one student was talking a lot, he or she would distract others. She described one student who had dropped out of school, "He was interrupting other students while they were reading on a very regular basis. And so I do try to eliminate those distractions if there are distractions." The teachers felt their students were apt to be distracted. The physical movement in the room was possible source of distraction. Ms. Murray explained:

> I think if there's a lot of other activity in the room, some kids are better than others at shutting that out. I think some kids get really distracted by any little thing. So the quieter the better. And the more kind of still the better. I think even if I'm going around you know to different students to talk to them or give them the instructions that can disrupt reading.

In the classroom observations, the students appeared to be physically engaged in reading rather than distracted when the environment was quiet without continuous conversations or movement.

Lastly, Ms. Murray and Ms. Smith believed that the students may take longer on book projects if they were distracted by doing other tasks on the laptop. Ms. Murray stated, "It's easier to fake something if they're working on a laptop." Based on her observations, Ms. Smith had the same perception that the students who took more than a week to complete a project, were most likely distracted. Each teacher was aware of which students tended to use their cell phones or surfed the internet. Therefore, the amount of time that OA/YA ELs needed to complete tasks could be affected by their ability to avoid distractions.

Summary of the English Teacher Perceptions of their OA/YA ELs' Literacy Engagement at this AHS

Overall, the English teachers had positive perceptions of the OA/YA ELs literacy engagement. They believed that these older high school students approached reading and learning with positive motivational beliefs. The English teachers recognized that the students' with lower reading skills could disengage from reading if the books were too challenging, and that the students were developing confidence their literacy practices. Otherwise, the teachers felt some students were distracted by outside factors such as use of technology or socializing with peers. All in all, the teachers held that the students demonstrated literacy engagement when they asked questions and discussed their book.

Research Question 5: In Which Ways Does This Alternative High School Support the Literacy Engagement of Older Adolescent/Young Adult English Learners?

Through the analysis of interviews with the English teachers, librarian, and school principal, two areas of support were identified. These were related first to direct student support and secondly to overall support of teacher practices. In the latter form of support, the sub-themes included budgetary support and valuing the teachers' classroom practices with OA/YA ELs. It is important to begin this examination with the theme of direct student support as it relates to the research question and then follow with the theme of support of teacher classroom practices with their students. The English teachers, Ms. Murray, Ms. Phillips and the department chair, Mr. Harris described how the librarian worked directly with them and the OA/YA ELs, and how the administration provided financial and organizational support for their classroom practices. The interviews with the librarian, Ms. Carroll, and the school principal, Mr. Daniels extended these findings on how they directly and indirectly supported the literacy engagement of the OA/YA ELs.

Direct Student Support

In the interviews, the teacher and student participants both spoke highly of the support that the school librarian, Ms. Carroll, provided. She believed it was important to work closely with students when they came to her for guidance on

selecting a book. When she transferred to FAHS from another school in the district two years earlier, she was enthusiastic about her potential role of support. She stated, "It made me very excited to come and work here because one of the parts of new librarianship that I enjoyed the most is reader's advisory, or trying to find the right match of a book to a particular reader." Just as the English teachers valued offering their students choices in reading, the librarian valued interacting with students to help them find interesting and challenging books. Since reader's advisory is a function of a librarian's duties, this suggested that Ms. Carroll had specific expertise in this area.

Ms. Carroll gave a list of factors that she considered for reader's advisory. She interviewed students about their general interests, who was their English teacher, and their general reading level. She hoped that this attention could turn around students who were not engaged readers, and she explained:

> A lot of them don't have a good attitude about reading, so I often feel that if I can find just that one book, it's going to just turn them on, and I would have done my job well. So that's the enjoyable part for me.

Her hope was to help the students find a book that would, in her words, "hook them" into reading. This objective was also expressed by Ms. Smith, Ms. Murray, and Mr. Hughes in their interviews.

Ms. Carroll also took in consideration who the students had for an English teacher because she believed it was an influence on her books suggestions. She believed that certain themes were encouraged in different classes. The varying

themes were a reflection of the English department's goal to increase the challenge of the books as students matriculated through the guided choice reading program. Ms. Carroll explained:

> Ms. Murray is very big on coming of age stories, so that theme I try to hook into when I'm dealing with her students. Mr. Moore (a 12th grade English teacher) is more global issues so World War II literature or something a little more elevated in terms of historical impact.

Ms. Carroll ordered some books for the library based on the OA/YA ELs' interests and reading skills. She explained that she sought out books labeled as high-low from the publishers. As stated at the beginning in this chapter, publishers issue series of high-low books to target struggling adolescent readers' with high interest topics and less challenging text than other trade books. Ms. Carroll relied on two publishers for these books, but she was asking her fellow librarians in the school district for additional sources. She found that the OA/YA ELs would easily begin with these series, but they needed to grow beyond the genre's prescribed plot. She explained how some high-low series were used, "So there is a place for the (series), but they are very formulaic. It's a great first stepping stone." Like the English teachers, the librarian was seeking to support the OA/YA ELs literacy engagement with books that were scaffolded for their reading ability but still appealed to their interests. The lexile text level of one high-low series of books that student participants read ranged from 650 to 750, which would fall approximately into the range of texts found in fifth and sixth

grade classes. Over time, Ms. Carroll hoped the students would seek more challenging books closer to their grade level.

The OA/YA ELs were involved in the book ordering process with Ms. Carroll. At the new student orientations held throughout the school year, she explained to the students, "I can borrow any book in (this) county from any school that you like. Let me know. And beyond that, if you don't see it, and I don't find it in the system, I will buy it for you." When the books arrived in the library, Ms. Carroll liked to deliver them to the students in their classes, so the other students would see that she had ordered books expressly for that student. She promoted her role in reader's advisory and endorsed reading across FAHS.

Support of Teachers' Classroom Practices with OA/YA ELs

The guided choice reading program was supported building-wide at FAHS. First of all, there was budgetary support to purchase books for the classrooms and school library. Secondly, the teachers' practice of offering choice was valued by the school community and embedded in the school culture. The following section discusses the sub themes that emerged on how FAHS supported the literacy engagement of OA/YA ELs.

Budgetary support. The principal and the librarian gave budgetary support to purchase books for the classroom collections and school library. The classroom libraries were purchased with funds allocated to the English department by Mr. Daniels. He described his role as, "For me, it's to help support the

teachers and the purchasing of books." He agreed that money was required to keep the guided choice reading program stocked with titles the students would read. The English department chairperson, Mr. Hughes, explained the cost of ordering books:

> The typical one is $800 to about $2000. If it's a light book order, it's about $800 or $900. And if we go big, we go up to almost $1800 or $2000. This is for five classrooms, five or six teachers. A total school population is 250 to 300 kids.

The librarian, Ms. Carroll, collaborated with the English teachers on book orders to purchase with her budget. These findings from the interviews indicated that English teaches and librarian had an ongoing collaboration for purchasing books. Ms. Carroll described the collaboration as:

> There is a lot of communication that goes on. And I do eat lunch with the English department, and that's kind of natural for me because those people talk books, and I like to talk books. But they really use as an extension of their classroom library, so sometimes I use them.

They were talking about books as readers and as educators. Ms. Carroll referred to sharing books back and forth with the English teachers. They were rooted in their identity as readers who talked about books they read or would offer to students. If Ms. Carroll knew there extra copies of a title in the English classrooms, and it was checked out of the library, she would get the classroom copy for the student. The financial and professional support from the librarian was

valued by the English teachers. Ms. Murray explained the importance of support from Ms. Carroll as:

> The librarian, she's almost like a little honorary English teacher because she's really good at picking out books… Purchasing titles that are a wide variety of genres and skill levels. And she's very good at giving the kids recommendations...Yeah, so it is important.

This was a symbiotic relationship that benefitted the students because they were the recipients of the books that were purchased to suit their interests and skills. From the student interviews and online survey, it seemed that the chief reason they went to the library was to talk with Ms. Carroll and get her recommendations for books to check out.

Value as support of teachers' practices with OA/YA ELs. In describing the English teachers' practice of offering choice, Ms. Carroll stated, "I haven't heard a student who is not familiar with the choice program and what it means." The principal believed that the program was well known. He stated, "But that it is geared not only toward some cross curricular stuff. I think it's promoted definitely as part of the language acquisition skills for our ESOL students." The English teachers' classroom practice of offering choice appeared to be valued by the staff, teachers, and students at FAHS.

Principal's perspective. The principal, Mr. Daniels, valued the classroom practices of the English teachers to support the OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement,

but he expressed concern about the students' academic progress. He explained that discussions with the English teachers was necessary by, "Having a dialogue and questioning, not questions, but having conversations in CLT meetings based on student achievement. That dialogue and discussion regarding I think student engagement." He believed that in planning for the next school year, the English department needed to consider what to do about the test scores, which he described "struggling". He elaborated, "And our school plan is probably going to focus on aspects of literacy, specifically reading comprehension, or reading skills." The analysis of this interview data showed that the principal was concerned with the OA/YA ELs' achievement on the standardized assessment for English 11, and that he wanted to work with the English department on identifying students' weaknesses in reading and addressing it instructional support.

The English department documents their efforts to improve the students' scores on the state's standardized assessments for reading and writing. In the 2012-2013 school year, the state released a new reading assessment. The updates to state standards and assessments for all content areas are on a ten year cycle. In 2011-2012 on the previous assessment, 83 of 87 students, 95.4%, passed the reading assessment. On the new assessment offered in 2012-2013, the pass rate sharply decreased to 47 out of 75 students, 62.7% (FCPS, 2014).

The principal raised further concerns about the OA/YA ELs' reading skills and how they could impact their literacy engagement. He felt that students with

low reading skills or still acquiring English might not engage in reading. Mr. Daniels stated, "What I worried about is that students come to reading, some students come to reading very reluctant, and so just because you're putting a high interest book in front of them doesn't necessarily engage them in reading." He made a connection between students who needed word call and phonics skills could be reluctant readers. Therefore, he considered the need for further assessments to make this determination. Based on the self-generated book list of what students had read that school year, they read books that ranged from the fifth to ninth grade level. He stated, "Sometimes I question whether we're assessing that to find out what the struggles might be with a specific students before we give them a book in their hands." The principal maintained that these concerns could be addressed by assessing students' reading comprehension to match books to their abilities and then providing targeted instruction to address those gaps.

English teachers' perspective. The English teachers expressed a need for the administration to value their classroom practices with the OA/YA ELs. They believed the administration generally valued their classroom practices of offering choice. Mr. Hughes stressed that in order for the English teachers' to offer choice in reading to OA/YA ELs, the administration must value reading. He believed that reading was supported as a practice by the current principal and other faculty members who liked to talk about books. Mr. Hughes described how an administrator needs to understand and support the English teachers' classroom practices of offering choice:

> That's exactly what we need is support and first of all you need the administration that values reading. And is comfortable with walking into a classroom and 15 students are reading 15 different things for 30 minutes. And the teacher might be sitting right there with a book, a Nicholas Sparks maybe.

He explained that seeing a room full of people reading may not be all that exciting compared to a teacher who is standing up and leading a discussion. As discussed earlier, the English teachers' classroom practices included facilitating and modeling reading behaviors during the thirty minutes for reading. Ms. Murray explained that the teachers needed the administration to value their practices. She explained:

> I mean if they start to question it and doubt it, and think that it's not valuable,…and if we just went to the traditional model...I think that would be a disaster… there's such a wide array of skills in one class probably even more so than at a base school, I would say.

Ms. Smith echoed the need for classroom practiced to be understood and valued in order to support OA/YA ELs. She stated:

> SSR, sustained silent reading, has a bad reputation in some places because it tends to be viewed, in some places, that the teacher's being lazy and just not teaching the first half an hour. And to me it's probably the most valuable time that they'll spend during the day, and so the fact that we all value that, gives it a weight and a value.

With most of the OA/YA ELs at FAHS, the only time they read at length was in their English classes. The English teachers valued their classroom practices to support their students' literacy engagement and development in reading.

Summary of the Ways in Which this AHS Supports the Literacy Engagement of OA/YA ELs

There was both direct and indirect support for the OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement from two key sources in FAHS. The librarian worked directly with students by recommending books to them. Through her collaboration with the English teaches, the librarian purchased titles that she hoped the OA/YA ELs would be able to read and find interesting. Indirect support of the OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement came from the funds of the librarian and the principal that allowed for purchasing books. The other form of indirect support came from valuing the English teachers' classroom practice of offering choice. The principal valued these practices and sought to explore means of improving the OA/ELs' scores on the state's standardized assessments required for graduating from high school.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed the findings from the study in response to the five research questions. The student participants represented a unique group of high school ELs based on their ages, languages spoken other than English,

previous schooling, and incidents of interrupted schooling. From the analysis of the students' reading practices, themes emerged related to the students' choices about their books, interactions, comprehension strategy use, and time use. The themes that arose with from their perceptions of their literacy engagement included motivational beliefs, identity as a reader, reading good and interesting books, and their limited use of strategies for comprehension. The student participants stated that there was a variety of interesting books on the shelves in the library and the classroom, and they were supported by their teachers and other staff members. Therefore the physical and social environment were contributing factors to the students' literacy engagement.

There were seven themes that developed from the analysis of the English teachers' classroom practices. These themes identified how the teachers offered choices, showed consistency in course requirements, consistency in time for reading, facilitated and modeled reading, built relationships, communicated, and monitored and redirected behavior. The English teachers were responsive to their students as being older learners who wanted to learn in a mature environment. The English teachers also had positive perceptions of the OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement. The teachers' perceptions of the students' literacy engagement were rooted in themes that identified how they thought about the students' motivational beliefs towards literacy, reading skills, use of strategies for comprehension, and distractions while reading. The English teachers focused on how the OA/YA ELs' reading ability was an important factor in their literacy engagement. From

this point, the teachers believed that students would disengage from reading if the books were too challenging in relation to their reading skills.

In examining the ways in which the school supported the literacy engagement of OA/YA ELs, two major themes arose. First, the librarian supported the students' literacy engagement directly through reader's advisory. Secondly, there was financial and professional support to purchase books from the librarian's budget for the library and the principal's budget for classroom collections that the OA/YA ELs used each day. An issue that the principal raised related to the OA/YA ELs' reading abilities and literacy engagement. He felt that some students were not engaged in reading, despite the variety of books available, because they lacked fluency and comprehension skills. This sentiment was echoed by the student and teacher participant groups as a factor in OA/YA ELs' in literacy engagement. In examining how Fieldside Alternative High School supported the literacy engagement of older English Learners, the culture of reading was prevalent and well established at all levels from the physical environment to the social interactions around reading.

The following chapter is a discussion of the research findings. In addition, conclusions and implications for future research are provided for consideration on how teachers and schools-wide efforts could support the literacy engagement of OA/YA ELs.

CHAPTER FIVE:
DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

The following discussion and interpretation is based on the findings that were presented in Chapter 4. Subsequently, the conclusions of this study on the literacy engagement of OA/YA ELs are explained in Chapter 5. There within, recommendations are given for instructional practice and implications for future research.

This study examined the literacy engagement of OY/YA ELs at an alternative high school. The findings indicate that the student participants valued the options they had in the guided choice reading program, and this sense of choice nurtured their literacy engagement. The findings are discussed in this chapter as they relate to the research questions that guided this study and followed by conclusions and implications:

RQ1: What are the reading practices of OA/YA ELs in their English classes at this AHS?

RQ2: How do these OA/YA ELs perceive their literacy engagement at this AHS?

RQ3: What are the classroom practices of two English teachers who work with the OA/YA ELs at this AHS?

RQ4: How do the English teachers perceive their OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement at this AHS?

RQ5: In which ways does this AHS support the literacy engagement of OA/YA ELs?

The findings related to the OA/YA ELs' reading practices in their English classes (RQ1) were based on the analysis of the forty-five student participant online surveys, interviews with eleven students, twenty-nine classroom observations, and the self-generated book lists from teacher records. For findings of how the OA/YA ELs perceived of their literacy engagement (RQ2), the data sources analyzed were the forty-five student participant responses to the Reading Engagement Index (REI) and the eleven student interviews. To identify the classroom practices of the two English teachers (RQ3), the findings were drawn from the classroom observations, interviews with each teacher, and the department chairperson. Furthermore, to understand how the two English teachers perceived of their OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement (RQ4), data from the teachers' responses on the paper-pencil version of the REI as well as the interviews were relied upon. Finally, the ways in which FAHS supported the literacy engagement of OA/YA ELS (RQ5) emerged from the analysis of the interviews with the librarian and the principal.

Interpretation of the Findings

In a dialogic approach, each data source spoke to, or informed, the analysis of the next data source to create new findings on the OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement. The triangulation of the data served as a validity check for

this study (Maxwell, 2012). This is also the application of constant comparison among the data sources. For example, the students' responses on the online survey and Reading Engagement Index (REI) informed the ways in which the semi-structured interviews were focused on the students' previous and current reading experiences and served to provide context for the classroom observations. Further questions from the observations were followed up with participant interviews as confirmation. The interpretation and discussion of the findings, in regards to OA/YA ELs' literary engagement, are given in the following section as they relate to each of the guiding research questions.

Reading Practices of OA/YA ELs (RQ1)

The OA/YA ELs' reading practices were constructed from their book choices in selection of titles, development of routines for reading, and classroom reading behaviors. These older English learners exercised their autonomy to select their own titles, and they discovered books that interested them for the first time in their education. Their reading behaviors were comprised of being self-directed, their limited use of comprehension strategies, and their use of time. From these characteristics of the students' classroom reading practices, the three themes that emerged were choices, routines, and strategies.

First, in the theme of choices, the students decided on what to read from the wide-ranging supply of titles in the classroom collections and the school library. The book collection included easy to challenging levels of text from a

variety of genres. Students who matriculated from Transitional English 9 to 10 relied less on the formulaic high-low series created for struggling readers, and they chose juvenile fiction published for the general population of adolescent and young adult readers. There was not one particular book that the students all chose to read. In general, the most popular category of books was juvenile fiction, but there was a range of topics favored by the students. However, there was not a trend of students choosing progressively more difficult texts as they matriculated in their English courses, as the English teachers had hoped. ELs should encounter a variety of personally relevant texts in school, so they see themselves in the curriculum and not be marginalized. Jiménez (2000) found identity and culture influence students' motivation to engage in literacy development as well as how teachers acknowledge and respond to them through interactions. The difficulty of the text should also be considered for the EL who is acquiring literacy in the target language. According to Krashen (1982), ELs would benefit from the gradual increase in text demand that is represented by i+1, but it appears these OA/YA ELs did not predominately select more challenging books. The students seemed comfortable with evaluating books by interest, but not my text demand. Therefore, the students need guidance in how to select a text that is appropriately challenging for their current ability level. The varying ability of adult English Learners to select a book is based on their past literacy practices. This was found in s study on SSR by Hellermann (2006). It is not a question of whether these

adult English Learners can appropriately select a book, but have they experienced the socialization through interaction to do so.

In terms of choosing books by interest, the accessibility of titles and the support of teachers, staff, and peers to make book recommendations made it probable that the students would find books that they liked. The students were part of a culture of reading, in which they were active in giving and receiving recommendations. The physical and social environment of this alternative high school and the English classes contributed to culture of reading that sought to the support the young adult English Learners' linguistic, academic, cognitive needs (Thomas & Collier, 1997). Ivey and Broaddus (2001) found in their study that middle schoolers were motivated to read by finding good materials and having choice from that selection. Furthermore, in an analysis of the 2002 Program for International School Assessment (PISA) Brozo, Shiel and Topping (2007) suggested that schools offer personalized and challenging texts to promote reading engagement. In conclusion, the OA/YA ELs' choices supported their literacy engagement, but less challenging texts may not have supported their second language development.

Second, the students' development of routines for reading occurred during the dedicated thirty minutes for reading in class each day. This time allowed the students to create their own reading habits. It was clear that students understood the expectation set by the teacher to read each day because they were self-directed in getting their materials, initiating reading, and sustaining attention on the task.

The students also chose how to use the thirty minutes for reading or other activities not related to reading such as leaving the room. Nonetheless, the majority of students stayed in the classroom and either read or created book projects during this time and few were redirected by the teacher. Therefore, the OA/YA ELs acquired the routines needed for engaged reading in class. In considering time, Brozo, Shiel, and Topping (2007) found that increasing the time for reading in school with a variety of texts was a trait of reading engagement. This is a promising practice at FAHS for OA/YA ELs who are reading below grade level, and need more time to complete a trade book. In addition, the students referenced their responsibilities outside of school to work and take care of family members. It was important that they not only have time to read each day, but that they efficiently use the time to make progress.

Third, the students used limited strategies to support their engagement. Some OA/YA ELs used the dictionary or translating features in their cell phones for text support, but none used a paper dictionary. A few students relied on note taking to track their understanding or record key vocabulary. It was unclear if the students were aware of how to use strategies to support their comprehension and literacy engagement or they simply chose not to use strategies. Guthrie and Davis (2003) determined that the use of comprehension strategies for understanding text was a cognitive dimension for engaged reading. Since the OA/YA ELs used limited strategies, this could be a negative influence on their literacy engagement. Ivey and Broaddus (2007) found that ELs need teacher scaffolding in a supportive

learning environment. According to the model of SSR from Pilgreen (2000), one of the elements to include is encouragement in the form of discussions and sharing. Thus, the OA/YA ELs may need scaffolding in the form of reading strategies and encouragement to support their language development and literacy engagement.

Otherwise, the students' classroom behavior generally included quiet interaction, which may have been a strategy for comprehension. The students discussed their reading with a peer seated next to them. This type of interaction could represent a Third Space for the students to mediate their in and out-of-school identities (Gutiérrez, 2008). These OA/YA ELs represented nondominant communities, and they were given the space to interact with each other on readings that related to their out-of-school experiences. In the interviews, students stated that they did not know such books existed that related to their immigrant and coming of age experiences. Access to such books merged their reading development with their identities as immigrant ELs. In their English classes, the OA/YA ELs' reading practices were embedded in the choices they made for what they read, how they used their time, if they interacted with others, and whether they used strategies as a support for understanding the text.

OA/YA ELs' Perceptions of Their Literacy Engagement (RQ2)

The data indicated that the students had positive perceptions of their overall literacy engagement. There were four themes constructed from the data,

the students' motivational beliefs, identity as a reader, finding good and interesting books, and their use of strategies. The last two themes were also found to be present in the students reading practices, which indicates their significance to the OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement.

In the first theme, positive motivational beliefs were comprised of the students' extrinsic and intrinsic motivations towards their literacy engagement. Since the students were aiming to graduate from high school, it is not surprising that some felt completing the class requirements was the reason they engaged in reading. They also saw reading as the means to improving their English, which they needed to do in order to move onto the next grade level. In terms of intrinsic motivation towards reading, the student participants expressed how reading was fun and enjoyable when they found a suitable book. Reading became a pleasurable activity during the school day for the students.

As the second theme, the students' identity as a reader was closely linked to their intrinsic motivational beliefs for reading. There were reluctant readers of books who transformed themselves. The students who strongly identified themselves as readers in the English class, also stated they did not often read full length books prior to the guided choice reading program. They were more likely to read online sources related to the news, sports, and social media. The students in this category came to recognize the types of books they like to read and shared their insights with peers in a way that reading became part of who they were rather than an assignment in school. This becomes a construct of the students'

identity, which Jiménez (2000) found was an influence on the students' motivation to engage in literacy development. Merged with the Third Space discussed earlier, this sociocultural approach supports the OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement (Gutiérrez, 2008). The identity development of ELs through language learning in a community practice is a feature of Swain and Deters' (2007) sociocultural theory. These students found themselves in books, which nurtured their motivational beliefs for reading.

The next theme, "good" and "interesting" books, referred to the availability of titles that the students liked. Since the students could change their books if they did not like the story, this could have lessened the possibility that the students stayed with books they did not finding interesting. If that was the case, the ability to search for "good" and "interesting" books would be a positive influence on the students' literacy engagement. Earlier research suggests that students should have choice in what they read to support their literacy engagement (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001). From the survey findings, Ivey and Broaddus concluded that students were more motivated to read when they had a broad selection to choose from. This supports the conclusion that the availability of a variety of books was a positive influence on the OA/YA ELs perceptions of their literacy engagement. However, in order to have this supply of titles, teachers need to know the interests and experiences of their students.

The last theme related to the OA/YA ELs' perceptions of their literacy engagement was their use of strategies. They had weaker perceptions that using

comprehension strategies were supportive, and they reported feeling distracted when reading in class. If the students used strategies for comprehension, they might have minimized feeling distracted. Based on the data, distractions could have arisen from internal or external factors such as the students' lack of reading fluency, confidence in reading, interest in the book, physical ability to concentrate, or noise and movement in the class. Guthrie and Davis (2003) found a relationship between middle school students who were struggling in reading and their disengagement, so the OA/YA ELs' reading skills should be considered as a factor in their engagement. From a sociocultural perspective, Moje (1996) concluded that comprehension strategies could be taught as a as a tool for learning, as well as means for the teacher to develop the students' positive attitudes towards reading. As such, comprehension strategy use could be promoting literacy engagement. Nonetheless, more needs to be understood about the causes for OA/YA ELs to feel they are distracted during reading time.

Classroom Practices of English Teachers (RQ3)

The classroom practices of the teachers were shaped by offering choices in reading and their departments' framework for the guided choice reading program. The English teachers' practices included seven components: consistent requirements, consistent time for reading, facilitating and modeling reading, building relationships, communicating, and monitoring and redirecting behavior.

The English teachers maintained a learning environment that allowed the students to create a routine for reading. The teachers monitored and redirected students' behavior in an effort to promote using the class time for reading that was respectful to older students. The OA/YA ELs needed supportive factors to ensure their success in school rather than be at risk for experiencing subtractive schooling. This is perhaps the most central role for the teacher in the guided choice reading program. Suárez-Orozco et al. found that students who felt their teachers' caring and support as a positive influence were more likely to engage in their schooling. This is important to OA/YA ELs, as alternative high school students, who are already older than their grade level native-English speaking peers and are trying to graduate.

As stated earlier, the teachers themselves were readers, so they were role models for their students. Overall, the consistency of the teachers' classroom practices were a stable force for fostering the OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement. The physical and social environment that the English teachers created and maintained in the classroom emerged as positive contributing factors for the OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement. Moje, Overby, Tysvaer, and Morris (2008) found in their research that older students are negotiating their role in society, and they are influenced by social relationships in and out of the classroom. Therefore the English teachers can be cultural brokers between those worlds, and the English teachers seemed to respect and understand this role (Gutiérrez, 2008).

As a physical feature to support literacy engagement, the teachers ensured that there was a wide selection of books in their classrooms. They collaborated with the librarian on titles to purchase for the school library, and they were flexible in allowing students to select books from either collection. The social environment of the classroom encouraged interactions about the students' reading and their lives. The teachers demonstrated caring behaviors towards the students in responding to their questions, discussing issues, and encouraging students to monitor their own behavior. The teachers were not authoritarian, and the students took responsibility for their actions although they could feel distracted while reading. Both teachers guided the OA/YA ELs' reading practices and behaviors in a manner that respected them as older high school students. These older ELs came to FAHS because they were not successful or did not feel accepted in other school settings. In interviews, the student participants spoke fondly of their teachers and their supportive manner. The merging of the physical and social environments were crucial to how the OA/YA ELs' engaged in reading books for school. These factors related to physical space and adult support were also found to be crucial to the successful turnaround of the high school SSR program examined by Fisher (2004). The teachers' caring behaviors supported the ELs' engagement in learning, and this finding was supported in the research from Suárez-Orozco, Rhodes, and Millburn (2009) related to subtractive schooling. ELs who did not feel supported by their teachers and school community, were more likely to experience subtractive schooling. Again, there were OA/YA ELs

who chose to come to FAHS because they were not making progress in their neighborhood high schools.

English Teachers' Perceptions of their OA/YA ELs' Literacy Engagement (RQ4)

The English teachers had positive perceptions of their students' general literacy engagement in their classes. The four themes related to the students' literacy engagement that emerged from the teachers' perceptions included their students' motivational beliefs, reading skills, use of strategies, and ability to avoid distractions.

Based on the Reading Engagement Index (REI) results, the teachers perceived that the students had stronger motivational beliefs than the students had rated themselves. From their observations of the students reading in class, the English teachers believed that most students enjoyed reading class and did not require frequent redirection to stay on task. The teachers attributed the students' sustaining interest in reading to the books that they chose and found interesting. When teachers did speak about students who they believed were less motivated to read, the teachers attributed this to either the students' reading skills or ability to resist distractions. These factors were interwoven as contributing to the students' literacy engagement and are discussed further.

The second theme was how the teachers thought many OA/YA ELs were reading below grade level. Consequently the teachers thought it was important that the OA/YA ELs with low reading skills were engaged in their books, so they would develop a habit for reading for enjoyment. Thus, the teachers found a connection between students being engaged in their reading and developing their skills. The teachers held that the students' need for more time on reading and writing assignments was due to their skills rather than their engagement in the tasks. It is important to recognize that second language learners' literacy development is dependent on teacher quality (August & Shanahan, 2006). The relationship between reading skills and literacy engagement is interdependent, and the teacher needs to help older ELs recognize this to support their own literacy development. As older students, they had the analytical capabilities to understand the interdependence of reading skills and literacy engagement as a means for acquiring academic language (Collier, 1987).

The third theme involved the English teachers' perceptions of the OA/YA ELs' use of strategies to support their literacy engagement. The teachers believed that the students were cognitively active while reading. This was demonstrated by note taking, asking questions, and using the dictionary or translator via cell phones. In particular, the teachers recognized that questioning was a common and effective strategy for comprehension, yet this infrequently occurred during the classroom observations. While questioning is an effective strategy for reading, the

OA/YA ELs need to use it if they are to move on to more challenging text and stay engaged in the story.

The teachers could promote strategies, such as questioning, through the interactions and relationships they have developed with their students (Nieto, 2010). According to Hellermann (2006), such interactions are part of the language socialization required of adult English Learners, and they need support to acquire this literacy practice. Since the English teachers have built a foundation of classroom practices, as readers themselves, which include relationship building, they could create a space for authentic strategy instruction (Noddings, 1988). This would follow the work of Garza (2009), which found that high school Latino students sought out teacher caring that supported their academic learning. The Latino students in Garza's study represented the nondominant language community in a school with White students. The OA/YA ELs also represented the nondominant language community, and seemed to consider themselves as non-readers prior to taking an English class at FAHS. Just as these students discovered there were books that related to their lives, they need to explore how readers interpret and analyze text. Such cognitive activity would appear to be invisible to the novice book reader, so they need visible demonstrations to reveal the next level of engaged reading they should aspire towards.

The fourth theme, distractions, arose from the teachers' perceptions found on the REI and in their interviews. The teachers recognized that some students

could be distracted in their reading, but they were not concerned about the majority of the OA/YA ELs in their classes. Those who were distracted were on their cell phones or talking with a peer next to them. Otherwise, the teachers understand that many students worked in the evenings and were responsible for their families, so they may be exhausted rather than distracted by the classroom environment. Therefore, the English teachers saw their role as a reader and as a caring facilitator who maintained a calm, quiet environment for all readers. This practice to reduce distractions was also a means for lowering the ELs' anxiety over reading, which in turn promoted their second language development because it addressed their affective needs in learning (Krashen, 1982).

Continuing with the theme of distractions, teachers identified a few students who were struggling readers. They appeared distracted while trying to sustain reading. It seemed that these students who were new to the class were still adapting to reading for thirty minutes each day in the classroom. While the teachers could easily redirect distracted students, they were unsure how to scaffold reading for students who found it challenging to read a book independently. Additionally, the English teachers had responded less positively about their students' self-efficacy on the REI. When the issue of distraction was considered alongside self-efficacy, the OA/YA ELs' sense of competence in reading must be examined as well. In their research, Ryan and Deci (2000) found that the learner's sense of competence is an influence on his or her self efficacy towards the task. The teachers would need to take a multipronged approach to

address the students' ability to resist distractions through their sense of competence and self-efficacy in reading. Given that many of these OA/YA ELs have experienced interrupted schooling, they have not had the academic experience of reading a book at length independently, so they would need additional support and scaffolding to do so if they are to approach the ability of their grade level peers (Thomas & Collier, 2002).

Ways in which FAHS Supports the Literacy Engagement of OA/YA ELs (RQ5)

Findings indicated that decisions and practices at the school level were important factors in understanding the literacy engagement of the OA/YA ELs at this school. The English department relied on the support of the principal, the librarian, and the school culture to support the guided choice reading program. This was revealed as direct student support and program support. First, the librarian provided direct student support to the OA/YA ELs in helping them to select and gain access to a broad selection of titles that the students found interesting. The librarian played in key role in supporting the OA/YA ELs literacy engagement. Like the English teachers, she believed that students who had been reluctant readers needed to find text that drew them into reading. She interacted with students to learn about their preferences and skills, so she could provide them with a selection of books to choose from. This personalized approach to

finding an interesting book was aligned with the practices of the teachers in the English department.

The guided choice reading program was supported philosophically and financially by the school. FAHS adopted a culture of reading. This was demonstrated by the collaboration between the Social Studies and the English departments. Communication and collaboration among the teachers, librarian, and administration ensured that the program's framework was understood and operationalized. In terms of financial support, the librarian purchased books based on students' interests and skills, and the principal approved the English department's book orders throughout the school year.

A conclusion that has emerged from the findings of this study is that all participants were concerned about the reading skills of some OA/YA ELs. A concern about the guided choice reading program was raised by the principal. He believed that limited fluency and comprehension skills in reading could be a contributing factor for some OA/YA ELs' limited literacy engagement. The English teachers had also expressed concerns about their students' reading skills and the possible impact it had on their literacy engagement. The student participants rated themselves less on being confident readers than their ability to reading independently.

According to the findings of Suárez-Orozco, Rhodes, and Milburn (2009), the school environment and supportive relationships can significantly influence the recent immigrants' engagement for school learning and outcomes. These

relationships positively affected the OA/YA ELs in this study, so they were not affected by subtractive schooling. The practices of the teachers and librarian contributed to the school environment that supports reading practices and engagement of the OA/YA ELs at FAHS. According to the findings of Fisher (2004), the role of adults in the school as authentic models of reading is critical for student buy in and the overall effectiveness of an SSR program. These practices have contributed to the culture of reading at Fieldside Alternative High School. On the latter finding, students with limited readings skills can disengage from reading as found by Guthrie and Davis (2003). This was discussed in the previous section and has become an essential conclusion in this study.

Limitations of the Study

There are limitations to be considered in determining the validity and generalizability of this study. The areas of limitations discussed in this section include the study site, population, and the time for the data collection process.

The study site was purposely selected based on it being a unique setting. The majority of students volunteer to attend the high school, class sizes are limited, and policies are geared towards an older, more mature student population. A large percentage of students who are ELs attend the school, which makes it a unique location for a study of EL literacy development. The site was also chosen because the English department had created and followed the guided choice

reading program for at least ten years. For that reason, the program was established and accepted by the school.

The next limitation of this study was that the participants were not randomly selected. The student population participation in the study was based on their age, placement in English classes, and consent. The number of student participants for the online survey and REI was small (n=45), which limit the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, the number of teacher participants was limited by which teachers had OA/YA ELs in their classes. This was based on school scheduling, not on the teachers' expertise to instruct OA/YA ELs as a distinct student population.

The last limitation of the study was the time allotted for the data collection process. This study was conducted in the last quarter of the school year. The majority of students had been enrolled in the English classes since the previous fall semester. Therefore, students had already established their own routines for reading and selecting books, which may account for limited observational data related to students seeking book recommendations from their teachers.

Conclusions

From the interpretations of findings, there are four conclusions that can be drawn from this study concerning the literacy engagement of OA/YA ELs at an alternative high school. A discussion follows of how these conclusions may influence educators' instructional planning and the development of reading

programs, which promote OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement. Thereafter, implications for future research on the literacy engagement of OA/YA EL in alternative high schools are given.

The first conclusion from this study is OA/YA ELs need to have access to a broad range of reading materials in order to chart their own literacy pathway that is personally applicable and meaningful. OA/YA ELs seek out a variety of books that may reflect aspects of their lives and experiences related to immigration, coming of age, and family issues. It cannot be assumed that a student's age, native language, previous reading habits, or life experiences will predict the genre or topic of the books he or she may choose to read for school. For instance, both male and female students read pop-culture romance novels. This supply required financial support from the administration to purchase books for classroom collections and from the librarian for the school library. These collections needed to be updated regularly based on the preferences of the OA/YA ELs in their classrooms. The teachers and staff discovered these preferences through ongoing interactions with the students, which led to the second conclusion of the study.

The second conclusion of this study is that the teachers were authentic role models for reading. They read and interacted with the students as fellow readers, so the students accepted their book recommendations. Some of the OA/YA ELs identified themselves as non-readers or reluctant readers prior to participating in the guided choice reading program. They were not sure how to choose a book to

read for school, so they came to see the teachers, as well as the librarian, as readers who could recommend books. In this role, the teachers needed to offer a range to books in each recommendation, so the students, as mature young adults, made the final decision. As teachers modeled the behavior of being a reader and made recommendations, the older students then also took on the role of recommending books to their peers. This social interaction with students of an older age range became a pattern of behavior that these young adult English Learners internalized, which was a contributing factor to the development of a culture of readers.

The third conclusion of this study is that the guided choice reading program was operationalized in a consistent manner by the two teachers within the English department. There was consistency in the time dedicated to reading each day with limited distractions, the availability of books, and the assessments for students to demonstrate comprehension. These OA/YA ELs had many inconsistencies in their lives related to where they lived, where they worked, and which family members were part of their lives. However, they knew that the time for reading was something they could rely on. With this population that has experienced such mobility and uncertainty, structure and routine is a supportive factor for their learning. Through this uniformity of process and practice, students matriculated to other English classes and continued developing their literacy practice and engagement as shown by students advancing from Ms. Smith's class to Ms. Murray's class. Additionally, the consistency of the guided choice reading

program in the English department helped to develop a culture of reading in the alternative high school that the teachers, staff, and administration supported. Reading was valued by the school community, so the Older Adolescent/Young Adult English Learners could see themselves as members of the community of readers.

The fourth conclusion of this study is that the OA/YA ELs needed teacher support to show them how to improve their reading skills though comprehension strategies. A lack of fluency and comprehension could have led some students to disengage from reading. While most OA/YA ELs indicated that they were engaged in reading, there remained others who appeared to be struggling to maintain physical engagement in reading during class time. These students understood the flexibility that the guided choice reading program offered them in the topics and challenge of the books, but they found it difficult to read in class. Before English teachers can implement a plan for supporting their OA/YA ELs' reading skills, they need to first assess their comprehension for areas of strengths and weaknesses.

Recommendations for Teaching and School Programs

For teachers and schools aiming to support the literacy engagement of OA/YA ELs, four recommendations for teacher practice and program development follow from the conclusions of this study. Even though these recommendations are listed individually, they should be considered as

interdependent elements that are woven to create a physical and social environment, which fosters literacy engagement for OA/YA ELs.

First, the school must provide for a wide selection of books beyond one classroom collection. The teachers and staff need to continually update and replenish the selection based on the students' expressed and potential interests. The OA/YA ELs should encounter interesting literature in more than one classroom, so they are able to access it. Additionally, attention should be given to the reading abilities of the OA/YA ELs, which include but are not limited to their lexile score. As second language learners, these students may not have the prerequisite background knowledge to comprehend a book that is listed within their lexile ability. However, ELs could reach towards these more challenging text if they are provided scaffolding to grasp the context of the story. Therefore, additional money should be allocated towards purchasing materials while also giving teachers time to create complementary resources that build upon one another and are strategically ordered.

As a second recommendation, teachers need to be readers themselves to model reading behaviors and social interactions. The teachers and staff are members of a reading community. With that identity, they are able to make book suggestions to students and guide them in their choices. As students who have likely experienced interrupted schooling and/or limited access to text in print, these OA/YA ELs will strongly benefit from the teacher's caring and role model of engaged reading. From that role, teachers interact with students to build

trusting relationships for learning about their lives, interests, and goals. In this social environment, reading is fostered rather than assigned, and the students develop an interest for engaging in reading on a regular basis.

A third recommendation to support OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement is for the classroom routines and framework of the guided choice reading to be consistent. Students should rely on knowing there is a devoted time each day in a calm atmosphere to develop reading behaviors and cultivate their literacy engagement. In addition, there needs to be equal access to books across the classroom collections and the school library. Since the characteristics of this OA/YA EL population indicated that they have adult responsibilities outside of school, the time to read in class each day is essential to their literacy development. Consistency also includes how OA/YA ELs demonstrate their understanding of a book. Teachers and administrators should collaborate on their framework for guided choice reading, so the reading community becomes part of the school's culture.

Lastly, teachers need to know the reading skills of their students because struggling readers are more likely to disengage from reading. Since most OA/YA ELs are reading below the level of their native-English speaking peers, they need language strategies to become fluent and confident readers. In a class of OA/YA ELs with varying reading abilities, the teacher models for students how to access the text as a bridge to their literacy engagement.

Implications for Future Research

The implications for future research concerning further influences on Older Adolescent/Young Adult English Learners' literacy engagement at an alternative high school have been discovered through the analysis of data in this study. This study has merged the fields of second language acquisition with literacy engagement to determine a more authentic approach to determining Older Adolescent/Young Adult English Learners' academic language development, and so further research must continue to explore this relationship. Guthrie and Davis (2003) sought to understand struggling readers' disengagement when they encountered texts that were more challenging. Guthrie and Davis found that among the factors to promote literacy engagement, direct instruction on reading strategies would support the students' self-efficacy for reading. This research was conducted with native-English speaking middle school students as the participants, so the issues of OA/YA ELs second language acquisition was not a factor in the study. However, the findings from Collier (1987) suggest that older ELs are efficient learners, and therefore they could benefit from these strategies that require metacognition. From this point, the OA/YA ELs are at an age and maturity level to efficiently acquire reading strategies, which they could internalize as part of their reading practice. As stated earlier, OA/YA ELs may not understand what is going on in a reader's mind while he or she is analyzing the plot in a novel, but the teacher can make this thinking visible.

As stated in an earlier, the participants in this studied were identified as ELs based on their scores from the WIDA-ACCESS for ELs standardized assessment. The reading portion of this assessment is comprised of comprehension questions based on short texts related to language arts, social studies, science, and mathematics. The OA/YA ELs were placed in a Transitional English 9 or 10 course based on their WIDA-ACCESS for ELs score. However, the score from this assessment is not an indication of the students' ability to read longer grade level texts, which they encounter in the classroom. For this reason, there needs to be an assessment that takes into account the students' ongoing second language acquisition and their ability to read grade level text. The latter is a requirement for them to pass the state's standardized assessment for English and graduate from high school. It is unclear how to identify OA/YA ELs as struggling readers at an alternative high school. Further research needs to focus on how to identify OA/YA ELs as struggling or proficient readers.

A second implication for future research is to understand how reading strategies help OA/YA ELs access and engage with the text. In an atmosphere like that in the guided choice reading program, students read in a quiet and calm atmosphere. There were a few students who looked up words and took notes, but they do so without distracting other readers. If the English teachers were to expand the OA/YA ELs' repertoire of strategies, they would need to identify their areas of need and match them with appropriate support. This type of assessment and direct instruction would need to occur outside of the time dedicated to reading

because the students need independent reading practice as well as guided practice with the teacher. Strategy instruction, such as those related to monitoring comprehension, need to be modeled and practiced for OA/YA ELs to adopt as a practice.

Final Thoughts

Prior to investigating the OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement at FAHS, I based my understanding of their engagement on three influences, the wide variety of books to choose from, the time to read in English class, and their motivation to complete the class. From the conclusions of this study, I discovered that my initial understandings of the OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement were confirmed but were not fully shaped. Since collecting and interpreting the data, I have recognized that the OA/YA ELs benefitted from their teachers' intention to foster their reading engagement. From their interviews, the English teachers had a predisposition for supporting their students to be readers who make choices and share their ideas with other readers. I believe that more value needs to be placed on teacher collaboration and their ability to problem solve in their local context for the academic and personal achievement of their students. The English teachers at FAHS were familiar with their OA/YA ELs personal lives and educational experiences, so they could build caring relationships with their students, which became a foundation of trust and mutual respect. This positioned the teachers to be trusted facilitators and guides for OA/YA ELs who needed to experience

engagement in reading for academic purposes. Above all, the development of these relationships and interactions were supported by the unique learning environment in Fieldside Alternative High School, which contributed to the culture of reading.

This experience has contributed to my belief that research in schools should be based on a sociocultural construct for learning to recognize the outcomes from teachers and students learning together. Merging sociocultural processes with academic learning is one of the recent areas of focus in the research and practices of second language acquisition. This study brings together the two fields of literacy research and second language acquisition.

APPENDIX A: RESEARCH MATRIX

This study will investigate the reading practices and literacy engagement of older adolescent/young adult English Learners (OA/YA ELs) in their English classes at an alternative high school (AHS)					
Research question	Q1. What are the reading practices of OA/YA ELs in their English classes at this AHS?	Q2. How do these OA/YA ELs perceive their literacy engagement at this AHS?	Q3. What are the classroom practices of 4 English teachers who work with these OA/YA ELs at this AHS?	Q4. How do the English teachers perceive their OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement at this AHS?	Q5. In which ways does this AHS support the literacy engagement of OA/YA ELs?
Why?	1. To identify the variety of reading practices that OA/YA ELs describe and exhibit during their English class	2.1 To understand how OA/YA ELs monitor and reflect upon their literacy engagement in their English class	3. To identify what English teachers do individually as well as a department to plan for and carry out their classroom practice with OA/YA in their context (e.g. interrupted schooling, continuum of language acquisition, multiple life experiences, and	4. To understand how the English teachers consider the role of student engagement in their context (e.g. interrupted schooling, continuum of language acquisition, multiple life experiences, and limited academic success) and how it impacts their classroom practices and interactions	5. To identify the present factors in this AHS that are related to literacy engagement for OA/YA ELs in the English classrooms

			limited academic success)		
Who/ Where?	Student surveys of ELs enrolled in an English 9, 10 or 11 class (may range from 50 to 60) Teacher Surveys of ELs enrolled in an English 9, 10, or 11 class Pre and post observation interviews with each English teacher. Ongoing classroom observations by the researcher Student interviews of purposely selected students (up to 12) Teacher interviews Interviews with administrator and librarian in how they support the literacy engagement of OA/YA ELs Field notes by the researcher				
Kind of data	Student Survey Student Interviews Observations Artifacts-Self Generated Book Lists	Student REI Student Interviews	Observations Teacher Interviews	Teacher REI Teacher Interviews	Staff/Administration Interviews
Student Surveys and Teacher Survey	**Quantitative:** Categorical variables of reading practices in school and at home (e.g. where they find books, who suggests books, and how long they read for) and demographics (e.g. languages spoken, language	**Quantitative:** student rating of literacy engagement as a continuous variable using Guthrie's (2004) scale	/	**Quantitative:** Teachers rating of approximately 50 ELs along a continuous variable	**Qualitative:** code statements from students that refer to factors related to their literacy engagement (e.g. people, policies, and resources)

	for reading, interrupted schooling) **Qualitative:** favorite books read, coding for genre of books, lexile text measures for grade level, and page length of books				
Field notes	**Qualitative:** Inferences from observations of teachers' practices and students' in class reading behaviors and interactions				
Interview	**Qualitative:** Code across informants for themes from elaborations and clarifications on survey findings and follow-up from observations Code statements that refer to factors such as people's actions, school policies and other resources that informants perceive as related to OA/YA ELs' literacy engagement.				
Student Writing/ Teacher Materials	/	**Qualitative:** Inferences about students' strategic and conceptual reading as an indicator of reading engagement	**Qualitative:** Inferences about teachers' practices in how they work with OA/YA ELs	**Qualitative:** Inferences about teachers' beliefs on literacy engagement	/
Validity Threats	Researcher bias, Reactivity, Interpretation of ELs' responses in English				

APPENDIX B:
TEACHER SURVEY OF STUDENT READING ENGAGEMENT

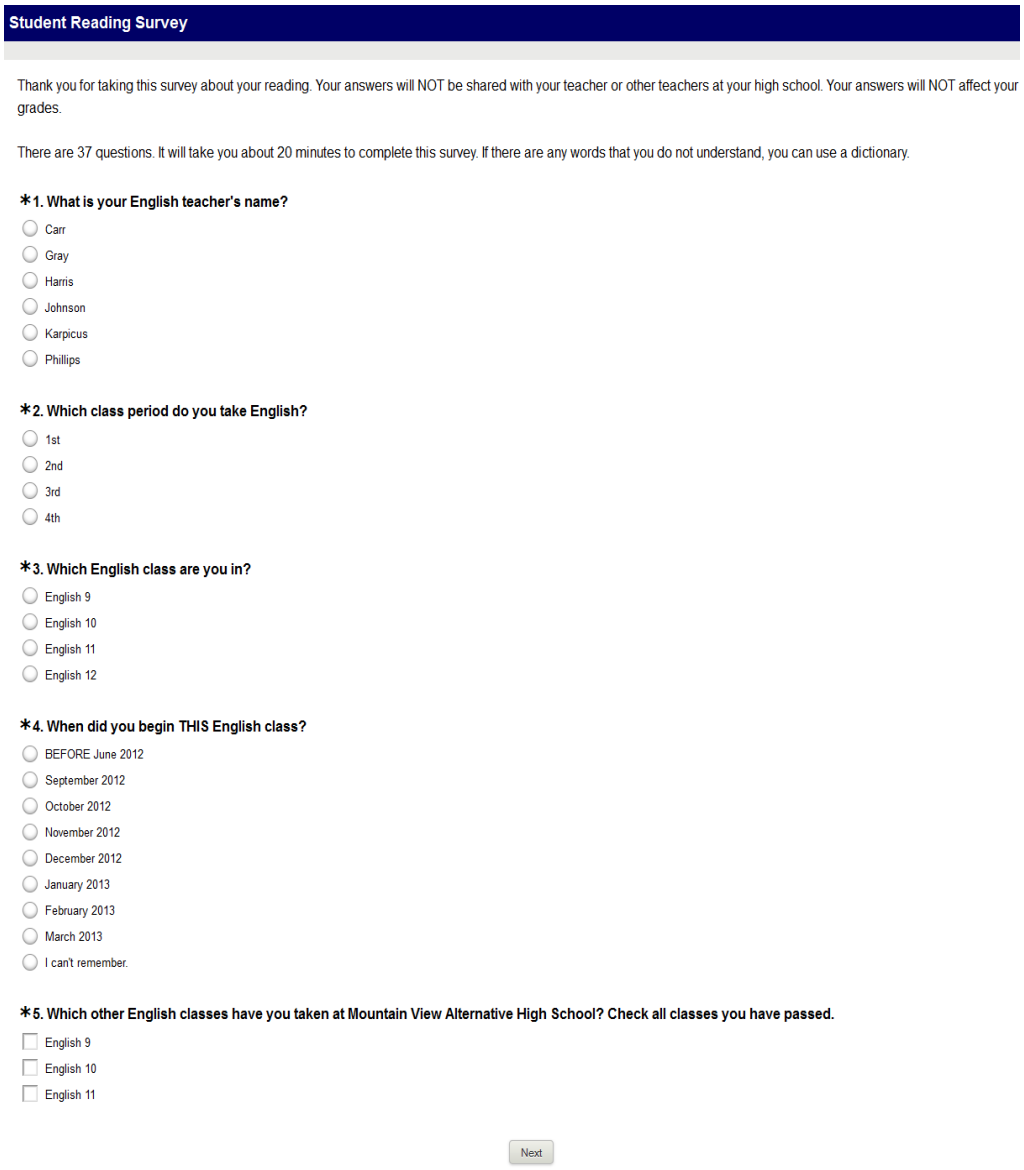
Reading Engagement Index adapted from Reading Engagement Index, (Wigfield, A. & Guthrie, J.T., 2004)

STUDENT 1: This Student:	NOT TRUE 1 2		3	VERY TRUE 4 5	
Often reads independently in class					
Reads favorite topics and authors					
Easily distracted during self-selected reading					
Works hard in reading					
Is a confident reader					
Uses comprehension strategies while reading					
Thinks deeply about the content					
Enjoys discussing books with peers					
Other comments (optional)					

APPENDIX C:
STUDENT SURVEY OF READING PRACTICES AND ENGAGEMENT

Student Reading Practices Online Survey adapted from Ivey and Broaddus, 2001

Student Self-Report of Reading Engagement adapted from Reading Engagement Index, Guthrie, J.T., 2004.



Student Reading Survey

Thank you for taking this survey about your reading. Your answers will NOT be shared with your teacher or other teachers at your high school. Your answers will NOT affect your grades.

There are 37 questions. It will take you about 20 minutes to complete this survey. If there are any words that you do not understand, you can use a dictionary.

***1. What is your English teacher's name?**

- Carr
- Gray
- Harris
- Johnson
- Karpicus
- Phillips

***2. Which class period do you take English?**

- 1st
- 2nd
- 3rd
- 4th

***3. Which English class are you in?**

- English 9
- English 10
- English 11
- English 12

***4. When did you begin THIS English class?**

- BEFORE June 2012
- September 2012
- October 2012
- November 2012
- December 2012
- January 2013
- February 2013
- March 2013
- I can't remember.

***5. Which other English classes have you taken at Mountain View Alternative High School? Check all classes you have passed.**

- [ ] English 9
- [ ] English 10
- [ ] English 11

Next

Student Reading Survey

*6. Which is your FAVORITE reading activity in English class? Choose only one activity.

- Reading my book
- Reading an article or story with the class that the teacher chose
- Talking in small groups about what we read
- Talking as a whole class about what we read
- Listening to the teacher aloud read to the class
- Listening to students read aloud to the class
- I read aloud to the class
- Working on a book project
- Nothing

Other (please specify)

*7. In addition to your favorite reading activity in English class, please check any other reading activities you like? You can choose as many activities as you like.

- [ ] Reading a book that I chose
- [ ] Reading an article or story with the class that the teacher chose
- [ ] Talking in small groups about what we read
- [ ] Talking as a whole class about what we read
- [ ] Listening to the teacher aloud read to the class
- [ ] Listening to other students read aloud to the class
- [ ] I read aloud to the class
- [ ] Working on my book project

*8. What book are you reading now in English class? Name the title and author. If you can't remember, write the main idea of the story.

*9. Why did you decide to read this book?

Prev Next

Student Reading Survey

*10. How many books have you finished reading in this English class?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- more than 5

*11. What makes you want to read in English class?

*12. Who has helped you find books to read for this class? You can click on more than one person.

- My English teacher
- Another English teacher
- Students in my English class
- My friends who are not in my English class
- Librarian
- Another teacher at Mountain View
- My family
- No one, I like to find my own books
- Other

Other (please specify)

*13. Where do you find books to read for this English class? You can click on more than one answer.

- My English classroom
- Another English classroom
- School library
- Public library
- Home
- Bookstore
- Online

*14. What do you like most about your English class at Mountain View? Explain this.

Prev Next

Student Reading Survey

15. You will respond to the next 8 statements about your reading in English class.
The scale is from 1 (not true) to 5 (very true)

	Click on the arrows for choices
I often read in class.	
I read favorite topics and authors.	
I am easily distracted when I read my book in class.	
I work hard in reading.	
I am a confident reader.	
I use comprehension strategies to help me understand.	
I think deeply about the story I am reading.	
I enjoy discussing books with other students in my class.	

***16. What fiction(untrue) books do you like to read in school? You can click on more than one.**

- [ ] Stories about people my age
- [ ] Stories about people who are like me
- [ ] Adventure
- [ ] Mystery
- [ ] Graphic Novels (comic book style novels)
- [ ] Romance
- [ ] Historical Fiction
- [ ] Scary stories
- [ ] Science Fiction
- [ ] Stories in a series (more than one book with the same characters)
- [ ] Poetry
- [ ] Fantasy
- [ ] None

Other (please specify)

***17. What nonfiction (true) stories do you like to read in school? You can click on more than one answer.**

- [ ] Sports
- [ ] Current Events
- [ ] History
- [ ] Science
- [ ] Biography/Memoir
- [ ] Autobiography
- [ ] None

Other (please specify)

***18. How do you prefer to read in school?**

- ○ With the computer
- ○ With printed materials (paper)

19. In school, which language do you prefer to read in?

- ○ Your native language (the language you use at home)
- ○ English
- ○ I don't have a preference

Prev Next

Student Reading Survey

20. Which language do you prefer to speak?

- ○ Your native language (the language you use at home)
- ○ English
- ○ I don't have a preference.

21. List up to five languages you can speak.

Language 1	
Language 2	
Language 3	
Language 4	
Language 5	

***22. When you are NOT In school, which language do you prefer to read in?**

- ○ Your native language (the language you use at home)
- ○ English
- ○ I don't have a preference

***23. This next question asks you what you read when you are NOT in school and in which language you like to read.**

	In My Native Language	In English	In Both Languages	I Don't Read This
Newspapers	○	○	○	○
Magazines	○	○	○	○
Book for school	○	○	○	○
Another book I chose	○	○	○	○
Picture book to a child	○	○	○	○
"How to" instructions	○	○	○	○
Job related materials	○	○	○	○
Email	○	○	○	○
Chat Rooms	○	○	○	○
Online News	○	○	○	○
Online Sports	○	○	○	○
Online Entertainment	○	○	○	○
Online Shopping	○	○	○	○
Social Media (Facebook)	○	○	○	○
Texting	○	○	○	○
Tweets	○	○	○	○

Other (please specify)

***24. Think about last week. Think about the types of reading listed in the previous question, number 23. How many times did you read outside of school?**

- ○ Every day last week
- ○ 5 to 6 times last week
- ○ 3 to 4 times last week
- ○ 1 to 2 times last week
- ○ Not at all

***25. Still think about last week. If you add the minutes altogether, how many minutes did you read OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL?**

- ○ 0
- ○ 1 to 20 minutes
- ○ 21 to 40 minutes
- ○ 41 to 60 minutes
- ○ 61 to 80 minutes
- ○ more than 80 minutes a week

26. What are your favorite things to read outside of school? You can give up to 3 answers.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Prev Next

Student Reading Survey

27. How old are you?

- ○ 17
- ○ 18
- ○ 19
- ○ 20
- ○ 21
- ○ 22
- ○ older than 22

28. What is your gender?

- ○ Male
- ○ Female

29. List the countries where you attended school for each grade level. You can write more than one country for each box.

Grades 1 to 6 _____

Grades 7 to 8 _____

Grades 9 to 11 _____

30. BEFORE you moved to the United States, how often did you miss school in another country?

- ○ 0 to 1 day a month
- ○ 2-3 days a month
- ○ 4 to 5 days a month
- ○ 6 to 7 days a month
- ○ 8 to 9 days a month
- ○ 10 or more days a month.

31. BEFORE you moved to the United States, how many months IN A ROW had you missed school?

- ○ None
- ○ 1 month
- ○ 2 months
- ○ 3 months
- ○ 4 months
- ○ 5 months
- ○ 6 months
- ○ 7 months
- ○ 8 months
- ○ 9 months
- ○ 10 months
- ○ More than 10 months

32. If you missed school for a month or more in another country, how old were you? You can give more than one answer.

- ☐ I didn't miss school for more than a month.
- ☐ 5 to 7 years old
- ☐ 8 to 9 years old
- ☐ 10 to 11 years old
- ☐ 12 to 14 years old
- ☐ 15 to 16 years old
- ☐ 17 or older

33. If you missed school BEFORE you came to the United States, what were the reasons?

34. AFTER you moved to The United States, how often did you miss school?

- ○ 0 to 1 day a month
- ○ 2-3 days a month
- ○ 4 to 5 days a month
- ○ 6 to 7 days a month
- ○ 8 to 9 days a month
- ○ 10 or more days a month.

35. AFTER you moved to the United States, how many months IN A ROW have you missed school?

- ○ None
- ○ 1 month
- ○ 2 months
- ○ 3 months
- ○ 4 months
- ○ 5 months
- ○ 6 months
- ○ 7 months
- ○ 8 months
- ○ 9 months
- ○ 10 months
- ○ More than 10 months

36. If you missed school for a month or more in the United States, how old were you? You can give more than one answer.

- ☐ I didn't miss school for more than a month.
- ☐ 5 to 7 years old
- ☐ 8 to 9 years old
- ☐ 10 to 11 years old
- ☐ 12 to 14 years old
- ☐ 15 to 16 years old
- ☐ 17 or older

37. If you missed school AFTER you came to the United States, what were the reasons?

Prev Done

APPENDIX D:
OBSERVATIONAL PROTOCOL

Date	Location/Setting	
Time began	Time ended	Total time
Role of observer		
Incidents that occurred prior to the observation		

Running time	Person observed	Actions, interactions, direct/indirect responses, interruptions	Inferences and questions

APPENDIX E:
TEACHER SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

Teacher_____ Date _____ Location

_____

Started: _____ Ended: _____ Length of interview _____

Incidents that occurred prior to the interview _____

Introduction: "This is an interview that I am using for research. While you have seen me in school, I am now taking on the role of a researcher. If I ask you a question that you think I should know the answer to, I am doing so to record your response today.

How did you decide to teach at this alternative high school?

What did you know about this English program before you came to this school?

Now that you are at this alternative high school, can you tell me about your ELs' needs and interests?

What do you say, do or show your students so they know what they will do in your class?

Tell me about the reading choices students have in your class.

How do you react to students and the choices they make in reading?

Can you tell me about a time when a student seemed confused by the expectations and daily norms in the class?

In what ways do you see this program supporting students' literacy needs?

How does the English department make this possible for you to offer students choice?

What do you need from the school or other persons?

Is there anything you would like to add?

APPENDIX F:
EARLY OBSERVATION SEMI-STRUCTURED STUDENT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Informant _____Date _____ Location _____

Length of interview _____

Incidents that occurred prior to the interview _____

Introduction: *"This is an interview that I am using for research. You may have seen in school because I am teacher. However, I am doing this research as a student at George Mason University. If I ask you a question that you think I already know the answer to, I am doing this to write down your answer."*

1. What did you know about this school before you came here?
2. What type of books did you read before you started this class?
3. Do you read at school?
4. Do you read at home?
5. What choices in reading do you make in your English class?
6. Do you prefer that the teacher chooses the book or you chose it yourself? Why?
7. How did your teacher explain the reading requirements in class? (routines)
8. What was the first book you chose in this class? How did you decide to pick it out?
9. Were there enough books in the class to choose from?
10. Are there other types of books you would like to see on the shelves?
11. What is your routine during reading time? (Listen to music? Talk to friends?)
12. How do feel about reading?
13. What do you need from the teacher to be successful at reading?

14. Is there anything you are worried about in class?

15. When do you expect to finish this book?

16. Are there books that you are thinking of reading next?

APPENDIX G:
FOLLOW UP SEMI-STRUCTURED STUDENT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Informant _____ Date _____ Location _____

Length of interview _____

Incidents that occurred prior to the interview _____

Introduction: "This is an interview that I am using for research. While you have seen me in school, I am now taking on the role of a researcher. If I ask you a question that you think I should know the answer to, I am doing so to record your response today."

1. Now it is later in the semester. How has your semester been so far?
2. (I recapped what they told me in the first interview.)
3. Did you finish the last book _____ you told me about? If so, when?
4. Can you tell me about the book? Last time you said _____ about the story.
5. What book project did you choose to do? Why?
6. What book did you choose to read after that one?
7. Why did you pick that book?
8. How much have you read?
9. Have you thought about the book project yet?
10. Have you thought about your next book to read?
11. How do you feel about choosing your own books to read?
12. Are you reading more now than you did before you came to this school?
13. What do you need from your teacher to be successful?

APPENDIX H:
INFORMED STUDENT CONSENT FORM

Investigating Older Adolescent/Young Adult English Learners Literacy Engagement at an Alternative High School

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

This research is to understand what students who speak a language other than English think about reading and how they read in their English Classes at Mountain View Alternative High School.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete an online survey during English class and allow me to review your class records and assignments. I MIGHT observe your English class, and ask you to participate in an interview(s).

RISKS

There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this research.

BENEFITS

There are no benefits to you as a participant other than to further research in reading. The benefits to you include a pizza lunch.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The data in this study will be confidential. Your name will not appear on the online survey or other collected data.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason. If you decide not to participate or if you withdraw from the study, there is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

ALTERNATIVES TO PARTICIPATION

If you do not participate in this study and I observe your English class, I will not refer to you as a participant.

CONTACT

This research is being conducted by Michelle Ohanian at George Mason University. She may be reached at XXX-XXX-XXXX for questions or to report a research-related problem. The faculty advisor is Dr. Rebecca Fox at George Mason University, and she may be contacted at XXX-XXX-XXXX. You may contact the George Mason University Office of Research Integrity & Assurance at XXX-XXX-XXXX if you have questions or comments regarding your rights as a participant in the research.

This research has been reviewed according to George Mason University procedures governing your participation in this research.

CONSENT
I have read this form and agree to participate in this study

_____
Name

_____
Date of Signature

APPENDIX I:
INFORMED PARENT CONSENT FORM

Learning about Teen Age and Young Adult English Learners' Reading at an Alternative High School

INFORMED PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

The reason for this research is to find out how teenage and young adult English Learners' think about reading in their English classes at an alternative high school. If you agree to participate, your child will take an online survey during his/her English class. Your child's name will NOT be on the survey. I will NOT share this information with your child's teacher. I MAY ask to see and photocopy your child's class records and assignments from his or her English class. I MAY visit and observe your child's English class and interview him or her about reading. I will record the interviews and delete them after the study.

RISKS

There are no risks to your child for participating in this study. Your child will not lose any of his/her rights by being in the study. You or your child may decide to stop participating at any time during the study.

BENEFITS

There are no rewards or money for being in this study. However, the things I find out may help other teachers become more aware of what English learners think about reading in their classes. All participants will have a pizza lunch.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your child's name will not be on the survey. I will record our interviews, but I will keep that recording in a secure place. Everything that we all say on the recording will be written out on paper. I will change your child's name so that no one will know who he or she is. I may use some of your child's words when I write my report, but I will never tell anyone your child's name. The principal investigator Dr. Rebecca Fox and co-investigator Michelle Ohanian will have access to the information with your child's name on it.

PARTICIPATION

Your child does not have to participate in the online survey, class observations, or interviews. If your child changes his or her mind after we start the survey or interview, and your child wants to stop that is OK. I will not get mad, and nothing will happen to your child. There are no costs to your child or anyone else to participate.

ALTERNATIVES TO PARTICIPATION

If your child does not participate in this study and I observe the English class, I will not refer to your child as a participant. If your child does not participate, he/she will remain

in English class and continue with individual reading time while participants take the survey, and I interview them.

CONTACT

My name is Michelle Ohanian, and I am a student at George Mason University. I am doing this study to earn my doctorate degree. You may contact me at XXX-XXX-XXXX if you have any questions about this study. You can also ask me anytime you see me in school.

The George Mason University Office of Research Integrity and Assurance knows about my research and said that it was OK for me to do it. You can call them at XXX-XXX-XXXX if you have any questions about being a part of this research.

This research has been reviewed according to George Mason University procedures governing your participation in this research.

CONSENT

I have read this form and agree to participate in this study.

Check one:

__ I agree for my child to be audio recorded

__I do not agree for my child to be audio recorded

_____

Name of child (Print)

_____

Signature of Parent

_____

Date of Signature

APPENDIX J:
INFORMED TEACHER CONSENT FORM

Investigating Older Adolescent/Young Adult English Learners' Literacy

Engagement at an Alternative High School

TEACHER PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

This research is to examine how Older Adolescent/Young Adult English Learners' (OA/YA ELs') reading practices and literacy engagement in their English classes at an alternative high school.

If you agree to participate, you will complete a paper and pencil survey about the OA/YA ELs and their literacy engagement in your English 9, 10 or 11 class. You will need approximately 5 minutes to complete the survey for each ELL in your classes who have given their permission to participate in this study. You will have the survey over five day period to complete. I will ask to see and photocopy your syllabi, records of books students' have read, and reading assignments from your English class. I will visit and observe one of your classes at least 10 times over a 13-week period. I will interview you for approximately 40 minutes about your teaching practices, your ELs' reading practices, and their literacy engagement. You can pick a convenient time for an interview. I will record the audio interviews and delete them after the study. I will NOT share this information.

RISKS

There are no risks to you for participating in this study. You will not lose any of your rights by being in the study. You may decide to stop participating at any time during the study.

BENEFITS

There are no rewards or money for being in this study. However, the things I find out may help other teachers become more aware of what English learners think about reading in their classes.

CONFIDENTIALITY

I will record our interviews, but I will keep that recording in a secure password protected file. Everything that we say on the recording will be transcribed. In the transcription, I will change your name so that no one will know who you are. I may use quotes of what you said when I write my report, but I will never tell anyone your name. I will only share the information that you provide on the survey with the principal investigator. The principal investigator Dr. Rebecca Fox and co-investigator Michelle Ohanian will have access to the information with your name on it.

PARTICIPATION

You do not have to participate in the paper and pencil survey, class observations, or

interviews. If you change your mind after we start the survey or interview, and you want to stop that is fine. All teacher/staff participants will receive a $15 gift card to a restaurant.

ALTERNATIVES TO PARTICIPATION

If you do not participate in this study, I will not observe your classroom or collect data from you. There is no penalty for not participating in this study.

CONTACT

My name is Michelle Ohanian, and I am a student at George Mason University. I am doing this study to earn my doctorate degree. You may contact me at XXX-XXX-XXXX if you have any questions about this study. You can also ask me anytime you see me in school.

The George Mason University Office of Research Integrity and Assurance knows about my research and said that it was OK for me to do it. You can call them at XXX-XXX-XXXX if you have any questions about being a part of this research.

This research has been reviewed according to George Mason University procedures governing your participation in this research.

CONSENT

I have read this form and agree to participate in this study.

Check one:

__ I agree to be audio recorded

__I do not agree to be audio recorded

_____

Name of Participant (Print)

_____

Signature

_____

Date of Signature

APPENDIX K:
INFORMED STAFF CONSENT FORM

Investigating Older Adolescent/Young Adult English Learners' Literacy Engagement at an Alternative High School

STAFF PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

This research is to examine how Older Adolescent/Young Adult English Learners' (OA/YA ELs') reading practices and literacy engagement in their English classes at an alternative high school.

If you agree to participate, I will interview you for approximately 30 to 45 minutes about ELs' reading practices and your school environment. I will record the interviews and delete them after the study.

RISKS

There are no risks to you for participating in this study. You will not lose any of your rights by being in the study. You may decide to stop participating at any time during the study.

BENEFITS

There are no rewards or money for being in this study. However, the things I find out may help other teachers become more aware of what English learners think about reading in their classes.

CONFIDENTIALITY

I will record our interviews, and I will keep that recording in a secure place. Everything that we all say on the recording will be transcribed and saved on a computer. I will change your name so that no one will know who you are. I may use your quotes of what you said when I write my report, but I will never tell anyone your name. The principal investigator Dr. Rebecca Fox and co-investigator Michelle Ohanian will have access to the information with your name on it.

PARTICIPATION

You do not have to participate in the interview. If you change your mind after we start the interview, and you want to stop that is fine. All staff participants will receive a $15 gift card to a local restaurant.

ALTERNATIVES TO PARTICIPATION

If you do not participate in this study, I will not interview you or collect data from you. There is no penalty for not participating in this study.

CONTACT

My name is Michelle Ohanian, and I am a student at George Mason University. I am

doing this study to earn my doctorate degree. You may contact me at XXX-XXX-XXXX if you have any questions about this study. You can also ask me anytime you see me in school.
The George Mason University Office of Research Integrity and Assurance knows about my research and said that it was OK for me to do it. You can call them at XXX-XXX-XXXX if you have any questions about being a part of this research.

This research has been reviewed according to George Mason University procedures governing your participation in this research.
CONSENT
I have read this form and agree to participate in this study.
Check one:

__ I agree to be audio recorded
__I do not agree to be audio recorded

_____
Name of Participant (Print)

_____
Signature

_____
Date of Signature

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